

Government Orders

or how short it will be there. In other words, it could easily be a week at least before anything is done legislatively. But he knows that his government could have a year ago easily made all of those people essential employees, when there would have been no cessation of grain shipping. He knows that this government could have recalled us a week earlier if it really wanted to get on with this, and chose not to do it. Where was his voice then?

I am sure he will go back and tell his constituents all those items so that they will know it was the Tories that held this up, not the opposition.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I have a brief question for the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan. I listened to his remarks and he made a lot of sense. But I would just like to ask him a very specific question.

In Toronto right now we have almost a total shutdown of our economy because of the Toronto Transit Commission strike. The question that I would like to ask him is this. What kind of advice will he be giving to the Premier of Ontario to settle this strike?

Mr. Stupich: Madam Speaker, the first moment that the Premier of Ontario asks me for my advice I will give it to him.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I have a brief comment with a question to my friend from Nanaimo—Cowichan. First of all, let me congratulate the members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, especially if I can in Victoria, for the tremendous solidarity they have shown through this strike and the tremendous victory they have really won with the public and I think eventually with the government on this. They went out on strike to call on the government to negotiate, not legislate, and that point, I think, is finally getting through. They won widespread public support and understanding for their cause and I think they are to be congratulated.

When I was on the picket line I found that many of them were there for the first time, they had never been

on strike before. They were terribly angry at this government in the way it was treating them and treating their fellow workers.

So I congratulate those who have been on strike. I think the government is finally getting the message that something has to be done and it is time to get back to the bargaining table.

My question to the member is really this, and goes to the human rights and pay equity issues in this. Many of the people who are on the line spoke to me about pay equity. This is a very, very important issue to those who are on the line. They have said to me that they want a message delivered to this Parliament that pay equity is important for the people in the Public Service of Canada who do such a tremendous job for the people of Canada. Could the member outline to us the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission on this and give us his comments on this aspect of this dispute?

Mr. Stupich: I recall seeing three conciliation board reports dealing with this issue, and one of them recommended an increase of some 6 per cent as being reasonable under the circumstances. It would be my hope that whatever amount of money is available, from whatever source, in the event that we get to that, that the money would be used in a way that would bring up the people at the bottom—and, of course, that is dealing mostly with the ones who are suffering from pay inequity. I would like to see that happen. Now, again, my advice has not been sought on this, but certainly, Madam Speaker, I think all of us would like to see more progress towards equal pay for work of equal value, and I would hope that the money would go primarily towards that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford on a point of order.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I am worried. I wonder if the speeches being made now are for the gallery. Has the government resigned? No minister is present. Could you tell me whether this country still has a government?