

contracts that the government itself negotiated and signed and impose a 6 per cent and 5 per cent regime over a two-year period, despite the fact that the government basically gave its word by signing a collective agreement that people would be entitled to 9 per cent or 10 per cent increases.

Yet this is the same government that says it must not break the agreement it has signed with the provinces and with some oil companies to allow them to have increases of approximately 31 per cent in energy prices over the next 18 months. So on the one hand, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) and other ministers of the Crown in this Liberal government have said that they must honour agreements with the provinces, that they must honour agreements with the oil companies; on the other hand, they are saying they have no moral obligation to honour agreements with their own employees.

● (1230)

The government has stated through the budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and through this piece of legislation that it wants the co-operation of all sectors of the Canadian economy, including business, the provinces, government workers and private sector workers. How can the government even pretend to expect co-operation when it breaks the collective agreements that it has already signed with its employees, or agreements which Crown corporations like CN have already agreed to with its workers, and when it breaks agreements by way of amendments it introduced in committee that private sector railways have signed with their workers?

Certainly the municipalities, the provinces, small and large businesses and workers generally want to see the government get the Canadian economy back on the right track again. All Canadians, wherever they come from in Canada, want to see the government improve our economic situation which is still in difficulty, despite the good-news bad-news atmosphere the government is now pretending exists. While the government pretends there is good news about economic recovery, it is not so.

I would like to refer to a Gallup Poll which was recently conducted. This poll asked, "Which of the following do you consider to be the best way to cure Canada's economic problems?" The response was that 42 per cent favoured job-creation, 37.1 per cent said lower interest rates, 6.4 per cent indicated greater public controls over investment, and 6.8 per cent said public sector wage controls. In other words, 80 per cent of Canadians believe that job-creation and lower interest rates are the way to solve the problems that we face, while only 6.8 per cent of those polled believe in a program such as that introduced by the government. Canadians do not believe that this program will work, I do not believe it will work, nor do members of my caucus.

One must wonder what the real intent of this bill is. During second reading of this bill I referred to a government document which was leaked to our party over a year ago. In that document from which I quoted it said that wage control programs would be a public relations effort by the government

and that these controls would probably not work. It would have the advantage, however, of giving the appearance that the government was concerned about correcting Canada's economic problems.

That facade is what concerns our party about this bill and that is the reason for our proposed amendments. We are concerned that the government is conducting a public relations program which it has admitted in its own document is not likely to work. The government has indicated in its own document that it would be a public relations program which would give the appearance that it is doing something. That is not acceptable. Over 80 per cent of Canadians who want the government to take action on job-creation and lower interest rates do not find this program acceptable.

The government should have been implementing programs for job-creation and lowering interest rates last month instead of having us discuss this during the hot month of July and now into the month of August. It should have introduced some concrete economic planning instead of giving us this public relations job.

As I mentioned earlier, the government has primarily asked under this proposal to be allowed to break its faith with its employees. How can it expect its employees' co-operation under those circumstances? After all the witnesses which the government allowed to appear before the committee, the government then included 36,000 more workers under this proposal as a result of the amendment stage of this bill. While some of the representatives of those workers did appear initially, they were not allowed to appear after the government made that proposal. Initially, only workers in Crown corporations such as CN were affected. Their representatives made some presentations to the committee but when a further 36,000 members of those unions were brought under these controls, the members of the committee did not allow other groups to come back. Not only did the government refuse permission for union representatives to attend and explain how unions under the Canada Labour Code can be included under this bill, but government members on that committee would not allow their own Minister of Labour (Mr. Caccia) to appear and explain his responsibilities as Minister of Labour to workers under his jurisdiction under the laws of Canada and how they would be affected.

That was the position of the government majority on that committee. That same government majority refused to allow different groups to appear before the committee on ten different occasions. I moved motions asking for the minister responsible for the status of women to be allowed to appear and explain how this bill would affect negotiations on issues of concern to women and how it would affect the large wage disparity between the basic group of women workers and the top echelon which is primarily composed of males. The minister responsible for the status of women met with the national action committee on the status of women who told her that they were concerned about some major problems inherent in this bill. However, nothing came of those representations. The