

*Government Orders*

The government is not proposing to legislate a settlement. It is providing, with this legislation, a process for a fair and equitable resolution of these disputes.

• (1140 )

Immediately following the passage of the legislation, the chairman of the Public Service Staff Relations Board will establish a binding conciliation board for each of the two groups. Each party will then nominate someone to represent their interests in the binding conciliation process. The two boards will have 90 days to resolve outstanding issues. Should a conciliation board fail to resolve the issues it will render a decision that will be binding on both parties.

The government could have imposed its own settlement but as you can see we are approaching the problem with a much more open mind. We will solve the critical issue in a manner that is as fair and equitable as possible.

[*Translation*]

Ships' crews and hospital services are the last two groups represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada in the current round of negotiations for a collective agreement. Last March, a temporary agreement was reached with the alliance for 27 groups covering 160,000 employees. Three groups rejected the agreement, which provided for a contract spread over 42 months and an annual wage increase of 4.1 per cent, a settlement I feel is reasonable and fair.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, every effort has been made to reach a settlement with both of the groups that are still outstanding. For ship's crews workers in terms of pay equity, for example, we offered to establish, immediately upon signing, the agreement of pay equity between the east coast and the west coast.

In terms of meeting hospital services workers' demands *vis-à-vis* pay equity we have already acted. Even though this is not an issue in this dispute, some members have referred erroneously to it as an issue. I want to set the record straight. Retroactive pay adjustments totalling \$28 million have already been paid out. We are in the process of paying another \$10 million. We are living up to our obligations, no less.

All these responsible efforts at reaching settlements through the normal process have failed. However, at no

point can the government let a clash of wills take precedence over the safety and security of the public. We must intervene and we are doing so in the fairest way possible by submitting both sides to the decision of an independent third party.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate the government's resolve to ensure the health, safety and security of Canadians, and equally the government's resolve to ensure that its employees are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. We believe that this bill provides for both. I call upon all members of this House to co-operate in ensuring speedy passage of this legislation. It is legislation that is in the national interest. It is legislation that will allow the government to meet those two resolves; ensuring the safety, security and health of Canadians, and providing for a fair and equitable manner of resolving a conflict that now appears to be in a stalemate. I ask colleagues on the other side of the House to sit, discuss, debate this bill but I also ask them to give it speedy resolution. Thank you very much.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Madam Speaker, the fact that this bill is before us at all today is the result of the failure of the government to deal fairly with its employees, to act expeditiously and properly when it should have acted. It is the end of a sorry path of negligence, administrative bungling and mistakes on the part of the government. It is part of a pattern that we have been attacking in this House on debate on a number of issues.

We see here a failure of the government to act when it should have acted to protect the safety, health and security of Canadians through proper legal channels at the proper time.

We see a failure to bargain in good faith, the use at every step of every possible means of delaying the process of collective bargaining. We see a total lack of respect for the people who work for Canada, and particularly we see a determination that those at the lowest end of the salary scale, working for the people of Canada, are the ones who will bear the brunt of the government's arrogance and mismanagement.

We have seen this in a number of other pieces of legislation that we have spoken on in this House, whether it is the unemployment insurance bill or the clawback of Old Age Security, or the clawback of family allowances or tax reform. It is those who are most