

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

are in the west block I should like to avail myself of a few minutes to refer to a subject I raised the other day with the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). I should like to state first my philosophy as an optimist, in that I live for the day. I have lived for the day with the belief that the people of Kent County in New Brunswick, where I grew up as a boy, would one day vote Conservative, with the hope that Henry Aaron would hit his 715th home run, and with the hope that the Canadian government would take seriously its objective of overcoming regional disparities and its fight against discrimination.

Today the first objective was achieved when the people of Kent County in New Brunswick voted Conservative. I suspect that Mr. Henry Aaron will hit his record breaking home run in September two years from now, or in April or May of the year following. But until there is a change of government, or a very strong change in heart on the part of this government, we will not reach the objective of seriously overcoming regional disparities in respect of pay. Let me say to the Parliamentary Secretary—no, he has left. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Mr. Danson) is the one who blesses us now with his presence, if I may use that phrase. I shall get around to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Mahoney) in respect of one of his statements in a moment. The other day I asked the President of the Treasury Board the following question:

● (10:00 p.m.)

Will the policy of pay differentials in the regions of Canada, which has been presented as the federal position in the case of nurses, be extended as a matter of policy to other categories—

This appears at page 8353 of *Hansard*. It can be said about the President of the Treasury Board that he may not be wise, but at least he is sincere. The hon. gentleman's answer was the following:

The policy of pay differentials for people not required to have a high degree of mobility has been progressively introduced or proceeded with over the past four years. It is the intention of the government to continue in this direction as it produces a much better relatively and a much greater sense of fairness than attempts to equate unequal parts.

I said immediately, "Ten o'clock" and I meant ten o'clock. There are nurses—I shall deal with them first—employed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, by the Department of National Defence, where it operates hospitals, by the Department of National Health and Welfare and even by the penitentiary service where one nurse is employed. The nurse in the penitentiary service is not serving "time" but is there to assist in that service.

According to H. M. Larsen, research associate for the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, there were 2,027 nurses employed by the federal government in hospitals across Canada last year. Mr. Larsen says that 470 out of 590 nurses who left the federal government payrolls in 1970 were dissatisfied with their salaries and gave this as the reason. The turnover rate is always about 25 per cent. Their complaints boil down to this: salaries are too low, orderlies whom nurses train and supervise sometimes get more money, and nurses work for the same department at different wage levels across the country.

This is the name of whatever the President of the Treasury Board called it when I read his answer a few

[Mr. McCleave.]

moments ago. The fact is that the nurses' agreement expired on December 31, 1970. They have been in a process, first of negotiation and now are before a special board consisting of Mr. Justice Andre Montpetit as chairman and Jean Massicotte and Professor S. M. Jamieson as members of a tribunal of the Public Service of Canada.

What about the view of the Treasury Board in its submission to the tribunal? This is a watershed decision. It is one of the most important decisions we will ever have in the history of Canada in so far as the legislation which is now before us, and which governs the relations of government or Parliament with the Public Service of Canada, is concerned. This is big stuff indeed. This is what the Treasury Board, the great fighter against regional disparity, said:

As a nationwide employer, it is essential that our policy on pay and benefits take into account the rates of pay and patterns of benefits applying to workers in related employment in the private sector.

I say that that is a departure from a policy that was instituted back in the days of Robert Borden when the Civil Service Commission of Canada started its work. That shows how far reaching the decision of the government is, and what little regard is paid to the amenities of the law they have operated under.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Or to the cause of national unity.

Mr. McCleave: In the name of something. It is not in the name of national unity; it is in the name of computerized efficiency. I quote one paragraph from the nurses' brief, and this is where our concentration is going to be:

The concept that one level in the group should have regional rates is peculiar to this group.

I do not think that is so, but that is what the nurses thought.

Of the 28 groups in the scientific and professional category only one other group (education) has regional rates, but in the education group the rates apply at all levels. Regional rates are used because—

Here they quote the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Mahoney), as recorded in *Hansard* at page 7263 on June 22, 1971:

"it has been the board's position that zone pay systems ensure that fair and competitive local rates of pay apply to its employees. It has been demonstrated that there is relatively little mobility among those nurses on zone pay rates and the board therefore feels that zone pay rates are entirely appropriate."

Of course there is little mobility among the nurses in receipt of regional rates of pay. Who in their right senses would offer to perform the same services for the same employer for more than \$1,000 reduction in salary because they crossed a provincial border?

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we have had examples of dealings with the dockworkers in Halifax and Esquimalt where the Treasury Board took the top of a board report for wages at Esquimalt and the bottom of the report for wages in Halifax. This computerized nonsense has to stop somewhere. I hope that I am starting to put a stop to it right now.

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the matter of regional pay differentials as applied to nurses is not some-