

*Government Orders*

Why is this government going through this charade with the PSAC employees? Again, the hon. Minister of Transport mentioned that the strike had been going on for 27 days. These ships crews workers on the east coast have gone through 27 years of wage disparity—27 years! Where is the fairness? Where is the justice in that? I see that none of the members on the other side of the House can even look up. In other words, they are certainly ashamed, and they should be.

In other words, no one here on this side of the House disagrees with the concept of pay equity. The government knows that legally, ethically and morally it has no leg to stand on. The bottom line is that pay inequity is a concept only accepted by dinosaurs, dodo birds and Tories. In other words, no one here in this country with the exception of this government accepts notions of pay inequity as an acceptable standard.

In the Atlantic provinces such employment opportunities, as provided by the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and search and rescue among others, constitute an integral part of the economic and societal life of my city and my province. For 27 years persons within such professions have had to suffer pay inequities with their counterparts in the rest of the country.

Further, to attempt to redress the 27 years of inequality, they have sought the commencement of sea pay, a concept which may be foreign to some central Canadians. It is obviously foreign to the government. But to those who make their living on the high seas, to those who go down to the sea in ships, it is a concept which is absolutely just.

What is most ironic is that this government seems to be holding up negotiations on the issue of sea pay because it will cost some \$2 million annually. We heard the minister speaking previously about the amount of money that it is costing us to hold up the ships in the Great Lakes. We already know, by the way, that most of the ships could get moving.

This is the same government that is paralyzing negotiations with ships crews at a cost to taxpayers of \$2 million a day. This government is either short on sense, God forbid, or long on money, which it certainly would not claim to be, because it would be clear that ending this injustice would pay for itself in three short days.

In Atlantic Canada we have learned what we have to put up with to keep a special way of life. Canadians across the country always look at the easterners as people who will make do with little. Maybe we can put up with a lot and make do with a little, but one value which has remained overwhelmingly consistent is that an honest day's work deserves an honest day's pay. It does not cost any less for easterners to feed their families, house their families, or clothe their families. But the government does not see it this way. For some unexplained reason this government seems to think that it is just to underpay Atlantic Canadians.

This is just another example of the recurrent contradictions inherent in this government, for certain cabinet ministers are not forced to accept wage differentials according to geography, and neither are MPs. Why, then, Madam Speaker, should ships' crews accept wage differentials?

Different standards are unacceptable in a country that alleges to believe in justice and equality. Forcing workers back to work and forcing workers to accept standards which are entirely inconsistent with the values of this country will create moral problems and an innate distrust of government for years to come.

I believe that we must also pay tribute to those in search and rescue who have never failed throughout this strike to respond to emergencies. In every case, the response time has remained under the statutory limits of 30 minutes. It is not a bad record for strikers.

Here I must note that in Kingston, Ontario, today, this government locked out those workers who were keeping themselves on alert for just such an emergency situation. It is great to know that people care. The right to strike must be respected. The right of the workers must be respected. The fact that workers in the east, particularly in the Atlantic provinces, deserve the same treatment as others, should not even be a subject for question.

The need to address 27 years of inequity should not be ignored by a democratic government. In Canada as we move into the 1990s, the concepts of equality should be written in stone. They should not be open to this kind of question. Sadly, however, very little in the way of truth and justice appears to be written in stone for this government.

In closing, let us make no mistake that Haligonians and Atlantic Canadians, ships crews in the east, hospital workers in the east are not pleading. We are not