

Has the minister been able to approach her colleagues and receive permission to change the regulations under the Family Allowances Act and also the child tax credit section of the Income Tax Act that ends discrimination against orphaned children in Canada? In other words, has she had the time to put forward the regulations?

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** I am afraid not, Madam Speaker. I, too, have been involved for weeks now—every evening and even during the week—with the referendum campaign. I am sorry, but I have not yet had a chance since I took office on March 3 to proceed with a possible correction of the Family Allowances Act. However, I am aware of the problem and will give it my attention as soon as possible.

**Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain):** Madam Speaker, in view of the injustice to orphaned children over the last number of years, would the minister attempt to bring in, with her colleagues, some sort of retroactive period at least back to the time of the introduction of the child tax credit under the Income Tax Act?

**Mrs. Bégin:** I hope to bring in that recommendation when we study the question with the hope of resolution.

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#### PUBLIC SERVICE

##### COST OF LIVING INCREASE LESS THAN RISE IN INFLATION

**Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake):** Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board. I am sure that in keeping with the non-partisan policy of maintaining a strong, united Canada, the minister is aware that at present the Treasury Board is negotiating with about 65,000 employees in four different groups at the bottom of the public employee pay scale, a large majority of them being women, and about 75 per cent of them in the clerk's area. They are earning less than \$10,000 a year.

Can the minister tell the House why they were offered increases of only 5 per cent a year on a two-year term contract, when inflation is running at nearly 10 per cent, members of Parliament received on the first of this year 7 per cent increases, and corporate profits are running at over 50 per cent in the first quarter of this year?

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board):** Madam Speaker, the philosophy of the employer—the Government of Canada, through the Treasury Board—is to establish comparability in all these areas with the private sector.

In the case in point, negotiating procedures are under way, there is a mechanism established, and I am confident that a satisfactory settlement will be reached eventually and that the employees will be treated properly.

#### Oral Questions

**Mr. Anguish:** Madam Speaker, I am sure the minister is aware that unless the Treasury Board changes its policy immediately, the government will be facing a very important and crucial strike.

Can the minister give us an assurance that the current stand of the Treasury Board will change, so that many employees who are living on incomes below the poverty line will at least be offered increases comparable to those which members of Parliament have received or, preferably, up to at least 9.1 per cent which was the increase in the consumer price index in 1979?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Johnston:** Madam Speaker, in my first answer I expressed the philosophy which guides these negotiations. At the moment, as I understand it, the designated procedure is progressing, and eventually, I presume, the conciliation board will be appointed. I think that in the process of collective bargaining we have a responsibility not only to the government but also to the employees to let the negotiating procedure, the collective bargaining process, run its course.

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● (1450)

[Translation]

#### NATIONAL UNITY

##### QUEBEC REFERENDUM—SUPPORT OF PROVINCES FOR "NO" VOTE

**Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants):** Madam Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Acting Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister is attending an important meeting this evening in Montreal, would the Acting Prime Minister convey to him the very best wishes of other Canadians, that is, the best wishes of hon. members from other provinces of Canada who support him fully in saying No to the referendum?

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the interest he and his colleagues of all parties in the House are showing in the cause of the No in the Quebec referendum campaign. I thank him for the show of solidarity he has just expressed and I assure him that I shall be only too happy to convey those wishes to the right hon. Prime Minister who, I am sure, will want to publicize them even more. The hon. member can rest assured that his comments are very much appreciated. I want to take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to thank the House leaders of both opposition parties who, since the beginning of the referendum campaign, have been flexible to the point of allowing the government to fulfil its obligations in governing Canada and hon. members and ministers, specially those from Quebec, to go to that province and work for the cause of Canadian unity.