

Oral Questions

As the hon. member knows the area is very difficult. It is very difficult to search because of lack of light. We cannot inform the House, unfortunately, as to the outcome. We can only hope it has been successful.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiq): Mr. Speaker, in light of this accident, in light of the gradual easing of the global cold war and in light of the very strong northern opposition to cruise missile testing, will the minister reconsider and cancel cruise missile testing?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the agreement under which Canada allows for the testing of the ACM-86B is an agreement that was signed and supported by the previous administration—and he is a member of that party at this time—and supported by this administration.

I believe it is an important part of the defence of North America. We are part of an alliance.

Mr. Benjamin: The defence of missiles.

Mr. McKnight: The Leader of the New Democratic Party asked a very important question about the concern for a pilot and about concern for an aircraft. I am sure her colleagues would like me to be able to answer the hon. member.

No, at this time, the testing will take place. The testing is part of the contribution that Canada can make to security for North America. I would suggest to the hon. member that what we see taking place now in Europe is part of the reason for NATO to exist. NATO will continue to exist and Canada will exist as a part of NATO.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. On Friday, the minister made a first tentative step toward pay equity in the Public Service.

Ever since the Public Service was established women have been unfairly paid. If the government really proposes to rectify this injustice, why then is it paying these women back only about one-quarter of what is actually owed to them?

If this government were really committed to the concept of pay equity, it would do better than two bits on the dollar.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the announcement I made on Friday was based on the results of a joint union-management study that has been ongoing now for five years. The methodology that was retained for use in this study is methodology that is defensible and recommended by outside experts, reviewed by consultants retained by the joint union-management committee and reviewed by the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

All I can to my hon. colleague is that we stand by the numbers we have put out. We believe this is a very important step in achieving equal pay for work of equal value and that people who have been discriminated against unfairly are now finally getting recognition from this government.

• (1500)

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Commissioner has already indicated that this proposal certainly in no way really addresses the issue of pay equity in the Public Service.

Studies have shown that women in female-dominated occupations are due about \$1.2 billion in retroactive payments, not \$317 million as proposed by the government. Women are owed \$200 million in equalization payments, not \$76 million. This is money which these women have earned over the past five years, money that has not been paid to them by this federal government. This is money that men have been getting for the same work over the same period of time.

When is the government going to pay these women the money that they have already earned and the money that they deserve? When will this government truly implement fair pay equity for women in the Public Service?

[Translation]

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, to answer the question, I would like to quote an editorial published in *Le Droit*. It says: "The Public Service Alliance of Canada can keep on shouting murder, the retroactive salary adjustments of \$317 million for 75,000 federal public servants announced on Friday by the President of the Treasury Board are an important victory for the principle of pay equity for federal employees." The editorial continues: "They are a model and a basis for negotiation not only at the federal level but also at the provincial level and even in the private sector, where in most cases pay equity