

Government Orders

Mr. Stupich: It is the same as it was. It is still costing \$1.2 billion. A one-eighth reduction in that amount of money would provide enough to give the civil servants that increase. That is a lot of money to you and I as individuals, a lot of money to Canadians as individuals or as groups.

• (1610)

But to say that incurring expenditures of \$150 million when the minister himself argues that we should be moving toward pay equity, when the Prime Minister said that the funds are available, have been set aside to achieve pay equity, a solemn promise during the election campaign—

An hon. member: During the throne speech too.

Mr. Stupich: During the throne speech as well, I am reminded. Is that price too high? Is that the price that is going to destroy Canada economically? If that is the case, then we are in a bad way. It is not because we have been in office. The Tories have been in office and have had complete control for the last seven years. If in that period they have brought us to that sad state of affairs, then they have a lot to answer for.

I do not believe it is that bad. I do not believe even the Tories could have us in that bad a position in seven years, as much as they might try. And that is another point. Why are we fighting this recession? Why are we asking the lowest paid people in the Public Service to contribute? We are not asking others to contribute.

There was a story in *The Toronto Star* that I used the other day where the recession is the headline: "The recession does not hurt bosses' pay." A survey shows Toronto executive raises averaged 7.7 per cent in 1990. That is the increase in pay. It was less than they expected, but then the bonuses, of course, made up for it to some extent. Bonuses were targeted last year at an average 46 per cent on a base salary of \$131,200. The bonus last year for them was only \$44,608 each. Why not ask them to contribute to the recession? It is only the ones we can get at so easily, the ones at the bottom.

We have to defeat this legislation if it comes to a vote, but I hope, Madam Speaker, that will not happen. I hope the legislation will be withdrawn, that another way out of this will be found, and all Canadians will be the better off for it.

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Madam Speaker, it was most interesting to hear the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan reflect on his position and that of his party with respect to the bill and the legislation that is before us today.

I am going to put a very simple question to my colleague in the House. I just received from a little weekly newspaper in my district up in the Interlake of Manitoba over my fax machine a paper article about the effects the strike is having on the grain farmer. The headline says: "Grain plugs elevators". Just a little article in today's paper said:

Elevator managers Frank Fiarchuk in Arborg and Guy Bernier at Fisher Branch said operations were at a standstill with little to do other than field calls from impatient farmers wanting to know when they could bring grain in.

"There is not much sympathy around here for the civil servants," said Bernier, referring to the nation-wide strike by members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, protesting a zero per cent increase in their salaries.

"While farmers have had to take a 30 per cent cut, the civil servants are being asked to have their incomes frozen once in their lifetime. Producers are saying that the government had better legislate them back to work—

One thousand farmers at a meeting in Manitoba suggested this is the same situation.

These are ordinary Canadians who are trying to make a livelihood, trying to just make a living. In the fall they are to deliver their grain. He knows how seriously the markets have gone down in value for grain farmers. The question I ask: are these producers not within their rights to demand that these people return to work in the way we are going to legislate them back? Perhaps at some other given time we could maybe bring back a higher return on their wages. Nobody likes strikes. I do not like this strike. I do not think anybody in this room likes to see this happen.

I can recall, as can members opposite, that I was a farmer when the Liberal administration brought in the six and five per cent. You remember that too. I was absolutely shocked when they broke their own rules. The question then is: Here is some grassroots representation suggesting that the government does, in fact, legislate these people back to work, and do you not accept that they have an important cause to be concerned about as well?

Mr. Stupich: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question as it gives me an opportunity to add a little to what I said. I would just like to say to the member that now he has participated in the debate in this House, now that he knows we are debating a motion that says this will come to a head next Monday—which is five days from now—then the bill will go to the Senate. Who knows how long