

*Government Orders*

This is your legacy! How can you explain your tolerating for so long what we are now getting ready to correct?

[English]

**Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Madam Speaker, I am glad that the member entered into this very, very important debate. It is easy for members on the other side to reply to every problem or every question that is posed by saying that it was there when the Liberals were in power. The Conservatives are in power now, but if the Liberals were in power we would have been true to our word with the labour union movement on wage parity. If you do not believe me, look at the results from the last federal election, look at the places where those wage inequities were in place, and look at the stripe of the members that they elected. They were not on your side of the House very many times. Not very many times.

• (1610)

However, the member raises another very important issue. He talked about the fact that this is another strike and there is never quite enough to give and unions are always posturing. I pose a question generally. Is \$21,000 a reasonable remuneration for the occupations that I have just described? How would individuals opposite feel if they worked in a plant and the people on the east side of the plant got paid one rate of pay and the people on the west side of the plant got paid a different rate of pay? It would do a lot for your morale, wouldn't it? It would do a lot to build your morale. Do you think that the federal government should destroy the collective bargaining process by introducing legislation like this when the two sides were lately, at least from what we hear from the front benches opposite, very close?

The outstanding issues are very small. They don't cost a lot of money. We hear that on the seaway the costs could be as much as \$2 million a day while the strike goes on. In order to give them the \$177 a month for sea duty, which I think is pretty reasonable, it would cost less than \$6 million. The wage parity issue would cost less than \$3 million to settle.

In conclusion, I decry this bill and I will do everything to stop it. My colleagues and I believe that it is time that this government gave our public servants the respect, recognition and remuneration they deserve and that this government should go back to the age-old principle of negotiating, not legislating collecting labour agreements with the Public Service of Canada.

**Mr. Peterson:** Madam Speaker, could the hon. member for Dartmouth give to this House even one good reason that he has heard as to why the government supports higher wages on one coast than on the other? Is there one good reason they have come up with?

**Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth):** There is no good reason that wage discrimination should be allowed to be maintained. When the hon. minister opposite, the President of the Treasury Board, was at committee, I asked him about his position on wage parity. When I asked him about wage equity, he said to me that he agreed with the principle. He thought it was something that was very important but that we had to be careful. I said: "Why?" He said: "Because the settlements in the public sector will affect the private sector." I said: "First of all, even if that were true, it's still not reason enough to discriminate against a worker based on where they live."

I rose earlier in this House today on a standing order and talked about a problem in my area of discrimination against the largest native black community in Canada in the Preston area. That is in my area. Unfortunately in the private sector young black men make 42 per cent less on average than their non-black counterparts. Is that reason enough then for the government to say that anybody who is black or in a minority group in that area should get paid less because that is what the private sector gives them? That is utter nonsense. If that situation applies in dealing with minority groups in the private sector, it should equally apply in the Public Service of this country.

If you want to look specifically at the strikers, at the seamen and women on the east coast of Canada, they are getting paid about 32 per cent less than their private sector counterparts.

In conclusion, there is no good reason and it will be political folly for this government to introduce this piece of legislation.

**Mr. Crosby:** Madam Speaker, first let me make a very clear answer to the question asked by my colleague which the member for Dartmouth refused to answer. The President of the Treasury Board, in this House of Commons and elsewhere, has given to the ships' crews in east coast Canada wage parity with the ships' crews on the west coast. All they have to do is sign a collective agreement and they have parity, something that the