

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—BILLS**

[Translation]

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT ACT**MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Young (Beaches—Woodbine) that Bill C-225, an Act to amend the Public Service Employment Act (staff of Members of the House of Commons), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and on the amendment of Mr. Funk (p. 15352).

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to continue my remarks as I object to this NDP bill suggesting a double standard with regard to the hiring of Public Service employees.

[English]

The Public Service of Canada is presently embarking on an initiative called Public Service 2000. It has been criticized for not having taken into account the ideas of employees' representatives. Let us not make another mistake by allowing the Public Service Employment Act to be amended and benefits such as these extended without a thorough investigation of all the ramifications included in the bill by parliamentary committee.

In closing, I would like to add that in no way do I wish to downplay the importance of our own employees at work on the Hill or in our ridings. But let it not be at the expense of a dedicated professional and non-partisan Public Service. Surely there must be more fair and creative ways of dealing with the future of those who work so diligently for members of Parliament. The normal route to a position in the Public Service is a competition based on merit. We must not impose any impediments to this process by attempting to do something for one group. I feel we are neglecting the rights of others and at the same time insinuating that our former employees are not educated, professional and motivated enough to obtain employment in a fair competition.

Mr. Ricardo Lopez (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate which I feel is very important because it deals with our own staff, the staff of Members of the House of Commons. I wish first of all to congratulate the Hon. Member for Beaches—Woodbine for introducing Bill C-225.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the staff of the Members of the House of Commons are *de facto* public servants. The fact is that, more often than not, they are already hired and considered as such, except that they do not enjoy the same security as Public Service employees.

Mr. Speaker, we must be prompted by a sense of fairness and justice. Not so long ago, as members of the House, we granted ourselves some benefits, unquestionably well-deserved—and unquestionably also far from what we should get, when we compare our duties as parliamentarians with those of businessmen and professionals. It seems to me, therefore, that we deserve a better pay equity, and probably better job security and a better pension scheme as well.

Now, since we must decide that what is not good for us is not good either for our neighbour, and what is good for us is also good for our neighbour, we must realize that very often, if not always, the performance level of an hon. member depends to a large extent on the performance level of his or her personnel. Mr. Speaker, there is not a single member in this House who although well-intentioned could do a very good job, unless he or she has the dedicated support of a qualified and competent staff.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to my staff who so far have provided me with invaluable service. Very often, no mention is made of their contribution. As members of this House, we get all the benefits and honours, while our staff are really doing the job.

Consequently, if we really want to be fair and if we want to obtain the same treatment and security for our staff that we want for ourselves, it seems to me that Bill C-225 goes a long way toward correcting this inequity. If we think that our staff are already doing the same job as Public Service employees, it seems to me that they should be granted certain privileges or benefits.