

administration of the public service, to provide for its detailed examination in committee and it is the intention of the government that this practice should be followed with respect to the proposed collective bargaining legislation with which the resolution before us is concerned. With this object in view, a resolution to establish a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons has been placed on the order paper and this resolution will be called at an appropriate time.

Legislation dealing with the public service has traditionally been considered by parliament in a non-partisan atmosphere and it is my hope that this tradition will be maintained with respect to the measure contemplated in this resolution. The legislation to be placed before the house has been prepared with very great care but there is little doubt that suggestions to amend it will be made. Hon. members may be assured that the government will be prepared to consider very seriously any such suggestions for change and to support those which would result in improvements.

The legislation forecast in this resolution will rightly be regarded as a measure of very great significance in the history of the public service. For those who have customarily been identified as servants of the Crown, that is, servants of the people, and whose terms and conditions of employment have been determined by parliament or by the government of the day, this legislation will provide the right to participate in a process of joint determination of the terms and conditions of their employment. This is a process which is rooted in the concept of equity and equality between the government as employer and organizations representing its employees. Such a change will call for major adjustments in established processes and procedures and in the traditional attitude of all those who are concerned.

The legislation proposed by this resolution has been long in preparation—properly so, I believe, in view of its far-reaching implications and importance. The preparatory committee on collective bargaining under the distinguished chairmanship of a great Canadian public servant, Mr. Arnold Heeney, was established in August of 1963. This committee of senior officials was asked by the government to prepare for the introduction into the public service of an appropriate form of collective bargaining and arbitration and in doing so to examine the need for reforms

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in the system of classification and pay applying to civil servants and prevailing rate employees. Supported by a staff of very competent experts, the preparatory committee met regularly during a two-year period. In the course of its deliberations it received briefs from and consulted with interested employee organizations. It also consulted a number of distinguished persons from the universities, from industry and from provincial and municipal governments. Its report to the government, made in June of last year, was tabled almost immediately and is, of course, available to hon. members.

I should like to express the gratitude of the government, and I am sure members of this house will join with me in this expression of gratitude, to the chairman and to the members as well as to the staff of the committee for their effective and valuable services.

The proposals contained in the preparatory committee's report which relate to the reforms in the classification system were welcomed by the government, and after discussion with the Civil Service Commission they were approved. A program to convert all positions in the civil service to the new plan of classification was immediately undertaken by the Civil Service Commission. This program is now well advanced and is expected to be completed next year. The reforms in the system of classification are of great importance to the successful introduction of a system of collective bargaining, since it is intended that the groupings established by the classification system will constitute the basis of the collective bargaining relationship.

The report of the preparatory committee has been studied very carefully by the government since it was received and published. In the course of this study, the chairman and other members of the committee and its staff have continued to assist ministers. They will, of course, be available to assist the joint committee in its examination of the measure referred to in this resolution should the resolution itself obtain the approval of hon. members, as I hope it will.

The measure to be introduced varies in a few important respects from the proposals made by the preparatory committee on collective bargaining. The modifications which have been put forward by the government do not detract, however, from the fact that the proposed legislation conforms to the basic recommendations of the committee. I will make reference to the main modifications a little later as I refer to the more significant aspects of the resolution before us.