

*Routine Proceedings*

They cannot negotiate classification or pensions and there are a whole number of prohibited areas under the Public Service Staff Relations Act which the unions cannot negotiate. That act was passed 25 years ago. We have had a successive parade of Liberal and Tory governments ever since, for at least 20 of those 25 years, which have wanted to amend this legislation.

The government introduced Public Service 2000. Many of the attitudes at the bargaining tables and the reason many of the components have not completed their bargaining is because the government has been stalling, waiting for this legislation. Now we find out that the government introduces legislation which does not bring Public Service 2000 into a mode to be ready to go into the 21st century. As my colleague from Nickel Belt says, we should be calling this PS 1000 because you have taken us back to the dark ages.

The minister referred to continued federal government leadership in dealing with inflationary public sector wage pressures as an essential part of his strategy; "and the actions of six provinces which have followed our lead since the budget show that it is the right course". Everybody in this House knows and Canadians all across the country know that the Minister of Finance called together the finance ministers, cut a deal, and agreed before the federal budget came in that they would attack the public sector workers from coast to coast to coast in this country. The two governments in this country which have made it absolutely clear that they will live up to their collective agreements have been the Bob Rae government in Ontario and the Tony Penikett NDP government in the Yukon.

The fact that six other governments in this country have followed suit with this misguided Tory government does not mean that this government is following the right course. It means that six other Liberal and Tory governments are on the wrong course.

I would like to go on through the minister's comments.

• (1640)

He talks about a renewal of the Public Service which he does not wish to see compromised. Does he mean renewal with a hammer?

He talks about bringing the human dimension into managing the Public Service. The human dimension is back to work legislation. He is saying: "If you do not settle, we will tell you what you get". Is that the human dimension that the minister is speaking about? If that is the human dimension that this government talks about then I am surprised that this government has not introduced legislation to abolish collective bargaining in the public sector.

That is in fact what the minister is doing. He is calling it another name. He is saying: "If the unions do not settle by September 16, it does not matter that they are in a free collective bargaining process". If they do not settle, the minister has said: "We will tell you what you get. We will suspend collective bargaining for this round".

I wonder about a minister who says he is concerned about the human dimension in managing the public sector in one paragraph and in the next paragraph talks about suspending collective bargaining in this round.

He goes on to say that 55 of the 80 bargaining units representing some 165,000 employees as of tomorrow will have collective agreements that have expired, in five cases for more than a year.

It is interesting that when this government wants to make progress and wants things to happen—my leader mentioned during Question Period that it wanted the grain handlers' industry back in operation, it wanted gun sales legislation to go through—anything can be done by this government. When it comes to collective bargaining, this government has set the pace for the country for stall tactics.

Fifty-five out of 80 bargaining units are living with expired collective agreements. Yet, the minister says that if they do not settle by September 16 he will tell them what they get. He goes on to say that by that time—meaning September—as many as 38 bargaining units and 170,000 Public Service employees will be in a legal position to strike.

"Legal" is the operative word here. The minister very clearly stated today that "legal" means nothing. The minister has said that he will recall Parliament immediately to legislate these workers back to work whether the strike is legal or illegal. If they do not have a collective agreement by September he will tell them what they are going to get.