

Public Service

ministers at this time. It is also essential that we take a long look at what is happening in the Public Service with the appointments of associate and assistant deputy ministers.

Miss MacDonald: Order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please, the Hon. Member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) has the floor.

Mr. Schellenberger: The purpose of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to standardize the method of appointment and tenure of senior officers of the Public Service and to tie their appointments to the duration of a Parliament. The Public Service would thereby be more accountable to the Government of the day and to the electorate. That, in effect, is saying that we should make sure that senior public servants hold the same political beliefs as the government in power and as the Ministers. If governments were to change more often than they have in the past, you would find that the principles on which the government is elected and the policies by which it has come into office would be the same as those of the senior public servants whom it has appointed. Those senior public servants would then be in charge of making sure that the Bills and other pieces of legislation that have passed this House are put into practice by the Public Service.

If one looks at what has happened in the last number of years, one will find that legislation is now being passed that gives more and more discretion to the Public Service and to the Governor in Council. No Minister can keep up with making sure that everything that is passed by this House is being put in place by the Public Service in the method in which this House or the government wishes. It is important that Ministers have the chief people in the public service using the same methodology as those people who have been put into power.

● (1710)

We now have the problem of having permanent political public servants at top levels of government. Because we have had in effect one-Party rule since 1963, elected officials and appointed senior bureaucrats play a similar role. I use as an example the deputy minister of national revenue who was on television defending the Government for practices which it had put in place. Also we have the deputy minister of agriculture making a speech on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and in effect assuming his role. Therefore, the political effect of those at senior levels is the same as that of Ministers. There are approximately 45 deputy ministers and between 250 and 300 assistant deputy ministers. The Minister's office has become a back door for higher public servants. They are not appointed on the merit system. Rather than doing what is being done now and saying that it is not in effect, we ought to legitimize the process.

The Minister needs a small loyal staff who can administer his Department along with him. That is what we ought to provide. Bureaucracy at the highest level is being eroded of its objectivity and its professional neutrality by a tired political

executive or one that does not care and is on to other things. We must acknowledge this fact. It reminds me of a book written by Hugh Heclos entitled *A Government of Strangers*. He wrote, and I agree with it:

—a political appointment need not be unfilled to be functionally vacant; career officials can be found in charge where the supposed political leadership is uninterested or inept. As a former supergrade who had moved up to a presidential appointment said: In a department where there is a vacuum and only a series of transients, then the bureaucrats try to fill the vacuum. Without malice, with the best intentions in the world, people trying to fill a political vacuum can adopt some pretty unique strategies... arranging special trips for congressmen or upgrading their own and other people's jobs.

In effect that can happen when we ask a supposedly unpolitical Public Service to take over the job of a Minister who does not have time to administer his Department properly or is not capable of doing it. There is a need in Canada for major reform at senior levels of bureaucracy in order to facilitate the greatest degree of responsiveness between senior levels of the Public Service and newly-elected political leaders.

In some cases the transition can be smooth, Ministers and their senior deputies and assistant deputies get along well and are of the same philosophical background. In other cases there are barriers. There can be structural barriers to transition or a situation wherein a senior deputy minister has a completely different philosophy from that of his Minister and finds it very difficult to abide by what he should in fact be putting in place.

There are many things deputy ministers can do to see to it that policy is not effected. They can start by having many briefing sessions with the Minister to say that this or that is not possible. In effect, they slow down the process. They can ensure that all correspondence going through the Department is routed through the Minister's office. They can exaggerate the time frames within which things can or cannot be done. They can see to it that there is a lack of money in the budget to adopt new approaches which the Minister or the Government wishes to put in place. In effect, they can indicate that there are certain ramifications as to why on a political basis something should or should not be done. There are many examples of this in history, for example, in the Province of Saskatchewan when the political change from the Liberal Party to the CCF occurred. This can be documented as actually having taken place. When political policymakers come head to head with bureaucratic personnel who can influence policy, they simply withhold information or ideas, change them or forcefully present conflicting proposals to the Minister.

● (1720)

When government is growing there is a greater amount of decision-making conferred on departmental management. This really raises the question of who has the power—who is the master and who is the servant. We see a majority of Bills which are now conferring discretion on departmental management. They are attributable to present government philosophy. The Government has remained in power for a long period of time. Effectively there has not been a change since 1963. Because of this fact, the executive and legislative functions of Government have become very closely meshed.