

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Peterson: The member for Kingston and the Islands touches a sore spot. I have undertaken hours and hours of diligent research in the libraries, in dusty tomes, I have sought for their rationale, I have sought for their wisdom and 'ere I searched all day, it was as if I had searched all day for two grains of wheat hidden in two barrels of chaff, and 'ere I found them, it was not worth the search.

Mr. Gauthier: I would like to join with my colleagues in the House in congratulating my friend from Toronto for making this very great contribution to this debate. I just want to follow up on the question put by the member from Kingston.

I was here and I heard the great presentations put forth by our socialist friends concerning RRSPs. I am just wondering if, in his search for the truth, the member from Toronto has found out if members of the New Democratic Party have given up on RRSPs and that they are all going to cash them in and turn them over to the charities of their choice so that we are sure that indeed their principles are that they will not save any money for their retirement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On that note, we will call it seven o'clock.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, my purpose for being on the late show today comes out of a question I had asked in the House on November 24.

The question was directed to the President of the Treasury Board who happened not to be in the House that day. It was answered by the Minister of Finance who assured me that some time during the following week the President of the Treasury Board would get back to me with an answer to my question.

The substance of my question was: When would the government, particularly the Treasury Board and the

good offices of the President of the Treasury Board, be used to bring fairness to the ongoing negotiations with respect to hospital services people, members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada and civil servants of the Government of Canada on the question of parity between workers on the east coast and those on the west coast as it affected ships' crews so that on both sides of this great country of ours they would be able to get the same wages for doing the same work? I asked whether or not the Treasury Board would use its offices to expedite the proceedings, get on with the bargaining, get the striking ships' crews back to work and try to make sure that the hospital services people were negotiated with fairly as well.

The President of the Treasury Board did not get back to me the next week and he did not respond in any way to the employees either. I guess the answer that came back was: "No, he was not willing to use his offices to try to prevent any further strife within the Public Service and to alleviate the problems which had arisen with respect to the hospital services workers". The hospital services workers went on strike, and I would suggest they were probably forced to strike because of the inactivity of the Treasury Board and the President of the Treasury Board in exercising his responsibility.

I would like to point out that prior to November 24 and my questions in the House I had written a letter to the President of the Treasury Board with copies to the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Minister of National Defence because these different departments were involved. In that letter I pointed out that I had four major concerns. The first one was that of designation. What we were dealing with in this case were employees of the Public Service of Canada, members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, union members who from the time they were able to belong to unions had been prevented from going on strike on the basis that the government—not just the Progressive Conservative government but its predecessor Liberal government as well—had designated them as essential services.

That may strike some people as being not all that bad, but when one considers that in the case of these two groups of people as many as 110 per cent of their total numbers were designated as essential, one gets some kind of an idea of the lengths to which the government was willing to go to treat these people badly.