

Ways and Means

I think the point the hon. member is raising is that if this discussion continues he might lose out on that hour during which the motion might be discussed. The suggestion now is to provide that hour and make sure it is not lost. I think we would be willing to co-operate on the distinct understanding, then, that he might go on not later than nine o'clock, so that he might have a full hour, from eight to nine or nine to ten.

Mr. Churchill: I feel in a very co-operative mood and I hoped the hon. member for Essex East would be in the same frame of mind. Despite the forcefulness of his suggestion, upon which I do not want to comment, we are content to proceed now as I have suggested and take the motion for the production of papers at nine o'clock.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Perhaps the Minister of Justice will give us the opinion and save all this time.

The Chairman: Is it agreed that the committee follow this procedure?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Knowles: I thank the minister for his offer to get all of the statistics and detailed information that are called for by my inquiries. I hope that he will have it by the time we come back on January 21. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, although we usually like to have things produced in this house first rather than in the newspapers, if the hon. gentleman can give this kind of information to the civil service organizations even before we come back, this would be quite satisfactory to all of us. I believe that the civil service organizations are asking for even more, and are asking for the recommendations that the pay research bureau made. In fact, they are asking for some consistency in the matter of letting them have these reports.

In this general field, Mr. Chairman, there are two other things I want to say, and I might have another question after that. The first is that, no matter what explanation the minister gives, no matter what assurance there may be that matters will be dealt with at some future date, I think it is most unfortunate that a number of these groups in the lowest categories had to be missed. I think it is particularly unfortunate that postal employees, along with those of customs and immigration, were left out.

Mr. Nowlan: My hon. friend knows, I am sure, that they were not left out. They were not included in the review which had taken place, but they are being reviewed now in the next class. It is not the omission of them, but it is a matter of the review not being completed.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Mr. Knowles: I think I appreciate the semantics, but being left out or not being included are really the same thing. Either way, they did not get the increase now when other public servants are getting the increase. I realize that it is going to be retroactive, but I say it is most unfortunate that some of these groups that needed it most have to wait so much longer. In view of the fact that this whole question of the pay freeze was put on on June 24, in view of the fact that there were representations made by various civil service organizations and the trade unions involved and representations on the floor of this house, it seems to me it would have been possible to have all the reviews made so that when the announcement finally was made on December 10 it would have covered all groups.

All I can plead now is that the minister do his best to speed up the completion of this job, the adjusting of the wages and salaries of all public servants. The other comment I wish to make, Mr. Chairman, is to remind the minister that the new machinery, the so-called consultation, really is not working very well. It is not helping the morale of civil servants. I would ask the government to give very serious consideration to the request made by civil service organizations all across the country for full collective bargaining rights for the organizations chosen by public service employees. I congratulate the organizations themselves on having come, even more now than they had some time ago, to the realization that this is necessary. I think they did right in accepting in good faith the proposals for consultations that were made when the last amendments to the Civil Service Act were made. They have found, through experience, that that arrangement is not good enough and they are now asking for the same right that many other employees in Canada have, in many other sectors of our economy, full collective bargaining. I urge this government to give serious consideration to this important request being made by the civil service organizations.

Mr. Chevrier: There is just one question I should like to ask the minister. It has to do with the \$50 million item which was in group "A" of the supplementary estimates under vote 213A, the interim payment for the royal commission on railway matters. I cannot see it here, and I understand it has been taken out. Can the minister tell us why?

Mr. Nowlan: My hon. friend who prepared the original estimates says that when we revised the estimates it was taken into the main estimates.