

faith with that union. For two years, they negotiated in bad faith.

I submit that they did that because they felt that when the time came and there was no agreement they would then designate those employees as essential and make sure they had to accept the contract from this government which does not want to negotiate in good faith with the trade unions and the Public Service. But they screwed up. When it came time to designate them as essential services, government members missed the deadline.

"My God, what do you do after missing the deadline? We have been negotiating for two years as if it were a joke, a lark, a useless exercise, but we missed the designation deadline. My goodness, we are going to have to really see what these people want, and what we are going to do with them. We do not have them under our control any more. This is a pretty bad situation", the government said.

They then wanted to start to negotiate but on the main issues. One of the main issues that these men and women and the ship crews wanted to have addressed was pay equity. My goodness, it is almost 1990. It is not 1890. Pay equity should be a fact of life and a piece of history. It should not be something that has to be debated on the floor of the House of Commons.

I have said it in this place before—and I hope I do not have to say it too many more times before it becomes obsolete and an issue that does not have to be addressed—for goodness sake, because I live on the east coast and I do a job that is the same as a job being done perhaps in the riding of the minister of fisheries, is that any reason at all to tell me that my labour is not worth the same as the labour for that particular job on the west coast or any other part of Canada?

This government talks all the time about pay equity. "We are in favour of equal pay for work of equal value". That is hollow rhetoric. Last year, during the federal election campaign, over 3,000 dockyard workers and others on the east coast were begging for wage parity. They said: "Tell me, in this day and age, how you can possibly discriminate against me because I live on the east coast? I am doing the same job as those good employees on the west coast, but you pay me less". It is a fundamental issue. It is fundamental to fairness in this country.

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We legislate the laws and we set the tone of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. For five years this government has said: "Pay equity is something we have to put in place. We are against wage discrimination". We are against discrimination, but it is okay by their definition of discrimination to discriminate against people who work on the east coast of this country and to pit them against their fellow workers and their brothers from the west coast. That is what this government does. Its actions speak a lot louder than its rhetoric when it comes to pay equity.

The union said: "Fine. We get, on average, \$21,000 a year to risk our lives out on the icy Atlantic. Sometimes we have to stay away from our families for three months at a time for \$21,000 a year. But if you are on the west coast, that is okay. You get \$1,800 more for the same job, for the same hardship". It does not make any sense. The union said: "We are going to stand firm this time. Once and for all we are getting rid of that 27 years of wage inequity, that discriminatory practice, because, damn it, we are just as good as any other worker in this country doing the same job".

Time after time in this House and in committee, we asked the minister opposite about pay equity, and we asked him about regional rates of pay, and what you get are weasel words. This strike should have been settled. The contract should have been settled three months after those negotiations began, but the government says: "These people are being unreasonable". Well, I think that rhetoric from the government opposite is absolutely scandalous and it is unacceptable.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Let us look at these people, who risk their lives on the east coast and on the west coast to protect the Canadian fish stocks. They protect the stocks we have not given away to the foreign countries, and we have given most of them away. I am now even getting a rise out of the minister opposite. I guess he knows I am correct. They are out there doing fisheries patrols.

Is that a holiday? There are armed vessels on both coasts of this country trying to protect that valuable national resource. What do they want in return? They want fairness and recognition of their efforts by this government. They want to negotiate. God, we know that. They have tried for two years, but the government screwed up and did not get them designated. Then it had