

Treasury Board had actually participated in together with the unions.

Treasury Board did not like the results of the study so it tried to ignore them.

A human rights tribunal established by the Canadian Human Rights Commission rejected the government's attempt to bar these important findings. The government challenged the tribunal in the Federal Court and the Federal Court, the country's highest law-making body, ruled against this government.

The minister makes a lot of noise about the money it has already paid toward pay equity, but he fails to mention that he still owes his employees a billion dollars. This is not a gift. This is not a handout. This is money that these people have rightfully earned according to this Government of Canada's laws.

Federal pay equity legislation itself is not good enough. Since 1987 the Human Rights Commission has been suggesting amendments that are essential to bring this legislation in line with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Now the government has suggested that it could introduce new legislation to eliminate any retroactive pay equity claims prior to 1990. Instead of working to make the laws better, once again this government is working only to protect itself.

Again and again this minister and the government have evaded the issue. I will ask one more time, for the nurses who marched on Parliament Hill today, for the physical therapists and the librarians, and for all women who work in female-dominated jobs: Will this government finally agree to give these people the settlements that are their basic rights?

• (1810)

Mr. Dave Worthy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the wage gaps based on official statistics, the wage gap in the Public Service is 24 cents. This shows a gradual improvement and we are confident that the gap will continue to decline.

Furthermore, it is much smaller for newly hired and/or younger female employees, which implies that it will continue to decline in the years ahead.

It is to the credit of this government and its efforts in the field of equal pay that the wage gap is and has been declining.

Adjournment Debate

With regard to the pay research bureau, the closing of the bureau will have no significant impact on the wage gap or pay equity settlements. The bureau is mandated to collect information on rates of pay, employee earnings, conditions of employment and related practices prevailing both inside and outside Public Service.

We have other various measures that can be used to compare the salaries of men and women in the Public Service. Treasury Board as the employer believes that the comparisons of salary ratios and participation rates on the basis of occupational categories are more relevant and useful.

On pay equity in general, the government is undertaking a major reform of the job classification system to design and implement a universal job evaluation plan. This will provide a durable basis for maintaining equal pay for work of equal value. The government supports that principle and we are proud of the progress that we have made in this important field. Its implementation and maintenance will continue to be pursued.

FISHERIES

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, on February 20, 1992 I posed a number of questions to the Secretary of State for External Affairs with regard to the French foreign fleet that has been given a certain allocation of fish off what is known as the Sydney Bite. It was given 1,300 metric tons of cod in 1990 and in 1991 it was given 1,600 metric tons of fish.

I have now been informed that for 1992 the French foreign fleet will get 100 per cent of its last year's quota; namely, 1,600 metric tons.

I find it totally unacceptable that the Government of Canada would provide much needed fish stocks to foreign nations while at the same time jeopardizing Canadians who make their living from the sea.

I am very much aware of the fact that international agreements have been consummated by Canada and other countries. Surely as a nation which has respected the laws and traditions of NAFO, the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization, we have a right to exercise prudent judgment on behalf of not only our own fishermen on our fish stocks, but as to the consequential effects that has for the entire fish stock wherever that may be.