

Government Orders

freeze applies if he or she is willing to be trained and possibly relocated.

[Translation]

Generally speaking as a fair employer, we recognize that it is in the interest of the government and its employees to ensure continuity as much as possible and to clear up any uncertainties if we are to have a productive and stable workforce.

As regards the relocation of employees affected by the elimination of specific jobs, this government's record is beyond reproach. All but 1,087 employees affected by the government restraint policy since its inception in 1986 were redeployed within the public service. Based on a workforce of 225,000, this would indicate a 99.5 percent job security overall.

We wish to keep this impressive record intact, Mr. Speaker. That is why we have chosen to continue to consult the union on renewing the staff adjustment policy agreed to by the NJC; this policy provides fair protection for employees.

Contracting out is an issue related to the previous one. The government is committed to providing services to Canadians as effectively and efficiently as possible. For this reason, it has sometimes had to turn to the private sector. The idea is not new, nor was it new 30 years ago when the Glassco Commission dealt with the issue of "make or buy". We will not give up contracting out as a responsible way to manage public resources. At the same time, we are sensitive to its impact on our employees and we have discussed it with the union at the National Joint Council.

[English]

Finally, I would like to mention equal pay for work of equal value or pay equity, as it is also known. The government remains committed to pursuing the goals of pay equity through its proper forum, which is the Canadian Human Rights Commission. This is why the work of the commission has been exempted from this bill. We have had a long history of working with the unions on these issues and it was they, as a group, who launched the current legal process with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. This is why we consider it

inappropriate to negotiate the issues separately with individual unions.

[Translation]

Hon. members should also be aware that since 1978, many complaints concerning pay equity were resolved in close cooperation with the unions and the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

In 1990, the government made a retroactive lump-sum payment of about \$317 million to 73,400 public servants. That is almost a third of a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. As part of this move to pay equity, payments of over \$81 million a year continue to be made, and other payments may follow when the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has ruled on the pending cases. It is an important issue involving major expenditures.

[English]

In conclusion, I want to return to a point that I made at the outset. The Public Sector Compensation Act is based on the premise that all of us working in the public sector have a necessary contribution to make to national economic recovery. For the employees of the Public Service, it is not what they deserve in relation to the contribution that they make daily to this country. Unfortunately, the government and the economy generally do not have the capacity to recognize fully this contribution through the compensation that Public Service employees receive. But, we remain prepared to meet with the unions to discuss non-monetary issues outside the areas of compensation covered by the bills.

Dialogue with the unions will continue to be a central feature of the relationship between the government and its employees and it is my strong desire to remain open to the concerns of the Public Service union wherever I can.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, it was not possible to reach agreement under Standing Orders 78(1) and 78(2) concerning allocation of time for second reading of Bill C-29, an Act respecting compensation in the public sector of Canada and to amend another Act in relation thereto. Pursuant to Standing Order 78(3), Mr. Speaker, I give notice of my intention to propose a motion at the next sitting of the House for allotting a certain period of time for the