

Point of Order

the Minister of Employment and Immigration the discretionary authority to consider special circumstances and allow benefits in situations where it is expressly denied by legislation.

Since the amendment of the UI regulations pertaining to income and earnings which became effective March 31, 1985, severance pay which is paid or payable after March 31, 1985 is considered to be earnings for benefit purposes. Transitional exemption from this regulation can be found provided these moneys are paid as part of a separation package paid pursuant to an employer's written policy, a formal labour-management workforce reduction agreement or collective agreement that was in force before December 31, 1984 and had not expired before the payment of the money.

"Northern allowances" have been determined to be earnings arising out of employment and are allocated as same. It is considered that this is a benefit which is regularly and customarily paid by employers in the North to compensate for the higher cost of living and thus, the payment cannot be considered anything other than earnings arising from employment. It is clear that this payment does not continue beyond the complete termination of employment, but may continue during a period of sickness or maternity leave in which case it is definitely earnings without the performance of services. The northern allowance is a benefit of a kind received by a claimant from or on behalf of the employer in respect of the employment and falls squarely within the definition of moneys to be considered earnings for benefit purposes. All northern allowances are allocated accordingly.

[Translation]

Mr. Lewis: I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: The questions enumerated by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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[English]

POINT OF ORDER

DISABLED VISITORS TO PARLIAMENT HILL

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On Friday last you will recall that my colleague, the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young) wrote to you, and the Hon. Member for Eglinton-Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille) also raised with you the difficulty that those with wheelchairs have in entering the House of Commons for the purpose of viewing the proceedings. You indicated, Sir, that you would give the matter some consideration and report back. Do you have any report on that question, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I do. The Sergeant-at-Arms advises me that he can handle, on a rotating basis, up to 10 wheelchairs at a time today and will organize his affairs that way.

The original request I had, of course, was to allow the use of the Chamber. I cannot do that, as the Hon. Member knows. I may say to the House that I have also asked the Sergeant-at-Arms to look at this problem. Anytime these things occur, we

discover our limitations. We are looking at different ramps that are possible for future use to allow the entire galleries to be used better in future.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Thursday, April 10, consideration of Bill C-62, an Act respecting Employment Equity, as reported (with amendments) from a Legislative Committee, and Motion No. 1 (Mr. Nystrom).

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There are certain procedural arguments with respect to Bill C-62 which we wish to make. I want to indicate to my colleagues opposite that we are prepared to make them at whatever time you should decide, or when they are prepared to go ahead.

Mr. Speaker: May I say to the House that I had indicated that I wanted to hear those arguments now. Is there some suggestion that they be delayed? The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier).

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak on Motion No. 1. If you are ready to pronounce on these—

Mr. Speaker: I was interrupted by a point of order from the Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans).

The House will remember that when I first gave a ruling on the amendments I indicated that in respect of procedural arguments about the motions on which I had made procedural comments, as opposed to the issue of being in committee, I was prepared to hear them at this point, if anybody wished to do so prior to resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) and then the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary on procedural debate.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I looked for your guidance on this the other day; maybe it was not the right time. I made some representations and I would make the same arguments at this time. They are on the record, so I do not think it is necessary for me to repeat them. I hope that they are taken into consideration.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, if it is in order I would proceed with points of order with respect to two of the motions.

We have had an opportunity to look at Bill C-62, and there are two procedural arguments. First, with respect to Motions Nos. 13A and 15. In our opinion, these motions appear to be trying to introduce irrelevant matters into the Bill and are essentially redundant to it. In our view these motions are partly dependent upon the acceptance of Motion No. 10, about which the Chair has expressed some reservations in its preliminary ruling. In other words, it seeks to import the principle of equal pay for work of equal value into a Bill which concerns itself with the participation of certain groups in the workforce. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, we feel it is irrelevant to the Bill.