

*Government Orders*

negotiations and you turn around and say: "Sorry, we were wrong, it is now zero per cent."

Do you know why? It is because the President of the Treasury Board suddenly realized that he could not afford to part with 6,000 public servants.

The government pruned the number of public servants by 15,000 over six years and it boasts about it. Then all of a sudden he is confronted with a situation where he could lose 6,000 more if he ended up with a 3 per cent increase according to the Minister of Finance. So he abandoned that policy at the table and said: "You are getting zero."

Who did he say it to? He said it to all the lowest paid workers. Just before the budget came down on February 26 it gave a big increase to all the higher paid workers who were not negotiating with them in a union. That is what it did.

Now the government suddenly realizes its error and said: "Oh boy, we are going to apply this freeze." In June, the minister had the gall to stand in this House and say he was extending the freeze of zero per cent to everybody because he had realized the blunder he had made in giving the increase in January and February to these people.

Then, having recanted that far, the minister says zero per cent now applies to everybody, except the bonuses. He did not say that, of course, but we drew it to his attention and the unions drew it to his attention. He said: "Oh well, the bonuses are included too, it is all zero now."

That is what he wanted all along, but he did not have the nerve to admit it in the House, in the budget, in February. His predecessor did not. He was the one dictating the terms at the time. He did not have the guts to admit it in the House in June.

It was only when the unions pressed him to come out with a fair policy for everybody that he then said zero is the rule. But what he had done is give a substantial percentage increase to the highest paid ones in a year when the inflation rate was 6 per cent. He then says to the lowest paid: "You get zero this year. You may get three next year, but for the year when inflation is 6, you get zip." The others all get 4.2 or whatever it was that was given.

It was a shocking abuse of power by this government and a total mismanagement of the Canadian government that has cost us and cost us dearly in terms of jobs and that is why we are facing this legislation here today.

I have here some quotations from some experts in the labour field, a quotation from the Kingston *Whig-Standard*. These people are experts and professors at Queen's University. I will read the story:

Ottawa has badly bungled its handling of the public service labour dispute, two labour relations scholars say.

Dictating a wage freeze and forcing civil servants back to work is an ugly move that could have been avoided, say professors Pradeep Kumar and Donald Carter of Queen's University.

The scholars, who teach industrial relations, say the federal government's mistakes as an employer over the past few months could very well:

Demoralize civil servants.

Scuttle efforts to make the public service more efficient, flexible, and responsible.

Promote a more militant public service union with more militant and politicized members.

While they see some things differently, the two scholars agree that Ottawa has erred by imposing wage restraints under the guise of collective bargaining, a cherished labour principle under which unions and management jointly define employment conditions.

These are experts in their field. They say the minister has bungled this and bungled it badly. I say I agree with them and so does every member on this side of the House, and so does the Canadian public. This government is incompetent and should resign and get out. It is no good. I have got more.

• (2200 )

Then, we have the Minister of Supply and Services who represents an Ottawa riding. He says: "Public Servants have nothing to complain about." He represents an Ottawa riding, and he has lots of public servants. Listen to what this man says. This is an unbelievable set of statements.

"They did not get laid off. They simply did not have their wages rolled back," says Dick, supply and services minister and Ottawa area's lone representative in the cabinet. I may say he is the only Tory in the whole Ottawa area, the people of eastern Ontario knew better than to elect this bunch.

He went on: "They did not have their plant shut down. They do not have to work-share. The Tory MP for Lanark—Carleton makes no apologies for the government's freeze on the salary of its employees in spite of the fact that the freeze only applies to the lowest paid".