

Government Orders

“(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as derogating from the rights of the employees under the Canadian Human Rights Act.”

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn) moved:

Motion No. 14.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 11 by adding immediately after line 8 at page 6 the following:

“including implementation of the Human Rights tribunal order referred to in paragraph 10(1)(b).”

He said: Mr. Speaker, there is one item that I would like to touch upon just before I get into the essence of this motion. I would certainly like to set the record straight. If the member who just spoke was referring to me as being the person from Saskatoon who has no interest in what goes on on the east coast, I would like to assure him that indeed I do. Having lived on the west coast for a considerable period of time, I am familiar with the oceans and seafaring. I can assure the hon. member it is the government itself that has said the response of those people has been exemplary. The parliamentary secretary is playing with words and using the situation to try to alienate people, and he is not being successful.

The motion we have before us at the moment goes to the very heart of what this dispute is about, particularly for the hospital services people. We know from the debate which has gone on this afternoon that the Canadian Human Rights Commission made a decision long ago that the hospital services people should be paid at the same rate as the general services people. The decision was made on the basis that the HS group was primarily women and that there was a discriminatory action being taken by the government in not paying them equally.

This motion would put into place the provisions whereby this inequity can be addressed in this round of negotiations so that we do not have to wait for some long drawn out process. It escapes me entirely why the government is so insistent on drawing it out, other than the fact that it is reluctant to expend this money, I suppose. Maybe that is it.

The Conservatives have not said it yet. This is about the only piece of legislation in the last year where they have not made reference to the deficit. Perhaps they expect to recover from the deficit at the expense of these people. Considering what they have done to them already, I suggest that maybe that is the case.

That is the heart of the matter. It is a mystery to me why the Canadian government at any stage, whether the Liberals before this government or this government since it has come into office, would drag a situation out so long. Why would they not include those equalization payments as part of wages so that they can be included in these people's pensions? Why they will not do it within this legislation and get on with it is a mystery to me.

There are a couple of other things that ought to be referred to but which time is not going to permit us to debate at any great length, and that is a motion which refers to the length of the contract. It is doubtful whether we will get a chance to debate it this afternoon. It is important that when the legislation is passed—and I know the government is going to vote against it, but I would hope that the conciliator would take note of it—to make sure that the lengths of the contract do not extend beyond the present length of the contract of the Public Service Alliance of Canada general agreement.

In addition, there is reference in the legislation to liability in cases of non-compliance. We are suggesting that if government members are going to include reference to the union in that clause, they ought to be making reference to the employer which of course is themselves. The government ought to be making reference to agents of the employer. I do recognize that in its most definitive sense what we are really referring to is the Queen. It is rather doubtful whether or not if the government were to be non-compliant we would be wanting to incarcerate the Queen. Certainly not.

• (1740)

There ought to be references to the employer. Having referred to those two issues in addition to the very essential one of affirmative action, the government ought to stop dithering around, get down to work, and negotiate with these employees in good faith. It has been demonstrated since 1981 that it has not been doing this. Certainly it has been demonstrated in the last two years that it has not been doing it. It is a little late, but I would suggest that the government ought to be doing that and doing it now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Halifax West on a point of order.