

Oral Questions

the IJC will be happy to provide information that falls within its mandate.

I would suggest that if there is a need for a library and some other organizations want one, they should start one.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. We now know that the male-female wage gap is at an unacceptable 32 cent differential. Moreover, the government's proposal to eliminate the Pay Research Bureau, a branch that collects information to set pay and benefits within the Public Service, will further widen that gap.

In light of these statistics, will the minister immediately reinstate funding for the Pay Research Bureau, thus guaranteeing retroactive pay equity settlements within the Public Service?

Hon. Gilles Loisel (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat that this government is committed to pay equity and it has shown it by making the largest settlement ever in the history of any government in the world.

Mr. Valcourt: How much?

Mr. Loisel: It is \$370 million plus \$80 million a year.

I agree that we need to keep careful watch over this and make sure that over the coming years, the situation is improved where warranted. We are very proud of our record on pay equity.

As far as the management of pay within the Public Service is concerned, there are many ways of having access to information about pay in all sectors. We do not need to establish a pay research bureau.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from a public servant who is not too proud of the government's record on pay equity. She has a masters of library science, the lowest paid of all scientific and professional job classifications in the Public Service. This woman loves her work but is forced into taking a masters in public administration in order to break out of the pink collar ghetto.

The future of millions of Canadian working women rests in the hands of this minister. I ask that given that equal pay for work of equal value came into law in 1977, that this minister and this government agree to meet its own pay equity obligations.

Hon. Gilles Loisel (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I have said we are committed to pay equity. We are acting in the most responsible manner and I do not accept the view expressed by the hon. member.

I would add further that through PS 2000 we are making changes which will be very favourable. Classification removal, for example, will give access to women to a greater number of jobs, better training and very full access to equity.

This government has a very good record. We are going to continue to be attentive to this, but we feel that we have respected the law fully.

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OLD AGE PENSIONS

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Last week the government announced a 37-cent increase in old age pensions. This is on top of a whopping 75-cent increase in January. Thirty-seven cents will not buy a glass of milk or a postage stamp.

When is this government going to give seniors the proper funding they need in order to have a decent standard of living?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I never believed that the Liberals would like to have more inflation, but that is exactly what will happen. The member should know that the formula we use is based on protecting the capacity of senior citizens to spend at the same level at which they spent the year before. That formula is calculated every three months.

The question is not the 37-cents on the cheque. This year, with the low rate of inflation, we have protected seniors' capacity to spend money as they did one year ago. I am surprised because I expected that for once the