

*Government Orders*

all women in our society. Equal pay is the law, and it is a law that is being ignored by this government.

One document puts the situation very clearly, and I quote:

What would your reaction be if you were told that you had just lost thousands of dollars? Anger or shock, sadness that such a thing could happen.

Well, there are millions of women in Canada who are being robbed of thousands of dollars each and every year. It is a fact that women earn less than men for performing work of the same value. Often women earn much, much less; 10 per cent; 20 per cent and sometimes even 40 per cent.

We have a law that forbids the employer from discriminating between men and women and paying wages for work of equal value. This government is ignoring that law.

There is a binding Public Service Staff Relations Board ruling that the government must negotiate with its workers, not force them to accept a zero per cent increase and no pay equity, without even talking. This government is breaking that as well.

I wonder how the government can expect and hope for Canadians to respect the laws that are passed here in this House of Commons when the government itself ignores them.

The government has shown over and over again that it has no respect for Canadians, especially low income women working for low wages, and that it has no respect for the democratic process.

A strong economy and a stable society cannot be built by undercutting more than 50 per cent of the population of Canada, by undercutting women. This is a terrible kind of role model for other Canadians.

Women and all workers are simply not going to take this any more. I often question the government on issues of concern to women. Many times, over and over again, the Prime Minister or other government ministers stand in this House and talk about equality and about how they have appointed a woman to this board or they have appointed two women to another government function or another government board. They speak with such bravado and such boasting tones about how they have appointed more women to positions in government.

It is not good enough for the Prime Minister and the members of cabinet to simply tell us that they have appointed another woman here or there, or that they support the issue of equality for women in our society.

This government has an opportunity right now to put its money where its mouth is, to show that it has a firm commitment to equality for women within its own Public Service. We have had enough talk about equality for women. It is not good enough anymore for the government to say equity, they must pay equity.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments on the speech by the member of the New Democratic party. I may remind her that in 1967, it was a Liberal government that introduced collective bargaining in the Public Service and that the present Tory government is destroying our public service by using strategies like today's back-to-work legislation, contracting out and bonuses as incentives for senior, in fact, very senior public servants. I may remind the NDP hon. member that this government has ignored women as far as wages are concerned. Many women in my riding earn very low salaries as a result of this government's policies. These women, in many cases single parents, have to pay taxes, including federal and provincial income tax, municipal taxes and school taxes. Because of this government's economic restraint policy, there has been a flow of fiscal responsibility from the federal government to the provinces and subsequently to municipalities and school boards, which has engulfed low-income earners, most of whom are women responsible for raising a family. I say women, because all too often, women are at the bottom of the wage scale although they have the same responsibilities, the same duties and the same tasks as men.

• (1130)

This government has ruined the relationship between employees and employer, the employer being the present government. How will these employees feel, now that they are being forced back to work? It's almost like seeing a film on slavery. You see the employer taking employees by the scruff of their necks and saying: You are going to work today and tomorrow, otherwise you will be fined \$500 per day. And on top of that, your salary increase will be zero per cent. Either you toe the line or you might lose your job. That is the kind of employer we have today.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time these employees have to cope with tax increases at all the levels I just mentioned. I think that with its economic restraint policy, this government is dividing the country into