

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SERVICE****NAVAL DOCKYARD WORKERS—WAGES PAID ON EAST AND WEST COASTS**

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the President of the Treasury Board, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Ship repair workers in the naval dockyard in Halifax are paid \$3.50 an hour less than similar workers in Esquimalt, British Columbia. Those workers are all federal civil servants. They all do exactly the same work.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister explain to the House, to the workers, and to Canadians, why federal employees in one part of the country are paid less than workers in another part of the country when they are doing exactly the same work?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, without getting into the details of the issue, I would suspect that the collective bargaining process would have something to do with this.

I will take this matter under advisement and return to the Hon. Member with a fuller response.

**PAY OF HALIFAX DOCKYARD WORKERS**

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is correct, this is a matter that is a bone of contention in collective bargaining in the Halifax unit.

First, the workers in the Halifax dockyard have been without a contract now for one year. Because their work is essential they are not allowed to strike.

Why does the Prime Minister not do what is fair and honest to the workers in the Halifax dockyards and remove this regional discrimination in the hourly rate of pay, and immediately settle the contract in Halifax by giving the workers pay equity per hour with the workers in British Columbia?

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)):** Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to my hon. friend that it is government policy, as an employer, to reflect the current rates in that particular region. When viewed in the context of the rates that are paid in the Halifax region, those rates are reasonable. That is the point of view that the Government takes.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Do you do it for MPs?

**Mr. Lewis:** In terms of the Halifax shipyard industry, and this was very well brought out by my hon. friend on the Government side earlier today, and I am surprised my hon. friend did not listen to his comments—

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Do you do it for MPs?

**Mr. Lewis:** No. We are going to stay with that policy.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** That is shameful.

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT****IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING PROGRAM FOR OLDER WORKERS**

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montréal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. For two years the Minister of Labour in this Government has been boasting he was going to negotiate with provincial governments an adjustment program for older workers. As we know, such a program was put in place under the Liberal Government to meet the needs of people 55 and older who were affected by plant closures, such as the ones that are now happening in the Eastern townships and also in Eastern Montreal at the Vickers plants. For two years, the Minister has been stating he is negotiating with provincial governments. Can the Minister tell us now whether the Quebec Government, the Ontario Government, the governments in western and Atlantic Canada signed an agreement with the Canadian Government to set up an adjustment program for older workers, so that our working men and women aged 50, 55 or over can benefit from a program that is really efficient and compassionate?

**Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, as I said to the Hon. Member and to this House on several occasions, the program in place under the previous Government only covered four industries—it would not have covered Vickers employees for instance, as suggested by the Hon. Member, nor those of the company the Hon. Member for Shefford referred to earlier.

Mr. Speaker, the program is indeed in the final negotiating stages and I expect to be in a position to make an announcement very soon.

**REQUEST FOR RETENTION OF FORMER PROGRAM**

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I will believe the Minister again. For two and a half years, he has been telling me that he would make some announcements soon. But they have not been forthcoming; we still do not have any answer. Does the Minister not believe that it would be preferable to maintain the old program and to extend it to the people of eastern Montreal and Sherbrooke? It is an internal matter for the federal Government to decide. He does not have to wait for someone else. So would the Minister be prepared to implement the former program immediately? Once agreements have been reached in the provinces, then he can change them. It would seem more humane to me, because the guys from Vickers have been waiting for a year and a half . . . when they have to pay for their groceries, the cashier does not tell them that he will wait until the Minister of Labour has negotiated with Quebec; he wants to be paid right away, in cash. Why delay such a decision?

**Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, since the former Liberal program was to end in 1985, and was discriminatory, we decided it would be better to negotiate a new non-discriminatory program for workers 55 and over, and I should be able to make an announcement very soon, Mr. Speaker.