

Government Orders

through, it will still be the end of next week before it is through. They have been out on strike for four and a half weeks. The government will be sending back to work employees who have been out on strike for an extended period of time. It is going to be doing so without giving them a single point of win for their effort. It is going to therefore end up with some very bitter, unhappy employees.

The government has said over and over again in this House that it is ready to concede pay equity, that it is ready to concede regional equity. I urge the government to consider including in this back-to-work bill, if it persists with this legislation, an agreement and understanding that the conciliation boards are to proceed from that principle, that the government acknowledges that the settlement must include pay equity and must include regional equity in this country.

Third, underlying this bill there is a very serious issue of principle and public policy. This country, through various governments, is committed to free collective bargaining. We stand in this House and in other places and applaud the Poles when they go out on the streets and win free collective bargaining. Free collective bargaining is an important principle and it is important public policy. There is no excuse possible, by the government simply raising a few individual cases, to force all of these workers to give up this fundamental democratic right. I urge the government to reconsider this iniquitous bill.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): A short answer from the Minister.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Madam Speaker, yes, very briefly.

[*English*]

I do not have any time to answer the question. The member said that we will face very bitter, unhappy people. But I am looking after 26 million very unhappy Canadians. I agree with the principles that the member put forward.

But there is another principle in terms of the free collective bargaining. When we jeopardize the economy and thousands of Canadian jobs, the government has to take responsibility. That is what we do. My friend is from Victoria and we are different in terms of the way we manage things. They do not face the same ultimatums

we have here. We know that the ice is getting thicker and thicker and we have to face that reality. We do not have two or three weeks. We have days. That is why I ask my friend to support the bill, to give us the possibility of bringing people to the table and find an agreement. That is what we want.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Resuming debate. The hon. member from Halifax.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I am desolate that the hon. minister is leaving. I wish he might wait to hear one comment. Is he aware that, indeed, two Russian ships have cleared the Seaway today, because of their ice-hardened abilities, just like the Canadian ships that he claims are tied up and making the populous unhappy and uncomfortable?

Indeed, the Canadian ships have the ice-hardened capacity as well and will manage to get out of the Seaway in these conditions this week or next week. So the time that he considers so crucial to the economy of this country is, perhaps, not as crucial as the hon. minister has led us to believe. The Russians did it. I would imagine that Canadian ships and Canadian seamen can do the same thing.

But that is typical of this government. Across this country people are confused, dumbfounded and bewildered. They are puzzled at the treatment they get. They got promises from the government during the election campaign of 1988 that are broken one by one by one, ten by ten by ten, fifty by fifty by fifty—promises to keep VIA Rail, promises not to tamper with UI and promises of national day care. And what do we get? Instead of VIA Rail, instead of a national dream, we receive a national nightmare. Instead of a just and equitable UI program, we receive a mangled and bloodied program that helps few. Instead of a national day care system, the government was kind enough to offer us a new 9 per cent goods and services tax. And what are Canadians supposed to believe from these people?

Today's events with ships' crews and hospital service workers are just another case in point of how this government has perfected the art of speaking out of both sides of its mouth.

Here we have a situation whereby the government has and is demonstrating absolutely no regard for civil liberties and individual rights. And surprising as it is, this noble government has turned its back on the great