

*Public Sector Compensation Restraint Act*

minister responsible for the status of women should have been invited to attend before the committee to explain some of the difficulties with this bill, but the Liberal majority on the committee would not permit it.

Mr. Ian Sinclair, head of the private sector six and five community, who is president of Canadian Pacific, has now had his workers affected by these provisions with the good graces of the government. Those workers are now on a mandatory program of 6 per cent and 5 per cent, with the blessings of the government. The Liberal government has paid off Mr. Sinclair quite royally. He is now preaching the gospel of this crusade. He is receiving the attention of the press as he explains why everyone should have a voluntary 6 and 5 program. Immediately after Mr. Sinclair endorsed that program, the government placed CP workers under the mandatory provisions of this bill. This bill is entitled "An act respecting compensation in the public sector of Canada". The government has now included the private sector and Mr. Sinclair has benefited from it as a result.

• (1240)

We believe that that person who met with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston), and a number of their cabinet colleagues, to convince them that this program, which is necessary in his eyes and to his pocketbook, will perform a great public service in relation to the six and five rule. That person should have been invited to speak to the committee to explain why the six and five program would work, why all the private sector companies would allow it to work and how they would participate. But again, the Liberal majority defeated the motion by the New Democratic Party to have Mr. Sinclair appear before the committee.

Bell Canada has said that it will not go along with restricting its prices to 6 per cent and 5 per cent, although it has already restricted the wages of its middle management workers. If Bell Canada is to restrict its wages but refuses to restrict its prices and instead asks for a 25 per cent increase in the telephone rates in the province where it operates, its president, Mr. de Grandpré, who earns \$650,000 a year, should appear before the committee to explain why he was quoted as saying he wanted mandatory wage controls for the public sector after meeting with the Prime Minister. He does not want price controls for his own company, but he wants to be able to lower the wages of his own employees. However, he does not want to lower his own wage of \$650,000 a year. Again, the Liberal majority on that committee would not allow such witnesses to appear. I will not go through the list. I did mention earlier that I moved motions relating to ten different groups, including the Public Service Commission, the Business Council on National Issues, which of course took credit for suggesting this program to the government, the Letter Carriers Union of Canada, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the National Union of Provincial Government Employees. We requested that all those groups be asked to appear, both those in business and in labour, to explain their positions.

It is interesting that the government has suggested that this program would set guidelines for the crusade, that the government would put in wage controls on the public sector, that it wanted the provinces and the private sector to follow suit, and wanted the unions to accept them, but would not even let the representatives of the National Union of Provincial Government Employees come forward to discuss the bill. If this bill is really more than a PR program, as the government would call it, and if it is really the hallmark of the crusade, as the President of the Treasury Board calls it, and if it is to be followed in other sectors of Canada, then we should have been allowed to hear from the representatives of the groups which are supposed to join in, if not with enthusiasm, at least with co-operation.

We will not be voting for the bill. We suggested that a number of clauses be deleted from the bill. We have also proposed amendments to improve the bill, about which I will be speaking later. Although we oppose the bill and will vote against it, we believe it is our responsibility, as Members of Parliament, to try to take away some of the very harsh provisions contained in the bill. If we do not succeed in doing that, we have an equal responsibility to try to modify the legislation so that people can negotiate for pension increases.

As I have said earlier, if one cannot negotiate pension increases now, or if one is restricted to 6 per cent and 5 per cent increases in one's salary, a person who retires at the end of the two-year period will not only suffer for two years, but for the rest of his life. Inflation may increase by 10 per cent, 11 per cent or 12 per cent over the next 15 to 20 years. We do not like it and we certainly wish it were not true, but it may happen. If workers' wages increase by only 6 per cent and 5 per cent because of the provisions of the bill and the decisions of the government, if they cannot negotiate better pension plans, as there are areas which are fairly weak or have some substantial holes in them at the present time, then these people will be punished for longer than two years. If they join in the government's crusade over the next two years, they will make a sacrifice for the rest of their lives, a sacrifice which they will never be able to overcome because of the way in which the bill is presented. Our caucus has proposed amendments to ensure that pensions can be negotiated and that the pensions of those who are approaching retirement age will be calculated as if their wages had risen with the cost of living and not merely by 6 per cent, because we know that the cost of living will rise much more than 6 per cent.

We have also proposed amendments dealing with maternity leave. That is not a matter which should be included in the six and five program, but it should be a basic human right to help women workers and their families achieve some equality and to provide more hope in the workplace.

We will be speaking again to the various specific amendments which are before us, but I am worried about the whole purpose of the bill since the government has stated that it is a bill which is basically a public relations program. We are worried that the government, despite yesterday's announcement, will really not allow for collective bargaining because,