

You would think a wise employer would say, "I had better get serious about this bargaining business and find out what it is they really want and how we can sit down and reach a settlement with them so they will be back to work. We will then not have a disruption of essential services or a disruption of grain shipments. We will not have an undermining of international confidence in the St. Lawrence Seaway. I would think that that is important as we are trying to build up our trade and signing new export wheat deals with Russia and other countries. I think it is kind of important that the reliability of the Seaway be well known internationally and that the international companies and the international markets know they can trust us". Apparently this is not important to the government. Instead of spending June, July, August and September when a settlement of this could have been reached, they chose to again go off to the courts at great cost to the taxpayers of Canada. I am sure you can imagine how these trips back and forth to the courts would poison the atmosphere for negotiations.

Is it any wonder that in October, when a conciliation board was finally appointed to try to reach agreement between these two parties it could not reach agreement? It just said, "The two sides are too far apart. There is no possibility of a settlement here." That is one part of the story. That is the part of the story that applies to both of these groups and, I must say, it also applies to a third group. Remember the welfare program workers, the parole officers inside our prisons, the training officers inside our prisons? They were on strike, too. They were on strike for very much the same reasons. The government had dragged them back and forth through the courts instead of sitting down at the bargaining table and negotiating in good faith.

The other side of the story is the hospital service workers. Although it will not do any good in this debate, because we know that the government has every intention of forcing this legislation through and that there are no open minds, open hearts or open ears even, I suspect, on the other side of the House. This issue of pay equity for the hospital service workers has been around for a long time. Going back to last spring I have had substantial correspondence with the President of Treasury Board on this problem.

The issue really is that people who are doing identical work are being paid different amounts of money, and

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substantially different amounts of money. That is contrary to the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. It is contrary to the pay equity policy that this government enforces on private sector employers and it is not a matter of debate. Or is it? It has been to the Human Rights Tribunal. It has been decided that, in fact, one group of workers called "hospital service workers" do the same work as another group of workers called "general service workers" but they do not get paid the same. One of the reasons they do not get paid the same is because it is largely a female group.

That is a fundamental problem of pay equity. It is why, in the government, women get paid 67 cents for every dollar a man earns. It is why women do not get into senior management positions at the same rate as men do. It is why, after 10 years, women are still not getting promoted in the scientific and professional categories. They are still at exactly the same state as they were at in 1976 despite policies, laws, and stated good intentions from the other side of the House. That is a reality for women. They do not get paid as much for the work they do.

They pay the same price for a loaf of bread. They pay the same price for a car. They pay more for a haircut. But, for the basic necessities of life they pay the same price as men but they do not earn as much to pay for them. So, they do without things more than the population, in general, does.

I wrote the President of Treasury Board about this first in July of 1989. It is over two years since the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled this way. What has been done to give these people the classifications and the wages they deserve? He wrote back and told me all the bureaucratic hoops that this has been going through for two years. It was, I must say, a very informative and helpful letter that helped me understand why bureaucracies do not always get things done that are fair and just and right.

• (1620)

I wrote back and said: "It does not seem fair to me that in the time these people have been trying to seek justice, many of their children have grown from pre-schoolers to adolescents. They have done without and they have been deprived of many of those things and many of those comforts that children should have as they are growing