

Board, that the position taken on this side of the House is in any way to continue to prolong a situation that is becoming increasingly grave by the moment, then the minister and the government do not understand the situation.

If there is any misapprehension that somehow my colleagues from Atlantic Canada, the west or along the St. Lawrence Seaway are somehow being dictated to or bludgeoned into accepting the debate on this back to work legislation, who want to see the grain moving, of course they do. People want to see their constituents back to work a couple of weeks before Christmas and having a half decent paycheque coming into the house.

The statement by the Minister of Justice suggests that in fact he has not been listening in this House. If he had been listening, he would have heard the people who represent these workers who live by the ocean and know what 10, 20 and 30-foot waves are like, who know what going out on the ocean in 100-mile-per-hour gales is like, who know what going out on the ocean in 16 degrees below zero is like. The people who have spoken in the House know all these things. They know what is going on in our hospitals because they have been in touch with their constituents.

I have been to the veterans home on Smyth Road in Ottawa. I spent time with those veterans, long before this strike was an issue, long before I knew what hospital service workers were. I spent time in that home and I know the needs of those veterans. I know the ones who are confused and a little out of touch with reality. I know the ones who cannot control their own bodily functions and, therefore, need constant care and attention to ensure that they have basic cleanliness. I also know the people who look after them. I know that this job is not done for the miserable \$16,000, \$17,000 or \$18,000 a year they get paid. It is a job that is done out of love and compassion and caring and wanting these people in their retirement years to be well looked after.

There are people at this home who have spent virtually their whole working life there because it is work that is meaningful and matters to them. I can almost believe that the government knows that is the way they feel about their work, that their patients matter to them,

whether they are working in the laundry making sure the sheets are clean, in the tailor shop to keep things in good repair, in the kitchen to prepare nutritious and tasty meals, or whether they are stripping the soiled bedsheets and making sure the elderly patient is clean and comfortable.

I cannot help but wonder if the government does not know that they do those jobs out of love and real concern for those patients and that, therefore, they withdraw their services very reluctantly, and despite the low wages they will continue to work in that job because they are dedicated and committed. For nearly a decade they have been waiting for fair recognition of the value of work they do, despite a decision of the Human Rights Commission in 1987 that these people have been underpaid by, at that time, an interim amount of \$28 million. This was not something the government did out of the kindness of their heart. It was simply returning to them what was and should have been theirs by rights all along. The member for Ottawa West understands perfectly the issues before us today and for the last week.

• (1540)

I want to go back to the words of the Minister of Justice on Monday morning. I want to go through them very carefully and point out just how lacking his own understanding is of the issue. He states at page 6725 of *Hansard*:

I think everyone—except if one lives in a large city in central Ontario such as Ottawa—who has any experience with the weather and the transportation system in this country appreciates the dangers of the oceans at this time of year.

Well, yes we do. All my colleagues from Halifax, Dartmouth, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and New Brunswick have spoken eloquently on this matter. What they fail to understand is why the government does not understand these dangers. We raised these matters in the House before the strike ever began, and several times since and the government has not understood the urgency of reaching a settlement that would get these people back to work.

My colleague from Dartmouth, particularly, asked about the 1,700 lobster fishermen putting out to sea at a dangerous time of year and under dangerous circumstances because there is a great rush to get to those