

*Government Orders*

they are—and if I have time in this particular part of the debate, I will get to that.

If they are as essential as the government says they are, why on earth are they so poorly paid? In our society, it is rather common, when people are deemed essential, when society cannot get along without their services, that they be paid commensurate to their value to society.

Successive governments have used the heavy hand of designating these people as being essential in order to prevent them from being able to go on strike and to make sure that their wages were kept down.

In spite of the fact that the justice minister was referring so sneeringly to us being in consultation with a higher authority, we were in consultation with a higher authority and that higher authority was something about which the justice minister may know something. I know doggone well nobody else on the government side knows anything about it. The only reason that he knows anything about it is because he is justice minister.

What we are referring to is justice, justice for these people who, for so long, have been kept under the thumb of tyrannical governments and have been prevented in a heavy-handed way from being able to receive the kinds of pay which their obvious value to society would dictate that they ought to be able to receive.

Justice is what we are talking about. The very day that this government introduced closure on Bill C-49 was the day when three people, one from each party in this House, stood up and praised the forty-first anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The very day that closure, one of the most heavy-handed things that a government can use in any situation was introduced, was the very day that we were celebrating the forty-first anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights which includes the ability to go on strike, if it comes to that, if you are desperate enough.

I was an hourly paid employee before I was elected to Parliament. I have been on strike, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure you that going on strike is not the first thing you do. Going on strike is the last thing you want to do and it is an act of desperation. This has been true throughout the course of human history, whether strikes have been legal or not, with all due respect to the member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia who said there has to be a better way, that we have to look at the laws and

maybe this will encourage us to do so. If he looked at labour relations history in any part of the western world over the last short period of time, he would find out that prohibiting strikes is not one way of solving the problem.

What we are talking about is a matter of justice. Can you imagine, in addition to these people never having been able to go on strike, that in 1981 it was brought to the attention of the government that these people in the HS group were being unfairly paid in relation to the GS group. Most of the people in the hospital services group are women. Most of the people in the general services group are men. The Canadian Human Rights Commission found that this group, mainly composed of women, were being underpaid and the government had a responsibility to pay them commensurate with those who worked in the general services group.

That was in 1981. It was 1987 before these people received any kind of financial recognition of what the Human Rights Commission had determined several years before. It amazes me that any group of people in a situation like this would have to go to the Human Rights Commission at all in relation to a government which is supposed to be elected to look after people's human rights and interests. These people had to force the government, albeit initially not the government we have here, but one populated by people down the hall on this side.

However, this government is certainly culpable. In 1987 when it decided to pay and it bemoaned the fact that it cost \$28 million to finally divvy up—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I would like to bring to the attention of the hon. member the motion which refers to taking out the word "chairman" and putting in the word "chair". I do not wish to bring up relevancy this afternoon but I just cannot understand why the hon. member is not speaking to the motions. I would just like to bring that to his attention. I know he is a new member but I would still like to bring that to his attention.

**Mr. Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I recognize the relevance of your suggestion, but I think you will find it much more convenient if members can cover a lot of topics in one or two speeches instead of being forced to rise on six different occasions throughout