

am pleased to be associated because they are policies the majority of Canadians indicated they support.

REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, it is quite clear from this document that the statements and the philosophies which the minister has been following, not just since he has been in the office he holds now but for the last ten years, have led to the present high level of interest rates in the country. In my presence about a year and a half ago the minister said that if interest rates went above the prevailing level, at that time of some 13 to 13.5 per cent, he would resign.

He has also said that this document does not necessarily represent government thinking at this stage. If in fact it represents government thinking and is accepted by his colleagues in government, will the minister resign both for that reason and for the reason he stated 18 months ago, that if interest rates went above the then prevailing rate he would resign?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Resign, Herb!

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I do not think that the policies I support are in favour of or have in any way contributed to high interest rates. The hon. member's question is essentially hypothetical, but I think I will say now, as I said before, that in any event whatever happens in terms of government announcements it is incumbent upon people such as myself to stay here and fight to ensure that the group on the other side do not get in office again and have another chance to damage the economy as they already started to do before they were thrown out by the Canadian people.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

WAGE EQUALITY FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. The Human Rights Commission found in May, 1980, that the federal government was guilty of shortchanging some 3,000 public servants, mostly women, by approximately \$9.5 million. Since the report of the conciliation board brought down yesterday argues that this point is correct and indicates that equality should be provided, why has the minister waited 18 months to provide the equality due Canadian women? Why does he not pay them the money they deserve?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, this question has been asked a number of times in the House.

Mr. Broadbent: Well answer it this time.

Oral Questions

Mr. Johnston: I have given very satisfactory answers. We have moved in every possible way that we could up to this point to eliminate what has been called a discriminatory practice. This so-called discrimination against women is actually against female dominated groups in the general services group. Let me cite an example. In the laundry services group there are 36 women and 35 men. We recognize that the contract to which that group is subject in 22 different pay zones and seven subgroups across the country is a basis of claim for discrimination.

Miss MacDonald: How about deputy ministers?

Mr. Johnston: The conciliation board report which was handed down yesterday was referred by the Public Service Alliance to its membership for ratification, which it has to do in accordance with the terms of its constitution. In the meantime we have indicated our support for the minority report which would have the effect of eliminating discrimination and in fact of providing a common pay plan, a 17 per cent increase in 1981, and a 10 per cent increase in the next year. In fact it is a 26-month contract. I do not see how the hon. member for Oshawa can say that we have not done everything possible to revolve this difficult situation.

● (1425)

I might also add that with respect to the retroactive period which terminated at the end of the prior contract, namely, in December, 1980, a human rights tribunal was constituted and that issue will be determined by the tribunal, namely, what is the proper interpretation of Section 11 of the Human Rights Act.

REQUEST THAT CONCILIATION BOARD REPORT BE ACTED UPON IMMEDIATELY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, the minister is clearly the biggest sexist in the country. Listen to that answer! He knows that I wrote to him in June, 1980, after the ruling of the Human Rights Commissioner, and he wrote back saying that he would resolve the issue as "expeditiously" as possible. That was 18 months ago. Canadian women working for the Canadian government are still waiting for his action.

I ask the minister again why he is waiting to act until further meetings take place? Why does he not accept the majority recommendation of the report that came down, and why does he not provide some equality now?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Oshawa and his party are notoriously generous with taxpayers' money. The interpretation to be given to Section 11 of the Human Rights Act is something that a tribunal must determine. We have made offers of settlement. We made a proposal to the Human Rights Commission that would have cost the taxpayers \$13.8 million. The Human Rights Commission suggested that a