

*Routine Proceedings*

direction but that until people have a wage classification that reflects the value of their work we do not have justice in the Public Service of Canada.

Let the minister be under no illusion. The people who receive this cash will welcome it. They need it because they are among the lowest paid employees of the Government of Canada in many cases.

Let there be no misunderstanding that that will not dampen their fervour for full justice in the pay cheques they receive, not token equalization payments but full justice in their salaries and in their classification, a full recognition that their work has value to the people of Canada and that it will be paid for equitably.

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, I too welcome the statement of the President of Treasury Board today. It is certainly a step in the right direction. I am fearful that it does not go far enough. It sounds like a lot of money when we hear the figure \$76 million. But we all must remember that this is money that these women have earned over the years. In fact, because of the lack of pay equity it is money out of which they have been cheated.

I would like to ask the minister a couple of questions about what he said today. I will just present them and see if we can follow up on them later.

Will these equalization payments be taxed at a higher rate? Some of the undervalued occupational groups will not receive these equalization payments, if I understand what the minister said. He indicated word processors. This is undervalued women's work. It sounds like it will continue to be undervalued. Equalization payments should be reflected in salaries that women receive and not a separate payment.

This week the Public Service Alliance of Canada withdrew from the joint union-management pay equity study. Reports on the news indicate that they felt that they had struggled for five years. The Public Service Alliance Vice-President said that the study was becoming a farce.

In the face of a major public campaign by the alliance for pay equity there was a possibility that 80,000 complaints would be filed with the Human Rights Commission. I wonder if this is why the government is now responding. Is it fearful of those complaints being raised with the Human Rights Commission? Women have

experienced pay discrimination within the Public Service of Canada ever since the Public Service was first formed.

Pay discrimination exists in every occupational group that is made up mostly of women. The government is proposing retroactive payments to March of 1985, but I do not see any time frame in the statement by the minister.

When will they receive this money? Will it come this month? Will it come next month? Will it come next year? The record of the government has not been good on this. The minister said that there are still some minor issues that are yet to be resolved. What are these minor issues? Are they really minor issues?

This is the same government that has legislated female hospital workers back to work instead of dealing with their demand for equal pay for work of equal value, which is their right.

I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board, what about these workers? Are they going to be dealt with? When are they going to benefit? When are they going to be treated equally, fairly and equitably on their demands for equal pay for work of equal value?

The Minister mentioned progress toward employment equity. Employment equity is not pay equity. His own colleague in the House of Commons, the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration, said in the House just this week that there has been very little progress made toward employment equity, which is a separate matter from pay equity.

The women in Canada make up the majority of the poor. If the minister is really serious about improving economic equality for women in this country, and if this government were really serious about improving the conditions and the equality of women in Canada, it would reindex family allowance which has been deindexed. It would raise old age security benefits for all older Canadians, as well as the guaranteed income supplement. Women make up the majority of the poor in this country. Elderly women make up the majority of the poor elderly.

I agree with the statement of the minister that we cannot move together forward as a nation unless we are prepared to move forward together as a nation of equals. I appreciate the minister's comments. It is very true that we must all work toward this goal. To become a nation of