

*Adjournment Debate*

29,500 people participated in the activities of the Canadian Jobs Strategy in Montreal.

Since the beginning of this year, Employment and Immigration Canada has completed its 26 agreements under the Industrial Adjustment Service at a cost of \$130,542. A further 46 new agreements have been signed this year with a commitment of \$438,085 in funding by Employment and Immigration Canada.

The Industrial Adjustment Service agreements also involve spending by the province and the private sector so that the total expenditures in the Montreal area under the completion of new agreements is expected to exceed \$1.8 million.

In 1988-1989, in the hon. member's riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, nearly \$2.4 million was committed and a estimated 550 new clients were served under the Canadian Jobs Strategy and development of UI programs. This assistance with training and other human resources development was in addition to the substantial amount of income support available through the unemployment insurance program.

## PAY EQUITY

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Madam Speaker, in October of this year I posed a question in the House to the President of the Treasury Board, asking what the minister was doing to correct the deplorable situation of hospital services workers who were badly underpaid for the work they were doing, compared to comparable groups that were largely male dominated groups.

The pay and equity problem of these federal hospital services workers got some much needed attention when the government brought in Bill C-49 to force its lowest paid striking workers back to work and into binding conciliation.

I am here to give the matter more attention, and I do not plan to stop. This female dominated group had been waiting for nine years to settle its pay equity dispute, a dispute that led them in near desperation to the Human Rights Commission tribunal, which ruled overwhelmingly in their favour in 1987. The tribunal stated that these workers are undervalued and underpaid compared to a male-dominated group in the Public Service doing exactly the same work.

• (1900)

Although retroactive equalization payments of \$28 million were paid out in 1988, these were only interim payments. Two years later the group is waiting for an additional adjustment of \$10 million for retroactive pay from 1987 to the present and, above all, for a salary that recognizes the value of work rather than a token equalization payment. These workers are paid on average \$3,000 per year less than they should be and at a salary of \$16,000, \$17,000 or \$18,000, \$3,000 is a significant amount.

Delay after delay by the government has discouraged these workers. The government was even back before the Human Rights Tribunal just in November of this year trying to argue that the tribunal had no further jurisdiction in this case. The tribunal took only ten minutes to dismiss this argument. However, with the female population of the group slowly diminishing, the government seems to be waiting until the group is no longer female-dominated so it can complain that there is no discrimination. Is this what this government considers a fair way deal with pay discrimination among its employees?

Women in the Public Service have been hearing a lot of empty promises from this government over the last five years. The wage gap between male and female Public Service employees grew in 1988 to nearly \$10,000, \$440 more than it had been the previous year. A female Public Service employee makes only 74 cents for every dollar a man earns, down by .8 per cent in two years.

When I raised this issue in the House the Prime Minister pointed to the appointments of women to boards and commissions, a valuable step forward but still a handful of tokens while women in general in Canadian society grow poorer and poorer. Families headed by women are four times more likely to be poor than families headed by men. Seventy-two per cent of the elderly poor are women. Four out of every 10 families headed by women are poor compared to only one out of 10 headed by a male. The end result of that is that over one million children live below the poverty line in Canada, that is one out of every six children.

The government, as the largest employer in Canada, should be in the vanguard of reversing the growing feminization of poverty. It claims women are doing better but the facts do not bear this out. Eighty per cent of women in the Public Service are still in the pink collar ghettos of administrative support workers. Professional