

*Government Orders*

to find other means to have its way with these individuals. So what is done? The government comes in.

Many times in this House since the strike began three weeks ago, questions have been raised about safety, because we were concerned. There were 1,700 fishing boats. Lobster season was opening on the east coast. We said in this House: "We are concerned about the strike. We are concerned that there is a safety issue". We were repeatedly told in this House that there was no safety issue regarding this strike. Two days ago the Minister of Transport stood in his place and said: "They should all go to the same briefing meeting in the morning, then they would not get themselves into so much trouble". As reported in *Hansard* at page 6505 in response to a question from my hon. colleague for Ottawa West, the Minister of Transport stated:

There is nothing true in the allegations that there is a problem of safety on the St. Lawrence River.

The next day we hear of strike-breaking legislation coming into this place. What does the government use as a reason for this legislation? Safety. There is supposed to be a big problem.

• (1600)

I submit to you, Madam Speaker, that if the government did not see a problem with 1,700 fishing boats on the east coast, the only reason I can see that it finds a problem now is that a few of its friends along the St. Lawrence Seaway, big businesses, are tweaking their Tory friends and saying: "Get rid of this strike now. We don't care what you have to do". The government has itself backed into a corner. It does not want to settle with these workers. What it is going to do is legislate them back to work; use a sledge-hammer approach to collective bargaining. The government should be ashamed of itself.

Let's look at what these workers want. For two years they have been without a contract. They said right off the bat that they wanted this \$1,800 wage gap eliminated. That is in keeping with the policy of this government, a policy that it refuses to put into effect. Instead of getting \$19,000 for that terribly difficult, dangerous job, they were going to get \$1,800 more for that terribly difficult,

dangerous job. That doesn't change the working conditions.

The other thing that these workers wanted was to see some shift differentials put in. My goodness, they go off for three months at a time. Treasury Board had great difficulty with the semantics of all this. They said that the workers were not really on a shift. They work from six to six or six to six, but that is not really a shift, that is a watch and as a watch they did not have anything to deal with that and they could not be given a watch differential because it is not in the guide book. The workers said: "Fine, we will get you out of that pickle".

On Department of National Defence vessels, the civilian employees get sea duty. They do not get paid very well either, \$170 to \$270 a month while they are at sea. That is not very much to ask, that is reasonable. They said: "We want sea duty. We do not want \$500 a month, we want \$177 a month". The government said it could not give them that. The workers said: "When we are away from our spouses and our families, we think it is reasonable to ask in the agreement to be allowed to call home, ship-to-shore, at the expense of the employer, the Government of Canada and make a five-minute call". The government said it could not possibly do that. Perhaps these workers will get homesick, perhaps they will find out what a terrible job it is and what a terrible employer they really have and they will want to go back to shore.

These are the types of things that these workers are looking for and this government says that they are unreasonable. The minister opposite stands up, and he would have you believe that these people are the scourge of the earth, that they are trying to milk the federal treasury for every single penny they can get. He loves to get up and, with his own mathematics, combine certain parts of a benefit package and certain parts of a wage package and come up with: "They want 17 per cent". I have talked to the unions and I believe what they are telling me because they are honest hard-working individuals. Their position has been misrepresented constantly by this government as this debate has gone on.

What do we do at this point? The government was very close to a settlement. It bungled it on the designations. Its bad faith bargaining was in full public view for all to