

*Government Orders*

I hope members opposite have not thrown away their opportunity for wage equality between ships' crews on the west coast and ships' crews on the east coast because members like myself and my colleague from Annapolis Valley—Hants have fought for this equality for years. In the 11 years that I have been in Parliament, I have raised it hundreds of times. Finally, we have come to the point where this could be a reality.

I hope members of the Liberal party, especially the member for Dartmouth, and members of the New Democratic Party have not thrown that opportunity away because they are going to have to answer to the ships' crews. The ships' crews knew that they had wage equality in their hands. If they lose that wage equality it will be on the hands of the members opposite and the member for Dartmouth can answer for that.

I say to the ships' crews, do not picket my office. Do not come and see me. I had delivered for you wage equality. Picket the Liberal offices. Go to the Public Service Alliance of Canada and ask Daryl Bean why he threw away wage equality on your behalf when we had it in their hands. It was on the table, it was theirs, and Daryl Bean and the Public Service Alliance of Canada gave it away because they wanted to delay this bill. They wanted to suffer through the process of the House of Commons. They wanted the ships to risk tie-up in the St. Lawrence Seaway. They watched ships go down at sea and they did not care. They showed no concern for that.

We could have had this bill passed on December 6. Those ships could be moving, the men could be back to work and they could have a favourable settlement, but they are not simply because the process of the House of Commons and the avarice of the members opposite in their leagues with the Public Service Alliance. They are lackeys of the Public Service Alliance. They would not make their own decision. They would not make the decision in the interest of the people of Canada. They delayed this legislation. The legislation will go through, it will be passed. People will be back to work and they will get fair settlements and those who suffered through the delay can blame the members opposite. The blood is on their hands.

• (1250)

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, I see that I have very little time before the lunch break to respond but I would like to begin by responding to some of the comments that the hon. member opposite made.

He talked about the serious situation being created by this strike and he talked about it as if it were something that materialized the day the strikers went on strike. One fact of life in Canada is that winter comes every year. That means ice comes every year. That means traffic on the Seaway gets into difficulties every year and that sooner or later the Seaway closes down. The shippers are aware of that. The government is certainly aware of that. The ships' crews workers who are on strike are certainly aware of that because they are the ones who go out in those icy waters, keep the channels clear for commerce, for the grain ships, for the oil ships, for the chemical ships, for the ships bringing supplies to communities along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes.

I am mystified totally by the hon. member pretending that these situations only arise because workers are on strike. The fact is that the Saguenay River is frozen which is something that happens every year. The fact is that ice-breakers need to be up and down that river constantly throughout the winter. This happens every winter. It has happened every winter since Confederation, and it happened for centuries before that when nobody was there to see it happen.

The member has done something on which he has been challenged before in this House, on which he has been challenged in committee, and I am going to challenge him once again. Despite the words of the President of Treasury Board, despite the facts of the situation, the member has unconscionably attempted to link this strike and the workers on strike with the tragedy at sea. That is an abuse of his ability to stand and speak in this House with impunity. That is a despicable attempt.

The member knows that in this, as in every other urgent situation at sea, even though these workers have been on strike they have responded and have responded instantly. They have never once failed to meet normal times for normal responses to an emergency or even a potential emergency at sea.