

on this. That is certainly not the way the Official Opposition feels about it.

Instead of the careful and due consideration that the Standing Orders require them to give to the bill, government members said that if we wanted to suggest these for consideration they would agree that they be considered and that the appropriate wording would be developed by the government.

We saw yesterday how much consideration they got. The fact is that these amendments were put one by one for discussion by the committee. In every case there was agreement that they would be considered, that an appropriate wording would be worked out, that members such as myself from the opposition on that legislative committee would then have the opportunity to move those amendments in the House, and that perhaps by then the officials of the Treasury Board, of Transport Canada and of the Justice Department, having had due opportunity to consider those amendments, might in fact be prepared to support them.

My hon. colleague across the aisle has suggested that something quite different happened at that legislative committee, but we did have an agreement—and it is recorded in the minutes—on each and every one of those motions. I know because either myself or my colleague from Dartmouth put forward each and every one of those motions for consideration. We did have an agreement that they would be considered and that the wording would be seriously reviewed by the government as to whether they could be incorporated into the legislation. The parliamentary secretary himself made it quite clear that there was no real and serious objection to these amendments.

We obviously have seen that those assurances to the opposition members of the legislative committee really were not taken seriously by the government members of the committee. If they were, we would have had quite a different outcome yesterday afternoon on the amendments and we would have had quite a different bill before us today.

I have dealt with some of the points made by my colleague opposite.

I think it is fairly important in this House that we all try to reflect as fairly and as openly as we can what

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discussions really have taken place at various times, and not in any way to have a convenient lapse of memory so that we can place our colleagues in an undesirable situation or attempt to place them in an undesirable situation simply to save our own necks.

I want to go now to the words of the Minister of Justice, the hon. government House leader. I took his comments of Monday, December 11, at approximately 11.20 a.m., quite personally because I have been involved in the issues related to this strike since last April, shortly after entering the House of Commons, as Public Service employment critic for the Official Opposition.

The hon. Minister of Justice demanded to know what a member from Ottawa could possibly know about the situation on the east coast, about the situation on the Seaway, about the situation in veterans' homes and hospitals across the country. He demanded to know how the Liberal opposition could possibly be opposing this bill when it should understand, if it had any responsibility at all, how important this bill was.

The member for Ottawa West knows because she listens, something this government does not do. This government could well learn a lesson about listening. This government could well learn a lesson about listening to Canadians when it comes to the punitive effect something like the goods and services tax would have.

I cannot believe that I heard the Prime Minister of Canada stand up in this House today and say that it is okay if well over 1,000 fish plant workers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and throughout Atlantic Canada are without jobs because we are giving them better unemployment insurance. They do not want unemployment insurance; they want jobs. They want this government to do something to stop its destruction of the fishing industry, its destruction of their livelihood, and its destruction of their very communities. They do not want better unemployment insurance because unemployment insurance is a pitifully low level of income to live on. These people want to live with dignity and they want to know that their government is doing something to save Atlantic Canada from being lopped off from the prosperity that a good part of Canada enjoys and set adrift in the Atlantic Ocean. The government could be listening to that.