

*Government Orders*

The women of Canada look to their government to protect them from the greed rampant among many of the people who employ them. When the government of Canada is that employer and it pays no heed to the calls for common justice and common fairness, then we are in a situation on the edge of 1990 that is absolutely unacceptable for anyone who believes in truth and in justice.

Everyone recognizes that this strike is affecting profits, that this strike is affecting the movement of ships in the Seaway, that this strike is affecting hospital care across this country. No one is in favour of the problems that this strike creates. Yet this strike is there because of a fundamental lack of justice in government policy.

The issue is whether or not the right to strike, the democratic right to dissent against unfair and unequal treatment, transcends the right to profit monetarily. The answer is and must be yes, individual dignity and individual search for justice and fairness has to be of a higher priority for the government of all of the people than the question of profit.

It would be pleasant, indeed it would be surprising, if even once this government tried to help the underdog and tried not to step on the average Canadian. But sadly, this has not been and apparently will not be the case. In all its pomposity, the government places the interests of big business ahead of anything else, ahead of human rights.

We have seen the government open up contacts, for example, with China, just one short month after Parliament unanimously condemned the Chinese government for human rights abuses. I guess an expectation on the part of Canadian workers, women and men, of justice in light of that kind of a development is a vain one. Just one short month after hundreds of innocent students protesting in a democratic fashion were massacred in China, this government cosied up with big business and the almighty dollar and wheeled and dealt with the butchers of Tiananmen Square.

There is another equally important principle which this government needs to address and that is the democratic right of association. Time after time, this government and the Prime Minister have challenged the authenticity of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. "It

is not worth the paper it is written on", the Prime Minister said, "because of the notwithstanding clause".

Well, if the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is worthless, it is only so because this government puts the sale of Canada and the sale of Canadians ahead of all other interests, ahead of all the traditions that we have held so dear, ahead of all those institutions in this country that have made us uniquely Canadian and a wonderful, individual society on the North American continent.

The democratic right of association, which includes the right to strike, is a principle, a legal, moral and ethical principle. But to this government, it is nothing more than an idea which is second to money, money and more money, and sadly, most particularly, American money.

In 1986, the government of Saskatchewan came under attack from various human rights organizations because it invoked the notwithstanding clause for legislation it passed on January 31 that ended rotating strikes by 12,000 public employees and imposed a legislative contract agreement. Saskatchewan invoked the notwithstanding clause before a challenge could be issued because the government was aware that its legislation was inconsistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

According to Chief Justice Dickson, the guarantee of freedom of association, Section 2(d) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, includes the freedom to bargain collectively and to strike. Such legislation as that which is before us now interferes with the employees' freedom to engage in strike activity that would be lawful in the absence of Bill C-49.

I believe that the profits lost by the continuance of the strike would not merit exclusion under Section 1 of the Charter. The legislation is wrong. The government is wrong. The people are being put down and exploited because there is not a sense on the government side of the House of what is right and what is fair.

I see that the minister responsible for the status of women is in the House. Most particularly it is a tragedy that the rights of women to pay equity are being ignored and even vilified in this legislation. When the time comes I assure you the women of Canada will not continue to be silent. They will stand up for their rights. They will