

*Government Orders*

those of the general service workers, and then the government was supposed to go back and adjust that \$28 million payment to what it really should have been. That is the \$10 million the minister is talking about.

Now, he did mention that the government is in the process of having that \$10 million paid out to people. This is December, and it was August when the minister wrote to tell me that that was happening. I gather from comments today that it is still in the process, it has not happened.

The other thing that was supposed to happen is that the classifications were supposed to be changed so that from 1987 on, those workers would be treated the same and paid the same as the other workers doing the same kind of work. The government has a neat little trick here. It does not like to change classifications and it does not like to change pay scales. So what it does is say: "We will give you instead an equalization payment". That is such an abrogation of the whole concept of pay equity and equal pay for work of equal value.

The government says: "We are not prepared to give you the wage you are earning, nor do we recognize that in your classification and pay scale. We are prepared to give you a little token payment to bring you up to what your proper pay rate should be. You will go on getting this token payment, but you will never get the classification and the wage salary scale that you are entitled to".

If it seems that the hospital services workers are being a little tough on this, I ask the House to bear in mind that since they first started this action, since this inequity in pay first started getting their attention, many of them have seen their children grow from pre-schoolers to adolescents, deprived of an adequate income into their household that would have provided many of the things that the children and grandchildren of those of us in this House take for granted. It means quite simply that their children have done without because this pay equity issue has not been settled.

Again, it is not a minor matter. Their salaries were from 10 to 40 per cent behind those of people doing exactly the same work. A worker getting up on a ladder to clean the ceilings or the walls in the Rideau vets' home out on Smyth Road could be getting as much as 40 per cent less than a worker performing exactly the same

work down at 240 Sparks Street. Now, that is not fair in anybody's books.

At the salaries these people are earning, the average adjustment should be \$3,000 a year. At our salaries, and certainly at the salary of ministers, that might be an extra little bit of disposable income, an extra little holiday. But for these people, it is money that is needed for the essentials of life.

I cannot help but feel that there is deliberate manipulation here. The minister said in his answer to a question on this issue a few days ago that it is not really a female dominated group. That is true. The balance is shifting. It is evening out. I cannot help wondering if there is some attempt here to wait them out, and whether there is some deliberate manipulation to move that group toward a group that is 50-50 male-female and therefore no longer considered a pay equity issue.

The fact is the Human Rights Commission determined it is a pay equity issue. It has reaffirmed that decision and yet this government was back before the Human Rights Tribunal just on November 8, arguing that the Human Rights Tribunal had no jurisdiction in this matter. That is nonsense.

I want to close by saying that these workers in all cases have acted responsibly throughout this strike. The ships' crews workers have, in all cases, provided emergency rescue services any time the need existed. They have not once failed to meet the normal response time, to put down their pickets, to go out to sea to save lives or to prevent a disaster when that was needed. They missed once by three minutes. Sorry, they were once 33 minutes instead of 30 minutes because of high waves that were so bad that they eventually had to put back.

The hospital services workers offered to continue to provide emergency services in the veterans' homes and in the national defence hospitals but the government was not able to reach an agreement with them, I suspect because there was no incentive. They thought they could provide these services with the military and with volunteers. It just is not working, Madam Speaker.

I would like to quickly summarize the strike-breaking techniques that have been used and the attempts to try to get around the law that have delayed negotiations. Also, there were attempts to designate 100 per cent of each of these groups so they could not go on strike and could not use the ability to withdraw their services. The