

dealt with in one month hence, which might even kill the Bill. I note that there are a number of shortcomings which deal with the fact that classification cannot be dealt with under the proposed legislation. I have already noted some of the appointment weaknesses which are found in the Bill. However, Clause 5(3) would prevent any negotiation with respect to problems related to classification. There is no provision for the employees' union to negotiate job descriptions, or for an opportunity to negotiate the assignment of pay levels, or for the possibility of negotiations dealing with the evaluation of duties. This is, of course, a failure of the legislation to deal with one very large complex of grievances, a system which has evolved over the years, as far as job classification is concerned, which has been an enormous source of dissatisfaction for employees. Many employees do not even have job descriptions. Those who do find that they are often out of date and that they can be arbitrarily changed in an environment which we all realize has seen a good deal of change over the last years. The result is obviously a great deal of employee frustration, insecurity and poor morale.

Similarly, when it comes to the question of staffing, we find that Clause 55(2) prohibits the possibility of bringing the issues of job appointments, job appraisals, promotions, demotions, transfers, lay-offs or releases to third-party arbitration. There is no possibility of having these equally contentious matters, at least in their potential, dealt with to a resolution which will be genuinely impartial through third-party arbitration. These are the types of issues which have been central to the drive by parliamentary employees to gain bargaining rights.

• (1650)

Parliament Hill has had a history of staffing decisions coloured by political influence, favouritism, nepotism, and administrative incompetence. The Government has no desire to change that fundamentally. I should like to add to these areas of weakness. The lack of a grievance procedure to deal with a great diversity of problems which can arise between our managers and our employees is surely the most fundamental weakness in the Act. If there is one thing collective bargaining should provide, it should provide a basis for resolving conflicts under the rule of law through a grievance procedure and, if necessary, into third party arbitration.

I have emphasized the importance of applying sound principles of collective bargaining to Hill employees. I have been critical of the present Government and of previous Governments for hypocrisy in legislating well for others but failing to apply the same principles to their own actions. In this kind of context it is quite appropriate for others to say something like: "Put up or shut up. You state these principles, but what will you do about them yourselves?" I say with some pride that the New Democratic Party caucus has been true to the principles which helped create the movement of the CCF and the NDP. We have been faithful to our employees.

#### *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*

Our power as Members of Parliament employing them has been constrained by the conditions which the Government imposes upon us through the Board of Internal Economy in particular. However, New Democratic Party members have in fact gone the route of collective bargaining with our employees. I say with pride that we have done so as far back as 1977. Obviously it was done by my predecessors such as the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) and others who made the decision at that time to negotiate with a parliamentary association of support staff comprised of our assistants on the Hill, assistants who were in fact, in full legal fact, some of the Hill employees about whom I am talking. In effect we created a bargaining unit of support staff, and our caucus members took on the responsibility of being employers and regarded themselves explicitly as employers. That process has continued.

There have been several rounds of negotiations and elaboration of the collective agreement. As is inevitable in these circumstances, we have found that difficulties can arise at times, that difficult questions must be answered, that collective agreements need to be refined, and so on.

Since becoming a Member of Parliament in 1984 I have had some involvement with those matters. However, in all honesty and honour, I say on behalf of my colleagues and myself that we accepted the principle that collective bargaining should apply to our relations with our staff. We knew that we could not control what they earned. We knew that there were various constraints upon us as employers which put us in a difficult position at times, a position our staff members had to recognize when they dealt with us. However, where we could, we provided for them in every area.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** The grievance system.

**Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** We particularly provided for grievances. As a new Member of Parliament I discovered that particular matters had been carried through grievance to arbitration and had been resolved for the caucus. We sought by those means to deal within the framework of law, law refined and applied to our relations with our staff. We sought by those means to govern relations and to ensure that all the abuses of favouritism, nepotism, and so on—in other words, all abuses of management power which had been so common on the Hill—would not prevail in our offices.

I feel I have every right to say in all honour that the Government should recognize the same responsibility. We as Members of Parliament should appreciate our obligation to provide properly for the working conditions and the rights of our employees on the Hill. Therefore, I call upon Government Members, as well as my colleagues in the NDP and in the Liberal Party which put forward this motion, to join together in giving this Bill the hoist. I call upon the Government, which is responsible for bargaining matters, to elaborate an Act that will provide for the areas in which the Bill has failed. I call upon it to provide for proper classification and staffing and to ensure that grievances, if necessary, can be carried through to