

Government Orders

the human rights decision and pay the hospital services group equitably.

In this case both the ships' crews group and the hospital services group are being adversely affected by the intransigence of the government. Intransigence hardly covers it. It is Draconian. Draconian in this context is not my word, it happens to be the description of a process which was used by the government back in 1986 when previous negotiations with the ships' crews led to an impasse and conciliation was followed through as is normal under the Public Service Staff Relations Act, the law governing negotiations with the government's employees.

The conciliation board reported that yes indeed these people had been underpaid. Its recommendation was that they be paid in a certain fashion and that fashion exceeded the general settlement which had been reached with the rest of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

• (1640)

The government said no. The government refused to accept the conciliation board's report that these people, having been paid in an unfair way by the government, ought to be paid more. Again, out of desperation, just as surely as the situation we have before us now is a desperate one, the ships' crews went on what is commonly referred to as a wildcat strike. If you have been designated as being unable to go on strike and you do, certainly there is no question about it, everyone involved would admit that the law has been broken.

The government of course, in its usual benign fashion, summarily went to the courts and got an injunction. I would like to read something that the judge said in his decision on granting that injunction. Judge F. C. Muldoon said:

Doubtless, these incidents do evince frustration in regard to the plight in which the defendants find themselves vis-à-vis statutory provisions which, without undue exaggeration, can be termed draconian.

When I used the word "Draconian", it is not a word which I alone have used in relation to what is happening. When a judge imposing an injunction against people refers to what is happening to them as being Draconian, it gives you an idea of the mentality of the government opposite. Obviously the mentality of the government has

not changed, its outlook has not changed, its feelings toward its own employees have not changed in the intervening years.

There are many more things that could be referred to in relation to this and I would certainly like to refer to one or two others.

One of the parliamentary secretaries alluded to danger which was being faced by sailors on the high seas as a result of ships' crews who man our coast guard vessels being on strike. In every instance when these people have been called upon to respond to a situation of distress on the high seas, these crews have dropped their picket signs and gone on to those ships. Not only that, their union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, in a case or two where these ships were in foreign lands, actually paid for these people to go to some place where they could be manning ships. The Public Service Alliance of Canada is paying for the hotel bills of these people standing by, it is paying for the meals of these people standing by, and when the need arises these people spring into action. The government has admitted that in every instance the response has been as good as ever and in some cases better than average, more expedient than is usually the case.

I think that speaks very highly of these people. Perhaps as the debate goes on I will be able to refer to how expediently the hospital services people tried to respond. The hospital services people tried to respond in a very similar manner to that of the ships' crews. The government accepted the offer of the ships' crews but turned down the hospital services group much, I would suggest, to its chagrin. Had the government behaved more kindly toward these people in the first place it would not have found itself in the nearly the trouble it is in and we would not be here debating this issue today.

I think I will probably have an opportunity to address this question a little later this afternoon.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I must say that the fact that this motion even has to be debated today is a sign of the arrogance that the government has demonstrated throughout the last two years on negotiations with these workers. It has demonstrated that it is quite prepared to put an end to collective bargaining in the Public Service. It has abused over the last few years the designation process, disobeying the laws and then trying to go back through the