

see. We have another example of the lousy treatment that this federal government gives to members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada who do a job for each and every Canadian, and do a darn good job of it.

These workers wanted wage parity. The minister gets up in the House and, with a gleeful look on his face, in response to a question that I asked answered: "We have wage parity". We asked the minister to put it up front as a stand-alone issue. If you are going to say yes to wage parity, do not link it to any other outstanding issues in the contract.

What the government did basically was put wage parity up the other evening which, by the way, was supposed to be in a confidential meeting that the minister had with the union. He broke his confidence in the House the next day and then wonders why they have trouble listening and believing things that come out of this government. Then he smiles gleefully and says: "Well, we put it on the table. Wage parity is not an issue any more". It is an issue unless the government puts it up front and states that no matter what the resolution is on any of the other issues, it is going to give parity because it is right and it is the proper thing to do.

Now what they do is tie it up. They say: "We will give you wage parity", and tie it up in the straitjacket of other outstanding issues and push you in the direction of a long walk off a short pier. That is their idea of proper and fair collective bargaining. Well, it is not my idea and it is not the idea of most Canadians.

In conclusion, since my time is drawing to an end, but I could speak all day on this issue—

Mr. Crosby: Only if it makes sense.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): My hon. friend opposite says to make sense. I heard a great deal of good sense yesterday in the Halifax—Dartmouth area when the members of the labour union went over to see you in your office and spoke to you long distance. You should read the press reviews on that one.

I obviously have their hackles up on the other side.

In conclusion, I would pose the following questions. Why is this government now concerned at this late date with public safety when we know that the unions and the workers have provided proper safety measures? We have not had any emergency that has not been responded to

within 33 minutes by that responsible union and workers. I ask the question, is \$21,000 an unfair salary—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I really must interrupt the hon. member. I have been trying for quite a while to get his attention.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Montmorency—Orléans.

[*Translation*]

Mr. DeBlois: Madam Speaker, I would have two comments and a question.

Opposition members seem to be giving the public the impression that they are the only ones who talk to the unions. We understand them, we like them, but we are the bad guys—we are anti-union.

I think it is important to remind the public listening to us and my colleagues in the House that we have dialogued. I received people from the Coast Guard at my riding office in Quebec City. I talked with them for an hour. I appreciate the work they do and in that regard, I accept the description of their difficult job given by my colleague from Dartmouth, who almost tore his clothes. Yes, the people working on the boats have a difficult job. They staged a responsible strike and I am very glad, in a way, that the strike helped us better understand how hard their work is.

The second remark, Madam Speaker, is that we must get it right. I was a journalist in Quebec City for 20 years. I covered emergency legislation and usually, when the government in Quebec passed back-to-work laws, it imposed working conditions. I remember very well the former Social Affairs Minister, Mr. Forget, saying that if workers had to be legislated back, they should be given less than the last management offer on the table; otherwise the workers would always be tempted to go to Parliament thinking that they had nothing to lose and everything to gain since they could never get less than the last management offer. I find the bill before us very humane; it leaves it up to a third party to determine working conditions.

The question I would like to ask the hon. member for Dartmouth, who was indignant because we were slow in paying workers on the east and west coasts the same, is this: Why did the Liberal Government tolerate eastern workers earning less than western workers for so long?