

the other thorn on the side of the government, the Cogger affair.

Ministers of this House have contradicted each other no less than three times, finally concluding that Senator Cogger had not worked for the Federal Business Development Bank since his appointment to the Senate and that the senator himself in the other place actually insinuated such as well.

Given that Mr. Mark Rosenstein, a senior partner in the law firm of Lapointe Rosenstein, has now confirmed through a reporter for *The Globe and Mail* on November 13 that Senator Cogger had worked for the Federal Business Development Bank before and during his tenure as a member of the Senate, how can the minister reconcile the statement of Mr. Mark Rosenstein with the ones made by himself and by his colleague, the Minister of State for Small Businesses?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP is currently undertaking an investigation into this matter.

**Mr. Robichaud:** How about some facts?

**Mr. Andre:** The other place is undertaking an investigation of this matter.

I have no ability nor any desire to look into the internal operations of the law firm of Lapointe Rosenstein. I am sure the hon. member would agree, if he thinks about it and if it is truth in getting to the bottom of this issue that he is after, that we would be well advised rather than abusing bits and pieces of evidence here and there as the occasion arises to let the RCMP investigation take its course, let the Senate investigation take its course, and in the end we will all know the true situation in a more factual, fair and open fashion.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, whether or not there is an RCMP investigation does not mean that this minister is no longer responsible for the administration of his own department. I want to ask him a supplementary question.

[*Translation*]

Is the Minister now prepared to tell us and repeat to us what he said on November 1 in the House of Commons:

I am convinced, on the information it (the Bank) has provided, that its behaviour is unassailable.

### Oral Questions

Is the Minister still of the opinion that the behaviour of the Federal Business Development Bank is unassailable in the way it awards contracts or makes loans? Is he still ready to say that today?

[*English*]

**Mr. Andre:** Mr. Speaker, of course I am ready to stand by the information given to me by the FBDB.

The hon. member seems more interested in talking to his neighbour than hearing this. He scored his political points. I guess that takes care of it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

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### PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board and it concerns his department's policy of wage discrimination which has forced nearly 1,300 men and women employed as ship's crews on the east coast out on the picket line.

The government talks a good game of pay equity, but in the case of east coast ships' crews Treasury Board has steadfastly refused to conclude a contract that would pay these workers the same wage as their west coast counterparts for doing exactly the same job.

My question is this: Will the minister affirm his support for the principle of pay equity and, if so, is he now prepared to order his negotiators to close that wage gap not in the fourth year of a new contract but immediately upon signing of a new contract?

• (1450)

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, to answer my hon. colleague, I can tell him that officials of the Treasury Board have been instructed to resume negotiations as soon as we have an indication from the union that meaningful discussions can get under way.

That has been my policy all along. It is an open door policy where we are willing to sit at the table and iron out these difficulties as they come up. We would certainly welcome the union coming back to the table as soon as possible.

**Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, paying a person less based on their gender or colour is unacceptable to Canadians. It should be unacceptable to this government because what the government has been doing is paying people according to where they live in