

PUBLIC SERVICE

APPROACH TO CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON
EQUALITY FOR MALE AND FEMALE EMPLOYEES

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Yesterday I asked him a question about the government's commitment to equal pay for work of equal value. He dismissed my allegations at that time. Since then it has come to light that the Treasury Board has tried to make a sweetheart deal with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, asking it not to accept any more complaints on the general services group of PSAC in return for a final settlement offered by the President of the Treasury Board. With that in mind can the minister confirm this to be the truth? If it is, why does he feel he is above the laws of this land?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. Yesterday I took the liberty of supplying him with quite a detailed analysis of this particular complaint and the efforts which have been made by the Treasury Board to resolve this problem. Unfortunately, as I indicated yesterday, the matter is one of extreme complexity and I would not like to take the time of the House during the question period to review the entire formula.

Very briefly, I would like to explain that what was done was to take the national pay level for both the female-dominated groups and the male-dominated groups to establish an average pay level in each, then to take the difference, expressed as a percentage, and increase the pay level in the female groups by that percentage. For example, that would have the effect with respect to level two in zone 11 of increasing two of the female-dominated groups above male-dominated groups. You will recall that yesterday I mentioned there are actually 22 different pay zones in Canada.

The request to the Human Rights Commission was to the effect that if an averaging formula is accepted for what would appear to be a very equitable settlement of this particular claim, then clearly no more complaints could be accepted with respect to that complaint. In other words the averaging formula would make no sense. I think that is perfectly clear. There is no attempt to avoid in any way the application of the law. In fact, every attempt is being made to comply with the spirit of the legislation.

WIDENING GAP IN PAY SCALES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, I wish I could thank the minister for his answer.

The point is that the Human Rights Commission did find the government's offer inadequate. A recent Statistics Canada study pointed out that a group of 1976 university and community college graduates working for the government are in a situation in which the women are earning \$3,300 less per year than the men. This is indicative of the over-all problem of unequal pay in the public service.

Oral Questions

I would like to ask the minister whether or not he will finally take some action to stop the widening gap between men and women in the public service. If he will not take action, then will his route be to ask the Secretary of State to exempt himself and his department from the human rights legislation? Is that his way out? Or will he finally take some action to resolve the problems which exist within the public service?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I have had the occasion to answer this question before in the House. Members of this government and myself continue to take action, and we are concerned. That is why we have an equal opportunities for women program. That is why we have introduced affirmative action pilot studies, which are moving forward very effectively. I would suggest there are a number of reasons, some systemic, which account for the differentials which were expressed in the newspaper article based upon Statistics Canada information, to which the hon. member makes reference.

I insist that any suggestion that we are not taking action is completely and totally unfounded. It is a matter of continuing consultation amongst my colleagues. I can assure the hon. member that I remain committed in every way to the affirmative action program and the equal opportunities for women program, as do all my colleagues.

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[Translation]

INCOME TAX

INQUIRY WHETHER DECISIONS CONCERNING CANADIANS
WORKING ABROAD WILL BE RESPECTED

Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue and it concerns an injustice on the part of the Lévesque-Parizeau government against 2,000 Quebec families and companies.

Two and a half years after granting a tax exemption to at least 2,000 Quebecers who had obtained a non-resident status while posted abroad, the Quebec minister of revenue has just unilaterally decided to repeal the written agreements concluded for that purpose with some 200 Quebec professional firms and companies. Since the Lévesque-Parizeau government has made of those Quebecers second-class citizens and has discriminated against them in relation to their colleagues in other provinces, my question is as follows: will the Canadian government abide as a responsible government with the decision previously taken by its officials in connection with the non-resident status granted to those Quebecers and other Canadians working abroad during a certain period, that is, before the autumn of 1979?

[English]

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that this government intends to keep the commitments it made to these