



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, March 23, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

## CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 23, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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*Prayers*

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• (1005)

[Translation]

## CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table the 1998 report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to five petitions.

\* \* \*

[English]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association which represented Canada at the joint committee meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly of defence and security, economic and political committees held in Brussels, Belgium, February 14 and 15, 1999.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT, 1999

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 57, I move:

With respect to Government Order, Government Business No. 21, that debate shall not be further adjourned.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1055)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

## Government Orders

(Division No. 354)

## YEAS

## Members

Adams  
Assad  
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bélanger  
Bennett  
Bevilacqua  
Bonin  
Boudria  
Brown  
Caccia  
Cannis  
Carroll  
Cauchon  
Chan  
Clouthier  
Collenette  
DeVillers  
Dion  
Dromisky  
Duhamel  
Eggleton  
Finlay  
Fry  
Gallaway  
Goodale  
Grose  
Harb  
Hubbard  
Iftody  
Jennings  
Karetak-Lindell  
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)  
Knutson  
Lastewka  
Lee  
Lincoln  
Mahoney  
Maloney  
Marchi  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
McCormick  
McKay (Scarborough East)  
McTeague  
Mifflin  
Mitchell  
Myers  
Normand  
O'Reilly  
Paradis  
Peric  
Pettigrew  
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
Proud  
Redman  
Richardson  
Rock  
Scott (Fredericton)  
Serré  
St. Denis  
Stewart (Brant)  
St-Julien  
Telegdi  
Torsney  
Valeri  
Volpe  
Whelan  
Wood—137

Alcock  
Augustine  
Baker  
Barnes  
Bélair  
Bellemare  
Bertrand  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonwick  
Bradshaw  
Bryden  
Calder  
Caplan  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)  
Coderre  
Cullen  
Dhaliwal  
Discepola  
Drouin  
Easter  
Finestone  
Fontana  
Gagliano  
Godfrey  
Gray (Windsor West)  
Guarnieri  
Harvard  
Ianno  
Jackson  
Jordan  
Keyes  
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
Kraft Sloan  
Lavigne  
Leung  
MacAulay  
Malhi  
Manley  
Marleau  
Massé  
McGuire  
McLellan (Edmonton West)  
McWhinney  
Minna  
Murray  
Nault  
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
Pagtakhan  
Parrish  
Peterson  
Phinney  
Pillitteri  
Provenzano  
Reed  
Robillard  
Saada  
Sekora  
Shepherd  
Steckle  
Stewart (Northumberland)  
Szabo  
Thibeault  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Wappel  
Wilfert

## NAYS

## Members

Ablonczy  
Asselin  
Bailey  
Bergeron  
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok  
Bigras  
Borotsik

Alarie  
Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Bellehumeur  
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—  
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Blaikie  
Brisson

Cadman  
Casey  
Chatters  
Cummins  
Desjarlais  
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)  
Duceppe  
Duncan  
Epp  
Gagnon  
Gilmour  
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)  
Grewal  
Guimond  
Hardy  
Hart  
Herron  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Hoepfner  
Johnston  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Lalonde  
Lebel  
Lunn  
Mancini  
Marchand  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
McNally  
Meredith  
Morrison  
Nystrom  
Power  
Ramsay  
Riis  
Robinson  
Schmidt  
Solberg  
St-Hilaire  
Stoffer  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Vautour  
Wasylcia-Leis  
White (North Vancouver)

Cardin  
Casson  
Crête  
Dalphond-Guiral  
Doyle  
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)  
Dumas  
Earle  
Forseth  
Gauthier  
Girard-Bujold  
Gouk  
Grey (Edmonton North)  
Hanger  
Harris  
Harvey  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hilstrom  
Jaffer  
Jones  
Konrad  
Laurin  
Lowther  
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
Marceau  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Mayfield  
Mercier  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Muisé  
Picard (Drummond)  
Proctor  
Reynolds  
Ritz  
Rocheleau  
Scott (Skeena)  
Solomon  
St-Jacques  
Strahl  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Vellacott  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Williams—99

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson  
Bulte  
Debien  
Folco  
Graham  
Longfield  
Patty  
Pratt  
Speller  
Turp

Assadourian  
de Savoye  
Desrochers  
Fournier  
Guay  
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)  
Perron  
Sauvageau  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 21

The House resumed from March 22 consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had two minutes left in my speech and I really wanted to come back today and take all the time available to me to explain the scope of the bill that is now before us.

In these two minutes, I should summarize yesterday's remarks for the benefit of those members who were not here, and perhaps

also for those listeners who are just joining us on the parliamentary channel today.

Yesterday, I accused the Liberal government of being anti-worker and anti-union. I accused it of being unfair, cynical and Machiavellian, for several reasons which, unfortunately, I will not have time to repeat. I will deal with the essential.

Back to work legislation is a prime example; it is not the first time that this government prepares and introduces this kind of legislation. Canada Post workers were hit by such a measure, and so were railway workers. Now, the government is targeting 14,000 low income federal public servants.

Yesterday, among the examples I gave to show that this government is anti-worker and anti-union, I mentioned how slow it has been, and still is, in settling the pay equity issue, and how quick it is to grab the surplus in the federal public service employees pension fund.

• (1100)

I used the example of the Singer employees, who were probably the first victims of this government's refusal to assume its responsibility as trustee, because it was already planning to grab the surplus in the federal public service employees pension fund.

These examples show that this government is clearly anti-worker and anti-union.

I call on the Liberal party to use common sense. It is not too late. I am asking government members to withdraw this bill so that bargaining can continue until a collective agreement is signed by the parties involved.

[English]

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I know it is not summer but suddenly the reruns are here. It seems that we have been in this place before doing exactly the same thing, legislating some group of people back to work. This is certainly a heavy handed approach to take. It does not solve anything.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I do not wish to be impolite in regard to your predecessor, but at the end of the speech by the member for Saint-Jean, I believe the Speaker in the Chair before you neglected to provide the period set aside for questions and comments and immediately sought to have the debate continued.

I would like your comments on that, Madam Speaker, and I would suggest to you, as you were not there, that you confirm this with your clerks, who will be able to enlighten you.

### *Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** In response to the hon. member, when Standing Order 57 is invoked as has just been done, there are no more comments or questions.

[English]

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Madam Speaker, as I was saying, we have done this before. I do not see this as a resolution. I do not see anything being resolved. In most situations somebody should gain something. There should be some winners. When I look at this situation I am hard pressed to find a winner.

What we have now is legislation before us that will put people grudgingly back to work. It will do absolutely nothing to improve the relationship that the employer, the Government of Canada, has with its employees. We have done this over and over again.

The last time we legislated people back to work was over 16 months ago, in 1997 before Christmas, when we legislated the post office people back to work. Those people are still without a contract. As of today they are without a contract. What have we gained? We got the mail moving all right, but we somehow got the government out of its obligation to bargain with and come to settlement with its employees. If that is the kind of situation the government wants, why does it not put it in its policies?

When we had the labour code up for amendment a year ago, the government said that it would be seeking a balance. That was the framework on which the amendments to part I of the labour code were based. This does not seem to be a balance.

The bill covers some 14,000 blue collar workers in Canada, some of whom are not on strike and some of whom will not be eligible for a strike position until this coming Friday. The government has some obligation to come to an agreement with its employees.

• (1105)

We have now experienced closure or at least the limiting of debate in the House 50 times. While I agree that we have an emergency on the business of getting the grain moving again in western Canada, I do not think there was any need for the government to drag its feet to the point where it suddenly feels its back is against the wall with a two week break coming up. It is now in a position where it wants us to agree to put the legislation through the House in all stages in one day. This is simply for the convenience of the government which is, I will point out once again, responsible for the situation we face today.

It is only reasonable to expect people to work without a contract for so long and then there will be some real problems. These people have been to the bargaining table. The President of Treasury Board says that in his estimation they have been totally unreasonable and that Canada simply cannot afford to agree to their demands. We

*Government Orders*

have not been party to those negotiations so we are not sure just how to evaluate the remarks of the President of the Treasury Board.

However, I think the onus falls on the government to make sure that this sort of thing does not arrive at the situation where it is today. The main reason I say this is that it is a recurring thing. Again and again we will be called on to legislate some group of people back to work because of the failure of the government to act in a responsible manner and to arrive at a contract with its employees before it reaches an impasse.

That is why we have advocated for some time now the use of final offer selection arbitration in cases where there is a monopoly situation, where the services cannot be obtained anywhere else and where the withdrawal of those services would have a detrimental effect on an innocent third party such as the grain handlers, and in particular the grain weighers in this case. Some 70 people go on strike and stop the movement of all grain in western Canada to port.

Final offer selection arbitration is a tool that can be used equally well by management and by labour. By putting in place a mechanism that will require both parties to place their final offer, their bottom line, in writing before a mutually agreed to arbitrator or panel, they may possibly bargain so earnestly and fine-tune their position to the point where there will not be any need for an arbitrator to make any decision at all. The result will be that final offer selection, used to its ultimate, is not used at all. We firmly believe that the best settlement is a negotiated settlement.

I would like to quote from page 18 of the Reform Party's blue book which clarifies where we are coming from as far as labour relations are concerned. It states:

The Reform Party supports the right of workers to organize democratically, to bargain collectively and to strike peacefully.

At the same time we believe certain services in Canada should not be interrupted because it would have a detrimental effect on the country's economy and innocent third parties would be damaged by the removal of those services. We therefore suggest that in those situations final offer selection arbitration be used.

• (1110)

Some people have said that final offer selection arbitration will take away the right to strike from people. I counter by saying I do not think it will at all. It will not take away the right to strike any more than a negotiated settlement will take away the right to strike. Maybe it will take away the need to strike, but so does a negotiated settlement. If the settlement is arrived at and agreed to by both parties, there is no need for a strike.

Let us be perfectly clear. I cannot think of any union or any unionized person who would relish the thought of going into a

strike. It is very traumatic for them, for their families and for their bank accounts to make the decision to strike. When they do they are trying to pry an intransigent party away from its position and back to the table to continue to negotiate.

**An hon. member:** Why are you smiling?

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** In spite of my smile I think this is a very important and very serious situation. I would also like to read from the blue book regarding labour policy. It says:

The Reform Party supports the harmonization of labour-management relations and rejects the view that labour and management must constitute warring camps.

It would seem to me that in this situation the government has taken exactly the opposite view of what the Reform Party has articulated as our labour policy. It is very difficult to arrive at a negotiated settlement when we are in a situation where we are constantly ordering people back to work.

Daryl Bean of the Public Service Alliance of Canada warned the government that it would use grain as a lever in this round of negotiations. That should come as no surprise to anybody, because it has been done over and over and over again. We cannot simply point our finger at the labour union in this case and say that it brought about this stalemate, that it is entirely its fault. It would be absolutely false to say that.

There is also an unwillingness on the part of the government to come to an agreement. We have to overcome that. The best way to do that is through the process known as final offer selection arbitration whereby people can arrive at a negotiated settlement through a little pressure from a third party.

It is very interesting that recently the government decided to remove binding arbitration from PSAC workers and then a short time later legislated them back to work. I know we are not supposed to impute motive in this place, but we have to wonder if there is a lot more to this situation than meets the eye.

Twenty minutes is a long time to talk about back to work legislation. We will be presenting an amendment to the bill. We would very much like to see it include the use of final offer selection arbitration. We feel that anything less than that is simply a stop gap measure that does nothing whatsoever but grudgingly put parties back on the job. It does nothing whatsoever to deal with the contract or to smooth labour-management relations.

This is not the first time we have had such an amendment presented, but I hope this time we get unanimous or at least majority consent to pass the motion. We see it as a tool that could be used over and over again and we would not have to go through an extremely painful process for everybody.

*Government Orders*

• (1115)

I still have six minutes remaining, although I am not obliged to use the six minutes.

We have a big problem with the negligence we are seeing. This unethical, undemocratic government has rammed this back to work legislation down the throats of its workers. It is also limiting the amount of debate. Some of my colleagues are very anxious to speak to this item and we are being restricted in the amount of intelligent thought that we can put into this very serious matter.

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we are debating an important issue today, one which my party has concerns about. Back to work legislation, particularly in regard to the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the current strike, is an issue we take most seriously, especially considering that mechanisms are in place whereby the government could have resolved the matter.

My understanding is that the difficulties have been under negotiation for some two years. The fact that no resolution has come forward is almost an indictment of the government and its lack of effort to bring this matter to some kind of closure.

I am particularly concerned about my part of the country because one of the fundamental issues in this strike is the regional rates of pay. The government has refused to acknowledge and negotiate that. Regional rates of pay means that people who are doing exactly the same work are paid less in one part of the country than people in another part of the country. Not surprisingly a bulk of those people who are paid less reside in Atlantic Canada, one part of the country that can least afford low wages.

I will address that particular issue because it affects my region. It affects other regions. It is interesting to note, and the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre raised this yesterday, that in the back to work legislation there is some reference to those particular regional rates of pay. The government is suggesting that it will reduce the number of regions from 10 to 7. It is talking about combining Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, and I suppose we will have Nova-Saskatchewan. It is another way of saying that people in western Canada and eastern Canada will receive less pay than people in other parts of the country. And the government wonders why there is western and eastern alienation.

How long has this been going on? I believe regional rates of pay were imposed in 1922. There have been some changes since 1922.

**An hon. member:** Not in the NDP though.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** A member opposite says not in the NDP. In some ways we have held true to our principles, unlike the government party which we have seen slide to the right as pressure from the Reform Party mounts.

The hon. member is right. There are some things we in the NDP have not given in on, unlike members of the Liberal Party. They have given in on things like labour legislation. They have given in on things like the right to strike. They have given in on the fundamental democratic right to debate issues in this House. That is why there is closure today.

• (1120)

The hon. member wants to heckle and call out where the NDP stands on certain issues. I welcome those suggestions.

Going back to when this legislation was introduced, it was in 1922, three years after the Winnipeg general strike and about six years before the great strikes in Cape Breton which led to the death of William Davis, one of the great labour leaders in my province. I had the pleasure and the honour of being in Winnipeg recently. I got to see where that great strike happened, where the workers of this country stood together to fight for fair labour standards. I come from a part of the country where people have shed blood for the right to strike for fair labour standards. Yet today, many years later, we stand in this House with back to work legislation being imposed with closure by the government so we cannot even have a full debate.

It was introduced in 1922, before the second world war, and the government still justifies regional rates of pay. Think about it. In Vancouver, British Columbia and all across the country there have been all kinds of developments. Back then people were still taking trains to get from one end of the country to the other but since then, the Liberal and Conservative governments have seen to dismantling the train lines. Now people fly, those who can afford to. It is a measure of how out of touch the government is when it still defends a policy that was in place before Mackenzie King. It is archaic.

What does it mean to the workers in my part of the country? I have some statistics. It means that in Nova Scotia a private sector carpenter will earn on average \$20.49 per hour. Someone who works for the people of Canada through the government will receive \$13.92 an hour. What it means in Nova Scotia is that a private sector electrician will earn \$22.53 while a PSAC worker will earn \$15.38. A private sector labourer will earn \$17.79 while a PSAC worker will earn \$12 on average. A private sector plumber will earn \$23.50 while a PSAC plumber will earn \$16.89.

Not only are there regional rates of pay which discriminate against workers in different parts of the country, but when we compare what the PSAC blue collar workers are receiving in comparison to the private sector, we see the need for amendments and changes.

We understand and I ask Canadians who are watching the debate to understand the frustration of workers in one part of the country who are being told they cannot be paid the same as their brothers

*Government Orders*

and sisters in other parts of the country and who are facing that huge wage gap between the public and the private sector. Why are they so frustrated? Why have they taken to strike? It is not because they wanted to but because of those very issues.

These are the people who have borne the price of the deficit fight on their backs. There is no question that the gap between the rich and the poor in this country has increased steadily. We know that over the last eight or nine years—and I think it has been seven years since these people have had a raise—wages have been frozen and clawed back for the public sector employees.

The Minister of Finance and the members of the Liberal government stand and applaud themselves for fighting the deficit. The reality is that it has been fought on the backs of the very people who today are standing outside and asking why they are being denied a marginal increase in pay.

The government will answer that in many ways. Yesterday in answer to questions one of the members of the government said that it would be inequitable to have the same rates of pay across the country, that somehow that is unfair.

• (1125)

The interesting thing about that is the people who are receiving the regional rates of pay represent 3% of the entire public service. If I were one of the other 97%, I might be a little concerned that the government's notion of fairness was going to find its way into the rest of the public service. If the government thinks it is unfair to give people who do the same work across the country the same pay, then those who are receiving the same amount of pay whether they are in Halifax, Sydney, Vancouver, Regina, or Toronto had better watch very carefully.

I dare say if the government were to suggest that members of parliament were to receive a change in their take home pay based on where they lived and what part of the country they represented, we might very well see a different debate in this House.

The government has some concerns about the movement of grain. It is important. No one should diminish the importance of the movement of grain to the farmers. Farmers themselves understand the difficulties faced by these labour unions.

Let us not forget that the mightiest combination that has moved us toward significant progress has been the alliance between labour and farmers. That was the foundation of the beginning of progressive movements in this country.

In my own province the labour movement and the farmers of Nova Scotia joined together and formed a political party and nearly

captured the government. This was a very brief period in Nova Scotia history. Only by doing that did Nova Scotia begin to move progressive legislation forward in the areas of minimum wage, the right to organize and the right to strike.

I think the farmers who are being hurt by this legislation understand how important it is to join forces. That being said, the blame as to why farmers are suffering lies squarely at the feet of the government.

As I said in my opening remarks, this new labour situation did not fall like rain from heaven, unknown and not forecast by the weatherman. This dispute has been simmering for a long time. Regional rates of pay, cuts and clawbacks to the civil service are not brand new, or they should not be brand new to the government. Anyone who works and operates in any city or county of this country knows the terrible price the public service has paid to balance the books for this government.

This should have come as no surprise. Realistically, anyone with any foresight could have seen that without some settlement there was going to be strike action. And if there was strike action, it was going to end up hurting the shipment of grain across the country. It was going to end up shutting down public service buildings. It was going to end up hurting people who receive unemployment insurance cheques. It was going to end up hurting people waiting for income tax returns. It was going to hurt most Canadians. Surely be to God, the government, which represents and is supposed to act in the best interests of Canadians, should have seen that coming and should have done something about it.

The farmers are frustrated because the grain cannot move. Elderly people are waiting for cheques from the government. Many thousands of people who are without work are waiting for unemployment cheques, those who are entitled to unemployment under this government's legislation, those few who still qualify. People are waiting for other cheques from this government or for government services and are not receiving them because of this strike. Those people need not look far to determine where to point the finger. Point the finger at the government and its failure to act and its failure to take into account what was going to happen.

There is plenty of evidence. The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance report "Retention and Compensation Issues in the Public Service" implied that it would be in the public's interest to settle the labour dispute in a fair manner. That is a report that comes from the Liberals and the Conservatives in the Senate. Nevertheless, it is something I am sure that was brought to the attention of the government in its own caucus meetings.

• (1130)

Let us look at the cost to the government to settle this dispute. My understanding is that to settle this dispute would have cost the

*Government Orders*

government perhaps \$8 million. It is worth noting that the wheat board costed the loss of one contract at \$9 million, slightly more than the cost to the government of reaching an agreement.

We are here today facing closure in the people's House on a fundamental piece of legislation that forces people back to work, that does not respect the right to negotiate, that will not look at arbitration in terms of a settlement. We are here debating that when it was foreseeable, when it was coming at us like the *Titanic*. There is nowhere for this blame to rest except at the feet of the government.

That being said, members of my party will continue to fight against the kind of tactics which have been used. Yesterday morning the opposition parties were given a piece of legislation that I think is 150 pages in length. We were given a piece of legislation in which the actual imposition of the back to work legislation was not highlighted. We were given a piece of legislation in which the figures were not costed. We had to rely on doing that ourselves, in a short period of time. We do not mind doing it ourselves, but when we are given that kind of document less than 24 hours before this government tries to impose a settlement, it is absolutely unfair. It is absolutely undemocratic. It takes away from what Canadians want in the House, which is reasoned debate on real issues that matter to Canadians.

We play political games with the lives of thousands of workers who are on strike and the thousands of farmers who are depending on grain shipments. That is the approach that the government uses.

It is no wonder that people get cynical about politics. They say "Why is the debate ongoing and taking so long?" It is ongoing because there has not been a proper process followed by the government. That has not been followed simply because the government did not want to admit that it did not see this coming.

We end up taking up a huge amount of time in this Chamber dealing with what could be dealt with in a more rational way. While we are doing that other important legislation has been moved aside. One has to wonder about the subtle implications of that.

It was only yesterday that we began debating the Minister of Justice's new young offender legislation. That has all been moved now, that important legislation, because this government has not followed the proper process. Other areas of important debate get deferred while we continue to try to deal with this back to work legislation.

It is regrettable that we are here today in this situation. It is unnecessary that members of the House of Commons find themselves in this situation. It is unfair to those whose livelihoods are being affected and who are waiting for the outcome of this legislation.

It is poorly drafted legislation. It was pointed out by the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre yesterday that the clauses are written

in French and English, and one clause has been modernized while the other has not. It has been mentioned that the government forgot our newest territory when determining what the regional rates of pay would be. The government forgot to include Nunavut.

Perhaps the government should have taken its time to craft in a better way the legislation that comes before the House and given the opposition members appropriate time to review that legislation, instead of playing politics with the lives of people in this country, with the lives of the workers in this country, with the lives of the farmers in this country and with the lives of the taxpayers in this country, those who can least afford to have politics play with their lives.

It is with regret that I stand here seeing democracy eroded, seeing workers' rights eroded, seeing the things that Canadians have fought so hard and so long for eroded, to keep in place regional rates of pay from 1922 and to keep in place unfair worker discrimination from an era long gone.

• (1135)

This may have worked at a time when there was not the kind of information and communication that there is today. Today a worker in Sydney, Nova Scotia knows what his brother, a carpenter, is making in Vancouver, British Columbia. Today someone who is a plumber in Toronto knows what someone in Winnipeg is making. The government can not hide that from them. It does not have a rationale. We all keep waiting for a rationale from the other side to tell us how regional rates of pay can be justified. There is no logic. The answer is deafening in its silence. That silence is what the people who are in the public service alliance will remember in the next election.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues in the Bloc and the NDP for giving me this spot. As I sat and listened to the speech of my colleague from Wetaskiwin, I felt that as a farmer I wanted to fair. I felt it was another opposition member who probably should speak. I did not know that I was in line. But thanks to their kindness, they gave me my spot back.

There was a lot of truth in what we heard from the hon. member of the NDP. When I got into my office this morning the first thing I was told was that there were four PSAC strikers in my constituency office in Portage La Prairie. I dreaded the thought of talking to these people because I had always been given the impression by certain factions that they were probably very harsh and probably very unreasonable. The way government members explained it is that they could not deal with these people because they were asking far too much. I found exactly the opposite.

We talked on the phone with these people for about half an hour. I asked them what they wanted me to do. I said that a large percentage of my constituents were farmers. I also said that I have

*Government Orders*

a lot of PSAC workers in the department of defence and in the prisons. I asked which side I was supposed to represent. I said that I knew the farmers were in dire straits and that they have to have cash flow to put in their crop this spring. I also said that I knew they had not had an increase for six years. He said "Mr. Hoepfner, you are wrong. We have not had an increase for eight years".

When I see people who have waited for eight years to get a wage increase from this government, and I see this government that has in the last year and half given a 10% increase to the other place, followed by another 6% increase in wages, I know that something is wrong. That is simply negligence. I would call it even worse than that, and maybe say words that I should not use in the House, when an ordinary person who puts bread on their table cannot get an increase in eight years. We know what the cost of living has been. We know how taxes have increased in eight years. How are these people supposed to live?

I said to these people that I wanted them to support me in this back to work legislation, but I would make very sure that this government would get fire under its rear end so that it finally recognizes that their members are not the only ones who want an increase. The ordinary blue collar workers also want an increase. They deserve it and they have to have it.

How much does this government care about farmers? How much does it care about the ordinary individual? A prime example is what we experienced last year. The Ontario farmers voted 92% in favour of a voluntary wheat board so they could market some of their grain for a better price. What did this government do? It, along with the Ontario government, legislated against it. It listened to the manufacturers who said that if the farmers could sell their grain into the U.S. they may have to pay a higher price because they would not have the product.

• (1140)

There is a very simple solution to this issue of striking dock workers or railway men. Give farmers the choice to market their grain. They will take it across the border where there is no problem in moving that grain. They will probably have to pay a few cents a bushel extra for freight, but they will have a cash flow.

I want to read some statistics which show why I am so determined that this problem could be easily resolved. Morris Dorosh writes in the *Financial Post*:

Export shipments of the grains (wheat and barley) over which the Wheat Board has a legislated monopoly so far in the 1998-99 crop year are down 41% from the year-ago rate, and down 30% from the five-year average.

Do not tell me that these few days of rotating strikes have decreased that kind of movement of grain.

He further states that exports of non-durum wheat are down 44%, that durum is only down 18% because of the pasta plants in North Dakota, and that barley is down 64%.

He goes on to say:

Exports of leading Western Canadian crops that the Wheat Board does not handle are up 39%. Canola exports are 63% higher than a year ago and a record for the period. Flax export shipments of half a million tonnes are 13% higher than a year ago and the highest to this date in at least 15 years. Exports of Canadian oats are an all-time record for the first 31 weeks. . .

There is a problem, but it is not the workers at the ports. The problem is with the management and with the selling of these products. Management does not have to be accountable or efficient. They just have to sit and watch things go on as usual, while drawing high salaries, which has been the fact in the past.

This gentleman says:

So what happened to those advantages of the export monopoly? Where is the power and the glory of single-desk selling now? If this is orderly marketing, give me chaos.

That is exactly how the farmers feel.

It is not the workers at the ports. We have seen that with all the non-board grains. It is not that the railways are ineffective in moving this stuff. It is the monopoly that controls the management of these sales.

I would say that is negligence by a government when we have a decrease of 600 million to 700 million bushels of board grains that are being shipped when there is an increase in population in the world of at least 80 million. No one can tell me that these people are eating that much less food that they do not need these bread wheats or grains.

Reform opposed back to work legislation five years ago and suggested that we should have the final offer selection agreement. Today the unions are telling me they are tired of striking. They are tired of using the defenceless farmers as a lever. They do not want to do that. They are human and know that people have to live. However, they feel that is the only lever they seem to be able to use to make government react.

These people have been in a legal strike position for 90 days. As we heard my hon. colleague from Wetaskiwin say, some of the agreements are not finished yet and they were ordered back to work a year and a half ago or two years ago. This is not the way to run a country. This is what a heavy-handed government delivers when it will not listen or react to what needs to be done.

• (1145)

The PSAC workers, and I hope the facts they gave me are correct, were telling me that their gross paycheque was \$24,000 a year. How many people today can have a decent livelihood with \$24,000 a year? They still have to pay taxes on that. They still have to feed their families. They still have to clothe their children. It is ridiculous. It is a crime. That is the way I call it.

*Government Orders*

This is what farmers are fighting for. They want a decent return. They do not care about becoming millionaires. They want a decent return for their product, and they are willing to share. We can see that with the food grains bank. No matter how tough it is, farmers donate thousands of tonnes to the Canadian food grains bank. They see suffering and they want to help.

After talking to the PSAC workers this morning for half an hour or so I really felt sorry for them. They are in a position where they have very little clout and they have to use the food line to force government to a settlement. That should never happen in a democracy. That should never be the fact in the House of Commons, but it is.

If we do not change the system to give fairness, to give the opportunity to provide for families, we will some day experience what we are seeing in Kosovo and those areas today. Eventually people will revolt where they are kept handicapped or where they are imprisoned with government legislation that does not give them opportunities other people have.

How much has this country lost because of these strikes? I can bet my farm on that and I am not that big a gambler. If farmers got back all the money that was lost by them on work stoppages, they could probably all retire right now and have a nice bank account.

The worst of that situation is that the money they lost did not stay in this country. The money they lost went to foreign shipping companies and for demurrage. The money they lost went to pay penalties for non-deliverance of the grain they shipped. The money they lost in grain sales is foreign dollars that should have come into this economy. It is not just the losses that the farmers have been asked to bear, it is the whole economy that has lost these dollars.

When we look at statistics and some of the big private analysts telling us that every dollar that agriculture makes has a multiplier effect of \$5 or \$6 to the economy, we have a bit of an idea of what it could have done for this country. It could probably have provided for all our social costs. But no, we will not listen. We will not take the bull by the horns, as we say on the farm, and wrestle the critter down.

This critter that has allowed these types of work stoppages is not due only to the Liberal government. Work stoppages went on the whole nine years of the Conservative regime. This is a grave disease that nobody seems to be able to cure. What will it take for this country to realize this? What will it take for the government to realize this? Opposition parties realize it and have blasted the government for the last five or six years that I have been here.

Government members do not know how to listen. I do not know whether they all need hearing aids or what they need to finally listen to some good input from this side of the House. To me it sounds like they have silencers that we use on heavy machinery over their ears. The problem with that is if there is a problem with the machine and there is some kind of bearing squealing, they

cannot hear it. There are 100 and some bearings squealing over here but that machine out there cannot hear it. They will let the whole thing break down before they will fix it. Then they will blame us and ask why we did not pull those lousy earmuffs off their ears so they could hear.

• (1150 )

We are not allowed to do that in the House. We are supposed to be very gentle but sometimes I feel like walking over to the other side and screaming "there's a problem, are you listening?" People are not working. They cannot get a paycheque. Farmers cannot ship their grain. There is a problem.

**An hon. member:** We are trying to fix it.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner:** They are fixing it, all right. What they are doing is draining the bit of grease out of the bearing that is still there so it will seize completely. That is what the government is liable to do.

The first John Deere combines that came out were all fixed with Japanese bearings. They had tried to build a good combine with cheap bearings. It was not very many months before farmers found out these suckers would not run. They had to replace all the bearings.

Probably the opposition is starting to realize that until we replace the machines on that side the bearings will be squealing all the time, or seized. There is no way that the machine of government can run. This is a problem we have been dealing with for five years and there is no fix in sight.

This is the example PSAC workers are telling us. It is broken. It is dilapidated and it is getting rusty. Very soon we will not even see the red colour on it. It will be just rust. It will look like the metal has been eaten through and there is some dirty dust underneath it.

**An hon. member:** What about the Reform?

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner:** The Reform over there would not do any good anymore because the machine has to be replaced. It is completely shot. It has to be replaced.

How we will do it we do not know but I know they are helping us by reacting to people like these PSAC workers. They will not forget at the next election that they were promised certain things and they never happened.

I tried to warn the government about the Manitoba flood area. It was out very gallantly during the flood with its chequebook and \$5,000 cheques were written to anybody who had seen water in that area. It said it would set the guidelines later on so that people would have a good thing out of the flood.

*Government Orders*

Lo and behold all of a sudden the guidelines have changed. It wants the money back. The poor people who went through that flood will not forget that by the time the next election rolls around. They will not forget that at all and I can guarantee that the riding of Provencher will be sitting with the government on that side. That is where it is now but it will be under a different name.

**An hon. member:** It will be NDP.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner:** We will see about that. I know there is a change coming. Everybody knows that. Nobody has to gaze into a crystal ball because when the unions are against you, when the farmers are against you, when the doctors are against you, when the nurses are against you, who is left? The only ones supporting the government are in that other place and they do not have too much clout anymore.

It is very sad but it is true that under circumstances where we could have saved money for a rainy day, when we had a tremendous economy, we blew it. Now with an economy that is stretched to the hilt we are trying to rectify some of that. We are trying to rebuild a health system. We are trying to rebuild a railway system. We are trying to rebuild a road system. We are trying to rebuild everything. That will not fly well in the next election, that we have allowed the system to deteriorate to a point where everything needs fixing.

When there is one segment of an industry that is suffering or in trouble it is not that big a job. It is to fix everything. In Saskatchewan the roads are out of shape. The elevators are closing down. Everything is going against the economy. How in heaven can it continue? I do not think it can.

• (1155)

That is why I am trying to tell this government today that instead of taking a band-aid approach to this labour problem it should fix it properly. Give these people a chance to bargain in good faith with government. That is all they are asking for.

They told me they were so close to an agreement that it was not even worth mentioning the difference between what they would accept and what they were offered, and then the government had to order back to work legislation. It should not be necessary. Those people would go back to work if the government would sit down in good faith and bargain with them. That is all they want and that is all farmers want. Farmers want those people to work and to have a decent livelihood. When a farmer sees they are getting \$24,000 a year and they have not had a raise in the last eight years, how can the government call them irresponsible?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak this morning to Bill C-76.

However, 76 reminds me of other things. It rings another bell. It was the year the Parti Québécois took office under René Lévesque.

I would quickly like to relate a bit of history before speaking to this debate. In 1966, the sovereignists received 8% of the vote; in 1970, 23%; and in 1973, 30%. Finally, in 1976, we came to power.

I will now move on to Bill C-76, which is anti-union and discriminatory legislation. I will quote two newspaper headlines “Treasury Board President imposes special legislation”, and “Ottawa forces blue collar workers back to work”. The same article had this to say about the government House leader “The Leader of the Government in the House, one of the Liberal members who sided with PSAC workers in 1991, when Brian Mulroney’s Conservative government had imposed wage freezes—”

It is pretty surprising that these people are now singing a different tune. Back then, the Leader of the Government in the House was one of the so-called rat pack, which also included the present Minister of Canadian Heritage, the maverick Liberal MP for York South—Weston, a former candidate for the leadership of the Liberal Party and a former candidate for the position of Speaker of the House of Commons, whom the Liberal Party finally kicked out of its ranks. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell backed the alliance in those days. These members were dubbed the rat pack, and were known for giving the Progressive Conservative Party a hard time.

I could draw an analogy with France in the year 500 when Saint Rémi, while baptizing King Clovis of France, told the king to burn what he had worshipped. This is exactly what the present Leader of the Government in the House is doing. Having once defended the alliance, he is now going after it with special legislation.

The purpose of Bill C-76 is to force striking public servants of bargaining table 2 back to work. The bill also gives the government considerable leeway to impose whatever working conditions and salaries it wishes, including for correctional officers who have a strike mandate.

The federal government is pointing to the lost revenues of Prairie farmers and the backlog of tax returns due to picketing as justification for its bulldozer tactics.

• (1200)

I will give a brief historical background on public service negotiations.

Employer-employee relations between the federal government and public servants are governed by the Public Service Staff Relations Act, which came into effect in 1967. Placing public servants under this negotiating framework took them out of the broader framework of the Canada Labour Code.

*Government Orders*

At the time, the government justified this particular arrangement by committing to be a good employer as far as pay and working conditions are concerned, and by not taking advantage of its size and power to control the market.

Since then, particularly since the Liberals took office in 1993, these principles have been betrayed in every possible way. Using its legislative power, the government has falsified, undermined and subordinated the process of negotiation as no other employer could do. It has done so with its series of cutbacks, which have impacted heavily on public servants, and with its attempts to manipulate the taxpayers with demagoguery and the government's sizeable communication resources, as well as to abuse the House of Commons system, by giving MPs insufficient time and information to debate the matter thoroughly, as is the case now.

The federal government has abrogated the right to negotiate 8 times in the past 15 years. For 11 of those years, shipboard and hospital personnel have worked under a non-negotiated regime imposed by the federal government by legislative means, each time under the pretext that it was for the good of Canadians.

Those who work for the federal government have had to endure a whole series of unilaterally imposed laws. To name but a few, in August 1982, Bill C-124 froze the salaries of some 500,000 public servants. In December 1989, there was the back to work legislation, Bill C-49. With Bill C-29 in October 1991, the employer threatened unilateral imposition of its offer if it were not accepted.

The Labour Relations Board characterized this approach as unethical. The International Labour Organization noted that the federal government's action imposed serious restrictions on bargaining and urged the government to return to unrestricted bargaining.

Later, Bill C-113 imposed, in April 1992, a two year freeze and the unilateral extension of the collective agreement. The ILO lambasted the government for its lack of support of union rights.

In June 1993, Bill C-101 accorded the government the right to impose a vote on its final offers in any negotiations.

Now we come to the government currently in office, the Liberal Party. Bill C-17, in June 1994, continued the freeze for another two years and extended the collective agreement—six consecutive years of salary freeze. Once again, the ILO criticized the process.

With Bill C-31, still with the Liberals in office, in 1996, the federal government took up contracting out. In 1992, it closed the Pay Research Bureau, thus getting around having to take into account the facts and figures that disproved its assertions.

Bill C-26, on public service reform in 1993, gave the employer a significant advantage, judge and jury once again, on issues in the workplace.

As members know, up to now, the governments that have held office each in turn, be they Conservative or Liberal, have always been anti-union.

Bill C-76 is intended to bring about the return to work of public service employees currently on strike.

• (1205)

The bill also gives the government a lot of power to impose working conditions and salaries, including on correctional officers, who have a strike mandate.

Negotiations with correctional services employees, at table 4, led to a majority conciliation report, which was unanimously approved by union members. The employer tabled a minority report and the government should simply take into account the majority report that was submitted by a third party.

Negotiations at table 2, which concern general labour and trades, ships' crews, hospital services, general service and firefighters, did not lead to a majority conciliation report, since the chair of the conciliation board, the employer and the union tabled three different proposals. The gap between the offers from the employer and the union are not insurmountable, provided the government acts in good faith, something it is not doing right now.

Here is what is included in the bill. The government's offer for table 2 is lower than its previous proposal, and it is not the first time this happens. Sometimes, groups negotiate and when they are subjected to back to work legislation, the offers are invariably lower than those made previously.

The federal government was originally offering 2.75%, but has now lowered its proposed increase to 2.50%. As I said earlier, the government is obviously trying to take advantage of a situation where it is both judge and jury. It is to be noted that the salaries for workers represented at table 2 have been frozen for six years.

In addition to the pay increase, the other stumbling block is the regional rates of pay. It seems the government's offers are negligible in this regard. The government's offer for table 4 is unknown. There is a majority conciliation report, but the government seems to be ignoring it. The bill would allow the government to impose its own conditions, without taking into account the conciliation report that was unanimously approved by the union.

Here is the position of the Bloc Quebecois on Bill C-76. With this special legislation, the government is attempting to impose a collective agreement on table 2 and 4 employers, under the pretext of serving the taxpayers' interests. Quite some feat, when what the government really wants is to make use of them to violate the rights of workers.

*Government Orders*

In fact, the picketing could come to an end today, if the government wanted that to happen. It would merely have to accept the majority conciliation report for table 2 and binding arbitration for table 4.

Generally speaking, we are opposed to the use of special legislation, which would have the effect of denying the fundamental right to strike, particularly in the case of workers who have had to put up with this same treatment on numerous occasions already. On the other hand, we regret the inconvenience that the picketing by public servants has caused to Quebeckers and Canadians.

What we in the Bloc Québécois want, is for an agreement to be reached between the government and the workers of tables 2 and 4, and for the services to which the public is entitled to be restored. There is a way of doing this: the government finally sits down at the bargaining table and negotiates in good faith, once and for all.

At table 4, a majority conciliation report accepted unanimously by the union is not taken into consideration by the bill. One wonders why, since this is a worthwhile agreement, one proposed by an independent conciliator, which the union finds acceptable and which would make it possible to avoid a strike. All of the fundamental principles of labour relations would be respected.

At table 2, the union says it is fully prepared to go to arbitration. It therefore agrees to bow to the judgment of an independent adjudicator, and the picketing would thus cease immediately. The problems cited by the government in order to impose the bulldozer legislation would cease to exist.

• (1210)

And what does the government have to say? That the union demands are unreasonable. If the union demands are so unreasonable, why refuse arbitration? What has this government got to lose?

In fact, this bill is nothing more than a show of strength in order to impose a collective agreement and avoid the usual process.

Our position is clear: the freedom to organize supposedly exists in Canada, and when they have good reason to do so, workers go on strike. That is part of a fair balance of power, except when the employer is the government and abuses its legislative power. Special legislation should be kept as a last resort, until the government returns to the bargaining table with an offer that is acceptable to the workers and resolves the problem democratically, in a civilized manner, through negotiations.

As a former trade unionist with the CEQ and the CSN, I cannot agree with Bill C-76. Like my Bloc Québécois colleagues and my colleague from Trois-Rivières, I will oppose this bill.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise today actually in disappointment as this is the 50th time in the Liberals' reign that they have invoked closure. We talk about a democracy in this country. It is actually a capitulated democracy.

I preface my remarks around something that farmers would understand. Bill C-76 is legislation that looks like it came out of the south end of a northbound cow. It is absolutely disgusting that this 530 page piece of trash is not even properly done. It ignores Nunavut. It ignores other aspects. The French and English translation of this bill is not even proper and there are many other errors in it, but unfortunately we will not have the opportunity to go through it word for word because the government is ramming it down our throats and the throats of the Canadian people.

A news release by Treasury Board states "The government wishes to impose a collective agreement". I know that when the government changed unemployment insurance to employment insurance it had a new thesaurus. It changed the English language. Now it is changing it to imposing a collective agreement. For those listening, for those in the House today and for the 300 PSAC workers outside the House of Commons right now in protest who will be joined by thousands of others across the country, we cannot impose a collective agreement.

The word collective means together, labour and management come together with their own imperatives of what they would like to see for the next two or three years, the length of the collective agreement, and then they agree.

In all my years of labour negotiations when they cannot agree, that is when they get a third party, either a conciliator or an arbitrator. That person's ruling would be binding on both parties for the length of the collective agreement.

The government does not even want to go that route. It wants to impose a collective agreement. I have never heard that in my life. I have only been on this planet for 43 years. It wants to impose a collective agreement. That is absolutely ridiculous.

While we are talking about the Liberal government, last night in the late show I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board a question on regional rates of pay. This is his response, as reported in *Hansard*, on ending regional rates of pay:

That would make it inequitable for many people in the process. It would mean excessive income for some in certain areas [of the country].

• (1215)

Can we imagine it being excessive when a person making \$11 an hour now has his or her salary bumped over a three to four year period to \$15 an hour? I do not know a place in the country where \$15 an hour would be considered excessive. That is right from the lips of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

It is absolutely unbelievable that the President of the Treasury Board said in the House that members of parliament were paid differently depending on where they lived. That is absolutely not true. Some ministers may get an extra stipend, but the basic rate of pay for parliamentarians is exactly the same no matter where they live in the country. Whether we live in my beautiful riding of Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley, in Malpeque, P.E.I. or in Vancouver we get paid the same. That is a basic fact.

The truth is that 97% of all people attached to the public service receive the same base pay. Guess what? Only the lowest paid in the country do not, which is what we on this side of the House find so offensive.

Here is another statement from *Hansard* during last night's late show. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board said:

If the government were to pay Vancouver rates to blue collar workers in Halifax, imagine the outcry.

These are the crocodile tears we get. He continued:

Small business would be competing for needed workers, not just the federal government but the corporations rich enough to match the higher rates. That would disrupt the local labour market.

We have letters from the official opposition, the New Democratic Party, and the Progressive Conservatives of Nova Scotia. Not one business person has ever called me up and said that the government was right. What they are saying is that the government is absolutely wrong. Imagine anyone saying that. It is unbelievable. I could go on with what he said, but I would be so upset I would want to go over there and scream in their faces.

This morning I had a wonderful breakfast with some doctors and some legislators to discuss tomorrow, World Tuberculosis Day or World TB Day. There is another epidemic, a plague going across the country, the plague of arrogance coming from Treasury Board. It is absolutely unbelievable that the arrogance coming from the minister and the parliamentary secretary goes right through the entire backbenches. I have great respect for some backbenchers. I can actually call them friends. However, the arrogance being displayed to backbenchers which is coming forth on the picket lines is unbelievable.

I cannot believe that in 1991 the Liberals sat shoulder to shoulder with PSAC workers. We have the evidence. We spoke to the workers. The Liberal members who were fighting in opposition

### *Government Orders*

at that time against the Mulroney Conservatives were telling PSAC workers to elect them in the next federal election and they would end regional rates of pay.

It is now 1999 and guess what? They misled them on that one. They will break their promise just as they did on GST, day care and free trade. It goes on and on. It was just a power grab and they misled some very wonderful people. I am absolutely disgusted.

I will now deal for a moment with members of the Reform Party. They are discussing the issues. Some of them have spoken very well on behalf of people in their ridings. The member for Wetaskiwin said they believed in fair collective bargaining and that these workers were decent and honest people. He is absolutely correct, but I wish he would talk to his member for Saskatoon—Humboldt who called these same workers hooligans. That was an absolute disgrace.

I wish members of the Reform Party, especially the leader of the Reform Party, would take the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt by the scruff of the neck and stop him from abusing his parliamentary privileges by calling PSAC workers on strike hooligans, thugs and thieves. It is absolutely unbelievable that member would stand in the House and abuse his privileges in that way.

I reiterate that we cannot legislate a collective agreement. The Reform Party likes to call it a contract but it is not a contract. It is a collective agreement. It is a living, breathing document between two agreeable parties for the duration of the contract. It is unbelievable the government would ignore that and try to legislate them back.

We had this same discussion, *deja vu* I would call it, back in December 1997 when the government did the same to postal workers. As of today postal workers do not have a collective agreement. The government is still delaying and stalling its efforts for a proper agreement. Darrell Tingley of CUPW, Daryl Bean of PSAC and all those hardworking people who strive hard to maintain the morale of their membership are trying to say that they will deal with and talk with the government, but the government is not playing ball.

• (1220)

Speaking about ball, the government turned around and ignored the pay equity rulings from the courts. It said that it could not do that, that it would be unfair to give people, especially women, fair compensation for fair value of work. It will not do that. The pay equity issue was strike one.

Regional rates of pay is strike two. The government will ignore that because it is a pet personal project of the treasury board minister so that is the way it will be.

Strike three is exactly what is going on outside right now, the government's grab on the superannuation surplus of workers of the

*Government Orders*

public service, those who are retired and those who are currently working. Where I come from three strikes in baseball and you are out. This is exactly what will happen to the government come the next federal election.

If the government is so sure of its legislation, if it is so sure of its policies and if it believes its polls, it should prorogue the House and call an election. I challenge the government to do that. It should go back to the people of Canada if it is so confident of this piece of legislation. I can assure the House that the Liberals will be in for quite a shock. We know they will not do that because they do not have the courage to do that.

I reiterate that the government is refusing to listen. It has absolutely forgotten to listen to people. I do not think it really knows how.

We should all try to help government members. I will try to help them get re-elected, especially the member for Malpeque who is looking at me right now. I can assure him his re-election. All he has to do is rip up Bill C-76, throw it away, recycle it. I do not know if any recycler would ever want to take it because it is so contaminated with such useless language. He can rip it up and tell the treasury board minister, with whom I am sure he has close contact, to go back to the bargaining table and bargain in good faith. That would do it.

That is common sense. It is called conversation. It is called talking. It is called dealing fairly or dealing equitably or equity. There is that word again which the government does not understand. It has its new dictionary, its new thesaurus and its spin doctors. It will turn around tomorrow and ram the bill through the Senate. As my colleague from Portage—Lisgar said, the only people supporting the government now are members of the Senate. If it cannot be reformed, eventually I hope we will abolish that other place. That is for another time and another story.

It is incredible that the government can ignore the hopes, aspirations and dreams especially of those in Atlantic Canada. There are two people working for PSAC literally 24 hours a day on behalf of their membership and on behalf of their communities, Mr. Howie West and Ms. Cathy Murphy. They have done yeoman's work in trying to get the information out to the membership on exactly what all this means.

Nova Scotians will not stand for it any more. They did not stand for it in the last election when they elected six NDPers and five Conservatives. If the government is thinking of trying to get re-elected, that is not how to do it.

I hope the member for Malpeque is listening because I am trying to teach him and show him how he can get re-elected if he desires that. The member for Portage—Lisgar is correct. These people will not forget. This is the straw that broke the camel's back, more or

less. The Liberals just cannot keep this arrogant way of governing. They cannot do that any more.

The last time I checked we lived in a democracy. My father and mother were rescued by the Canadians in 1945 during the liberation of southern Holland. My father always said "If they have a military like that, can you imagine what kind of country they have?" I was a young child in 1956 when we came to this country because of the democratic beliefs of Canadians. When I spoke with my father the other day he said that he could not believe the government that in the sixties had some very good progressive and co-operative ideas had completely abandoned them.

• (1225 )

It will legislate the lowest of the lowest workers in terms of salary back to work. If government members think that moving the picket line from outside to inside the workplace will make everyone happy, they are sadly mistaken. In the long run it will cost the Canadian taxpayer a whole lot more money.

It is unbelievable that the government would stall and delay and then all of a sudden use the hammer of legislation to get them back to work. It will not work. These people will not abide by the legislation. They will go back to the office because they are law-abiding people, but let us imagine what will happen to the morale of those people. It is unbelievable. When will the next time be? We did it with the postal workers. Now we are doing it with the PSAC workers. Who is next? I wish the government would tell us who is next.

When the Bronfmans sent \$2 billion out of the country a couple of years ago without paying any money to the federal government, did the government have an emergency debate? Did the government bring in legislation to order them to pay that money back to the Canadian coffers? No, it did not. It just said "Oops, it is the Bronfmans. We cannot say anything. We will not say anything because they are big donors to our party. We will just ignore that and let it slide".

Employees earning \$11 and \$12 an hour are exercising their democratic right to strike and the government legislates them back to work. The government's argument is that it is costing the Canadian economy money. If that is true, why did it not legislate the Bronfmans to pay back the money they owed the Canadian government and the Canadian people?

Another example occurred a few years ago. The Irving Corporation decided to move its mobile home manufacturing plant from New Brunswick to Nova Scotia. In fact it went to the town of Debert and asked for applications from people to join the company. Irving told the people of New Brunswick that if they did not abide by its standards, rules and a reduction of pay they would lose their jobs.

*Government Orders*

Did the government step in and say “You cannot do that. You cannot threaten the livelihood of communities in New Brunswick?” Absolutely not. It stood by and let the market decide. It let the corporation decide what was best for business. However, what happens when ordinary working people exercise their basic rights? The government turns around and says that they cannot have them. There cannot not be too much democracy in the country.

The government is one sided when it comes to negotiations of any kind. It does not know how to negotiate. It negotiated a terrible NAFTA deal. It negotiated bad environmental laws. Now it cannot even negotiate with the lowest paid workers, its own employees. That is an absolute disgrace.

I have been in the House for about two years. Like my colleague from Winnipeg said, we did not come to the House to vote away the rights of workers. We did not come to the House to have high taxes placed on small businesses and families. We did not come to the House to destroy the hopes and aspirations of people infected with hepatitis C. We did not come to the House to make all those people live in misery.

We came to the House to make it better for people. We came to the House, especially me, to work with other opposition members and to work with the government to come up with solutions that would benefit all of us in the long term no matter where we lived in the country.

I have had the opportunity to live in Vancouver, Yukon and now in beautiful Nova Scotia. I have an understanding of what Canadians think and what they say. The anger that people across the country are starting to feel toward the government is incredible. The government will stand up and say it had to be done for farmers, for this and for that. It is all hyperbole. If it really wanted to negotiate in fairness, it would rip up Bill C-76 and go back to the bargaining table. It will not do that because it has an agenda that does meet the needs of all Canadians.

If government members think for one second that they can move the picket line from outside to inside the workplace they are sadly mistaken. The arrogance of the President of the Treasury Board must stop. Otherwise there will be chaos and a lot of trouble out there in the very near future.

• (1230)

Many PSAC workers and their families in communities across the country have contacted our party and me saying we have to do something to get the government to listen to them. I have heard members from the Reform Party, members from the Bloc. I will be waiting for members of the Conservative Party to speak out as well. They are all speaking with the same voice. We cannot do this. We have to stop legislating collective agreements because it is impossible.

It is not a collective agreement anymore. It is a legislative term. It is certainly not agreeable. It is not agreeable to us or the other opposition members and it is certainly not agreeable to the workers. This is a slim majority of Liberals, who have only 38% of the popular vote, legislating their agenda.

Daily we listen to the rhetoric of the Liberals. We listen to the changes. They go with the flow. They change every day. There is no question they have a one sided agenda. Their corporate friends, their very powerful friends, have no problems. They will do whatever they want with legislation and whatever concerns they have.

The government ignores the working people in this country, their families and their communities. It will divide and conquer. Farmers will be put against workers, coal miners against other people. Destroy them all. That is completely unacceptable.

I thank members for the opportunity to speak on behalf of all PSAC workers, their families and their communities across the country.

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague for Kings—Hants.

I agree with almost every thing the member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore said. What the government has done today in the House is absolutely unforgivable, unconscionable and should not be allowed to happen in a democracy.

It is a pleasure, in one way, to be here today to see the government acknowledge it has failed miserably on two fronts. It has failed in managing the House of Commons, the Parliament of Canada. The government House leader has come in today with a bill that basically shuts down the rights of all of us as parliamentarians. This does not give us the right to have adequate debate. It does not give us a chance to reasonably explain to each other and the people of Canada why we are for or against any given piece of legislation.

When the government brings in closure it is acknowledging that it cannot run this place properly, it has failed to manage the affairs of the House of Commons. As a result the government takes away the rights of individual members in order to ram through legislation which obviously is only favoured by the government, not by any of the opposition members and not by the majority of Canadians.

The other area in which the Liberal government has failed is how it manages public relations, relations with its employees and how it runs its collective agreements. In effect what the President of the Treasury Board is saying today is he has failed. He was not able to negotiate a reasonable and fair settlement with the lowest paid of the Canadian public servants. To have the minister come in here

*Government Orders*

today and acknowledge that is at least something to say that the Liberals know when they have done something wrong.

Unfortunately what we are seeing here today is a government, its slim majority achieved with only 38% of Canadian public support, using its bullying power to pass legislation whether Canadians like it or not.

We should not be here today just to do the government's dirty business. We should be here to discuss the problems facing Canada. One of those is the PSAC strike. What we are really doing here is getting the government off the hook because it is incompetent, uncaring and unaware of how to reach a reasonable settlement with its employees.

We should take some brief moments today, with the small amount of time we are allocated under this closure motion, to talk about what collective bargaining is supposed to be in Canada. Government is not supposed to be in the House of Commons today changing a rule to suit itself. It is here for the good of the people.

• (1235)

When it suspends collective bargaining, which in effect is what Bill C-76 does, it says that people do not have a right to go on strike. This PSAC strike, as far as I understand it, is a legal strike. They as employees, part of a collective bargaining unit, have every right to strike. They pay their union dues. They use negotiating teams to negotiate a good agreement for themselves. If those things do not work then obviously they have the provision to strike.

The employer, on the other hand, has the provision to lock out any employee who does not have a collective agreement. In this case these workers, the lowest paid in the Canadian public service, who have not had a wage increase for seven years, have chosen to go on strike. To my way of thinking they have every legal right to do so. For us to be here today to vote to suspend that right, to take away their collective bargaining right, is simply not proper.

We are doing it for a reason, there supposedly being a real crisis in western Canada. My thought process is if we have employees who are deemed essential, the minute they go on strike everyone knows the collective bargaining process. Some respect it and some do not. Basically in a collective bargaining process employees will choose to go on strike at a time that is most opportune for them, where they can exert more influence, where they can put more pressure on the employer to reach an acceptable agreement. Obviously that has happened in western Canada.

If employees are so essential that we cannot possibly do without them, that their service must be performed at all cost and at all times, then we should change the process. We should do away with collective agreements for some employees and take away the right to strike. Because they are essential, because they are deemed absolutely crucial to the governance of our country, then we should

not have collective agreements but a system of binding arbitration where workers give up the right to strike on one hand knowing that a binding arbitration clause or agreement will be struck on the other hand that gives them a fair shake.

Not all governments follow this process exactly. In Newfoundland we have a most unfortunate situation now where we have taken the right to strike away from our policemen and firemen. Why did we take the right to strike away from policemen and firemen? They are deemed to be essential to good governance. They are deemed to be crucial to how our communities handle the affairs that come up on any given day.

Police in Newfoundland went to binding arbitration, so they thought, except they found that the Liberal Government of Newfoundland, with the same heavy hand that the Liberal government in Ottawa uses, would not accept the binding arbitration and in effect put in place an agreement which nobody, including the arbitrators, agreed with. That is government for government sake. It is not government for the people.

This whole situation we are in with PSAC puts farmers on one hand against PSAC members on the other. I again believe that if these workers, the grain handlers in particular, are absolutely essential to the agriculture industry in Canada, they are absolutely essential for our foreign trade purposes, then they could be declared an essential service. Make them eligible for binding arbitration and send them back to work.

If we were here today to discuss legislation which would change the collective bargaining agreement to deem those persons as performing an essential service, to give them binding arbitration, I suspect most of those members in that union would be more than happy to go back to work and do that essential service for the good of Canada.

What we have now is a crisis in the grain handling in the agricultural industry in western Canada and in effect what this government is doing is using the farmers, the producers of the country, as a form of blackmail to force some of their low paid workers not back to the bargaining table but simply back to work. I think that is absolutely shameful of the government. It is shameful to think that we would use our hardworking farmers to force some other low paying Canadians back to work.

I know there is tremendous concern for our international trade reputation. There is the tremendous concern of money loss, of contracts in place, of delivery schedules not being met, but it is the government's fault. Farmers in western Canada may think the Government of Canada is doing them a favour by legislating workers back to their duties. Most farmers will say it is the fault of the Government of Canada and not the low paid PSAC workers who are at fault here.

If the Government of Canada thinks it will curry favour with all the farmers across the country, I certainly hope that does not happen because it does not deserve any credit from the farmers of Canada.

• (1240)

Certainly Treasury Board and the government have known for over two years that these negotiations had to take place. Why were there only 14 days of negotiations with a collective bargaining unit over a 2 year period? Is this good planning and good management by the government? Obviously it is not.

I agree that in certain cases people may have to be legislated back to work because they are essential. If the marine Atlantic ferry workers connecting Newfoundland to the rest of the country were to go on strike it might be that because it was destroying the fishing industry and completely disrupting the tourism industry those people might have to be legislated back to work.

My thought process is again the same as it is with these workers, that they are deemed essential. Give them binding arbitration. They lose their right to strike but it is known that in the end there will at least be a fair agreement and it will not have to be done by blackmailing some other part of society.

One of the very important issues for Atlantic Canada, in particular for Newfoundland, is the regional rates of pay. This is another Liberal policy that allows for a Newfoundlander doing exactly the same work as somebody from Calgary or Vancouver to get a different rate of pay. It is absolutely unconstitutional. It is unfair.

It is not allowed to discriminate based on race, creed or colour but there can be discrimination based on where one happens to live. It is absolutely, totally unfair and PSAC is fighting this battle. It is a battle that needs to be won. It is a policy that needs to be changed by the Government of Canada.

It is silliness to think that the Government of Canada is afraid to disrupt local labour markets because of paying a higher rate of pay in Newfoundland. In Newfoundland we lost 30,000 people in the last three years. We have a 20% unemployment rate and a 35% unemployment rate with young people.

I assure the President of the Treasury Board and the Prime Minister and all his ministers in cabinet that there would be no disruption of the labour market in Newfoundland if the government paid these people a fair wage.

I hope that somewhere in this whole process some of these PSAC members are able to fight this battle on regional rates of pay and come to a logical conclusion which is that everybody in Canada who does the same work for the Government of Canada should get the same rate of pay.

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, government has a leadership role to play in human resource management. Let me make it clear. I believe very strongly in the free market system but I also believe that unions play an important role within that free market system in defending the rights of workers.

Those people who understand the free market system and support it also must understand that without unions to defend the rights of workers it would take a large government department to defend workers. Unions have for a long time played this important role, a role government does not seem to recognize.

I support the rights of workers to organize democratically, to organize collectively and to strike peacefully. It is appalling that the private sector has actually over the last 20 years leapt far ahead of the government in terms of human resource management.

Companies like Chrysler Canada were among the first to appoint union representatives to their board of directors. Companies now, when they are looking at improving processes, improving products and developing better services, are sitting down with their executives and the unions to develop those products and services, to agree on labour standards, to work together to improve the companies and the services for the customer.

The only place where this is not occurring is with the Government of Canada. That is appalling because government should be ahead of the private sector in some of those human resource areas. Instead, the private sector has actually played a more responsible role in human resource management than the government.

The issues PSAC raised are very important. It is important to recognize that we are talking about blue collar workers, people not at the higher end of the wage scales. These are people who I understand have not received a raise in seven years.

One of the issues they raised, as my colleague mentioned earlier, is regional rates of pay. To pay people differently in Atlantic Canada, to pay people based on where they live, creates a ghettoization of our national public service, a ghettoization that is unacceptable. When we are talking of \$11 to \$12 per hour jobs, I understand that there is a \$3 to \$4 per hour gap, depending on the region a person lives in. That is a 30% gap depending on where one lives. I think that is unacceptable.

• (1245)

National corporations have reflected this in policy in recent years. They accept that they will pay people the same for the job and people will choose where they live based on their own selection, based on quality of life issues or standard of living issues. To ghettoize the public service geographically, in my opinion, is appalling shortsighted.

*Government Orders*

We have with our public service now one of the lowest levels of morale that has ever existed. In fact, I feel comfortable in saying that this government has achieved the lowest level of morale in the public service that has ever existed. There was a time when public servants felt good about their jobs, felt good about serving their fellow Canadians and about contributing to the growth and prosperity of our country. Now public servants feel absolutely besieged by a government that has stopped recognizing their worth and contribution to the future of our country.

It is absolutely critical that this issue be dealt with and be dealt with not by a knee-jerk reaction or the crisis management style that this government has chosen to deal with almost every major issue, but in terms of a long term, visionary strategy that addresses the entire issue of the public service from a long term perspective.

Instead of negotiating in good faith over a longer period of time and working with the public service—and based on the meetings I have had over the past several months, I have found that the public service is more than willing to negotiate and discuss long term strategy—the government has let this reach the boiling point. It has allowed it to evolve at a critical time to a point where essentially the interests of western Canadian grain farmers and the western Canadian region are pitted against the interests of blue collar public servants.

I know a lot of farmers. The farmers I know are very fair people. I would argue that no farmer would want his or her interests pitted against those interests of lower income public servants. I think it is appalling that the government has taken, for instance, the interests of western Canadian farmers, who are already facing the lowest commodity prices in generations and are in a very precarious position, and pitting their interests against the interests of low income public servants, trying to somehow use this divide and conquer mentality. It is a bit like how the Canadian electorate was divided and arguably conquered in the last election when this government was elected with 38% of the popular vote, a lower percentage of the popular vote than that which the government of the Right Hon. Joe Clark was elected with in 1979.

Obviously this government is not interested in fair labour practices. It is not interested in sitting down in the same way that corporations do and developing long term strategies with public servants to meet the needs of Canadians and to actually improve the public service. Instead this is a government that, for instance, with the Revenue Canada agency, is going gangbusters to split off 40% of the public service, as opposed to trying to address the holistic issues of the public service within the public service. This government is saying “Let’s take a hands-off approach and get rid of the public service”.

This is not necessary. It is possible to work within the public service, as has been done in other countries and as has been proven by the private sector in working with labour to develop long term strategies to what are long term issues.

Every time we get into this kind of situation where we have a long term problem on the horizon, the government ignores it until it reaches a crisis point and then it creates a political solution to pit the interests of one group in crisis against another.

• (1250)

It is not responsible government. It is not responsible human resource management. It is the type of practice that embarrasses me as a parliamentarian to play a role in. It puts members in opposition in a very difficult position. In my opinion, the position of the government in allowing this to happen is an untenable position and an unconscionable position on this very important issue.

We would hope that the government would see the error of its ways and sit down with the public service. It should read the recent, excellent report of a committee co-chaired by Senators Stratton and Cools on the public service. It should develop a long term strategy to address the fundamental issues of the Canadian public service, perhaps as a millennium project. Instead of putting labels on these monumental projects that the government has developed for its own self-glorification, perhaps it should be working toward developing a new relationship with public servants across Canada for the new millennium. Maybe that would be the best millennium project this government could work on.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. members who have just spoken from this side of the House. I want to invite you, Mr. Speaker, members of this House and members of the listening audience to come on a little journey and meet two people who live right in the middle of my constituency of Souris—Moose Mountain.

Dan and Louise are just past 40. They have one child in high school and two in elementary school. I want to talk about what they know at the present time and the conditions they are living with. Later I will be able to inform them of what this government is doing to them.

In the middle of my constituency is the city of Weyburn. It is the largest inland buying centre in Canada. While we in this House debate the PSAC agreement—and we will probably get into doing something which nobody on this side of the House wants to do—Dan and Louise only know one thing. They do not even know what PSAC stands for, but they do know that sitting in the bins of western Canada is \$3 billion worth of wheat. They also know that the shipments were stalled for a few days because of the grain weighers.

What they do not know is why they did this. They do not know the reason this government has deliberately and consciously driven them into that act.

*Government Orders*

What they do know is that the wheat board's monopolized exports are down not 70% from what they were a year ago, indeed not 60% from what they were a year ago, but 56% from what they were a year ago.

What this young couple on the farm now knows is that with spring around the corner they cannot even turn last year's board grain into cash simply because the grain is not moving.

What this House should know, what this government should know, and what Dan and Louise know, is that at one time when they first started farming Canada's share of the wheat production for sale was 21.5%. What this government should recognize is that Canada's wheat share is going to drop to slightly below 12%.

• (1255)

If this government were at all sensitive to people's needs it would understand that, in the typical style of this government, it pits one group against another, rural against urban and central provinces against outer provinces. It has a mere 38% and that is how it governs.

That is what is before us now. Dan and Louise who live out there are not anti-PSAC. When this country gets to know the full story, it will be anti-government. Make no mistake about that.

Grain sales are down considerably. Farmers have not been paid for last year's crop. Dan and Louise lost \$80,000 last year and it is for sure that they will be down \$80,000 again this year. They do not really care, but when an opportunity comes along to move their grain they want it to be moved.

I will make another announcement that this government is insensitive to, and it cannot blame this on PSAC. When Dan and Louise go to fill their fuel tank this spring they will see a 10% increase. It has already happened. To an agricultural industry that is struggling to get by, this government sits idly by and says "We did not get much support out there anyway, so what is it to us?" It is the number one industry in our province and certainly number one in my constituency. Farmers have to enter the field this spring with a double whammy: no money for last year's sale and the prospect of paying more for fuel.

In the next few days farmers will be lining up to pick up their AIDA packages. When they apply for the government aid package they will need to come well equipped. Their wife's purse will not be large enough. It is 40 pages. I took one off the Internet and I phoned an accountant who said that he would not even complete one without a fee of somewhere between \$200 and \$500.

That is the insensitive part of this government. It is far worse than income tax. It is something that most farmers are simply going to throw in the air in desperation and say that it is typical Liberal

style. The Liberals will hire more people to administer and figure this thing out than the farmers will get. I call that a thousand dollar lottery because farmers will not find out until summer if they are even eligible for the package.

Why is this government always part of a problem? Why does it deliberately solve the problem of 500 people who belong to the correctional service, who got through the loopholes, by saying "If somehow we can pass this bill we can cure it", but the opposition gets mud in its face? It is very good at scheming these things.

I could tell Dan and Louise the hourly wage of the 70 PSAC members who are striking. I could tell them that this government really has not even dealt with them sincerely for 15 years. That is what they need to know. When Dan and Louise know that, they will not be angry at PSAC, they will be angry at this government.

The government exaggerates and personifies total disrespect for people who are marginal in this country. The 70 frustrated members did what they had to do and held up shipments across the west.

Certainly the farmers were angry about that. Certainly they were angry about the fact that they lost \$9 million. I know one thing. I will do everything that I can, in any way possible, to make sure my constituents, who are basically farmers, understand the real reason behind that stoppage of grain. That side of the House is the reason. The problem is on that side of the House. It is not PSAC.

• (1300)

Farmers need to sell last year's crop before they can plant this year's crop. The government's control has done so much that farmers simply do not have any money to put their crops in. The people on the government benches do not believe that.

In the last seven land sale packages which were held in my constituency, there was not one bid. There was not one bid in some of the richest land in Saskatchewan. Part of this has to rest right on the government benches opposite. Not only that, when the government offered an aid package to which I alluded earlier, the government has made it so complicated that most of the farmers are simply going to write "return to sender" on it.

The government should listen to what the union is saying about final selection and negotiated settlement. It should listen to what every party on this side of the House is saying. The government should simply go back to binding arbitration. Everybody would be happy. We would not be forced to stand here today faced with a vote later on. We should not have to do this. If it were offered, PSAC would accept binding arbitration today.

What is the matter with the government? The government likes its Bill C-68. It keeps the people unhappy. The people are unhappy and the government can govern and that is all that matters.

*Government Orders*

Back to work legislation should never be used. It should only be used as a last resort. The government has the power to stop this back to work legislation now, this afternoon. The government has the power to call in the members and privy council and say that it will offer binding arbitration.

People across Canada, including the union, would be happy, but the government does not want it that way. The government wants back to work legislation, but it does not want Canadians to understand it. The government does not want the farmers in my constituency to understand what it is doing. The government does not want the people in Nova Scotia to understand what it is doing. The government just wants the elected few to understand, to manipulate this House and twist this country about.

The government has not bargained in good faith. Let me repeat that the government has not bargained in good faith, and we are now left with this last ditch effort.

What would Dan and Louise say to this government? "If you come west and you are looking at why you have alienated the west, you had better bring some earplugs and be prepared to sit down because the long list of complaints will keep you busy all afternoon".

What we are about to do today is a disgrace. It is totally unnecessary, totally un-Canadian and totally against every principle of the democratic process. I hope between now and this evening the government can somehow come to its good senses.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Perth—Middlesex on a point of order.

**Mr. John Richardson:** Mr. Speaker, I am on my feet to speak for a short moment.

It was nice to hear the member give the usual knee-jerk reaction to complex problems that we have been getting from the Reform Party for the last five years. Then the Reform Party members go back home and say how badly they have been treated.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member is rising on debate. I understood him to say that he was rising to make a few remarks so I assume he is rising on debate. The hon. member for Perth—Middlesex on debate.

• (1305)

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to get this straight, the strike is across Canada. It could put a lot more people in jeopardy if we allow the strike to continue. It could slow down the economy as it has in the hon. member's riding, which is unfortunate.

Simple knee-jerk reactions are running against the grain on this issue. As a consequence, if we come up with some measures that are balanced, well thought out and put into place to get the PSAC

union back to work, we will then have a smooth flow across the country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today is a very sad day in the House of Commons.

I did not expect to again go through what took place in the House in 1995 when, for an entire weekend, we debated back to work legislation for Canada's rail workers.

Why do I say that today is a sad day? Because we are looking at a government that is sitting as both judge and jury and literally bludgeoning or, more broadly speaking, bulldozing over the democratic rights of workers.

As I was preparing my speaking notes, various ridiculous but terrible analogies came to mind, such as leaving Dracula in charge of the blood bank, or giving Colonel Saunders the keys to the hen house.

I also thought of the tale of the three little pigs. It is as though the poor wee things had hired the big bad wolf as a real estate agent.

This is the sort of situation we are facing. We are looking at a government that, on the one hand, has the power to make reasonable offers to its workers but, on the other, as soon as negotiations stall, dons a different hat. It dons its lawmaker hat and tramples the most sacred right that workers possess, the right to strike.

There are 177 seats—right now there are perhaps 172—and only five of them are occupied. The Liberal government is using its majority to amend the Canada Labour Code outright and tell Canada's public sector employees that they no longer have the right to strike, that they can forget about that recourse. It is depriving them of that right, and using its majority in the House to deprive them of the right to strike. The issue will be settled: as soon as negotiations fail, the government will put its final offer on the table and it will be all over. That will be it. And yet, the government boasts about the fact that, under the Canada Labour Code, workers have the right to strike.

I find it strange to speak about workers' rights. Before becoming a member of parliament, I spent 16 years working in labour relations, 14 of them in the pulp and paper industry, and two in the food industry. I have always represented the employer. I must confess that, while my training is in industrial relations, I always worked for the employer side.

• (1310)

One thing which I always found extremely important are the respective rights and obligations of the parties. Employers have rights and obligations, and so do workers.

*Government Orders*

In my role as a member of parliament, and even later on in life, I will never tolerate the violation of fundamental and democratic rights relating to labour relations, which is what this bill is doing.

The member for Chicoutimi thinks it is funny, but he should be very concerned about this issue, and I am looking forward to hearing him later on. I am convinced that the Conservative Party will act as a defender of the workers' interests, like us in the Bloc Québécois and like our colleagues in the NDP.

We know that the purpose of this bill is to get the striking public servants back to work. For the benefit of those who are listening to us, I should explain that there are two categories of workers affected. This may be a bit technical, but I would like to make it clear whom we are referring to when we speak of the blue collar workers.

In table 2, we have general labour and trades, ships' crews, hospital services, general services and firefighters, while in table 4 we have correctional services workers.

My intention in making this aside to list the categories of workers affected is to make it clear that there are no \$100,000 or \$150,000 a year earners in this category. We are speaking of those at the bottom of the scale, those who are the least well paid among the public service hierarchy. These are the people who have for some years made efforts and sacrifices, have accepted cuts, have agreed to play along. They were told by their bosses "We are one big family here, and we are having problems with our budget".

Their managers did not say so in so many words, but the Conservatives left \$42 billion per year of deficit behind them, and the Liberals made cuts in a number of areas. Let us think back to the 1995 budget of the Minister of Finance, which called for 45,000 civil service job cuts. We in Quebec have the fine motto of "Je me souviens", and we certainly do not forget.

What do the managers say to their employees? They say "You have to tighten your belts, do your share and we will get through this. One day, after we have get out of this, it will be worthwhile. You will see, that, together, we will be compensated".

But no. When these people want to take action in support of their rights, they get their legs chopped off at the knees. This is totally unacceptable.

I was saying earlier that these people are not at the top of the wage scales. They are, however, people who are committed to their work and proud of it and who intend to inform the public the best way possible. They are people whose service to the public has developed their awareness.

Naturally, a number of horror stories on public servants are being circulated. I am not saying that everyone is perfect. What

about the members here? Are all 301 MPs perfect? No, we are human beings with attributes and faults.

What I want to say, however, is that we should forget the horror stories that sometimes circulate about incompetent officials, because there are incompetent lawyers, doctors and butchers too. Let us forget these horror stories, and look at the vast majority. They are people whose work is important to them, conscientious people.

For the benefit of this speech, I will read a letter I received from an official in my riding, whose name I will not mention obviously for reasons of confidentiality. This letter was not written by me or a member of my team. You will see this is someone speaking from the heart.

• (1315)

The letter is dated July 17, 1998. It reads as follows:

Dear Sir,

I am a resident of Beauport and have worked for Revenue Canada since 1976. I have 31 years of pensionable service and am close to retirement. I bought back the years I worked for the provincial government and I am writing to tell you about what we are going through at work.

First, our salaries have been frozen since 1991. I can understand that, at the time, everyone had to tighten their belts in order to reduce the government's annual deficit. I did my part willingly, but we had no choice. To my way of thinking, when we were told that our salaries were frozen, that meant everyone, all federal government employees from the top to the bottom of the structure. When you work as a family, everyone is subject to these conditions. It makes sense and is fair for everyone. But the freeze did not apply to all members of the family and that is unfair. (Another federal government injustice.)

I continue with the third:

We have lost 17% of the cost of living since 1991. This came out of my net salary. So, on top of getting no increase, I have lost 17% of my net salary. (How is this fair? Our salaries had to be frozen.) This 17% will affect my pension. Those receiving pensions, by the way, got the cost of living increase because pensions are indexed.

In the fourth paragraph, he says this:

I have read various newspaper and magazine articles and I note that judges will get increases of at least 12%. Soldiers will get over 9% and members of the RCMP 12.85% by the year 2001. The management group will get an astounding 17.4% of the minimum salary. In addition, deputy ministers will get increases of from 10.95% to 19.35%.

The Beauport resident goes on to say, in his letter:

It is an insult to workers who provide front line services to tell them they will get a 1.5% increase at the most. If we are a family, a team, a partnership, as the employer has been claiming in recent years, we should get a corresponding increase, which would be logical and fair. So, I think that you, our members of parliament—

That person is writing to us, members of parliament. Since I am his MP, he sent the letter to me, but it concerns all 301 members who sit here.

*Government Orders*

He adds:

I think that you, our members of parliament, our elected representatives, should put pressure on those concerned, so that they think not just about themselves as leaders, but also about us, ordinary citizens, and about the fact that it is because of our work that they can give themselves these raises. We are part of the team, the family. When the atmosphere in the family is good, the team does highly positive work. In the business world, when a company makes profits, a portion of these profits trickles down to the workers in recognition of their good work. If we have contributed to eliminating the federal deficit, should we not get the same pay increases as the above-mentioned people? Think about it for a moment. It is time to take action and to do justice to all concerned.

This writer from Beauport said the following in closing:

Thank you in advance for your help. I am sure that you will be able to accomplish something very positive, because I think that the people in charge are aware of the situation and will do everything they can to keep all of the family positive and motivated. That is the secret for winning.

If I took the trouble to read this letter as part of my speech, it is because of the distress it expresses. There is much emphasis on the aspect of family.

• (1320)

We must not lose sight of what these people are now experiencing, the federal public servants who gave their unions a mandate, saying "We are sending you to Ottawa to negotiate an agreement. We hope you will bring the best possible one back to us. We hope that you are going to be able to make this government listen to reason".

The union negotiators came back with their tails between their legs to report "The government is refusing to accept the majority conciliation reports. The government is refusing the proposal of arbitration, of calling upon an adjudicator to determine working conditions, if we are unable to reach agreement".

The position of the Bloc Québécois is as follows. We say that, if the point of no return has been reached, if not even another half a centimetre's progress is possible, then why not ask a university professor anywhere in Canada skilled in this area to arbitrate the working conditions? According to the information we have, the union could live with that, but unfortunately the government is saying yet again "bang, pow, out of the question, no, nyet, not one minute".

We in the Bloc Québécois think that special legislation should be the last recourse and, we respectfully submit, not all the recourses have been exhausted. Since 1991, the federal government has renewed the master agreement with the public service with laws issued by this Parliament. Today, with this master agreement subdivided into seven bargaining tables, the government must reach an agreement negotiated in good faith.

I would like to close with a short history of bargaining in the public service. Labour relations between the federal government and public servants are governed by the Public Service Staff Relations Act, which came into effect in 1967. The government justified this particular framework at the time by promising to be a good employer, providing proper remuneration and working conditions and not using its size and power to control the market.

Since then, and especially since the Liberals took office in 1993, these principles have been abused in every way possible. Let us look at some examples. Using its legislative power, with its successive cuts, which have fallen heavily on public servants, through its attempts to manipulate taxpayers by demagoguery and by using major government communications resources, the government distorts, undermines and subordinates the bargaining process as no other employer can do.

We must not forget that the Department of Human Resources Development sets the number of public servants to be cut. We revealed a directive from a senior official in Prince Edward Island, which said "There could be 250 jobs threatened if you do not achieve the cuts quota".

Studies show that some 4% of people defraud employment insurance. But, according to what I have been told, when a person arrives in an employment insurance office, they are assumed to be defrauding the system. As soon as a person walks into the office, he or she is immediately labelled and seen as a cheater, when in fact only 4% of claimants are. We must not tolerate having 4% of claimants cheating the EI system, but it is totally unacceptable to assume the other 96% are cheaters too.

Let us now look at the acts imposed by this government and the previous one. During the 1993 and 1997 election campaigns, the Bloc Québécois said "To vote for the Liberals or the Conservatives is just the same". The Conservative government of Brian Mulroney must also share the blame for this unacceptable situation.

In August 1982, under a Liberal government, Bill C-124 froze the salaries of about 500,000 public servants. In December 1989, under the Conservatives, back to work legislation, that is Bill C-49, was passed.

• (1325)

In October 1991, again under the Conservatives, Bill C-29 threatened to unilaterally impose the employer's offers if they were not accepted. I could go on and on, but I only have one minute left.

I began my remarks by saying we cannot trust this government, which is acting as both judge and jury, and I will conclude with two quotes. Americans say "Do not put the rabbit in charge of the

lettuce”, while Germans say “Do not ask the cat to look after the cream”. This is what we have with this government.

[*English*]

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a displeasure to stand here once again. I am not happy that I have to stand up and again speak on behalf of prairie farmers, my constituents, with regard to this issue. We have had this before us now for quite some time. I will again refer to a bombshell that I released last week when we talked about this.

One of the key points that needs to be made is that the government is not sincere in dealing with this issue. It is looking for an excuse to bring in legislation and blame everyone else for the fact that it is in this predicament. With the things I will bring forth it will become quite clear that this is not the case.

When I got back to my riding I started getting phone calls from farmers in my area saying that Reform is to blame for all this. I asked why they said that. Apparently the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has been spinning out this whole scenario in such a way that the opposition, namely Reform, is responsible for the predicament in which the government finds itself. It is blaming us for the delay and all the concerns that people are raising. That indicates to me quite clearly that the government is not sincere in dealing with this and wants to make political points on it by blaming Reform. This is something the Canadian people must realize. The opposition parties can hardly be blamed for the whole mess that has been created because of the government's lack of action.

Recall last week that the government brought in a motion without informing the opposition as to what that motion was. It brought in a motion and asked for unanimous consent for a bill it would not even show us in advance.

Mr. Speaker, would you buy a pig in a poke? Would you agree to something you knew nothing about? Hardly. That demonstrates clearly the government was not sincere in dealing with this issue of the strike in a manner that was above board and wanted to resolve it. It wanted to be able to blame the opposition in some way for not having action on this more quickly.

About 15 minutes before government introduced that motion, the minister for the Treasury Board, under whose purview this whole thing is, said he would consider all options. We had just put forth the option of final offer selection arbitration, which the government is quite familiar with. If the minister was sincere in his comments that he would look at all options, to have a bill submitted or ask approval for a bill 15 minutes later indicates that the government had in mind all along what it wanted to do. It was clear that it simply wanted to find an excuse to introduce legislation to order the workers back to work.

### *Government Orders*

I referred to a letter last week. I called it my bombshell that I would release. That letter clearly indicates that this did not happen just in this last week. The government received a letter on January 27, 1999. That is more than six weeks ago. It indicates that the strikes were already creating a problem on the west coast, that PSAC had been on strike. The weighers, the 70 people who weigh the grain that is being shipped from the prairies, had already had some rotating strikes and had effectively closed down the Vancouver port operations.

● (1330)

The letter goes on to indicate that the Canadian Grain Commission had provided six supervisory personnel. They were doing their best to cover all the regular contingent in excess of the 70 weighmen who were on strike and if no picketing action is taken by the weighmen, the numbers this small would have effectively closed port operations.

The President of the Treasury Board received this letter. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Minister of Transport, the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, and the Minister for International Trade all received a copy of this letter. The government knew well in advance that this problem was developing.

The letter indicates that the results of such work stoppages have stopped the unloading of over 700 rail cars per day, eliminating the loading of approximately 275,000 tonnes of grain. The back-up caused by not unloading the rail cars will cost Canadian grain producers millions of dollars and impact our critical trading relationships with foreign buyers. This was all in that letter.

Let me pause for a moment, because there seems to be a few puzzled looks as to why I am dealing with this when we are talking about a strike by the Public Service Alliance of Canada workers. The point I am making is that a third party is being severely impacted. The economic loss is in the tens of millions of dollars to the farmers in Saskatchewan, the farmers of the prairies because of this strike, because of 70 people being off work. The government has taken the opportunity to order all the PSAC workers back to work because of the concerns that we have expressed about the farmers in my riding.

If a third party is being hurt by a strike of this magnitude, something has to be done. We are holding our noses and voting for this legislation. What else can we do? We have to get the grain moving because of the severe impact this is having on the entire country. Yes, something has to be done.

The letter also went on to say that the Canadian grain industry and in particular western farmers are at the mercy of the weighmen.

*Government Orders*

That is the point I am trying to make. That was included in the letter that I dropped as a bombshell last week.

The letter goes on to explain, "We are asking for the co-operation of all parties including the federal government in ensuring that the impact to western farmers is minimized during this time. To this end, WGEA members are committed to finding appropriate solutions to the present situation". They are looking for solutions.

For the government to suddenly come up with legislation to order them all back to work when this has been going on for more than six weeks just shows that it had the opportunity to do something and it did nothing.

I will give a bit of an explanation on the proposal we put forward. I am hoping at some point the government will seriously look at this. Then we would not have to be back here every few months dealing with similar legislation to order some other group of workers back to work.

Final offer selection arbitration is a method by which parties on both sides of a dispute that they cannot resolve put in their final offer. Then an arbitrator selects one or the other offer. He cannot take some middle ground between them. He has to select one or the other offer.

The key thing is who the arbitrator is going to be. Both sides have to select an arbitrator from a pool of arbitrators. It is critical that it is an impartial person who reviews the final offers.

Why are we supporting this legislation? We really have no choice. We have to get these people back to work. The government has dilly-dallied. It has not dealt sincerely with this and has put us in this mess. We have to hold our noses, as I say, and vote for it.

Farmers are being adversely affected and have no control over this situation. It is between the government and the PSAC workers.

• (1335)

The government has the power to run roughshod over anyone in society and unfortunately it has used this power. That has been of great concern as I have watched events unfold.

The bill has closure stamped all over it, which means we deal with this issue now. We do not go through the normal process of having first, second and third reading with the bill being sent to committee and so on and having all of those things available to us. The government said this was the way it was going to be and it is ramming it through.

Farmers are being impacted. The Canadian Wheat Board put out a news release saying it lost \$9 million in sales in just two days last week. I am hoping the wheat board is not going to use this as an excuse for its poor sales.

The wheat board controls all wheat and barley sales. Farmers do not own their own grain. They have to sell it through the wheat board. I just found out today that export shipments of grains, wheat and barley, over which the wheat board has a legislated monopoly, so far in 1998-99 wheat and barley sales are down 41% from a year ago and are down 30% from the five year average. Exports of non-durum wheat are down 44%. Durum is down 18%. Barley sales are down 64%. Farmers have bins full of wheat and barley which they cannot sell themselves and the wheat board is not moving it.

Canada's share of the world market for wheat could drop to below 12% this season. How does that compare? At one time we were up to 21.5%. The 10 year average of Canada's share of grain sales is 20% and we are down to 12% of our share of the world market. That indicates how serious the situation is for western farmers. They are locked in because they cannot sell their grains, wheat and barley, outside the wheat board.

The exports of leading western Canadian crops that the wheat board does not handle are up 39%. Canola exports are 63% higher. In these other areas that are not handled by the wheat board, the sales are up a great deal.

There is \$2 billion to \$3 billion of grain sitting in prairie bins that remains unsold. Had these off farm sales of grain been running at the rates of a year ago, there would be \$600 million to \$700 million more in the pockets of prairie farmers.

Not only are we prevented from shipping out that grain right now, sales have clearly been down through the wheat board already. How is that impacting on my riding? The various elevators in the northern part of my riding are plugged. The grain is there and it cannot be moved because the rail cars are not available to send the grain out to the west coast. It does not get more serious than that, especially if one completely depends on the sale of these grains.

I also want to clearly indicate for all those who are watching this debate on television how much this impacts on prairie farmers. The government has put us in the very awkward position of having to choose between the PSAC workers and the farmers. It has pitted one group against the other because it failed to resolve this situation. An innocent third party is being hurt, and we have to clearly explain to people how much that work stoppage at the Vancouver terminal has hurt.

Way back on January 24 of this year the first stoppage of services occurred. As I have already revealed, the government knew about this. A letter was sent asking the government to do something about it. That was quite some time ago.

The workers are on strike. They are picketing all five terminals. Five or six ships are waiting in berth and eleven more waiting outside to pick up grain. Sixteen grain vessels are waiting for a total of 370,000 tonnes of grain. It is a lot of money when we take

into account that each tonne of grain may be worth \$300. These boats are waiting in berth. Millions of dollars are being lost.

• (1340)

I should also mention that these contracts to sell this grain were made when the grain was at a high price. Now these customers have an excuse to buy this grain at a much lower price because we have not fulfilled our part of the contract in failing to deliver the grain. That is all part of the equation. It indicates that farmers are hurting and another nail is being pounded into their coffins.

The Canadian Pacific Railway will not deliver grain cars to any of the country elevators. It has cancelled all its car allocations for the next week. The Canadian National Railway, one of the two railways that services the prairies, is saying that it will spot only a few cars at a few elevators. That is virtually grinding to a halt as well.

CN has 13 trains waiting in Vancouver as we speak. It cannot move any of them forward. CN has 700 loaded rail cars and CP has 850 loaded rail cars waiting in Vancouver. They cannot do anything with these cars because of the strike. Seventy workers are holding up a huge economy. That is totally unacceptable.

Canada's reputation as a supplier of grain is severely affected. We are going to suffer immensely because of this work stoppage. This reputation affects the entire country. Many people do not realize the economic importance of agricultural products and grain sales on our balance of payments and on the whole economy of Canada. All of this is being severely impacted.

Productivity is declining. We talked a lot last week about the decline in productivity. Canada is now below the state of Mississippi when it comes to the level of productivity. This strike impacts that and further declines that productivity level.

It is unreasonable for 70 employees who are part of a much larger group to be allowed to hold up all of these people. We are asking the government not just to solve this problem today but to solve it for the long term. If there is anything I can say at the conclusion of my speech it is that we must do something to solve this for the long term. This legislation is not the answer to the problem on the west coast. The government should seriously consider implementing legislation that will solve this for the long term.

Let me quickly summarize the essence of what Reformers are saying. A number of stories have been printed and broadcast across the country about the strike by the Public Service Alliance of Canada workers at the grain terminals in Vancouver. There was some misinformation in the stories. I would like to clarify that.

The report stated that the government was ready to introduce back to work legislation and that Reform blocked a motion to get

### *Government Orders*

70 PSAC workers who were stalling shipments of grain on the west coast back to work. That is not true. I will tell the rest of the story.

Reform would like to get the grain flowing immediately at the terminals in Vancouver. We want to get the PSAC workers back to work permanently. We called for an emergency debate on this matter twice last week. The first time it was refused. The debate was then held on the evening of Thursday, March 18. The government neglected to recognize that there was a problem until Reform pushed for an emergency debate in the House of Commons. We had to ask for the debate twice before the Liberals agreed to discuss the issue.

What is even more astonishing is that the Liberals knew six weeks in advance that severe problems were going to occur as a result of this PSAC strike at the west coast terminals. In the emergency debate I revealed that five Liberal ministers were sent a letter on January 27 that specifically stated that the backup of unloaded grain cars could cost Canadians millions of dollars and could severely impact our critical trading relationship with foreign buyers. Reform asked the government to adopt a permanent dispute settlement mechanism rather than to rely on back to work legislation as a method of settling these work stoppages.

• (1345)

Time and again Reform has suggested final offer selection arbitration. It is a dispute settlement mechanism in areas where there are no alternative services and labour disruptions damage the national economy and harm innocent third parties. This procedure would ensure the continuous flow of grain to market.

The Treasury Board minister was even asked if he would support the idea of final offer selection arbitration. He responded by saying that he was looking at all the options. Not even 15 minutes later, without notice or consultation with opposition parties, the government asked for unanimous consent to introduce this legislation without telling us what it was.

The issue of removing someone's collective bargaining rights is quite serious and should be done properly. Let me emphasize that because that point has often been lost in a lot of the discussion. This is a very serious matter we are dealing with and the government has the power to do as it wishes. It is really ridiculous, as I explained previously, to blame the Reform Party for holding this up.

PSAC workers are asking for 3%. The Senate gets 10%. That is basically unfair and it is unfair for us to pit farmers against unions.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that Oral Question Period will still take place

*Government Orders*

at 2 p.m. and that my speech will therefore be interrupted. I will resume after Oral Question Period.

Since this morning, I have been listening to the debate on Bill C-76. I believe Bloc Quebecois members are very well prepared. Our approach to this bill is very well structured. One member I am thinking of is the member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Îles-d'Orléans, whose speech was well researched. Government members opposite would do well to reread the member's remarks very carefully.

It is not surprising that we should come to the defence of workers in such a situation. In our 1997 election campaign, we said that the Bloc Quebecois would be there for the workers and constituents of each of our ridings.

The Bloc Quebecois was left with no choice but to defend the interests of workers in the present affair. As others have said before me, we are not talking about workers earning \$100,000 or \$150,000 a year. These are people with relatively small salaries. The government wants to take advantage of the situation and beat them down with the bill before us today.

What exactly is being proposed this morning? Unfortunately, we are looking at closure. For those not sure what that means, the Liberal government opposite, not wanting to know every little detail of the negotiations, not wanting to know exactly what the opposition thought, not wanting to hear what the experts had to say, has moved closure, a motion I will read for the benefit of those listening. Each word of this motion is very important.

It reads as follows:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of this House, a bill in the name of the President of the Treasury Board, entitled An Act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services, shall be disposed of as follows:

Commencing when the said bill is read a first time and concluding when the said bill is read a third time, the House shall not adjourn except pursuant to a motion proposed by a Minister of the Crown, and no Private Members' Business shall be taken up;

The said bill may be read twice or thrice in one sitting;

After being read a second time, the said bill shall be referred to a Committee of the Whole; and

During consideration of the said bill, no division shall be deferred.

Mr. Speaker, you know what this means, but the average person might not. What the government wants to do is gag the opposition so that it cannot say too much about this important issue.

• (1350)

This is not a very orthodox procedure, but it does not come as a total surprise, because the government has used it several times. Closure motions on important things such as this are virtually

undemocratic, since we are here to represent our constituents and advocate their views.

When an adjournment motion is passed and the opposition is gagged, it is obvious all members of the Bloc cannot stand and support their constituents' views the way they should.

Each time the government uses this kind of motion, closure in this case, I cannot help but remember the nice things they say during election campaigns. In 1993 and 1997, Liberal members came up with nice plans and said they wanted to enhance the work of members of the House. Is this not a good opportunity for the government to enhance the work of members by letting them uphold their views in the House? One of the main roles of members is to make a stand on issues.

Each and every time we have a subject that is in any way controversial or complicated, when members could really score political points and express their views, the government opposite comes in with time allocation or closure. These motions are virtually anti-parliamentary, and above all demeaning to MPs, particularly the government backbenchers who must be getting bored to death with a government like this one, which does not allow them to stand up and defend their views.

I have been listening to this debate since this morning, and I have not seen very many Liberals standing up to defend their views. Is this because they have nothing to say? If they have nothing to say, why did they run in 1997? If they have something to say, this means that closure, the motion to gag the opposition, in a way also gags the Liberal backbenchers, who might have something to say on such an important subject.

I am sure that some of the Liberal MPs from Quebec have something to say. I have not seen one of them rise to defend his point of view, not a single one. I find this extremely strange. With closure, the opposition is being denied the opportunity to consult specialists in this field. They are trying to curtail debate, and thus there will not be time enough for the opposition to set out in any detail the positions they want to bring into the debate.

Fortunately we in the Bloc Quebecois saw this coming, and so we got prepared. We were not caught with our pants down, as they say. We were prepared to intervene in this House and to bring out our point of view, but this may not be the case for all parties.

The government has decided to bring out its heavy artillery. It seems to me, however, that where negotiations on a labour contract are concerned, it is legitimate to allow both parties to defend their points of view, both labour and management. In labour law, there are rules that must be followed. As far as I know, the employees and their union have followed those rules.

Bargaining is a complicated and difficult process. The membership must be properly represented. I believe there is also an

obligation for both employees and employer to work for the good of the community, particularly when the employer is the government.

I was a labour lawyer before I became an MP.

• (1355)

Like my colleagues who spoke before me and said they have represented workers or employers in negotiations, during the eight or nine years that I have worked as a lawyer, I have represented employers as well as employees. Therefore, I have no prejudice for one or the other.

However, I have some experience in labour disputes and bargaining. Now, how are things usually done in work contract negotiations? Employees try to negotiate and get as much money—since salaries are at stake—and benefits as possible. Conversely, the employer, who wishes to increase its profits and bottom lines, will try to negotiate lower salaries and fewer benefits. But during all that time, the parties sit at the same table and negotiate in good faith.

When I practised law, I also negotiated out-of-court settlements, which is not an easy task. I negotiated family law agreements, which is not easy either. But if the parties are ready to sit down and negotiate in good faith, they will sooner or later reach an agreement.

During all the years that I practised, the parties had one thing in common: they wanted to negotiate and to reach a negotiated agreement.

While it may not be directly linked to the issue at hand, I am sure you will allow me to mention in passing a similar case relating to collective bargaining. According to this morning's newspapers, an agreement in principle has presumably been reached at the Flamingo slaughterhouses in Berthierville and Joliette. Speaking of negotiations, in that case, the labour dispute had been going on for five months. Apparently the parties found a basis for an agreement because they kept negotiating and the agreement in principle which was reached will be submitted to the approval of the union tonight.

As we can see, through negotiation, agreement in principle can be achieved. This is why—and I will conclude on this and continue after question period—I urge the government to take this time to ponder and, after question period, to listen more carefully to what I say.

**The Speaker:** The member will indeed have the floor following question period, and I am sure we will all ponder his wise comments.

[English]

We will now go to Statements by Members.

S. O. 31

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### WORLD METEOROLOGICAL DAY

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, March 23 marks World Meteorological Day. It commemorates the convention on the World Meteorological Organization of 1950. Canada is a founding member of the organization and plays a prominent role in its work.

The theme of this year's day is "Weather, Climate and Health". This is particularly appropriate when communities around the world are struggling to recover from natural disasters. The prediction of significant changes in climate over the next 100 years has focused attention on the consequences of climate and weather, including health impacts. Environment Canada has contributed to the worldwide body of knowledge on climate change.

World Meteorological Day is also an opportunity to raise public awareness and appreciation for the valuable public weather service Environment Canada staff provides 24 hours a day year round. Weather events like the January storms in Toronto, last year's ice storm and the Manitoba and Saguenay floods remind us of the importance of reliable, accurate weather information in helping Canadians protect themselves and their property.

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### HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MOM

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, March 18 is a very important day for me. Yes, that is my mother's birthday. If not for my mother I would not be here with you today, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure you are very happy about that.

My mother says I was born with no hair, a problem I have had for most of my life. I do not know whether it is her or me who created the instance. I can say, born in Nova Scotia, raised in Nova Scotia, she has brought family values to our family. She always taught us to pay as we go and live within our means. That is one of the things mothers do very well when they bring up their children. I am very thankful for that.

• (1400)

Some might ask how old she is. I would not dare ask that question. My mom's age is quite irrelevant; it is her knowledge.

On this day I wish my mother a very happy birthday. She is a good friend, and the Liberals will be interested in the fact that she is a good Reformer.

*S. O. 31*

**The Speaker:** I can say that this place would not be the same without you.

\* \* \*

**LIVER DISEASE**

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member's mother a happy birthday. I am pleased to inform the House that March has been declared help fight liver disease month by the Canadian Liver Foundation. It is estimated that one in 12 Canadians will at some point in their lives contract a liver or biliary tract disease.

Liver disease is the fourth leading cause of death by disease in Canada. It is a serious health concern that has no prejudices, affecting men, women and children of all ages and races.

The mandate of the Canadian Liver Foundation is to reduce the impact and incidence of liver disease through research and education. The foundation's 30 volunteer chapters across the country are a valuable source of information for those with liver disease and their families.

I therefore ask all members of the House to join me in honouring the Canadian Liver Foundation, especially its volunteers, during help fight liver disease month.

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**YEAR 2000**

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the year 2000 is being anticipated with hope and optimism. In Burlington we are well on our way to celebrating the year 2000 with local community events that provide residents of all ages an opportunity to share in this historic occasion.

Right across the country Canadians will take pride in exchanging coins designed by citizens in response to the Canadian Mint's Create a Centsation contest. Burlington residents were thrilled to acknowledge one of their own stars.

Maria Sarkany's design was chosen for the month of July. Entitled "A Nation of People", the coin portrays six people representing law and order, learning, teaching, the arts, the love of nature and sports drawn in one continuous line.

I ask my colleagues to join with me in celebrating the talent, courage and innovative ideas of Canadians who together with community and volunteer groups, governments and the private sector will celebrate the year 2000.

\* \* \*

**ROGER GIGUÈRE**

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today our thoughts are with Master Corporal Roger Giguère and

his wife and daughter as he recovers in hospital from second and third degree burns. His injuries were sustained when the truck he was using to transfer aviation fuel from storage tanks exploded at Canadian Forces Base Comox on Saturday. Master Corporal Giguère is in serious but stable condition. We wish him a speedy recovery.

I commend the professional fire fighters from the air base who acted with textbook precision to quickly contain the fireball in extremely scorching heat to prevent a huge fuel tank only 20 feet away from exploding.

The military police and fire fighters have already launched an investigation into the cause of the explosion. We must determine the cause to ensure that it never happens again.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE**

**Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to defending and promoting the French language and French culture during l'Année de la Francophonie.

We are very glad to join all those who share the richness of French culture, including francophones outside Quebec who often had to fight a cultural battle that was far from easy. It is unfortunate that the separatist government has chosen to ignore this opportunity to show their support to francophones throughout Canada.

It is important to point out that there are 9 million Canadians who speak French, almost one Canadian out of three. We hope that, by the end of the year, there will be 30 million of us who appreciate the richness of Canadian Francophonie.

Francophones throughout Canada can rely on the Canadian government to ensure that the French language and French culture are given pride of place in North America.

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[English]

**EPILEPSY**

**Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to remind the House that March is national epilepsy month. Epilepsy is a functional disorder of the brain. It can temporarily block consciousness. It can be characterized by seizures, uncontrollable shaking or convulsion.

Approximately 300,000 Canadians, primarily young people, suffer from this condition and in nearly 75% of cases there is no known cause.

• (1405)

Canadian research has made important contributions to the development of effective treatment. New medications have been developed to help control seizures. However drugs are not a cure and often have severe side effects. Furthermore, 20% of seizures are not successfully controlled by current medication.

Continued research must be supported. I ask all members of the House to joint with me in applauding Epilepsy Canada during March, national epilepsy month.

\* \* \*

### BASKETBALL

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Guelph—Wellington has done it again. The St. James Lions recently won the Ontario provincial senior boys high school basketball championship by an impressive margin of 89 to 53.

When the team placed third at the tournament last year it was determined to come back and prove which was the best team in Ontario, and prove that it did.

St. James was leading at the end of every quarter and was ahead by almost 20 points at the end of the third, and it never let up playing its hardest to the very end.

I would like my hon. colleagues to join me in congratulating the St. James senior boys basketball team by taking home the provincial gold. I pay special tribute to player Michael King who, despite a personal tragedy, was the motivating force behind the team's victory. The teamwork and dedication displayed by these young men is definitely worthy of a mighty lion's roar of recognition. "Way to go, team".

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, impaired driving is the main cause of deaths and injuries due to criminal acts in the country. Early in the morning of March 14, three people died in another tragic and senseless accident near Trois-Rivières.

The impaired driver, Sylvain Boies, killed two young men and injured another. It was not the first time this man had been drinking and driving. The irresponsible and criminal acts of Sylvain Boies and other drivers just like him have ruined the lives of innocent victims.

My hon. colleague from Prince George—Bulkeley Valley has suggested changes to the Criminal Code to ensure that penalties

*S. O. 31*

reflect the seriousness of offences. His suggestions are being considered by the Standing Committee on Justice.

I urge all political parties to support this initiative—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes.

\* \* \*

### GINETTE RENO

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last week the House of Commons welcomed as it should the great lady of Quebec song, Ginette Reno.

This famous daughter of Boucherville was honored for her prolific career, which recently saw her nominated for a Juno Award.

Although her rich and powerful voice, with its affinity for various musical genres, has won her fame for many years, Ginette Reno also tried her hand at acting.

After a captivating performance in the feature film *Léolo*, directed by the late Jean-Claude Lauzon, she amazed us again in the feature film *C'ta ton tour Laura Cadieux* with her interpretation of the title role that earned her a nomination for the Genie Awards.

It was high time the House paid tribute to Ginette Reno, who said candidly that it was the first time she had ever set foot inside the parliament buildings. It is perhaps regrettable, as the heritage minister indicated in the speech she made on this occasion, that Ginette Reno is still so little known in English Canada.

The fact remains that Quebecers have long known, appreciated and been proud of this woman who has thrilled them at home as she has thrilled audiences abroad.

\* \* \*

[English]

### COMPUTERS

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today the need to learn computer skills is an important key to success. That is why the government launched in 1993 the computer for schools program which provides computers to schools and public libraries across the country.

[Translation]

A few hours ago, Gloucester High School, a school in my riding, welcomed my colleagues, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry, who were there to mark an important milestone in this program. Indeed, the school just received its 125,000th personal computer under the program.

I thank the Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry for their involvement and commend this excellent initiative, which will help young people acquire high technology skills.

*S. O. 31*

• (1410)

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in their election platform, the Liberals pledged to comply with pay equity legislation. They also promised to abolish regional rates of pay for blue collar workers in the public service.

What is happening today? The Liberals are imposing back to work legislation. This is a punitive measure. It is unacceptable to treat loyal public servants in this fashion.

These regional rates are unfair to 11,000 workers in Canada, including 1,500 in the maritime provinces. Treasury Board said that if regional rates of pay were eliminated, it would be hard to keep old employees and hire new ones. In Nova Scotia, a carpenter working in the private sector earns \$20.49 per hour, compared to \$13.92 in the federal public service.

Is it fair to pay less money to a blue collar in New Brunswick than to a blue collar in British Columbia who does the same work?

The time has come for the government to put an end to the discrimination against workers in the regions, and to negotiate, not legislate, a work contract.

\* \* \*

**MENTAL IMPAIRMENT**

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, during the Semaine québécoise de la déficience intellectuelle, from March 14 to 20, Quebecers were urged to forget their biases toward mentally impaired people. In Quebec, many organizations are helping change attitudes and perceptions toward these people.

I wish to salute the exceptional commitment of groups from Laval, including the ALDI, the centre de réadaptation Normand-Laramée, the CAFGRAF, and the Ludothèque, which strive every day to promote the social integration of mentally impaired people.

I also want to stress the vitality, professionalism and perseverance of the educational team of the Centre le Tremplin.

Thanks to that group, the choir *La différence*, led by Anne-Marie Gohier and made up of some 40 men and women, made us experience unforgettable moments, on March 16.

Thank you for contributing so generously to help each and everyone become a citizen in his or her own right.

**LONDON AND ST. THOMAS REAL ESTATE BOARD**

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the London and St. Thomas Real Estate Board whose representatives yesterday presented the Minister of Finance with a cheque in the amount of \$27,000 as its contribution to helping pay off the national debt.

For the past four years the board has contributed \$5 per member per year to a special interest accruing fund. The purpose of this campaign was to remind the public and politicians that debt reduction remains a goal that our nation must continue to pursue with zeal.

The government is committed to keeping the debt ratio on a steady downward track year after year. In so doing we will have the flexibility to strengthen not only health care but other important areas, to provide needed tax relief and to invest in a more productive economy.

The London and St. Thomas Real Estate Board and its members are to be commended for their efforts. They have shown that by working together we can address the nation's fiscal needs and build a better future for all Canadians. I say well done and thank you.

\* \* \*

**CHAD BLUNDON AND LISA ROBICHAUD**

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that all of my colleagues in the House are aware and appreciative of the efficient service performed in the Chamber by the young men and women in the House of Commons page program.

Today I draw attention to two of these young Canadians who have further distinguished themselves by competing in the Canada Winter Games. One of our pages, Lisa Robichaud, represented her home province of Prince Edward Island at the Corner Brook Games. Lisa, who hails from Cavendish, attends the University of Ottawa and works here as a page, was a member of the P.E.I. cross-country ski team that competed in the 1999 games.

Also competing at the games was page Chad Blundon, a young man I know personally from the athletic riding of St. John's West. Chad participated as a page in Team Newfoundland and Labrador. Before an audience in Corner Brook that included his family and friends, Chad and his team delivered Newfoundland's strongest showing ever in squash.

I ask all members of the House to join me today in extending our heartiest congratulations to these outstanding pages, Chad Blundon and Lisa Robichaud.

### ELMIRA MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to highlight to all Canadians the upcoming 35th Annual Elmira Maple Syrup Festival which will be taking place in my riding of Waterloo—Wellington on Saturday, March 27.

Each year people from across the country and around the world flock to the picturesque town of Elmira to taste the delicious Waterloo county maple syrup and to watch the renowned pancake flippers.

The festival is a wonderful event in the Waterloo—Wellington area.

• (1415)

Welcoming between 50,000 and 60,000 people, the festival has raised over \$600,000 over the years for local non-profit organizations.

Definitely a worthwhile experience, the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival provides a variety of activities for people of all ages. The more than 2,000 volunteers helping the festival committee will surely show everyone and their taste buds a good time.

I encourage my constituents and all Canadians who may be in the area during the next few weeks to make the trip down to the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival. I am very proud of all those involved in this festival for organizing such a rich and enjoyable event year after year.

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### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

#### BUILDING CONTRACTS

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a convicted criminal named Yvon Duhaime bought a money-losing hotel from the Prime Minister. The PM then instructed a senior aid to pressure public servants into giving Duhaime a huge government grant. This goes beyond the bounds of being a good little MP.

How can the Prime Minister deny that this is a clear conflict of interest, that he betrayed the public trust and that his conduct is unbecoming of a Prime Minister?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was elected to this parliament in 1963. The duty of every member of parliament is to represent his or her constituents and to help them create jobs. It is a very important task.

All the projects that have been proposed by entrepreneurs in my riding have been approved by the different government authorities,

#### Oral Questions

provincial and municipal. The caisse populaire, the Fonds des travailleurs du Québec and others approved the loan. In every case my office has done what is the responsibility of any member of parliament.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell you the responsibility of any member of parliament. It is to understand that if it is a conflict of interest, walk away from it and let the public service decide on merit and merit alone.

What does the Prime Minister do? He sends in his top personal aid to send a little message. The message was clear. Nobody less than the Prime Minister of Canada himself wanted them to grant this money to Mr. Duhaime.

I would like him to stand again and tell us how he can deny that this was a clear conflict of interest and that it was wrong, wrong, wrong.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have done what every member of parliament does when there is a certain level of unemployment and programs are available. The member for Okanagan—Shuswap worked for Askews Grocery Store. The member for Nanaimo—Alberni worked for Port Alberni Marina. The member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley worked for the Fraser Fort George Museum. The member for Skeena worked for the Skeena Valley Golf and Country Club. The member for Kootenay—Columbia worked for the St. Eugene Mission.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Prime Minister that none of those people who were consulted were standing in any way to gain, they were not convicted criminals and the people who were addressing this were—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. The words are close, but so far they are parliamentary. I would like the hon. member to please put her question.

**Miss Deborah Grey:** Mr. Speaker, let me finish by saying that none of those people were compromised by a conflict of interest situation.

The Prime Minister in 1996 said “Everybody knows I never run away when I have responsibilities to face”. He has them to face today. Conflict of interest—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. Put the question right now.

**Miss Deborah Grey:** Mr. Speaker, what is it about this Prime Minister’s character that makes him run away from responsibility, from his own unethical behaviour?

**Some hon. members:** Out of order.

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** Order. The words are now getting a little bit closer. The questioning of a member's character is not permissible. I am going to permit the Right Hon. Prime Minister to answer the question.

• (1420)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have served my riding for 36 years. My personal integrity has never been questioned in this House but by this member. I saw that again yesterday. Reformers make accusations like that, but when they go out into the corridor they do not use the same words because they are just a bunch of chickens.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**The Speaker:** Order. Again my colleagues, no one's courage is being questioned in this House and I wish we would leave words like that out of it.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not appear to realize that the Duhaime affair raises some very serious questions. The Prime Minister used his office to secure huge grants, not for just any constituent, but for someone who had done him the favour of taking a money-losing hotel off his hands. But that is not all. The Prime Minister also has a financial interest in a nearby golf course. Is it not true that grant money pumped into Duhaime's hotel also increases the value of the Prime Minister's golf course shares?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I sold my shares in 1993, so the opposition is only six years late. I do not have a share in that golf course. I sold my shares because I did not want to keep them and because I did not want to have any conflict of interest. That is all.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I will have to refresh the Prime Minister's memory. On January 28, 1999, the Prime Minister's ethics counsellor wrote a memo in which he said: "In January 1996, he (the Prime Minister) informed the Ethics Counsellor that he had not been paid" for his shares in the golf course "and wanted to know what his options were. He was told that the Code permitted him to resume ownership or if he wished, he could of course, sell these shares".

Clearly the Prime Minister was told by the ethics counsellor that he still owned these shares in the golf course. This is exactly the kind of question a conflict of interest raises. When will this be cleared up for Canadians?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, never have the shares come back to me, so I do not have a share.

I would like to quote a member of the National Assembly. On March 23, 1999 the Parti Québécois member for Saint-Maurice, Claude Pinard, said "I don't see why it's a mortal sin for the Prime Minister of Canada to be interested as well in his own riding. I find

it deplorable that they are throwing rocks at the Prime Minister for having worked within government programs".

We are working, provincial and federal ministers of government, for the well-being of Quebecers from that part of Quebec in Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the *National Post* revealed today that the surplus in the employment insurance fund will reach \$26 billion in the coming year.

• (1425)

However, according to the Minister of Human Resources Development, this surplus is virtual, it has disappeared. The money has been spent.

Since the money has been spent, since there is no more money in the employment insurance fund, will the Minister of Finance, the person primarily responsible for this misappropriation of funds, explain what he would do should, unfortunately, a recession occur? Would he increase contributions? Would he reduce benefits further? Or would he be obliged to present a deficit budget?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already explained to the member that the Government of Canada guarantees employment insurance contributions.

We are a long way from a recession. Should one by misfortune ever occur, the contributions are at an appropriate level. There would be no need to increase them.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the chief actuary of the employment insurance fund has already indicated that a reserve of \$10 billion to \$15 billion would be enough to handle a recession, should one unfortunately occur.

However, the funds the minister has siphoned off from the employment insurance fund represent about twice this figure.

Given the opinion of the chief actuary, and the fact that he has already taken \$26 billion from the employment insurance fund, does the Minister of Finance realize that his behaviour is not only indecent and immoral but also illegal?

**The Speaker:** Words are becoming a little too strong. I will permit the minister to respond, but a term such as "illegal" is out of order.

The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, not only is it out of order, it is totally ridiculous.

I would say to the hon. member that the three commissioners, unanimously, recommended contributions be at the level of \$2.55, which the government accepted.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the federal government is swimming in money, thousands of people are drowning in poverty, having reached that period in the year known as the spring gap, a situation made worse by the Liberal government's EI reforms.

What has the Minister of Human Resources Development got to say to the people who, for periods of from six weeks to two months, find themselves with no money to live on or feed their families, and who see their premiums being siphoned off by the Minister of Finance to pay down Canada's debt?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already spoken to the House about how we sympathize with workers in difficulty. And when we changed the EI system, we knew that we were going to be making things difficult for certain regions and for certain workers.

That is why we have made other tools available to these workers, so that more jobs will be created in the areas of highest unemployment. The goal is longer lasting jobs, so that their standard of living will be improved.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that, in a large number of seasonal industries such as tourism and forestry, the minister's active measures do nothing to help thousands of people who find themselves with no income for two months.

Will the minister put aside his rhetoric, come down from his ivory tower, and take an honest look at how his reforms have hurt real people?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is precisely because we care about these people that we want to help them create jobs in the regions.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew:** Mr. Speaker, the best way to show people that you care about them is to give them work, not to keep them unemployed, as the Bloc Québécois wants to do.

What is the Bloc Québécois asking us to do? Bring back the 10-42 system. The Bloc Québécois is calling on us to bring back the system of ten weeks of work for 42 weeks of EI.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew:** Even last Saturday's *Le Devoir* urged us not to bring back the earlier system, as the Bloc Québécois would have us do.

\* \* \*

[English]

### NUCLEAR WASTE

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Three months ago the House foreign affairs committee strongly and unanimously rejected the idea of burning plutonium based MOX fuel in Canadian reactors, saying that it is totally infeasible.

Why is the Prime Minister writing this month to U.S. President Bill Clinton, offering to consider using U.S. and Russian plutonium in Canada? Does this Prime Minister not understand that Canadians do not want our country to become a dumping ground for the world's cold war plutonium?

• (1430)

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that we will be tabling a response to the committee before the May 10 deadline. I am sure we will be able to satisfactorily answer the member's questions. I would like to clarify some of the facts the member put forward.

Canada is not under any commitment to have any kind of commercial burning of MOX fuel. The only commitment we have made is to undertake certain tests of very small, minute portions to determine the feasibility.

I am surprised at the hon. member. One of the most serious problems we face in the world is nuclear proliferation. One way to help is to burn up the warheads that Russia wants to destroy. That is why we have made that kind of commitment.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is not just this hon. member, it was every Liberal member of the foreign affairs committee that said no to MOX. The House would appreciate a response before the Prime Minister responds to the president of the United States. That might be a little more appropriate.

Why should Canada allow over-flights of plutonium when the United States itself bans those over-flights? Why should Canadian ports like Churchill, Montreal and Halifax take safety and environmental risks? Why should cities like Windsor and Sarnia be exposed to risk? Why will the government not listen to the foreign affairs committee and say no to MOX, period?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think I am being very clear to the hon. member. No commitments have been made. There have been no plans for any

### Oral Questions

flights for any transportation. If there were to be any decision of that kind, it would be subject to all environmental safety transport requirements under Canadian legislation.

The point is we live in a dangerous nuclear world. We have some responsibilities to help in the denuclearizing of that world. That is why at the Moscow conference, along with many other countries, we asked what Canada can do to help reduce the nuclear threat. We are simply testing to see if we can make a contribution to that issue.

\* \* \*

### BUILDING CONTRACTS

**Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC):** Mr. Speaker, today I received replies from the Business Development Bank of Canada and Canadian economic development to my request under the Access to Information Act. The Business Development Bank of Canada refused to provide any information about Yvon Duhaime while Canadian economic development denied having ever received a loan application from Yvon Duhaime, despite other evidence to the contrary.

In light of the refusal of these departments to clear the air on the Chateau Shawinigan deal, will the Prime Minister use section 11 of the Auditor General's Act to independently verify these shady deals?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again they use all sorts of words. I would like to read to the member what the PQ member of my riding said: "No, no, no. There cannot be favouritism because in this case the Prime Minister did exactly what I did in Quebec City. Meaning that we took our normal government programs and then we obtained a fair share for our own riding". These are the words of a member of parliament. Every member of parliament does this.

The mayor of Shawinigan said: "Whatever the party, be it at the provincial or federal level, what MP would shortchange his riding by saying I don't work for my riding? I find it deplorable that we slander towns in order to attack the Prime Minister who does his work like any good member"—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Markham.

**Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC):** Mr. Speaker, two wrongs do not make a right. The Prime Minister is hiding. He is hiding behind his cabinet ministers, hiding behind technicalities, even hiding behind his riding separatist politicians. No matter how hard the Prime Minister tries to hide, the inescapable fact remains. He is supporting Yvon Duhaime, a criminal who misled federal officials, and Pierre Thibault, an admitted thief under criminal investigation.

The ethics counsellor has no teeth to investigate the Prime Minister. Why will the Prime Minister not prove there is nothing wrong in these deals and table all documents from this office?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Business Development Bank of Canada, I think it is quite clear. The member is welcome to look at the facts for himself if he wants. The process of reviewing a loan application was dealt with in the ordinary course of business. The request for access to information is of course subject to the provisions of the act which retain confidential commercial information.

However, if the member wants to go to the registry office he will discover that the Business Development Bank of Canada was not the only source of financing for this project. The fonds de solidarité and the caisse populaire put in money on a commercial basis. That is fundamentally the answer to the member's question.

• (1435)

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to give the Prime Minister an opportunity to correct the record.

He said he sold the golf course in 1993 but he knows full well that he applied to the ethics counsellor, telling him that he did not get paid and by 1996 those shares were back into his hands and now sit with his lawyer. I ask him to correct that statement.

Second, did Yvon Duhaime owe the Prime Minister any money when he received the grants in 1997?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will answer because I sold the shares in 1993. I was not paid. It is my problem and the shares are still in the hands of the one who has not paid or sold to somebody else.

It is all dealt with by the person who manages the trust of my own affairs. I do not ask them any questions. I do not have the shares. All my assets are controlled, like other members of the cabinet, by the trustee and the trustee decides what to do.

I make it my point not to ask any questions. It is the job of the trustee to decide what to do with my assets.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor says those shares reverted to the Prime Minister on January 28, 1999. His office says they are in the hands of his lawyer, Debbie Weinstein, at this time.

Apparently that is the way this has all happened. Will the Prime Minister table or arrange for that agreement to be tabled in the House of Commons so we can see what happened to the golf course that happens to be right beside Mr. Duhaime's hotel?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my assets are managed by a trustee in what we call a blind trust.

I do not know in English what blind means but it seems that I am not supposed to know what is going on. In 1993 these shares were

sold. I needed money and there was no money. It is a big problem but I am still eating three times a day.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the Prime Minister wrote to President Clinton on March 3 indicating Canada's interest in receiving Russian or American nuclear arms waste, provided that the project is hazard-free and viable.

How could the Prime Minister have taken this initiative of contacting President Clinton when the foreign affairs committee had examined the issue and requested that the government reject this project?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the only undertaking we have is to look at some very preliminary tests to determine its application within the AECL nuclear reactor. There is no other commitment than that.

I underline for the hon. member, who I know has an interest in these matters, that we live in a world in which nuclear weapons are proliferated. We have to do our part to help reduce that threat.

The test that will take place will be less than .02 of a kilogram, about the size of an AA battery. I do not think it represents a real threat to Canada but nuclear proliferation represents a threat to all mankind.

[Translation]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before announcing to the whole world that Canada is prepared to become the nuclear waste dump for the entire planet, can the Prime Minister commit to a full debate on this matter here in the House, given the major impact such a decision could have on future generations?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the government will be tabling its response to the committee. That tabling under House rules gives opportunity for members to raise questions, to generate a debate. We would certainly be glad to engage at that point.

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#### BUILDING CONTRACTS

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are getting a smokescreen from the Prime Minister. The fact is blind trusts are only used for controlled assets such as shares in the stock

#### Oral Questions

exchange or ownership interests in private companies doing extensive business with the federal government. This is not the case with the golf course.

• (1440)

Again, did Duhaime still owe the Prime Minister money when he received his federal grant in 1997?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I have done. To be very prudent I said manage these assets too.

Every commercial activity, the golf course and these shares, was given to my trustee. At one time we wanted to have money and the money did not come. That is all. It is her problem, not mine. She is a competent lawyer and she is doing her job. I put all my assets in the trust. It is a blind trust. I was not forced to give her the management. I did exactly that so I would not have to reply to that type of question.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are getting a little sick and tired of the little guy from Shawinigan—

**The Speaker:** Order. I ask hon. members to address each other by their proper titles.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, the question is very straightforward, the same one I asked last time. Did the Prime Minister have money coming from Duhaime when he got the grant in 1997? Will he answer the question?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure I did not because I sold my shares in 1993 and he received the grant four years later in 1997. The trustee was not to be paid by Duhaime but to be paid by the one who was buying the shares. The shares were not bought by Duhaime but by somebody else who has not yet paid me apparently.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### BILL C-54

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, after the CSN and Quebec's Conseil du patronat, this morning the 260,000 professionals in Quebec came to the conclusion that Bill C-54 will create unacceptable duplication.

My question is for the Minister of Industry. Does he recognize that, in addition to creating useless and costly duplication while at the same time reducing the protection of personal information, Bill C-54 will very likely be challenged under the Constitution? As the chair of the committee put it "We will see about this in the supreme court".

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, several constitutional experts, including Jacques Frémont from the

*Oral Questions*

Université de Montréal, recognized the right of the federal government to get involved in the area of commerce. Our bill will complement the legislation that already exists in Quebec.

To be sure, the issue of privacy is very important to all Canadians. It is important in the context of electronic commerce, and is an international issue rather than a provincial one. We will protect the interests of all Canadians.

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what Jacques Frémont said is that this bill was a show of force. That is what he said.

Given the unanimity among Quebec's workers, business leaders and professionals, what is the Minister of Industry waiting for—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order please. The hon. member can put her question again.

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, constitutional expert Jacques Frémont said this bill was a show of force.

Given the unanimity among Quebec's workers, business leaders and professionals, what is the Minister of Industry waiting for to return to the bargaining table with Quebec and the other provinces and come up with legislation that can be implemented without being challenged under the Constitution?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we did work with the other provinces. After all, there was already a directive from the European Union that concerned us.

I think it is important that, in striving to be a leader in electronic commerce, Canada show it is capable of protecting the interests of individuals with respect to privacy.

We tried to work with Quebec officials, but our own officials waited in vain for six months and never got a reply from them.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

[English]

**BUILDING CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's spin doctors claim that the Prime Minister did not know that Pierre Thibault was under criminal investigation for embezzling money when he got a wad of government cash.

Now that we all know that Thibault has admitted to misappropriating funds, will the Prime Minister demand that Mr. Thibault do the right thing and give the government money back?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in that particular case, we went

through exactly the same process. It is the transitional jobs fund, which has been supported by the mayor of Shawinigan. It has been supported by the provincial government in Quebec, by the provincial member of the National Assembly there. This particular project has created 59 jobs, 20 more jobs than had been forecasted at the time the project was approved.

Only these people here like to see big problems and try to make innuendoes that are out of place in this House.

**Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Duhaime bought a money losing hotel from the Prime Minister. Subsequently he received a grant from the federal government for about \$1 million. We want to know whether Mr. Duhaime owed the Prime Minister any money on that hotel sale when he got the \$1 million of taxpayers' money in the federal grant. Yes or no?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have not been the owner of the shares since October 1993. I sold them to a person who was not Mr. Duhaime. I had no business relations at all with Mr. Duhaime. My shares were not sold to him. They were sold to another person who has not paid us as yet, apparently. It is in the hands of a trustee. I put all my assets in a blind trust. It is up to the trustee to decide how the money will come back, if ever I am paid, but not by Mr. Duhaime, by the one who owes me money.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADIAN EMBASSY IN BERLIN**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs rejected, quite surprisingly, the recommendation of a committee of experts, almost unanimous in its choice of an embassy proposal, claiming there were other considerations beside that of design. There were, according to him, security, cost and development considerations. Mention should perhaps also have been made of the Winnipeg connection.

How can the minister say that there were other criteria not considered, that the group worked on design only, when his own ambassador and one of his senior officials sat on the committee to consider the very—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** It is easy, Mr. Speaker, because he was not. The fact of the matter is there were four separate committees, one on design, one on cost, one on functionality and one on technical questions. Each of those four procedures came up with an independent evaluation of what

*Oral Questions*

would be the most appropriate choice. After those four reports were merged, the recommendation came forward and the choice was made. Nothing was overturned. It was based upon four separate criteria. I am glad to say a very distinguished Quebec firm was one of the winners.

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**GRAIN INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition party has been blocking the back to work legislation for PSAC workers. As a member from the west, I am extremely concerned about the negative impact of the delays in resolving the PSAC strike.

Could the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell us how those costly delays are affecting Canadian farmers and the Vancouver harbour?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, because of the delays and the unavailability to ship frequently on the west coast, our reputation as a reliable supplier is again in severe jeopardy. It may take months and even years to recoup that.

• (1450)

Unfortunately the losses that occur are picked up by the farmers. The Canadian Wheat Board has had to withdraw from wheat sales until into April because it cannot tell its customers that there is going to be reliability of delivery in the loading of ships.

I look forward to the support of the Reform Party and other opposition parties as we move forward to get these people back to work.

\* \* \*

**BUILDING CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are trying to get to the bottom of this very murky affair. We would appreciate some direct answers to some direct questions.

For instance does the Prime Minister know whether Mr. Duhaime owed him money for the sale of the hotel when the Prime Minister's office went to bat for him and secured this nearly \$1 million federal loan? Does he know whether he was owed money by the person who got the loan, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no. The money is owed to me by a person who is not involved in that at all.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the Prime Minister sold the hotel in part to Mr. Duhaime. Mr. Duhaime received a federal grant for nearly a million tax dollars. We know that the Prime Minister's office interfered in that process.

The question is, did the Prime Minister receive any financial benefit from Mr. Duhaime and did that happen at the time that the grant was received?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the shares were sold in 1993 to a different person. After that there was a debt owed to me. I asked my trustee to administer the debt for me and so far, so good. Apparently, according to what was said some months ago, I have not been paid, which is too bad. I guess I will have a collection for my breakfast tomorrow morning.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We are not talking about a golf course. We are talking about a hotel. Mr. Duhaime is no ordinary constituent of the Prime Minister. He is a constituent who did a business deal with the Prime Minister of Canada. In light of that, can the Prime Minister confirm that Yvon Duhaime had completed his payments to the Prime Minister for the purchase of the Grand'Mère Inn, not the golf course but the Grand'Mère Inn, by the time he was awarded a total of \$814,000 in federal grants and loans in 1997, and that not one penny of this public money found its way back to the Prime Minister or his partners?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hotel was owned by the company that owned the golf course. I sold the share of that company in 1993. After that I had nothing to do with either the golf course or the hotel. I had no shares. That was clear.

The debt that was owed to me by somebody else was in the hands of a blind trust. I have nothing to do with it. I have had no relationship with the hotel or the golf course since October 1993.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the question is, did Mr. Duhaime owe the Prime Minister any money in 1997 at the time that he received some \$814,000 in money from the federal government in terms of grants and loans? Did Mr. Duhaime owe any money to the Prime Minister's associates in 1997, yes or no? Surely the Prime Minister knows the answer to that question.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, he does not owe me a cent. In 1993 I sold the shares of the company that owned the auberge. There was no relation after that. I have had no shares in this operation since 1993. I cannot be more clear than that. I have no shares, no interests. He owes me not a cent, not a dollar, not a loonie.

\* \* \*

**TRANSITIONAL JOBS FUND**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, we have seen this type of shady behaviour before in the transitional—

*Oral Questions*

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

• (1455)

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, you will recall that Jacques Roy, an employee of the President of the Treasury Board, gave confidential information on transitional jobs fund applicants to convicted Liberal bagman Pierre Corbeil.

Now the Prime Minister's special representative, Denise Tremblay, made sure that the transitional jobs fund doled out big dollars to convicted criminal Yvon Duhaime. What assurances can the human resources minister give that Denise Tremblay or others have not disclosed jobs fund information to be used for illegal purposes? What safeguards are there?

**The Speaker:** The question is in order. The hon. Minister of Human Resources Development.

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can give the member full assurance that the process was thoroughly reviewed following the incident that the member is raising in this House. On behalf of the government, I asked the RCMP to investigate, if there was a need for it. Following that incident, I asked my deputy minister to thoroughly review the way we were conducting the consultations on the transitional jobs fund. I was assured that everything was absolutely correctly done.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in less than two years we have seen the transitional jobs fund become a source for Liberal Party kickbacks. We have seen the Liberal fundraiser convicted—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. I want the member to go directly to his question with no more preamble.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, last fall the human resources minister announced the creation of a Canada jobs—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford.

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**ENDANGERED SPECIES**

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Six hundred and thirty-one scientists have written to the Prime Minister protesting the scientific process surrounding the assessment of species at risk. They have contended that it has been and continues to be politicized and thus compromised.

[Translation]

What is the government doing right now to respond to the concerns of the scientists?

[English]

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today the Government of Canada along with the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for wildlife further increased the role of scientists to protect species at risk in Canada. Eight scientists have been added as voting members to COSEWIC, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. As Minister Stewart said, this change to COSEWIC's composition will ensure its continued scientific integrity.

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, I would remind you not to use the names of any members.

\* \* \*

**BUILDING CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this is what a blatant conflict of interest looks like: there are excuses, there are evasions and there is miscommunication.

Can the Prime Minister not see what every other Canadian can see, that his actions were unbecoming of a Prime Minister and unethical?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely not at all embarrassed to get up in the House. As a member of parliament I have done my job for my constituents. I have only done what any member of parliament does, what any member of the Reform Party or any other party in parliament can and is doing. Those who qualify, qualify. Okanagan—Shuswap got money for Moose Mulligan's Pub. I could talk about many other projects of the Progressive Conservative Party.

Every member of parliament is entitled to help his constituents to get money in order to create jobs so that people will not be on EI anymore and will have the dignity of work.

\* \* \*

• (1500)

[Translation]

**SOCIAL CONDITION**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, given the devastating effects of poverty and the Liberal government's lack of desire to do anything about it, my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve yesterday tabled a bill to include social condition as a prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

*Government Orders*

Does the Minister of Justice intend to support this initiative and make social condition discriminatory under the law?

[English]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member may be aware, I indicated some time ago that we would be undertaking a major review of the Canadian Human Rights Act. The act has been in existence for some 20 years, and I plan to announce that review in the coming weeks.

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**POINTS OF ORDER**

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to register my unhappiness with the way that question period unfolded today. Again the smaller parties are being punished for the time that is taken up by rows that basically happen between the government and the official opposition, or between the government and the Bloc Quebecois.

I see no point in any more encouraging my colleagues to be quiet and to show respect during question period if they are going to be punished by not having their questions heard. They might as well just get into it with everybody else.

It seems there is latitude at 3 o'clock to make sure that at least the NDP gets its third question, and perhaps the Conservatives, but this is not happening. It has happened a couple of times now that we do not get our third question.

What is the point, Mr. Speaker? It seems to me that your role is to reward and punish according to behaviour, not according to the clock, and we are getting the short end of the stick. If that is the way it is going to be, we will have to take that—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member is a veteran parliamentarian and he has raised this point before. Once again, we try to measure it all out and we will try to see if over the days ahead we can balance things out so all parties have a chance to ask questions and to have them answered in the House.

I wish I could be optimistic and say that at all times all members keep to the rules and are very quiet. I am sure the hon. House leader of the New Democratic Party will know that from time to time—it does not occur often—there are lapses in all parties and I have to take that into consideration.

• (1505)

I will see what we can do to see to it that we get in the maximum number of questions in every question period. If there are any

problems we will try to even it out by the end of the week, or surely by the end of a number of days. I undertake to do that.

KOSOVO

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a totally unrelated matter, although I agree very strenuously with the comments put forward by the House leader of the New Democratic Party.

This morning in the British parliament Prime Minister Blair made a lengthy statement to the British House of Commons concerning the deterioration of the situation in Kosovo. This appears to be a situation that will also involve Canadian military forces and their involvement in the possible military action.

I ask the government when we will hear a similar full statement in the House of Commons concerning Canadian citizens who will perhaps be called upon to be put into action with respect to the situation in Kosovo. Our armed forces are waiting.

**The Speaker:** Surely this type of question would be in order during question period. I do not think I will allow it to be raised as a point of order in the House.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT, 1999**

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before Oral Question Period, I was congratulating Flamingo, a company operating in Joliette and in Berthierville, because we are on the topic of labour relations and negotiations. I was saying that, when parties sat down and tried to reach a solution, when parties acted in good faith, something could be done.

The newspapers—to continue with this issue that concerns some of my constituents—reported good news, that an agreement in principle has been reached at the Flamingo abattoirs in Joliette and Berthierville that will, if approved by union members, end a five month dispute. This is concrete and very topical proof that opposing parties can reach an agreement if they act in good faith.

The following questions come to mind: Is the government opposite acting in good faith? Does the government opposite want to resolve the dispute fairly for all parties? In order to answer these questions, we must examine the facts. We must understand what the issues and the facts are.

*Government Orders*

We know that, since 1991, the federal government has established seven bargaining tables with its employees. It divided all its employees into seven such tables for bargaining purposes. One might say that the federal government divided to conquer, an old principle even Julius Caesar used to use. I dare hope this was not its main motivation, but the fact remains that there are seven bargaining tables.

Two of them, tables 2 and 4, are currently involved in a dispute. Who are the people involved? Table 4 comprises correctional service officers, and table no 2 general labour and trades, ships' crews, hospital services, general services, and firefighters. Clearly, we are not dealing with deputy ministers making twice as much as the minister in charge of the matter, but people at the bottom of the pay scale. They are not highly paid civil servants.

These two tables were bargaining and, since they were not making progress, union members resorted to pressure tactics, including going on strike.

• (1510)

At this point I believe we need to go back over the history of bargaining in the public service to have an overview of the situation and form an opinion on the matter.

Labour relations in the federal public service come under the Public Service Staff Relations Act. This act came into force in 1967. This new negotiating framework removed public servants from the more liberal framework of the Canada Labour Code.

There are many differences between the Canada Labour Code and the Quebec Labour Code. I believe the latter is far more specific, and probably more advantageous for workers. We do have a labour code, but the adoption of the Public Service Staff Relations Act effectively removed public servants from the jurisdiction of the Canada Labour Code.

It is very important to remember that one of the reasons given by the government of the day to justify the removal of public servants from the jurisdiction of the Canada Labour Code was that it considered itself a good employer because it paid its employees well and gave them good working conditions. We were told then that no government would ever abuse the situation and use its size and power to control the market, to muzzle its employees or to bludgeon them into submission, if I may use that expression.

In other words, we were told that since the Canadian government was such a good employer, its employees would be removed from the jurisdiction of the Canada Labour Code and would instead be governed by a law that would apply only to them and over which the government would have total control.

Is that what is really going on? I think history has shown us that it is not the case. Since the adoption of the new legislation, and particularly since the Liberals took office in 1993, those principles have been betrayed in every possible way by the government, especially through its legislative power. The government distorts, undermines and dominates the bargaining process like no other employer can, legally. It has the power to do so.

The government made a series of cuts which impacted heavily on civil servants, and attempted to manipulate the taxpayers with demagoguery and the government's sizeable communications resources. As well as misinforming the public, it has abused the House of Commons. We, the MPs, cannot even debate such a vital matter, thanks to the gags the government keeps using.

I would like to ask a legitimate question, for the sake of those following this debate. Is this the first time the federal government is acting in this way? Is this the first time it is trying to impose its will as heavy-handedly as this?

One would have to look at past legislation to see whether this is a first or not, and if it is true that what goes around comes around, it will surely not be the last time either.

In August 1982, Bill C-124 froze the salaries of some 500,000 public servants. In December 1989, there was the back to work legislation, Bill C-49. Later, in October 1991, there was Bill C-29, with which the employer threatened unilateral imposition of its offer if it were not accepted. "Those are the offers. If you do not accept them, you will end up with them anyway". That was more or less what Bill C-29 was all about.

But something rather special happened then. The Labour Relations Board characterized this move by the federal government of the time as unethical. Worse yet, the International Labour Organization commented that this action by the federal government imposed serious restrictions on the bargaining process and urged the government to return to free bargaining. The ILO found the way the federal government was treating its employees shocking.

• (1515)

Members will understand our having a few doubts today about the federal government's statement that it is a good employer. The International Labour Organization had doubts then.

In 1992, there was something else. In 1993, 1994 and 1996, there were in this House a series of laws imposing working conditions on these public servants. One of my Bloc Québécois colleagues said "We are forced to conclude there is no difference between Conservative and Liberal".

When we look at labour relations with public servants, both the Conservatives and the Liberals forced their will on their employees using the legislative tools at their disposal.

*Government Orders*

In conclusion—I will have the opportunity to come back about 11 p.m. or midnight, I am pleased to say—what we want the government to do is sit down and bargain, as they are entitled to do.

[*English*]

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today to Bill C-76. Unfortunately this bill should never have been brought to the House.

If the government had done its job PSAC workers would not be on a strike platform right now. If it had treated PSAC workers fairly we would not have the imposition on the grain handlers and the economy taking place right now.

The government has not been negotiating in good faith with PSAC workers. It has not treated them fairly. When PSAC workers wanted to come to the table for discussion with the government, it turned its back on them. Why is that? This is the third time PSAC workers are to be legislated back to work. We understand the reasons why the government will do that.

We cannot have an economy that is held hostage to strikes. We cannot have situations such as those taking place now with grain handlers being unable to carry on with their jobs; 70 PSAC workers striking and holding up 112,000 grain handlers should not be allowed to occur. On the other hand, PSAC workers should have the right to get a fair resolution to their problems.

There is a way of resolving this issue. How do we ensure that people will not go on strike? How do we ensure the economy will not be hurt? How, on the other hand, do we enable workers to get a fair resolution?

The solution put forth by the Reform Party is an excellent one that is built into the contract of essential services and built into the contract of PSAC workers. I suggest that some of these workers such as prison guards be made essential. In the process of doing that, these individuals must have an out, an ability to get resolution to their grievances.

The way to do that is by binding arbitration or final offer arbitration. In other words, give workers in various disciplines the opportunity to negotiate a settlement. If after a certain period of time no settlement is arrived at, be it on the lack of good faith on the part of the government or the people who are negotiating from outside the government, then a situation will happen where resolution has to occur.

Rather than have people go out on strike and hurt the economy, hurt Canadians, hurt other workers, the solution is to write into the contract that both sides come together for binding offer arbitration or final offer arbitration.

Final offer arbitration would ensure that both sides, the government and in this case PSAC workers, would put forth the best

solution they can possibly come to themselves. A third party, acceptable to both sides, would then make the decision.

The other option is binding arbitration. In that case a third party, again one acceptable to both sides, would deliberate on the situation, take the offers from both sides and construct an offer they find would be the best at that point.

That would enable workers to get a fair and quick resolution to their situation. PSAC workers, like other workers, just want to get back to work. They want to be treated fairly. On the other hand, it will prevent strikes from taking place and prevent the inconvenience and damage that is taking place to our economy, to other citizens and to the functioning of government. Therein lies the solution and we have put that solution forth to the government.

• (1520)

I will not be supporting Bill C-76 unless the clause of binding offer arbitration or final offer arbitration is accepted by the government. If it does not accept that, I cannot support the bill because members in my constituency of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca are very angry with the government and want a resolution.

What are they asking for? Are they asking for things that are unreasonable? No, they are not. Their pay has been frozen since 1992. They are asking for a fair wage increase. I submit that if PSAC workers were to get the same wage increase as members of parliament receive that would be fair.

On the issue of pay and equitable playing fields for people across the country, right now people are paid different amounts depending on where they live, and that is to take into consideration the fact that the cost of living in some places is different from that in others.

A better way of doing that would be to pay people the same for doing the same job. On the other hand, people are being forced to live in an environment where the cost of living is higher than in another. For example, in Victoria the cost of living is higher than in Halifax. The people working in Victoria would receive a supplement to what they are making at this point. That is done in the military with an accommodation assistance allowance.

A similar type of situation can be built into the contract. In that way we would not have the perception and the reality that people across the country are being paid different amounts for doing the same job. Pay them the same but give them the accommodation assistance allowance which would account for the differences in cost of living. That way everything would be very transparent and available to all concerned.

The other thing that we see happening is the issue of fairness in terms of labour-management relations. Labour unions have sometimes done a good job and sometimes have not. We need to clean up the labour situation and we need to ensure that the people working under labour union laws have the choice of whether to participate in the union.

*Government Orders*

Right now there are obligations for people in various jobs to participate. That is not fair. People should have a choice without being penalized for being a participant or not being a participant in the union.

Right to work legislation exists in some parts of the United States. Where that has taken place the income of those people is about \$2,500 to \$3,500 a year greater than for those people who are living in states where there is not right to work legislation.

Unions have to be in a position where they will be acting not in the best interests of the union leadership but in the best interests of the people they represent. That is extremely important.

In my riding we have quite a number of PSAC workers. One of the examples I would like to give is the non-military blue collar workers at the maritime forces base in Esquimalt. These people have been working for wages at or just slightly above welfare for a very long time. They have been asked to downsize significantly. Many of them have downsized 40%. They multitask. They have streamlined their jobs. They have streamlined their work. They have not asked for much at all. They have been working for rates far lower than what they could be making in other parts of the country doing the same job in other parts of the government. They stuck with it because they believed, out of a sense of duty, they were doing the right thing for the military.

After doing all this the government has kicked them in the teeth. It has not given them a level playing field to work on, and that is completely unfair. The workers in the base in Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca want to have a level playing field where they can compete with others fairly for their jobs and they want to be treated fairly.

The other issue, which I think is a very legitimate grievance, is that people doing the same job with the same skills working in PSAC are paid less than those individuals doing the same job with the same skills in the government, in other unions. Why is that? That should not happen. If a person is doing the job, if they have the same skills, they should be getting paid the same wage regardless of what union they are in within the government. That is called parity.

• (1525)

On the issue of employment equity, it is wise for us to understand what that means. Many people think it is for equal pay if people are doing the same job, with the same skills and the same experience regardless of their gender or any other characteristic we would like to name. That is not what employment equity is all about. Employment equity says that if person A is doing a job and person B is doing a different job, some arbitrary third person says those two people should be getting paid the same.

We do not believe that is fair. We do not support that. The reason we do not support that is we believe the market should decide what

the value of those two jobs are. Should someone working in a clerical position get paid the same as someone working in a blue collar job because some arbitrary third person in the government says those two jobs are equivalent? We do not believe so. What we believe in having is a level playing field where people can compete fairly for the jobs they would like to pursue.

We also believe very strongly that people doing the same job with the same skills in the same way should get paid the same amount of money. We very much support that. That is not taking place right now in the unions and the government has not addressed that.

The amount of money the government has given these people is pathetically small, given the impositions it has imposed on these workers and the challenges they have met. The blue collar PSAC workers have tried very hard and have met the challenges that have been put in front of them. They are hardworking individuals who are the backbone of our country. Yet the government has not treated them fairly.

The longer the government does this, the longer it continues to treat PSAC workers in this way, the less and less it will get out of them as workers and the less faith these workers will have in the system they work in. Who will be hurt by that? The people who rely on these PSAC workers to do their job and the country.

Does it not make sense if we are to have a stronger economy, a more cohesive society, that these people are treated fairly? That is all they are asking. Yet the government will force these people back to work and engage in strong, punitive legislation with huge fines for people who will not agree to that.

The failure of the government to deal with the situation in a proactive fashion has brought us to the catastrophe we have today, a situation that no one relishes. Why it does not do this I do not understand.

I challenge the government to do the following with the PSAC workers. It should identify other workers it believes are essential. It should put into the contract with their agreement that if the negotiations are not concluded with a fair resolution on both sides, binding final offer arbitration is put into the system, into their contract. In that way strikes will not take place, the economy will not be compromised, people will not be compromised and quick resolutions to this thorny problem will occur in a fair and equitable fashion so that the government, the economy, the public and the union workers will ultimately be treated fairly. To do anything less is grossly unfair to all concerned.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I regret that we are engaged in this debate, period. Let us be clear about what is before the House today. We have before us the most anti-democratic motion possible by any government anywhere.

*Government Orders*

Yesterday we had introduced in the House the most anti-democratic legislation imaginable for a democracy anywhere. Today we have the double whammy, an anti-democratic process on top of anti-democratic legislation.

The purpose for the debate this afternoon is to come to grips with this arbitrary, heavy handed approach by the Liberal government. It is yet another example of how arrogant this government has become.

• (1530)

Less than two years ago, when many of us were elected for the first time to this Chamber, we were given an opportunity to see democracy at work. We held out great hope that the rights of every individual member and the views of every Canadian would be heard and heard well. Lo and behold, that hope was short-lived for many of us.

I was elected in June 1997 and one of the very first measures of this government was to impose closure on Bill C-2, the bill to amend the Pension Act. Just when it became clear that this government was embarking on major changes that would have serious and widespread ramifications for Canadians everywhere, just when—

[Translation]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

With all due respect, I note unfortunately that there is no quorum in the House. I request your co-operation, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Indeed, I note there is no quorum. Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I see we now have quorum.

[English]

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Madam Speaker, I am glad I now have the attention of members opposite. I will carry on from where I left off, with my observations as a new member of parliament less than two years ago. I held out great hope that democracy would be a model for this country and for this parliament.

Instead I saw two things in very short order. First I saw a government that was more right wing and regressive than the previous Brian Mulroney Conservative government had been, absolutely and without question. The second thing I noticed was a government of unprecedented arrogance. It is unbelievable that any time an issue has become difficult or the debate has become complex this government has resorted to the undemocratic mea-

asures of closure, of speed-up motions as we have today, of killing parliamentary debate and of the chance for public input.

After many attempts over the last couple of years by this government to bring in closure and to bring down arbitrary, undemocratic measures, today we have before us a mean-spirited motion. It is an absolute abuse of power. What else can we call this attempt on the part of the government to fast track and limit debate on some very serious legislation pertaining to forcing workers back to work? It can only be described in terms of abusing power, of violating the very basic tenets of any democratic society.

Why in the world did this government feel it had to bring a heavy sledgehammer into this Chamber on an issue that is so fundamentally critical in terms of our history as a country and our traditions in terms of democracy?

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I call for a quorum check. I see the House is virtually empty.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I see we now have quorum.

• (1535)

[English]

**Mr. Ted McWhinney:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would take it that it is a contempt of this House for a member to make colourable quorum calls. I take note that the previous call was made by a member who immediately quit the Chamber. I therefore call upon you, Madam Speaker, to exercise your discretion and to refuse frivolous quorum calls.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Madam Speaker, I was here when the previous member made the call for quorum. I was present while she stayed in the Chamber. She did not leave immediately after she called for a quorum count.

I think I have been the only one who has been here throughout the whole thing.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I find the hon. member's remarks totally unacceptable. The government must make sure there is quorum and must have members present in the House. As long as the government does not make sure there is quorum, we have a right, as members of this parliament, to call for a quorum count.

*Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** This is not a point of order but a matter for debate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When the opposition called for a point of order there were more government members present in the Chamber.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Madam Speaker, what we are dealing with is deep-felt shame and embarrassment on the part of members of the Liberal government. Otherwise they would not be rising to their feet on points of order and commenting on those who are trying to seek a quorum in this Chamber.

Let us face it, it is an embarrassing moment for Liberal members. It must give them a terrible sense of shame and dishonour to have to sit here and be a part of a process that is denying fundamental basic democratic rights in the House of Commons. They have to be ashamed and embarrassed. They are probably also very ashamed and embarrassed about the legislation behind this motion, Bill C-76, which is an attempt to apply the most undemocratic process to deal with a labour dispute in our country.

Let us keep this in perspective and try to bring some sense to members on the government benches. This is not an isolated incident. This is part of a pattern of governing that is absolutely loathsome and absolutely repulsive for Canadians everywhere. This is just one in a series of examples.

I would like to remind members opposite how often we have had to deal with closure on important legislation, how often we have heard about decisions being made by the government outside parliament, how many times parliamentarians have been bypassed in critical decisions being made for this country and how often bodies without any democratic responsibility and accountability determine the future of this country.

Let us not forget the past week when we asked a simple question about the denial of postal subsidies for religious publications in this country. We were told that was part of the WTO, the World Trade Organization, reaching its tentacles into something as basic as the right of this country to produce religious publications that reflect the values of this country.

Let us not forget that if it had not been for the vigorous efforts on the part of non-governmental organizations, justice coalitions everywhere across this country and some members of parliament, we would not have had the multilateral agreement on investment before this Chamber for discussion. It would have proceeded in secret and arbitrarily. It would have become a *fait accompli*, causing much harm and destruction to the future of the country, if people had not called the government to task and demanded some sense of democratic process.

• (1540)

Let us also look at the way in which members of parliament have been raising their concerns over the last while and pointing out how much parliament is bypassed on a day to day basis.

My colleague, the member from Kamloops, was very clear last week in the House when he said that the government is working very hard to make all of us into political eunuchs. It is attempting at every step of the way to deny us the opportunity to exercise our democratic rights and to represent the people who elected us to this Chamber.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would like a quorum call please.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I do not see a quorum. Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** We now have a quorum.

• (1545)

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Madam Speaker, a minute ago I heard the member for Ottawa West—Nepean suggest the reason it had been hard to keep members in the House was that there were many committees going on. I want the member and all others members on the Liberal benches to know that many of us here would like to be in committee as we speak but we are forced to be in this place because of the unilateral, arbitrary and undemocratic actions of the government. If the government could see the light and realize that if it allowed democracy to pursue its natural course, we could all get the work of this place done efficiently and effectively.

I will try to wrap up the first part of my speech pertaining to closure, this arbitrary move on the part of the government, by referencing a couple of other incidents and events flowing from this place.

It should come as no surprise to members opposite that when it comes to serious matters like detailed analysis of the budget committees are barely given an opportunity for active scrutiny. The decisions are made outside this place. That is an undemocratic

*Government Orders*

practice. When it comes to big decisions of vital importance to the country and to the world, especially when it comes to questions pertaining to peacekeeping troops being sent into wartorn countries, as a matter of course this place is consulted after the fact.

The government may allow for a few hours to be spent on a take note debate, but when it comes to final decisions around whether or not troops will be sent into an international scene of conflict the government makes those decisions before parliament has had a chance to have any involvement or say on those issues.

Let me mention another example having to do with the incident we all had to deal with over the last year. Scientists in the health protection branch were being threatened, intimidated and placed under gag orders because they chose to speak up and inform Canadians about the possible harmful effects of something being added to our milk. In that case we were talking about bovine growth hormone. It is a very clear example of what has happened in the country and the kind of arrogance that is so pervasive with the Liberals across the way.

It means that civil servants who are doing their jobs are threatened, intimidated and made to shut up so that the government does not have to deal with the hard facts and take those concerns into account. There are numerous more examples of how undemocratic the government has become.

**Ms. Elinor Caplan:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Not only are the member's facts inaccurate, but I do not think she is speaking to the topic.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Madam Speaker, the motion before us is a motion to speed up the process around the approval for the most undemocratic legislation we have ever seen. We are talking about closure.

Every incident I have referred to has do with the way in which the government wields the heavy hand, cuts off debate, makes decisions outside parliament and denies the fundamental tenets of a democratic society. I am right on topic.

Let me move toward the actual anti-democratic nature of the legislation around which the motion is trying to speed up the process with regard to Bill C-76, the back to work legislation. Why in the world did the government feel compelled to go the route of fundamentally bypassing the democratic collective bargaining process and bringing in this heavy handed back to work legislation?

It is absolutely shameful the government had to resort to such tactics when there were many other options which the government with a bit of courage, leadership and conviction could have used to ensure that the concerns of workers, farmers and the public service were all addressed. Canadians could then feel there was some framework of harmony and consensus at play and the tools in place by which they would have the ability to take on the future with all the rapid technological change and global forces at work in this country and around the world.

• (1550)

We are talking today about the most anti-democratic process to bring in and to force the most anti-democratic legislation imaginable.

I do not think many Canadians will take solace in the government's suggestion that this heavy handed legislation was the only solution to the problem. Canadians know full well that the process of collective bargaining involving members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada was not respected. They know full well that legitimate issues and demands were being raised by alliance workers that were not taken into account.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to read a few letters I received today in my office in Winnipeg and some letters I received over the course of the last couple of months while public service alliance workers have been trying to convince the government of the need to deal with their grievances and, in particular, to deal with the whole question of inequity and discrimination in the regional rates of pay.

I quote from a letter by Alice, sent to me today at my office. She wrote:

I thought that being a federal employee would entitle me to equal treatment like everyone else that works for the government, but I guess (the President of the Treasury Board) doesn't see it that way. This is discrimination with a capital D. Our prime minister does nothing to help us. I feel we have no rights as Canadian citizens.

Alice does not feel she has any rights as a Canadian citizen. We do not feel we have any rights as members of parliament. Is there any sign of people feeling like they are able to use their full rights as citizens of the country?

Let me go on and read from Leona who wrote:

Dear Judy:

I am writing in protest to being legislated back to work by the federal government. I can't believe that our Prime Minister condones (the President of the Treasury Board's) behaviour towards the blue collar workers of Canada. (The Prime Minister) openly shows his discrimination, by not stepping in to stop (the President of the Treasury Board) and the treasury board from once again sending us back to work without a proper raise.

Let me quote from Mike who wrote to me today:

I am an employee of the Federal Government of Canada and a member of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. As an employee represented by Public Service Alliance of Canada-Table 2 I urge you to intercede on our behalf—

We are doing that today. We are trying to intercede on behalf of workers who are members of the public service alliance and part of the table two negotiations seeking to have their concerns heard and taken seriously.

It is absolutely unnecessary and unexplainable. It takes the words right out of my mouth to try to figure out why the government felt it had to resort to back to work legislation when there were options before it, when it was a matter of respecting the

*Government Orders*

rights of workers and respecting the role that the labour movement plays in the country.

I urge members today to consider their actions and to remember people like Stanley Knowles who would have been appalled by the kind of anti-democratic motion put before the House today. I ask members to remember the contribution of the labour movement throughout the history of the country in seeking a more just and equitable society. I ask members to remember the words that when one among us suffers we all suffer. When we work to ensure the collective good and find co-operative solutions, therein lies our hope for a secure, healthy and peaceful future.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to this debate. Honest to goodness, I cannot for the life of me understand what is going on and why we are playing these games.

There should have been a settlement a long time ago. We have asked the government many times, over and over again, to keep the grain moving. It has to be kept moving for the sake of our farmers everywhere, not just farmers throughout Saskatchewan and throughout Alberta in small towns or communities.

I talked with a number of businessmen just this weekend who reassured me once again that the success of the town, the community and the small business that exists relies totally on the success of farmers in their community. Over and over again every year we go through this nonsense.

• (1555)

I am pleased to hear that the grain is moving today and that we are not having a little demonstration, strike, picket line or whatever to stop its flow. It should have never come to that in the first place. We asked the government over and over again to bring in such things as final arbitration that would put an end to the harassment that farmers have to go through.

I realize what the NDP colleagues are saying about faithfully negotiating. If negotiations are supposed to take place, for heaven's sakes get to the negotiating table. I do not think there has been negotiating going on with the prison guards for I do not know how long.

People are pushing hard for negotiations and to reach a settlement. I would like to try an experiment after 1999, in the new millennium, that will change the role. Somehow or another we will get farmers to go on strike. They will just stop producing. We will not be able to legislate them back to work. We will not be able to do anything, because they will choose to pull the pin and go on strike. I wonder where all the picket lines would be if there was no grain to move, or if they did not have any of this or that to do.

The farmer has had the short end of the stick long enough. They have no alternatives. They do not have a negotiating table to go to. They do not get to sit around a table and say "We are going to

negotiate. What are you going to do for me? How much money are you going to bring me this year? How are you going to increase my wages?"

They have absolutely no say. They put their seeds in the ground and pray that it does not hail or there is not a drought. They go through the headache of getting a crop together and getting it to the right places so they can get it moving and into the hands of society so people can eat. Contrary to what some people on that side of the House must believe, food does not come from grocery stores. It comes from other places.

Farmers have no representation whatsoever in terms of who will look after their needs. When it comes to 70 grain weighers or a few dock loaders, man do we have people jumping to their rescue all over the land. They go on strike and stop the movement of grain. It does not matter if the farmer needs cash or his crop will go down the tube the next year if he does not get some cash.

Some people in my riding asked me not too long ago whether the Liberal government was trying to destroy them. That is what they asked. Why do hon. members think that a relief package is going out?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I must apologize to the member.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would you please check if there is indeed a quorum?

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** We do not have a quorum at this time so we must call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** We now have a quorum.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Madam Speaker, we have to play a few more games. We have to go through these things. I do not know why.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member who just called for quorum, whose party I notice is fairly underrepresented in the House today, is the same member wearing a badge on his lapel that I think is not according to the rules of the House.

• (1600)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** If the member rises wishing to speak, we will go into the matter at that time.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** There we go again, Madam Speaker. It is a good thing the grain movement strike is not in effect in Vancouver right now because that—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I do not appreciate the comment made by the member opposite. I am wearing this to show compassion for government employees.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** This is not a point of order but a matter for debate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Madam Speaker, that is what I am getting at. It is a good thing the grain is moving, because if it was not and we had to get them back to work to get the grain moving, that four or five minute intervention would have cost a few more thousand dollars which of course would have come out of the farmers' pockets. That is where those losses are. Farmers are the ones who lose. But of course we have to make sure this button looks good or that one looks bad or whatever. That is really important stuff.

When are we going to start doing things in this House that would guarantee some things to the farmers? They have no avenue. They do not have a union. They cannot go on strike. Every year they end up in the hole. It is getting worse and worse. A big fund was needed this year to help relieve a crisis. We would like to blame everything under the sun. We would not want to point any fingers in this place that would cause any problems. The government could have put an end to any danger in grain movement—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would like to know if there is quorum to continue the proceedings of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I do not see a quorum at this time.

Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** We now have a quorum.

[*English*]

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Madam Speaker, the point I have been trying to make is that it does not appear that the government in power or colleagues to my right or to my left are interested in the welfare of farmers.

The farmers' only alternative is the House of Commons. They cannot go on strike. They cannot set the price of their grain. They cannot determine who is going to buy it or how it is going to get there.

The fate of the farmers is left in the hands of everybody under the sun. They have no say about when the grain is going to flow, when money is going to come in, when they are going to have some cash to be able to put a crop in another year. All they ask for is a little peace and tranquillity so they can go into another year and keep doing their job. But there are these constant interruptions every year. Sure as clockwork it is going to happen again next year because this government will not—

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The member opposite is using his cellular telephone. This is completely unacceptable.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I did not witness the incident referred to, but I would ask all members to refrain from using cellular telephones in the House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Madam Speaker, we continue to play games. The farmers are quite concerned about their fate, about what is going to happen. The separatists are quite concerned if they are going to be able to leave Canada or not. I guess right now that is the most important thing. Why in the world can we not stop for about 10 minutes and think about the fate of the farmers?

I put out a notice in my riding the other day that if the strike continued and the farmers could not move their grain and they wished to go to Vancouver—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maurice Godin:** Madam Speaker, the interpretation is not coming through. I think something is not working.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I will ask those concerned to make sure that the system is working properly and, if there are problems, to let us know.

[*English*]

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I hope the public is listening to the wisdom of those people over there. We are talking about the fate of a lot of people. We are talking about the most important industry to this country which happens to be farming,

*Government Orders*

whether they want to admit it or not. If putting on a floor show is the most important thing they can come up with, then I will direct everything to you, Madam Speaker. You and I can have a good conversation because I know you will listen. They do not care that much. If they did care we would not be here again debating how we can keep the grain flowing in our ports.

We are going to support this back to work legislation. There is no doubt about that. We want these things to come to an end. We want the government to sit down and learn how to fix these problems by talking to all parties, including the farmers. This does not have to happen year after year. It is costing the farmers millions of dollars. It has put a lot of young farmers right out business. I do not think any of them over there know what it is like. Maybe a couple of them would know what it is like to lose a farm. I personally know some farmers who have, and it is because of a lot of what takes place here that it happens.

If we ever have to go through this again and if farmers want to load the ships themselves, they should give me a call. I will lead them to Vancouver. We will get shovels or whatever it takes and we will load the ships ourselves if that is what it takes.

I was asked how many acres I have. I used to have quite a few but then I used to do pretty well until the government stuck its nose in. Then I joined the ranks of "you better get out of it before you go bankrupt". That is life on a farm. Farmers have no say in their destiny. It is limited. It is all in the hands of people like Toronto lawyers who are not sure which animal produces the milk they buy in the carton.

I would like to talk about the prison guards. I visited the prison guards in my last portfolio. They begged and pleaded with the government and with corrections to do something. They were concerned about a raise. They had not had one for nine years. Now it is up to 11 years. It is one of the most dangerous occupations, one of the most responsible jobs.

• (1610)

The guards asked time and time again, through us because the government would not listen, that we deal with situations which needed to be dealt with in the penitentiaries. It would make their lives a little safer. It would make the lives of their wives and children at home a little safer because of threats they were getting. It was about safety measures that could be taken in the prisons to protect them from being stuck with needles which happened just the same and threats from other things.

They asked time and time again, could they please get equal treatment. A prisoner puts in a harassment charge and is dealt with in a matter of a few days or weeks. Guards who put in harassment charges are never dealt with. Sometimes it takes two to three years. The government puts such little value on the people who work in these institutions. In 11 years the guards have not had a raise. The

government is not even willing to talk about it. The guards were not really interested so much in the raise throughout that whole era.

One guard in Drumheller who was under suspicion and charged with theft was immediately released from her duties without pay. In the upper house, in the other place convicted ones are sitting in there drawing all kinds of pay. Yet there is a guard from the Drumheller penitentiary who is now at home because charges have been brought against her. She has been out of work.

This place sits back and plays its little games. All through this whole period we have brought these issues to this House of Commons. We have asked the solicitor general time and time again to look after the needs of our guards.

Madam Speaker, how many times in the last session did you hear me ask for puncture proof gloves, something that would protect the guards from possibly contaminated needles? How many times did it never happen? Always. Gloves appeared in some quarters of our penitentiary system, thanks to the efforts of many people at the grassroots level, not thanks to the government.

I remember this same bunch crying out in 1991, "No, no you rotten Conservatives, you cannot get them back to work through legislation. You cannot do that undemocratic thing". Now the Liberals are doing it, because they want to look good in the eyes of the public I guess.

How nice it would be to come into the House of Commons and deal with issues squarely on, face to face, sensibly and guarantee to our farmers that they do not have to worry about their grain shipments ever stopping again. Why do we not do that?

Wait a minute. I am from a different party than those members are. We cannot allow good ideas to come from the opposition and they cannot come from the government.

**An hon. member:** You never have good ideas.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** They never have good ideas to help our farmers. Keep them alive, keep them well and keep things moving. Are those bad ideas?

Farmers supply food to that member and to every household in the country. Is that not a good idea? If the member thinks that is not a good idea, then go ahead and say it. I will pass the information on to the farmers. Stand up and say it. We will turn the mike on so we can hear. I would like to know when we are going to wake up and take care of the people who take care of us.

I would love to see members of every union across the country collectively say, "We have a good idea, folks. We will join with the farmers, the businessmen and everybody else. Let us all come together to lobby and demand that we have a tax break. We are taxed to the hilt".

*Government Orders*

I can almost assure every prison guard, every policeman, every nurse that if we could get a tax break no one would have to have a raise. Besides, a raise would just put a person into a higher bracket and they would lose most of it anyway. So why not go for tax relief collectively across the land and come together as a people, instead of always squabbling back and forth and fighting one another and then ending up with one group of individuals which has no avenue to turn to?

• (1615)

Those individuals do not have a union. How many times do we have to say that? They do not get to name the price that they are going to put on their wheat or barley. They have to wait and see what it is going to be. They do not have a say in what it is going to cost to ship it here or there.

The number one most important industry in this world is farming. It puts food on our tables. We treat it every year in the same fashion.

**Mr. Scott Brison:** Fishing.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** And fishing, which is farming. But we would not dare to change it because it would not look good politically. I say, wake up folks. Let us get on with the legislation so we can get people back to work, and then let us start working from that day on to see to it that we do not have to go through this again next year.

Let us get to the legislation. We want to support the legislation. We want the back to work legislation. But let us start doing things together that will make it good for the workers, for the producers and for everyone. Let us start now and stop the games. Today is the day. We can do something.

I say this on behalf of all my grain farmers in Wild Rose, many of whom are on their last leg, who phone me every day and say: "Help us. We have no place to turn. Help us".

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am delighted to address some of the concerns and some of the nonsense that has been going on in this place. It actually began last Thursday night.

I find it rather interesting. The longer one is in this business, and I have been around for 20 years, the less surprised one gets at how silly and how low political parties, opposite particularly, can go with some misconstrued attempt to try to say to the people that they are doing something good for Canadians.

Last Thursday there was a request that came from the opposition to have an emergency debate. The issue surrounded the fundamental problem in the grain industry and the fact that grain shipments were being held up due to rotating strikes. The grain was rotting and the demand was that we have an emergency debate to see if there was some way the government could bring some position

forward that would get the grain moving again, notwithstanding all of the other problems around the rotating strikes, the difficulties of people not getting their income tax refunds or not getting their forms filed, all the safety concerns around national defence, around—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am disappointed that so few members got to hear the member's eloquent speech. I do not see a quorum in the House. Perhaps we should call for one, for the benefit of members.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** In fact, we do not have a quorum. Call in the members.

[*English*]

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** We now have a quorum.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Madam Speaker, there are a couple of not so minor points of interest. I am told that the cost to run the House of Commons is approximately \$27,000 an hour. We hear people who watch television say "I saw you speaking in the House. Why were there not other members there?" We all know what other members are doing. How many committees do we have? I currently sit on a couple. Public accounts is sitting down the hall from this august Chamber right now.

• (1620)

**An hon. member:** As is the health committee.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** The member says that the health committee is also meeting.

**An hon. member:** National defence.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** National defence is meeting with members from all parties as we speak. The justice committee is meeting as we speak in this place.

There are members of parliament from all parties who are working in committee. As the Bloc chirps on, we all understand that the process requires us to be in committee. Why? Because there are bills which go to committee, as well as the reports of the auditor general, which one would think the opposition members might possibly be interested in. But no. What do they do? They simply continue to call quorum. They are trying to perpetrate the fraud upon the Canadian people that members of parliament—

**An hon. member:** And we will keep doing it until the cows come home.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Go ahead, you just assist me when you chirp like that.

*Government Orders*

They are trying to perpetrate the fraud that members of parliament are somehow lying around and not doing any work. Members are at committee. If they are not at committee they are working in their offices with their televisions on so that they can follow the debate. But the Bloc is not interested in that. We know that it is in the very clear interest of the Bloc to try to bring disrepute to anything Canadian. It is in its interest to try to show the Canadian people that somehow this place does not work. That is all it is doing.

We know that Bloc members would not want to go back to their ridings and tell the people there, some of whom may have voted for them and some of whom may have not, that the committee system actually has a purpose in the Canadian Confederation, that for the bills introduced in this place to get proper scrutiny they are sent to committee, at which time members of the Bloc, if they choose to attend, and often they do not, would have the opportunity to put something forward that just might, in some small way, be important to their constituents. But it is much more interesting for them to bring disruption to this place. They could care less.

If the strikes were to continue on a rotational basis, if the grains—I say to the hon. member for Wild Rose—were to rot in western Canada, they would not care. In fact, they would like that because they could turn around and say “See that? There are strikes. Canada does not work. Food is rotting”.

We can tell by their excited interventions and their chirping that they are a little excited about this because the truth really hurts. When someone puts the point across and outs them for what they are, destructive separatists dedicated to destroying the greatest country in the world—and it does not matter to them what tactics they use—of course they will get excited. I understand that.

In spite of the fact that the Bloc continues to waste the time of this place at \$27,000 per hour, it is now 4.25 in the afternoon and we are going to be here until 11 o'clock debating this bill. That is no problem. We have lots of members. We are ready and willing to stand to defend Canada. We are ready and willing and able to stand to defend legislation that will put Canadians back to work, that will save \$60 million worth of wheat that is rotting, which they do not care about, that will bring safety back to our airports and that will bring back safety to national defence. We are quite prepared to do that.

• (1625)

In spite of the obstructionist, childish, immature, nonsensical tactics of the Bloc, we will vote on this at 11 o'clock. And guess what, boys and girls? We are going to win. How do you like them apples?

Once that happens we will go on to a new bill which is the actual bill that will put an end to the strikes. It is, of course, back to work legislation. Is that something any government wants to do? I would say not. Ordering one's own workers back to work through legislation is absolutely a last resort.

However, we were asked to have an emergency debate, and we did so. We looked for alternatives. Negotiations have been ongoing with the members of the union in various areas. Agreements have been arrived at which were not ratified in certain areas, such as for the correctional officers. There have been problems. Labour negotiation is a very complicated and difficult process to go through.

I know a little of what I speak because my dad was a labour leader. When I stand to support this government's legislation, which I will do proudly, sadly my father will likely once again turn over in his grave. He will not be particularly pleased that the son of the past national director of the United Steel Workers would actually vote for legislation that would send workers back to work.

**An hon. member:** Your uncle Ed will be happy.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** It is uncle Ted. My Uncle Ted is a farmer, I say to the member for Wild Rose. He only farms rocks mostly. In any event, my dad would say that he did not agree with it. However, he would understand democracy. My father would understand that this kind of nonsense is destructive to the very fabric and fibre of democracy.

The games that people play are quite remarkable. What do we do? We sit here because we are unable to make a deal—

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not always agree with the members opposite, but I would like to hear what they have to say. I would ask that you attempt to keep order in the House so that the speakers can be heard. I would appreciate that, Madam Speaker.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I am going to ask all members present to exercise a little courtesy and to listen along with me to what their colleague has to say.

[English]

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the assistance of the member opposite who would be somewhat loath I think, under normal circumstances, to provide me with any assistance. I must admit I am a little surprised that she is having difficulty hearing me. I will try to speak up. Perhaps that will help, although I doubt it.

What the member is really saying, once again, is that these people, the Bloc, have been outed for what they are. Their only defence is to yell, stamp their feet, pound their desks and be childish.

What are some of the problems? More than one million Canadians are awaiting their income tax returns. How many of those might be in la belle province I wonder. How many of those people

*Government Orders*

would like to ask the Bloc why it is intentionally holding up their income tax returns. Why are the Bloc members doing that?

There are a lot of people in Quebec and in all of Canada who those income returns are pretty darn important to. We have to find a way, as distasteful as it is to legislate a union back to work. I personally and strongly believe in the right to strike, in collective bargaining and in the process. I also believe that while one gets the right to strike in a free and democratic country, one does not get the right to use that instrument to block other people from doing their work. One does not get the right under Canadian labour law to prevent parliamentarians from going into buildings. That is simply not right.

I say to the member opposite from the New Democratic Party, you do not get the right to be disruptive to the point where you are actually taking away other people's rights. The right to strike means the right to demonstrate in a public place. It means the right to picket. It means the right to withhold services.

• (1630)

For people in the labour movement the only thing they have is the right to withhold their services. I understand that. At a certain point we as a government have a greater responsibility to all Canadians. Do we say to those million people awaiting their tax returns that we are sorry we cannot help them?

Members of the union who work for us are unhappy with the offer we have made. We have not made a deal so we are saying that they will not be getting their cheques. Frankly even the New Democrats who would pretend to support the unions in this cause, and in fairness I am sure they do, would have difficulty telling people in their ridings that they will not get their cheques because rotating strikes are going on.

At some point in time part of the responsibility of being a government is having the guts to govern. That is plain and simple. We have arrived at that point with this legislation.

**An hon. member:** Yell louder.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** No, I do not have to yell louder. The microphone is on. They have to yell louder because their microphones are not on. Once again they are simply showing their frustration because their tactics are not working.

The government has introduced responsible return to work legislation. The government recognizes that we have to bring safety back to those sectors in the Canadian economy that are in jeopardy. We have to get grain moving again. How can we in good conscience sit back and simply say that we will not do anything?

That brings me to an interesting point. I heard members of the Reform, and I hesitate to be too unkind since they were being somewhat gentle, say they would not support the bill. I have to be

honest. I heard members opposite when they were outraged. In fact I heard their critic being interviewed and saying that the solution was final offer arbitration.

Is that not wonderful? Where have they been? They want to come along now. They see the government doing what they would do in spades every day of the week. If we want to talk about democratic principles and the right to strike, the agenda the Reformers would bring forward would destroy the labour movement, and they know it.

They had to find a way to oppose back to work legislation so they came up with the magical final offer arbitration. They are not fooling the labour unions if that is what they are trying to do. They understand the agenda. They know where that is going. They are certainly not fooling us.

The farmers my friend from Wild Rose so eloquently spoke about must be shaking their heads and wondering what is going on. Farmers out in western Canada who voted for some of these people thought members of the Reform Party were their friends. Why are they not supporting the government in getting the legislation through quickly? Why are they continuing to debate, rag the puck, stall, delay and cause problems in the House of Commons? That is what farmers must wonder.

I also suggest the business community in western Canada must be wondering. There is no question that west of Manitoba is beautiful country, but there is an attitude out there because they sent Reformers here to protect their interest and unfortunately for them this is what happened. How can they assume they are protecting their interests? They are not. They are voting against a bill that would get the economy going again. I am sure they find that bewildering.

When Reformers go home for the two week Easter break they might find that there are some questions. Never mind the united alternative. They will be asked whether they were in bed with the Bloc, whether those two parties were being obstreperous. They have not heard the Tories calling for quorum and that kind of nonsense.

• (1635)

I see the collaboration between members of the Reform Party and of the Bloc which tends to be more of a left wing socialistic party that we would expect to be on the side of the NDP. How did that happen? How does that work? That is an interesting bed to find themselves in. It must be awful crowded. They would not want to turn over too quickly because they would not be sure exactly whom they are in bed with.

Some interesting dichotomies exist because the opposition, with perhaps the exception of the New Democrats, recognizes that this is needed legislation. If Bloc members were honest and it were not in

*Government Orders*

their interest to destroy the credibility of Canada in every possible way, they would say that.

I cite the example last week when I spoke at some length and I understand upset some members of the Bloc. It is their desire to eliminate the Canadian dollar from our economy and to replace it with some Pan-American dollar. I suggested it might be a coupon, that maybe they would use a coupon. The reality is that they would wind up using the American dollar if that happened. That does not bother them because anything that would discredit Canada, anything that would discredit anything Canadian, is in their interest.

I want to touch on the proposed legislation. Parliament is being asked to pass legislation that would authorize the government to impose the immediate return to work of some 14,000 blue collar workers represented by PSAC. It also seeks authority to impose certain terms and conditions of employment on workers who have been waging rotational strikes across the country for the past two months.

I have been involved in other situations where a labour strike had to be ended by legislation, for example the teachers in Ontario when I was part of the Peterson government. We had problems even during the Bob Rae days. NDPers must roll over every time they think of the Rae days because of the things he did that were totally opposite to the policies of the NDP.

**An hon. member:** Tell us about Bill Mahoney.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** That member should be in the back taking notes rather than sitting out here publicly witnessing anything. He has not heard anything because he is not listening. He does not like the fact that this is responsible legislation. He is just trying to be disruptive.

The proposed legislation will allow the government to implement a collective agreement for some 4,500 correctional officers. If NDPers do not think that is important, God bless them. Correctional officers are extremely important to ensure the safety of everyone that works in that system.

We have pride. The government has negotiated. We have sat at the table. We have put deals forward and taken deals back. The system has bogged down and the bottom line is that it is not working now because it is causing disruptions in areas that impacts our farmers, the recipients of tax refunds, safety and national defence. The government is responsible enough to know that cannot happen. It is an utter shame, particularly for members of the Bloc, that they feel the need to be so negatively disruptive and uncooperative.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is with some apprehension that I rise to speak today. There are not many members with the oratorical talent of the member for Mississauga West. He is capable of working himself into a frenzy

for minutes on end without saying anything, when he is not spouting nonsense.

I must therefore congratulate the member for Mississauga West on his exceptional ability as a speaker and it is with some trepidation that I rise to speak today.

I hope that the member for Mississauga West, along with his colleagues, will follow the example of the Bloc Québécois, who listened calmly to his speech, and that he in turn will listen very calmly to everything I have to say and hang on my every word, as I took in every word that he had to say.

• (1640)

It is important to have a clear picture of what we will be talking about. We have to know the text of the motion that was introduced by the government House leader. Here is what it says:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of this House—

All that goes out the window.

—a bill in the name of the President of the Treasury Board, entitled an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services, shall be disposed as follows:

Commencing when the said bill is read a first time and concluding when the said bill is read a third time, the House shall not adjourn except pursuant to a motion proposed by a minister of the crown and no Private Members' Business shall be taken up;

The said bill may be read twice or thrice in one sitting;

After being read a second time, the said bill shall be referred to a committee of the whole;

During consideration of the said bill, no division shall be deferred.

I want to tell my colleagues opposite, who were talking about the huge cost of keeping the House of Commons running, that it is their own motion that says the House shall not adjourn except pursuant to a motion proposed by a minister of the crown. We know full well that it is a lot more expensive to keep this place running at night than during the day.

If they want to complain about the even greater costs that will result from this debate, they just have to talk to their House leader who is forcing the House to sit extended hours at a cost of \$22,000 an hour, I think. It must be more expensive when there is overtime involved. At time and a half, it is \$33,000 an hour. At double time, it is \$44,000 an hour. It is outrageous. And they are the ones accusing the opposition of wanting to spend the taxpayers' money.

I would be ashamed to say such things in the House. It is their fault that the House will be sitting so late.

Since I have been here in this House, I have been terribly surprised at the attitude of Liberal backbenchers, who are nothing but doormats. We heard over the week-end that the Senate was going to debate the possibility for Canada to use a common

currency. This is what the outstanding speaker from Mississauga West suggested.

Senators are going to debate the issue whereas, in this House, we will not, although we are the only elected chamber, and willing to do it. It is absolutely incredible that such an archaic, outdated and undemocratic body will debate a proposal so vital to the future of Canada and Quebec when the House of Commons will not. This is due to the trained seal attitude of the Liberals, who decided this issue would not be discussed in the House.

They refused to discuss such a forward thinking idea as the creation of a pan-American monetary union. They similarly decided not to discuss such a fundamental issue as the right and freedom of Canadian workers to strike.

This harks back to the Duplessis area. As members know, Duplessis was a member of the National Assembly and Premier of Quebec from 1936 to 1939, and from 1944 to 1959, if my memory serves me right. My colleague from Trois-Rivières will confirm this. Am I right?

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** Yes, you are.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Premier Duplessis used to say "You know, in a good government there is no need for an opposition". This is the same attitude we are seeing from this Liberal government, which is telling us that no matter what the opposition has to say, it will not listen and will ram this piece of legislation down our throats.

It is important to remember that the Liberal Party of Canada was elected with only 38% of the vote. This means that 62% of Canadians voted against it. This highly democratic party is using its questionable legitimacy to force back to work Canadian workers who are legally exercising their right to strike.

• (1645)

This is a disgraceful, undemocratic, bulldozer policy, in short an illegitimate policy on the part of a so-called democratic government.

**Mr. Claude Drouin:** Bulldozer?

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** I see my colleague, the member for Beauce, getting excited already. As soon as he hears anything that makes sense, we know that he either votes against it because it comes from the opposition, or he leaves and does not give people a chance to say their piece.

In fact, the member for Beauce, who says he represents his constituents well, voted against striking a committee to examine the idea of single currency, while the business community, which is exporting over 80% of what it produces to the United States, is

### *Government Orders*

calling for this kind of study so that it can maximize cross-border exports.

I hope the member for Beauce will, for once, stand up instead of bowing down before the sacred cow represented by the government—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:**—and that, this time, on behalf of his constituents, he will vote against forcing the workers of Canada and Quebec back to work.

A motion like this one leaves me speechless, as I channel all the expressions of anger I have heard from the workers I have met, all their outrage at the government's attitude.

Just recently some of my office staff spoke with Viviane Mathieu, the union president at Donnacona penitentiary. She was on the verge of tears. "What can we do," she said, "if we are no longer able to exercise our right to negotiate a collective agreement freely? What can we do?" She felt she was at the end of her tether, and rightly so. What can be done, when workers are forced back to work against their will, when they have every right to continue to negotiate?

Not only that, but this is done in an underhand manner. It is done through the back door. It is done hypocritically. We know very well that the Liberal Party is very familiar with closed door policies, with deals made behind closed doors. This is what happened in 1981, when the Minister of Justice of the day, now the Prime Minister of Canada, negotiated a new constitution behind Quebec's back. That was called the "night of the long knives".

We know that this highly undemocratic party is continuing the same odious tradition, one which in my opinion merits absolutely no consideration by Canadians.

Special legislation ought to be a last-ditch effort. As my colleague from Beauce is well aware, not all avenues have been exhausted, far from it. We believe that workers have the right to strike. This is a fundamental right, and one which is in a number of international conventions. It is a right that is recognized by the International Labour Organization, of which Canada is a member, moreover.

What is the Canadian government doing? To our great shame, it is trying to abolish this fundamental right with a stroke of the pen, with special legislation. This is a right for which millions of workers have fought throughout the world. Those who are familiar with French literature may remember the stunning novels written by Zola on this subject. I cannot believe that the government would revert to the attitude that prevailed during the industrial revolution, when workers counted for nothing practically.

The government is reverting to a reactionary policy. Where are we headed? Let us reread Zola, the great thinkers and the great

*Government Orders*

novelists of the late 19th century. Where does the government want to take us? To the abolition of the right of Quebec and Canadian workers—

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** *Les misérables*.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Yes, *Les misérables*, among others. Incidentally—

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** They are in front of us.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Indeed, les misérables are in front of us, as the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve has pointed out.

• (1650)

In fact, my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, to whom I pay tribute today, introduced a bill yesterday to fight and almost eliminate poverty. While it may be an impossible dream, we must always aim to do so. It is surely not—and I am sure he will agree with me—by passing such odious and undemocratic legislation that the rights of workers and the poor will be respected.

I was saying then, before paying tribute to my colleague and friend from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, that if the strike of the blue collar workers affects the interests of other Canadians, as was said earlier, with the tax refunds and so on, we have to understand that the exercise of the right to strike inevitably has a direct or an indirect effect on society, because if every strike that affected the interests of the public were prohibited, there would be no more right to strike.

I studied law in Quebec at Laval University and in Ontario at the University of Western Ontario. In all law courses, and especially in the basic labour law course, we learned that one of the basis of a free and democratic society is the right of workers not only to associate freely, but to bargain freely with the employer.

When the government takes this right away from workers, it creates, I would say, a terrible imbalance between the powers of the workers, often the more vulnerable, and the powers of the employer, often the stronger.

So, once again, this government has decided to come down on the side of the stronger. This time, it is coming down on its own side, because it is the employer. There is a terrible imbalance. They are failing to respect the rights of the workers, the ordinary folk, the real people, with whom the government has lost contact. It lives in a bubble, on another planet.

What does it mean, living on another planet? It means imposing regulations and laws that are completely ridiculous. This is a totally hateful attitude, worthy of Duplessis, and we must keep saying that.

**Mr. Claude Drouin:** This is not the Parti Québécois here, this is the Liberal Party.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** I hope my colleague from Beauce will continue to listen carefully to what I have to say because even people from his own riding call me regularly because they are dissatisfied with their member.

I was saying that not only do we know the mentality of government members, of those Liberal backbenchers who are nothing but doormats, but also that of the President of the Treasury Board. All his actions over the last few years have gone against the interests and the rights of workers.

I can give a few examples that will help a lot of people understand what I am talking about. I hope the Liberal members who are here today are listening to me and will see the undemocratic and anti-worker attitude exhibited by the President of the Treasury Board since he took up his duties in 1993.

Now for the examples. He has refused to comply with the ruling on pay equity. My colleague, the member for Longueuil, who has done an extraordinary job on this issue, will be able to attest to that. If I am not mistaken, on this very day, the Canadian Human Rights Commission blamed the President of the Treasury Board for appealing its ruling. The commission has asked the government to withdraw the appeal. How did the government react? Because it lives on another planet and because it is deaf, it has decided to go ahead with the appeal.

I am happy to see that the member for Mississauga West is listening carefully. I am sure he will learn a lot of things from my speech.

I was talking about the President of the Treasury Board, who has refused to discuss the issue of orphan clauses and to recognize the problem.

The consensus in Quebec is almost unanimous, particularly among young people, that orphan clauses are discriminatory for young people who represent the future and to whom totally unfair and discriminatory clauses are applied. And what is the President of the Treasury Board doing while this discrimination is going on? Nothing. He does not even acknowledge the problem.

What is the President of the Treasury Board doing? He is completely reforming, and failing on all counts, the Canada Industrial Relations Board, where appointments are still being made along party lines and smack of patronage instead of being made according to merit.

• (1655)

As I said earlier, in my introduction, this government harks back to the Duplessis era, it is out of touch with reality, behind the times, old-fashioned, undemocratic and despicable.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Outdated.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** And outdated.

*Government Orders*

I was also saying that the President of the Treasury Board has refused to pass antiscab legislation. This type of legislation exists in Quebec since 1977, if I am not mistaken.

It is a masterpiece of harmony, an example of the harmony that well-thought out legislation can bring.

Since 1977, this wonderful legislation, which was introduced if I remember correctly by Pierre-Marc Johnson, has been universally acclaimed in Quebec. I think it deserves a try in the rest of Canada. But what did the President of the Treasury Board do? He refused even to consider passing such a bill, although it improved union-management relations tremendously in Quebec.

What did the President of the Treasury Board do in addition? He refused to pass part III of the Canada Labour Code concerning the preventive withdrawal of pregnant workers.

I have two children, who have just turned one. Nothing is more precious than a child, but before we can think about children, we must think about pregnant women. They must be protected. They are often in a vulnerable condition and must be removed from environments that can sometimes be dangerous both to them and to the child they are carrying. What did the President of the Treasury Board do? He refused to pass part III of the Canada Labour Code concerning the preventive withdrawal of pregnant workers.

As I have only two minutes remaining, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to speak for another 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Will the member please repeat what he said. I did not catch the member's request.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** I sought unanimous consent to speak for another 10 minutes.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Before everyone came back, there was unanimous consent.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Charlesbourg has requested unanimous consent to extend his speaking time by 10 minutes. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Mr. Speaker, I am not at all surprised to have been denied unanimous consent.

The government will not allow this house to discuss such an important bill, just like it would not let it examine the possibility of having a pan-American monetary union. This tyrannical, undemocratic, duplessiste government, which is also prone to patronage, continues to operate in its usual fashion.

As for the President of the Treasury Board, it is unfortunate that I only have a minute and a half left, because I could talk about him for a long, long time.

I will conclude, and this is unfortunate, because all the members were listening so intently to my comments and I could have gone on for a long time. Freedom of association exists in Canada. When workers have good reason to do so, they go on strike. This is part of a fair balance of power, except when the employer, which happens to be the government, abuses its legislative power, as it is doing in this case.

Back to work legislation should only be a last resort. In the meantime, the government must get back to the bargaining table with an offer acceptable to workers, and it must settle the dispute in a democratic and civilized manner, through negotiation.

I will end on that note. It is unfortunate. I could talk forever about this issue. It is always a pleasure to address this House, through you, Mr. Speaker.

I hope the member for Mississauga West, who is unfortunately not here, and the member for Beauce listened carefully and will be voting with the Bloc Quebecois tonight, for the workers of Quebec and Canada.

• (1700)

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, when the likeable and dynamic member for Charlesbourg asked for unanimous consent, I trust you could note that there was unanimous consent. I would not be able to understand our colleague's being denied the opportunity for the most democratic action possible in this house, that is voicing his opinion and speaking on behalf of his constituents. I would ask that you check again, because it is my firm conviction that it would be a loss if our colleague were not able to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Unfortunately, there is not unanimous consent. The hon. member for Drummond.

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Charlesbourg for his highly intelligent and interesting remarks. It is a pity that the House has not consented to his speaking for another ten minutes, for I am certain that he could have enlightened the House still further on what is going on at the present time.

These last two days have marked some extremely sad moments in our history. In my time here since 1993, I would never have

*Government Orders*

thought I would see the present federal government attacking the most precious thing there is in this country, that is the totally legitimate right to democracy.

Through the President of Treasury Board, the federal government has introduced Bill C-76. This bill is rife with demagoguery, historic revisionism, dishonesty, and worst of all, it represents an attempt to stir up public opinion against workers who have been deprived of their most basic right.

It shows the arrogance of this government, which has no respect for its citizens, or for this House, or for its own employees. We have seen that it also lacks respect for us as parliamentarians, by not allowing us to go any further in our discussions, as has just happened to my colleague from Charlesbourg.

I would like to give a historical background to this bill in order to truly show our listeners, all Canadians and all Quebeckers, what an odious piece of legislation this is.

The current bill is intended to bring back to work public service employees who are currently on strike. These workers are at bargaining table 2. The bill also gives the government broad latitude to impose the working conditions and salaries it wants, and on the correctional officers too, who have a strike mandate.

In addition, it says to those bargaining "You will come back to work under duress, and we will set the conditions". This is a breach of a legitimate right, that of striking to claim one's rights from a centralizing government. It has decided it will act as police and no longer negotiate. It is bringing employees back forcefully, under the nightstick, otherwise it will penalize them. That is what it is saying.

In addition, the federal government is justifying these bulldozing measures by claiming loss of revenues by farmers in the prairies and delays in the processing of income tax returns because of the picketing. If the government were operating in good faith, it would have sat down at the bargaining table and negotiated.

• (1705)

It is holding people hostage. It is the one acting in bad faith. It is the one saying, in an authoritarian fashion "Some people will be penalized. We are going to bulldoze that and we will fix that for you", because it does not want to negotiate. To the farmers and the people waiting for their income tax refunds, it is giving the impression that the workers in the public service, its employees, are taking people hostage. It is crazy. It is terrible.

The negotiations currently underway with table 4, that is the correctional service officers, have led to a majority conciliation report unanimously accepted by the members of the union. The minority report was tabled by the employer. The government

should take into consideration this majority report submitted by a third party.

Reference was made earlier to negotiations with table 2, and I want to specify the groups that are represented at that table. They are general labour, trades, ships' crews, hospital services, general services and firefighters.

These are not people who earn huge salaries. These are people who work for the government, government employees who earn relatively modest salaries. They have not received a raise for a long time. The government is telling them "We no longer want to negotiate with you. We will impose on you what we want and give you what we want".

These negotiations could not lead to a majority conciliation report, since the chairman at the conciliation table, the employer and the union tabled three different offers. The gap between the employer's offer and the union's offer is not insurmountable, as long as the government shows good faith, and we know how arrogant this government is.

What is contained in the bill is the government's offer for table 2, which is lower than its previous offer. The federal government had offered a 2.75% increase; it has now reduced it to 2.5%. The government is clearly trying to take advantage of a situation where it is both judge and jury. This is democracy according to the government.

It must be noted that table 2 workers have had their salaries frozen for six years. Workers are not asking for the moon. They have not had a wage increase in six years. They asked for 2.75% and the government said "We will give you 2.5% and no more. We want to hear no more. We will decide and fix everything for you".

Apart from the pay issue, the other sticking point was regional pay rates. The employer's offers in this respect have apparently been negligible. The government's offer for table 4 is not known right now. There is a majority conciliation report that the government seems to be ignoring. However, the bill would allow the government to impose whatever conditions it wanted without taking into account this conciliation report that was unanimously approved by the union.

It has already negotiated and everyone agreed. The government then said that was that. It said it no longer had an agreement with them, that it would impose whatever conditions it wished, without taking into account the conciliation report that had nevertheless been unanimously approved.

The government is once again trying, through this special legislation, to impose a collective agreement on table 2 and 4 workers, supposedly in the interest of taxpayers. This is nonsense. What the government wants is to use the public to violate—and I mean violate—the rights of workers.

*Government Orders*

In fact, if that was what the government wanted, picketing could stop today. All it would have to do is approve the majority conciliation report for table 2 and binding arbitration for table 4.

• (1710)

Generally we oppose back to work legislation that would trample the fundamental right to strike, particularly in the case of workers against whom this kind of legislation has been used a number of times.

On the other hand, we regret the inconvenience that the picketing by public servants has caused to Quebeckers and Canadians. What we in the Bloc Québécois want is for the government and table 2 and 4 workers to come to an agreement, and for citizens to regain access to the services they are entitled to. There is a way to achieve this, provided the government sits down at the bargaining table and negotiates in good faith.

As I said before, the union unanimously endorsed the majority conciliation report regarding table 4. The legislation ignores this report. Why? This is a worthwhile proposal made by an independent conciliator, which meets with the approval of the union and could prevent a strike; all the basic labour relations' principles would be respected.

At table 2, the union says it is fully prepared to go to arbitration. It is willing to abide by the ruling of an independent arbitrator, in which case picket lines would immediately come down. The problems cited by the government to ram this legislation down our throat would be solved.

But what is the government saying? That the union demands are unreasonable. If they are so unreasonable, why refuse to go to arbitration? What has the government to lose?

Obviously, this bill is nothing more than strong arm tactics to impose a collective agreement outside the normal process. I repeat, strong arm tactics to impose a collective agreement outside the normal process. This is what the government wants to do to the employees of the public service.

Blue collar workers of the federal government are presently on strike and their picket lines are hindering the transportation of grain. Those picket lines hurt prairies farmers. A member asked for an emergency debate to discuss means to bring this situation to an end.

Among the options proposed, an act forcing blue collars back to work was demanded. What is going on right now in this House is inadmissible and very sad. As I said at the outset, this strikes a blow at a fundamental and democratic right.

This government travels around the world to talk about democracy in the "most beautiful country in the world", as the Prime Minister likes to say. People who are looking at us throughout the world can see that this government is striking a blow at the most fundamental right. I believe government members who will voter

for this special legislation should be ashamed, in front of the rest of the world, to strike a blow at the most fundamental right, democracy.

We should never pass a special act such as this before having exhausted all other avenues. Have they been exhausted? We do not believe so.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** That's right.

**Mrs. Pauline Picard:** Going out on strike is a right of the workers. The member for Mississauga who has supported this special legislation should be ashamed.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** His father is a union man.

**Mrs. Pauline Picard:** He will be accountable to his constituents.

• (1715)

This is completely anti-democratic. The government did not think about the people who would be affected by this legislation.

The Liberal government is a very centralizing government. But to pass a bill like this one leans toward dictatorship. This is no longer democracy at work. When the government acts in this way, we have a dictatorship and it is a shame.

As I said earlier, the right to strike is a fundamental right for workers. This special legislation would deny them their right. The government would have us believe that it has exhausted all its options, but it is not true. Arbitration is still an option. If the federal government were to agree to arbitration, the blue collar workers would put an end to their pressure tactics.

Since 1991, the federal government has renewed the framework agreement with the civil service through legislation passed by this parliament. Now that this framework agreement has been subdivided into seven bargaining tables, it is crucial for the government to negotiate an agreement in good faith.

By introducing such a bill, the government is clearly not acting in good faith.

If the blue collar strike is hurting Canadians, one needs to understand that exercising the right to strike is bound to have a direct or indirect impact on our society. If we were to forbid a strike every time it affected our fellow citizens, the right to strike would no longer exist.

Instead of asking for special legislation, the Reform Party should urge the government to negotiate in good faith. Reform members who support this special legislation and will vote with the government should be ashamed of themselves.

We know the mentality of this government and of the President of the Treasury Board. All their actions over the last few years have struck a blow at the interests and the rights of workers, and I will

*Government Orders*

give a few examples: refusal to comply with the ruling on pay equity; refusal to discuss the issue of orphan clauses and to recognize this problem; total failure to reform the Canadian Industrial Relations Board, where appointments are based on partisan and patronage considerations rather than on merit; refusal to pass antiscab legislation; refusal to pass part III of the Canada Labour Code regarding preventive withdrawal for pregnant women.

I repeat, women represent 52% of the population, and yet this government has refused to pass part III of the Canada Labour Code regarding preventive withdrawal for pregnant women. It is outrageous.

In conclusion, as I was saying earlier, it is absolutely shameful that, in a country such as ours, a country that prides itself on its democratic tradition, a government be allowed to legislate its own employees back to work and to impose a collective agreement upon them. I said it before and I will say it again, this is dictatorial.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill. It does not, however, please me to see the situation our beautiful country has come to. This is not the first time such a thing has happened, either.

First of all, I want to quote from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states as follows:

Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- d) freedom of association.

● (1720)

Freedom of association implies the freedom to negotiate a collective agreement. The preamble to the Canada Labour Code, as quoted by the supreme court, states the following:

Whereas there is a long tradition in Canada of labour legislation and policy designed for the promotion of the common well-being through the encouragement of free collective bargaining and the constructive settlement of disputes; and

whereas Canadian workers, trade unions and employers recognize and support freedom of association and free collective bargaining as the bases of effective industrial relations for the determination of good working conditions and sound labour-management relations;

. . .and

whereas the Parliament of Canada desires to continue and extend its support to labour and management in their cooperative efforts to develop good relations and constructive collective bargaining practices—

Today we have Bill C-76, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services. It is as if people working

for the Government of Canada did not have the same status as other workers in the country.

Today reference is being made to different bargaining tables. There is talk of table 2 and table 4. Table 4 is that of the correction service officers, who will be in a legal strike position on March 26. The table 4 negotiating team voted to accept the bargaining committee report and has asked Treasury Board to sign a collective agreement.

In the bill the government wants passed, which is totally undemocratic, and of which it ought to be ashamed, these people are put in the same position. PSAC is in the process of negotiating a collective agreement in which employees in the Atlantic provinces, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, do not have the same salaries as their counterparts in Alberta or British Columbia.

I am certain that Atlantic region MPs are only too pleased to be paid the same as those from the west. When the President of Treasury Board comes and tells us this is not true, that the salaries are not the same, that they get more money in the west because they live in remote areas, this is wrong. Salaries are the same, it is their expenses that are not.

If a person has to take the plane to northern Manitoba, it costs more, but when it comes to salaries, the salary is the same.

What has been said in the House is wrong. We cannot accept the way Canadians are being treated. Whether they come from the east or the west, people doing the same work deserve the same salary. The problem is not the creation of the workers, but of the government, once again.

Once again the government is going after the workers. Once again, it is committing another injustice in our country. That is where the problem lies.

They do not want it discussed in parliament. They do not want it discussed in the House, so they introduce bills. They say "You are the bad guys. You, the workers, are the bad ones. You are not on the job to give people their tax cheques, and so you are the bad ones. You are not moving the farmers' grain". They take the growers and try to make them like other government workers.

But it is you, Liberals on the other side of the House, who are creating the problem. You should be ashamed. You should be ashamed of the way you are treating your workers. They are not in reality the best paid.

● (1725)

Some of them are being paid \$24,000 and \$25,000 a year to do the dirty work of the government, which then turns around and wants to legislate to force them back to work and not give them the

opportunity to bargain, an opportunity enjoyed by other Canadians under the charter and legislation.

The Liberals are not the only ones to do that. The Conservatives did it in 1989 and 1991. At that time, I was a union member, and the Liberals were in opposition. They boasted, saying "We would never do that. We would never do that if you put us in government. We would not treat our employees like that". Today, they have an opportunity not to treat their employees like that, but they are treating them exactly like the Conservatives did in 1989 and 1991, when Brian Mulroney was Prime Minister. This is utterly shameful.

Fourteen years after the pay equity legislation was passed, the federal government should be ashamed to still be dragging its feet and trying to make Canadians believe that it will cost them \$4 billion for pay equity, when in fact the government will tax back 60% of that money on people's paycheques. Let the government tell the truth.

I am disappointed at how the House is acting toward democracy and at how it is treating the workers who have helped build our country. Correctional officers are still negotiating and this legislation will force them back to work when they have not even gone out on strike, when they have not even had a chance to go ahead with a committee's recommendation. This is unbelievable. What are things coming to? It looks like we are following Mexico's lead. We are not there yet, but we are headed that way. We are losing our democracy.

I am convinced that, during the election campaign, the Liberals did not tell these workers "We will legislate to force you to go back to work. We will not pay you the same salary in New Brunswick as in Alberta, in Newfoundland as in British Columbia. You do not deserve as much as the others".

I remember when RCMP officers were paid less if they worked in the maritimes than if they worked in western Canada. They asked my predecessor, Doug Young, to go and see his Liberal colleagues and tell them that it was not right that an RCMP officer in the maritimes was paid differently than an officer out west. They did not pass legislation for the RCMP. They turned to their friend, Doug Young, whom I turfed out with the help of the voters in my riding. They went after a collective agreement and a contract with the same rates of pay Canada wide.

If the RCMP can be paid the same throughout the country, Canada's public servants deserve to be paid the same, whether they work in Newfoundland or Vancouver, in Prince Edward Island, Ontario or the Gaspé. They deserve to be paid the same.

Once again, what is going on is unacceptable. They should not be boasting. This is the 50th time they have legislated workers back to work and that they are denying democratic and collective bargaining rights. What is going on is a disgrace. Their attempt to pass a bill such as this without debate in the House is a disgrace.

### *Private Members' Business*

We have a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms giving us the right of association. We have legislation giving us the right to bargain collectively, and this government says that it has the power to set all that aside.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I must unfortunately interrupt the hon. member. When debate resumes, he will have approximately 10 minutes remaining.

It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### TAX ON FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

The House resumed from February 3 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been the usual consultations among all the parties and you should find unanimous consent for me to make a small wording change to my motion to help clean it up.

● (1730)

I would like to ask for unanimous consent to remove from my Motion No. 239 the following words "show leadership and". The amended motion would then read:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should enact a tax on financial transactions in concert with the world community.

I have had the usual consultations with the government across the way, the Bloc Québécois House leader, the whip of the Reform Party, the whip and the leader of the Conservative Party and also with my own party.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to make the change that he has just mentioned?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** When the motion was last before the House, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the

*Private Members' Business*

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans had the floor. He still has five minutes remaining.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to briefly summarize what I said previously.

I explained how much a tax on currency speculation was needed. I also explained that we could not allow the money speculators in New York and elsewhere around the world to sometimes bring countries to their knees by statements that a country was a basket case or whatever which drives trading in the currency down. I also explained that we could not allow money speculators, who just play with paper and create no real wealth and do not produce anything, to jeopardize ordinary people's working lives by their actions.

Let me use the few minutes I have left to build on why Canada should push for such a policy globally. The fact is a small and some would say very tiny tax on currency speculators could stabilize economies. At the same time it could help finance social initiatives and third world development.

By stabilizing economies I mean that some speculators who are playing with the financial markets on Bay Street or some other such place have a notion about a country and make a statement that a country is in serious financial trouble, that it is a basket case or whatever. Those words get into some of the investment papers. That one single statement by people play around with money and create no real wealth other than for themselves starts a run on the country's currency and causes serious problems for the finances and people of that country.

Putting this small Tobin tax as it is called on money speculators would ease that kind of activity. They would not play those kinds of games. We are talking about a very small tax, somewhere in the range of one-tenth of one per cent. That kind of a tax would also bring in a fair bit of return. It would have to be put in place globally. With that kind of financing a lot could be done for the third world in terms of needed social policies.

The book *Good Taxes* by Alex Michalos had this to say about the tax and how it would be put in place:

A transaction tax on purchases and sales of foreign exchange would have to be (1) universal and (2) uniform; it would (3) have to apply to all jurisdictions, and (4) the rate would have to be equalized across markets. Were it imposed unilaterally by one country, that country's FOREX market would simply move offshore . . . (5) Enforcement of the universal tax would depend principally on major banks and on the jurisdictions that regulate them. (6) The surveillance of national regulatory authorities could be the responsibility of a multilateral agency like the Bank for International Settlements or the International Monetary Fund. It might be authorized to set the size of the tax within limits. (7) It would have to possess sanctions that could be levied on countries that fail to comply with the measure.

• (1735)

Those points are important. That is what we are saying we have to move toward. All those conditions have to be met. It is important for Canada to lead the way by discussing with other countries that this kind of tax is needed on a global basis. This should lessen the

money speculation and would provide moneys to do good things in social policy and other ways for the third world.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Before resuming debate I would like to state that the motion proposed earlier by the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has been carried.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am somewhat troubled by the shift in thinking that has taken place over the last year. I am referring to the government's position which would tend to be supportive of the motion before the House.

The debate we are having today is very important. The motion may not be perfect, and the mechanism to deal with the issue may not be either, but at least this parliament is talking about the phenomenon of speculation, which is pervasive in our economies.

The first challenge in this debate is to define the concept of speculation, and it is quite a challenge. To understand speculation, a bit of a historical background may be useful.

Since the end, in 1971, of the Bretton Woods agreement governing the foreign exchange market, financial markets have been plagued with instability. Speculative bursts have occurred, and since the value of assets had no relation with reality, speculators played currencies against each other at the expense of the affected countries. Mexico was under attack in 1992 and, in 1994, the pound sterling had to be withdrawn from the European monetary system.

Mr. Soros, one of the biggest speculators in the world, who, incidentally, gambled \$10 billion against the pound sterling and earned \$1 billion, has stated that some order definitely had to be restored in the financial system.

This is a complex debate, but the impact of speculation remains to be determined. Today, at least, we are dealing with part of this problem.

I will not speak in favour or against a tax mechanism on financial transactions. I think the issue must be considered in a more comprehensive way. First, we have to understand the impact of speculation on civil society, and then, once we understand it—as I often put it, to understand in order to act—we will be able to act with the full knowledge of the facts.

Unfortunately, some people today are against such a regulatory system for the international financial system. However, the Tobin tax, the tax we are talking about today, is a mechanism that can be proposed. There are other mechanisms. For example, Chile, a South American country, partially sheltered itself from speculators by charging a tax on a portion of the funds getting out of the country less than two years after coming in.

Then, there is the tax on direct investments abroad, derivatives trading market regulations such as swaps, options, futures con-

tracts on bonds, stock index contracts and so on; I have here a list of proposals coming from civil society economists throughout the world.

Where there might not be any consensus is on what mechanisms should be set up and which international body should initiate such a reform. Others attack the project, stating categorically that it is impossible to reach an agreement internationally on this type of regulations.

The challenge is there but at least, what is important is that we talk about it and that people know more what we are dealing with when we talk about financial market destabilization because I think this is the case. There is some instability.

• (1740)

A while ago, my colleague mentioned investments in financial markets, they are not value-added. These investments do not create jobs, but wealth. It all depends how you define wealth.

There are other causes for concern. Thousands of billions of dollars are moving freely around the world in search of gains due to speculation. On a regular basis, their owners trigger attacks against currencies that appear weak, often causing them to be devaluated. Cases in point are the Swedish krona, the pound sterling, the Brazilian real and the Mexican peso.

When I read this kind of thing in *L'Actualité*, where economist Pierre Fortin tells us that speculators are attacking currencies, I would like to know what mounting an attack on a currency means. I am not talking about hypothetical things.

Last summer, the Canadian dollar lost 10 cents due to speculation. I am wondering who is attacking and who is mounting the attack. I believe this is worthy of debate.

The list of reasons why it is urgent to take such steps is quite long. I believe that when the House wants parliament to foster such debates internationally to bring about international regulations, we must agree with that.

This leads me to an issue dear to me. I believe the economy is currently in mutation. For example, with regard to speculation, 30 years ago only 5% of financial operations were of a speculative nature. Today, this proportion is as high as 90% to 95%. This is a lot. This means that a huge part of our economy is at the mercy of such fluctuations and so-called attacks.

This worries me and this fact is not the only one I find troublesome; there are a number of other ones which are linked to the globalization of the economy.

I believe this is linked to globalization. Make no mistake, I am not against globalization. But I want people to understand what it is all about. It seems to me that, for the first time in history, we as a

### *Private Members' Business*

society are faced with a very complex situation, and it is extremely important for us to understand it.

In the same spirit as this motion, one battle I am trying to wage in this Parliament is to see to it that the members of this House understand this phenomenon, that they have a perfect understanding of what we are experiencing as a society with regard to globalization, particularly with regard to what is going on right now in financial markets.

Last December, I presented a petition signed by 50,000 people asking their elected representatives to reflect on this phenomenon. I think it is a very legitimate request. It is perfectly normal.

The study of a mechanism to prevent financial speculation or to clean up financial markets is essential. I am happy that we can take part in such a debate today because I think it is of the utmost importance for countries and for society.

I cannot speak on this issue without also talking about civil society, which is mobilizing all over the world to make such debates happen. There is Atac, in France, a movement that is taking international proportions. Here in Canada, there is the CCIC and the Halifax initiative. In fact, there are numerous groups promoting debate on this kind of issues in civil society, in Parliament and soon, I hope, in international forums.

In conclusion, I will quote world famous speculator George Soros, who has taken advantage of the chaotic international financial system. He said "If people like me can bring down governments, it means something is wrong with the system. My experience with markets has shown that they often had a tendency to be unstable. If we do not take measures to stabilize them, serious accidents will occur". Obviously these are financial accidents.

This quote is from the October 24, 1996 issue of *L'Express*.

• (1745)

These are not leftist remarks. Even the greatest speculators in the world say that danger is lurking right now. I rarely say such things, but I am doing so today with all my heart in the interest of current and future generations.

If we want to have a global economy, we must have rules. Just like in hockey or in life, rules are essential. Right now, it seems that the lack of rules in this system and the lack of understanding by parliamentarians have resulted in carelessness, which has caused a lot of turbulence in financial markets.

That is why I will vote in favour of this motion today.

[English]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to enter into debate on the motion put forward by my

*Private Members' Business*

colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle to suggest the importance of Canada taking leadership in putting forward a Tobin tax and building international consensus around the critical importance of adopting such a tax.

It is a private member's motion, but let me make it very clear that it will be one that is enthusiastically supported by all 21 of my caucus colleagues. Why? Because we recognize and have long believed that it is essential for Canada to take the lead in building support in the international community for a modest but important tax on international financial transactions.

In 1997 the federal New Democratic Party at its convention adopted support for the Tobin tax into our party policy. In the 1997 election we ran on the commitment that we would go on working to gain co-operation and support for the Tobin tax at home and abroad in partnership with other progressive forces.

Let me say how pleased we are today that there is an increasing number of progressive groups in Canada from the faith communities, the labour movement, the environment, the development and other social justice movements calling for the Government of Canada to provide leadership in the adoption of a Tobin tax.

What is the Tobin tax? It is the brain child of Nobel Prize winning economist, James Tobin. As early as 1978 Dr. Tobin proposed the introduction of a tax on international financial transactions, a tax wisely proposed to be low enough not to have adverse effects on trade in goods and services but high enough to cut into the profits of currency speculators and thereby hopefully reduce the currency speculation that is causing havoc in economies around the world.

The world desperately needs to restore some balance after the mania of market fundamentalism which has gripped the world economy. In the 1990s we have seen the spectacle of the so-called risk takers: a 28 year old in red suspenders who can bring down a century old bank, a major private sector hedge fund engaged in billion dollar investments which has to get bailed out to the tune of \$3.2 billion by the U.S. federal reserve fund to prevent a major global financial crisis, and currency traders making billions of dollars while wages for ordinary citizens stagnate or fall even in the most successful economies of the world.

Market fundamentalism in the nineties has meant idealizing the marketplace as something that can take care of everything that matters to people. When unbridled currency speculators turn the Asian so-called economic miracle into a financial crisis overnight, whole national economies were plunged into recession. Twenty-five million people sunk into dire poverty in Indonesia and Thailand alone. Thirty-five per cent of the world today is in recession, and as the contagion spreads to other countries like Brazil that percentage is increasing.

• (1750)

Why do we need a Tobin tax in today's market? The economic market was supposed to reward risk takers. That was the theory, to reward people who would put up their own money to build a plant, to develop a new product or to provide a new service to the community. That is the theory.

However today's market rules are: do not bet your own money; hedge your bets; invest in the private market preferably offshore; get the public, in other words taxpayers, to bail you out if you get into difficulty; protect and hoard your personal wealth by sending it to a tax haven abroad. This has led to rescue packages for the super rich, impoverishment for the many, and diminishing capacity for the public through its elected governments to address the social problems left in the wake of market failures.

Today the world desperately needs a strategy to ensure that the international economy serves the interest of ordinary citizens in the poorest countries that are being increasingly marginalized and in the wealthier countries where workers are launched in a race to the bottom. The Tobin tax is one way to rebalance risks, rewards and responsibilities, a way to ensure that those who benefit most from the market system take some financial responsibility for it.

George Soros, the billionaire financier who has made a fortune in international markets, describes today's global capital flows as a wrecking ball spreading indiscriminate grief and poverty around the globe:

There used to be a concept of civic virtue, but because of the sharpening of competition, people have become so involved in fighting for their own survival they cannot indulge their concern for the common good. The concern with the common good has been almost eliminated by allowing the markets to become the main forum for decision making.

According to the United Nations human development report the estimated cost of providing universal access to basic human services for all the world's citizens is roughly \$40 billion per year, and \$40 billion is a mere 20% of the revenues that could be collected through the imposition of a Tobin tax. Nations around the world could use the revenues generated to alleviate human suffering on a scale so vast that it would eclipse all our collective efforts for the past five decades.

When the G-7 nations met in Halifax in June 1995 regrettably the Prime Minister of Canada resisted the call for our government to provide leadership in building consensus in support of the Tobin tax. I think it is a positive development, a very welcome development, that today the government recognizes the Tobin tax is an idea whose time has come. The finance minister has recognized in the Tobin tax:

—the general taxing power to raise money for great international needs, whether it be problems of the Third World, the heaviest indebted poor countries, or international environmental problems.

Surely a proposal with such potential cries out for political and international support.

The finance minister was absolutely correct when he stated publicly almost a year ago today on national television that it would take a long time to get the rest of the world to sign on to the Tobin tax. To that I say let us get started by giving unanimous passage in the House to the motion before us calling on the Government of Canada to provide leadership to the adoption of a Tobin tax on behalf of all world citizens.

• (1755)

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, all we need is the NDP to come to this place and suggest to these Liberals a new way of taxing us. As if we are not taxed enough, now there will be a new tax, and tax on tax on tax on tax.

I use that as my introduction because I think this is a wrong headed idea. We need a government that learns to live within its means, that perhaps stops subsidizing all the buddies of the politicians over there and giving them a bunch of our taxpayers money. The government just wastes it and avoids dealing with the real problems of the country, and that is jobs.

Jobs are created by having less taxation on economic activity, less taxation on the people and the families of the country and less taxation on businesses, not more. We do not need more taxation.

What we have here is a motion by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I will not question the hon. member's motivation. As a member of the New Democratic Party, the overt socialist party, he is very interested in seeing how he can get money from somebody who earned it—maybe it was not earned; maybe it was by speculation, which is part of the way of earning money—and give it to somebody who did not earn it. That is the whole agenda of the NDP.

I remember a number of years ago I had an interesting debate with a member of the New Democratic Party. We talked about helping poor people. I said to him, and I will not use his name here because he probably would not like it—

**An hon. member:** He was a nice fellow.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** A nice fellow indeed. I asked him how much he gave to charity the previous year and he said nothing, that it was not his responsibility but the responsibility of the government. I said to him "Therein lies the difference betwixt thee and me. I believe in being generous with my money; you believe in being

### *Private Members' Business*

generous with everybody else's money". That is what is wrong in the whole premise of adding yet another tax on to people who are trying to make money.

Here is an interesting twist, though. A New Democratic member has proposed the motion and the motion has been amended by the socialists on the other side of us here. The motion says that the government should enact a tax on financial transactions in concert with the international community.

This tax on financial transactions has been taken out in the wording of the amendment by the Bloc, so we will first be voting on whether or not to promote the implementation of a tax aimed at discouraging speculation on fluctuations in the exchange rate.

This was put forward by an eminent scholar, an economist, a Nobel prize winner who knew a lot, but I seriously question whether a small tax on a transaction will make any difference at all. Everybody who deals in the market, whether it is the money market or any other market, is quite willing to pay the transaction fee which accrues to the dealers. It does not discourage it at all. As a means of discouraging speculation, it is a wrong headed idea. We would have to put such a high tax on it to actually discourage the process that it would basically cause economic chaos around the world, as if we do not have enough of that already.

I would like to make a few comments on this tax. Generally what we tax we discourage. That is just simple human nature. I often think of my father who lives in a tax ridden province run by the NDP. He said when it brought in the GST, which was added to the PST, that it was one tax he could avoid. Whereas my father used to buy a new car every four or five years, he drove his car for ten or twelve years after that. I do not remember exactly how long it was before he traded it, but he said that he did not have to buy a new car.

• (1800)

As a result the GST and the PST discouraged him from entering into the marketplace and getting a new car. He just drove his old one. I think that was a good decision anyway. It was a perfectly good car. I will not do any free advertising for Oldsmobile here.

I remember reading about the Brits who at one time thought they were would tax rich people like NDP members always wanted. They say let us tax the rich so they leave the country like the finance minister does. He takes his business out of the country because he can get regime for taxes which is much more favourable. Let us tax these rich suckers so they leave and that way we will not have any jobs in this country. Everybody will be happy. This is NDP style.

The Brits came up with a wonderful measure of a tax for rich people. They would base it on the size, the total area, of windows in

*Private Members' Business*

their houses. What should surprise us is that all the rich people who had homes with big windows boarded them up. The windows were not needed if they were to be taxed on them. That is so obvious.

What we have here is an attempt to manipulate human activity, whether it is an investment or elsewhere, by taxation. As far as I am concerned that is an unwelcome, unnecessary and immoral intrusion of government on our personal freedoms. We should be able to move in these areas without having government, through taxation or other means of coercion, try to influence, determine and prevent us from doing what we want and instead try to tell us what to do.

There is another big problem with this tax. I have already mentioned the finance minister and his steamship companies. These companies are registered offshore. There are advantages that way. How can we ever presume that a Tobin tax will be accepted by every country? If all countries agree to do this, except 5, 8 or 12, then those are the countries that will become havens for the investors. Investors can go to these countries and do financial transactions without being taxed. That is exactly what they will do. That is human nature. I cannot blame people for making those decisions when greedy governments insist on taxing us to death to the point where we can hardly survive because so much of our income is confiscated from us.

There is another very important aspect to this. How do we ever get agreement among countries to co-operate on this in terms of how they are to collect the tax and how it is to be distributed?

We have this insane move by the minister of culture who thinks she will help the country by putting a tax on magnetic tape, notwithstanding that a lot of it is used for purposes totally unrelated to the recording of artists' materials. She will take the tax from this and have a whole bureaucracy. The government will soon announce the rate of this tax which will be retroactive. That will make people every bit as happy as the GST ever did.

The minister will take this tax and redistribute the money. That is an absolutely insane idea. We have taxes on taxes. We have great difficulty in coming up with a bureaucracy that is big enough and efficient enough that it actually earns more money than it costs to administer. What is the point of having a tax that returns nothing to the government or to the people of the nation because the cost of administration is so high?

This member certainly has his ideas. He is welcome to them. That is the wonder of democracy, the wonder of freedom of speech and I hope we can keep it. I have my doubts in this place because of the high handed government on the other side. It is the member's right to put forward this motion. He has done that. I recommend that all members think hard before they support this motion because it is wrong headed, going nowhere and will not be successful. It is a bad idea. Let us all be sure that it is firmly defeated.

• (1805 )

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to return the debate to the subject of the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's resolution.

We had only one reservation about the resolution and he has very gracefully accepted our suggestion for a change. I would like to enter into the record that the finance minister has been concerned with this issue for at least four years. He did raise it at the Halifax reunion referred to in 1995. It has recurred in discussions at the World Bank and the IMF in Washington and again at the Kuala Lumpur informal meeting of the APEC leaders.

It is a subject we are very concerned with. The economist who gives his name to the tax proposed is not some obscure ivory tower economist. He has been working in the practical world of economics. Apart from his Yale professorship, he was an adviser to President Kennedy on the crucial financial banking policy making that President Kennedy's administration was engaged in.

Returning to this subject, it directs attention to the problem of our times of the breakdown, as in other areas of the world community, of international institutions that were conceived for other purposes and have to be readjusted and remade to accord to new conditions. I am referring of course to the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system which in essence over the last half century has governed world banking and monetary policies.

The Bretton Woods system was set in place in 1944 in anticipation of the victory of the Allies in World War II and it was based on the evident economic financial facts of that period: the war about to end, the dominance of the United States and the dominance of the U.S. dollar system which was the pivotal international currency linked to gold by a fixed exchange rate with other currencies with fixed par value rates too.

What was linked to Bretton Woods was an international regulatory system for capital demand and supply and two very key institutions, the World Bank for long term capital assistance mostly to developing nations suffering from chronic capital shortages, and the International Monetary Fund, the IMF, for regulating money supplies to alleviate the crises in international payments. There was a multifunctional, global monetary banking framework established under Bretton Woods.

The special societal and economic facts on which that was posited have changed. One of course is the emergence of other banking systems not in opposition but parallel to the American system. We would take note obviously most recently of the emergence of the European banking group, the emergence of the new European currency unit and also of course of the Japanese construction of their own financial banking system.

More important, however, is the challenge to the institutions themselves. All of us have had reservations about the response of the International Monetary Fund to the Asian crisis. Others would take objection, as I have in other places, to the response to the change from the Soviet Union to a number of independent states and Russia itself.

The careful line between financial policy and political policy in the strict sense which figures largely in the IMF's decisions has sometimes led to results that one would question. Again there have been serious complaints made by third world countries.

What we are really directing attention to is that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's motion, the concept of curbing wild currency fluctuations due to manipulation of the international financial markets, this sort of thing has to be viewed in the larger context of the international financial regulatory framework.

• (1810)

I think we have to consider it together with the World Bank and the IMF. It will make a fruitful subject for study by the House committee on foreign affairs which had a very able group working on international trade policy. It is a subject that it could attend to.

More than ever the motion which we accept in its amended form asks us to effectuate this tax in concert with the international community. It is the green light. It reinforces our attempts to get this on the agenda of the G-7 and to re-examine the issue of fundamental reforms in international financial and banking institutions.

Sometimes we get interesting new policies. The post-Thatcher policies in Great Britain, which British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown is calling for, look for some new global overarching international financial regulatory machinery. It will inevitably reform the IMF, the World Bank and the Tobin tax taken in juxtaposition.

We welcome the motion by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. It accords with our government policy if we take it in the larger context in terms of fundamental reform and modernization of international financial institutions.

I invite the hon. member and all members of the House to join in the committee studies of this aspect preparatory to raising it with renewed force and supporting empirical data before the G-7 and other arenas so that the efforts the finance minister has taken in previous years will have that extra strength behind them.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I do not have much time, but I did want to take this opportunity to state that the motion by the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle addresses a world problem that has been around for many years.

Every day, in excess of one thousand billion dollars are moved around the world. This is not exactly investments, but rather

### *Private Members' Business*

speculation. People need to be clear on the point that we are not against the free movement of money, but instead we want to limit speculation.

The result of our hon. colleague's motion would be that Canada would be one of the first nations to promote this needed reform. In the past 15 or 20 years, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have not been able to find any way to control the existing abuses. The currencies of the various countries are in danger because of the incredible speculation that goes on in the business world.

This measure will need the support of all countries, at least all the industrialized ones. This will be a start toward putting the financial affairs of the various countries in order.

The developing countries, those unable to pay their debts, have fared the worst. Looking at the figures for recent years, the resulting difficulties and human suffering that have ensued are obvious.

There has been reference made to the Tobin tax. Some five or six years ago, I had the opportunity to hear Mr. Tobin speak and answer questions when he was invited here to Ottawa. He explained his approach and the way the various transactions could be taxed for the good of humanity. A half or a quarter of one percentage point is certainly not enough tax to hamper investment.

• (1815)

If there is one thing we need, it is investment, but not speculation. This initiative will certainly be the start of putting the world's finances in order so that the kind of shameless speculation that is already going on will not continue.

Canada has an opportunity to demonstrate on the world stage that we are concerned with the countries that are having a hard time. With this motion, I am convinced, it would be an honour for Canada to take this to the G-7 countries in order to try to convince them that this is a necessity in today's world.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** It being 6.16 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired. Accordingly, the question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

*Private Members' Business*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Call in the members.

• (1840)

*Before the taking of the vote:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** As is the practice, the division will be taken row by row, starting with the sponsor and then proceeding with those in favour of the amendment, beginning with the back row on the side of the House on which the sponsor sits.

After proceeding through the rows on the first side, the members sitting on the other side of the House will vote, again beginning with the back row.

[*Translation*]

Votes against the amendment will be recorded in the same order.

• (1850)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 355)***YEAS****Members**

Alarie	Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—)
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bigras
Brien	Cardin
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Dalphon-D-Guiral	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Duceppe	Dumas
Gagnon	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin (Châteauguay)
Guay	Guimond
Keddy (South Shore)	Lalonde
Laurin	Lebel
Lefebvre	Loubier
Marceau	Marchand
Ménard	Mercier
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Rocheleau	St-Hilaire
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)—36	

**NAYS****Members**

Ablonczy	Adams
Alcock	Anders
Assad	Augustine
Bailey	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Béclair
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Borotsik

Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brison
Brown	Bryden
Byrne	Caccia
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Casson	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chatters	Cloutier
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Cullen
Cummins	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dockrill	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duhamel
Duncan	Earle
Easter	Eggleton
Epp	Finestone
Finlay	Fontana
Forsyth	Fry
Gagliano	Gallaway
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Grose
Guamieri	Hanger
Harb	Hardy
Harris	Hart
Harvard	Harvey
Herron	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hoepfner	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jackson	Jaffer
Jennings	Johnston
Jones	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keys
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Konrad
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
Lee	Leung
Lincoln	Lowther
Lunn	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Mancini	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Massé	Mayfield
McCormick	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McNally
McTeague	McWhinney
Meredith	Mifflin
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Mitchell	Morrison
Muise	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paradis
Parrish	Penson
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Power	Price
Proctor	Proud
Provenzano	Ramsay
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson
Riis	Ritz
Robillard	Robinson
Rock	Sada
Schmidt	Scott (Fredericton)
Scott (Skeena)	Sekora
Serré	Shepherd
Solberg	Solomon
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
St-Jacques	St-Julien
Stoffer	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Torsney

*Private Members' Business*

(Division No. 356)

Ur  
Vanclief  
Véllacott  
Wappel  
Whelan  
White (North Vancouver)  
Wood —215

Valeri  
Vautour  
Volpe  
Wasylcyia-Leis  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Wilfert

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson  
Bulte  
Debin  
Folco  
Graham  
Patry  
Pratt  
Speller  
Turp

Assadourian  
de Savoye  
Desrochers  
Fournier  
Longfield  
Perron  
Sauvageau  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the amendment lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The division will take place in the same way as the previous one.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

(The House divide on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Assad	Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Belair	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Byrne
Caccia	Caldler
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Cullen	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dockrill	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Duhamel	Dumas
Earle	Easter
Eggleton	Finestone
Finlay	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gallaway	Godfrey
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Godin (Châteauguay)
Goodale	Guarnieri
Hardy	Harvard
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan	Lebel
Lee	Lefebvre
Leung	Lincoln
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Mancini	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle—Énard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Massé	Mayfield
McCormick	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McTeague
McWhinney	Ménard
Meredith	Mifflin
Minna	Mitchell
Morrison	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Plamondon	Proctor
Proud	Provenzano
Redman	Reed
Richardson	Riis
Robillard	Robinson
Rocheleau	Rock
Saada	Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora	Serré
Solomon	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	St-Hilaire
St-Julien	Stoffer
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vautour	Wappel
Wasylcyia-Leis	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood—164

*Private Members' Business*

## NAYS

## Members

Ablonczy	Alarie
Anders	Asselin
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Bigras	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brien
Brison	Bryden
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Crête	Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral	Doyle
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duceppe
Duncan	Epp
Forsyth	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Grose
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harb
Harris	Hart
Harvey	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hoepfner
Jaffer	Johnston
Jones	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Konrad	Lalonde
Laurin	Loubier
Lowther	Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Marceau
McNally	Mercier
Mills (Red Deer)	Muise
Pankiw	Penson
Picard (Drummond)	Power
Price	Ramsay
Reynolds	Ritz
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Shepherd	Solberg
St-Jacques	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vellacott	Volpe
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	White (North Vancouver) —83

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Assadourian
Bulte	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Folco	Fournier
Graham	Longfield
Patry	Perron
Pratt	Sauvageau
Speller	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

## CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from March 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-219, an act to amend the Criminal Code (using or

operating a stolen motor vehicle in the commission of an offence), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, March 17, 1999, the House will now proceed to the taking of deferred division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-219.

• (1915)

[English]

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 357)

## YEAS

## Members

Ablonczy	Anders
Asselin	Bailey
Benoit	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Blaikie	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brison
Bryden	Cadman
Calder	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Cummins	Desjarlais
Doyle	Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duncan	Epp
Forsyth	Gilmour
Grewal	Grey (Edmonton North)
Grose	Hanger
Harris	Hart
Harvey	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hoepfner
Jackson	Jaffer
Johnston	Jones
Jordan	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Konrad	Lowther
Lunn	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McNally	McTeague
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Muise
O'Brien (Labrador)	Pankiw
Penson	Peric
Power	Price
Ramsay	Reynolds
Riis	Ritz
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Sekora	Serré
Solberg	Solomon
St-Jacques	Stoffer
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Vellacott
Wappel	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver) —81	

## NAYS

## Members

Adams	Alarie
Alcock	Assad
Augustine	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bergeron

*Government Orders*

Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)  
 Bertrand  
 Bigras  
 Bonin  
 Bradshaw  
 Brown  
 Caccia  
 Caplan  
 Carroll  
 Cauchon  
 Chan  
 Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)  
 Coderre  
 Comuzzi  
 Cullen  
 De Villers  
 Dion  
 Dockrill  
 Drouin  
 Duceppe  
 Dumas  
 Easter  
 Finlay  
 Fry  
 Gagnon  
 Gauthier  
 Godfrey  
 Godin (Châteauguay)  
 Guarnieri  
 Guimond  
 Hardy  
 Hubbard  
 Jennings  
 Keyes  
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
 Lalonde  
 Laurin  
 Lee  
 Leung  
 Loubier  
 Mahoney  
 Maloney  
 Marceau  
 Marchi  
 Martin (LaSalle—Énard)  
 Massé  
 McDonough  
 McLellan (Edmonton West)  
 Ménard  
 Mifflin  
 Mitchell  
 Myers  
 Normand  
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
 Pagtakhan  
 Parrish  
 Pettigrew  
 Picard (Drummond)  
 Plamondon  
 Proud  
 Reed  
 Robinson  
 Rock  
 Scott (Fredericton)  
 St. Denis  
 Stewart (Brant)  
 St-Hilaire  
 Szabo  
 Torsney  
 Ur  
 Vanclief  
 Wasylcia-Leis  
 Wilfert

Bevilacqua  
 Blondin-Andrew  
 Boudria  
 Brien  
 Byrne  
 Cannis  
 Cardin  
 Catterall  
 Chamberlain  
 Charbonneau  
 Clouthier  
 Collette  
 Crête  
 Dalphond-Guiral  
 Dhaliwal  
 Discepola  
 Dromisky  
 Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)  
 Duhamel  
 Earle  
 Eggleton  
 Fontana  
 Gagliano  
 Gallaway  
 Girard-Bujold  
 Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)  
 Goodale  
 Guay  
 Harb  
 Harvard  
 Ianno  
 Karetak-Lindell  
 Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)  
 Kraft Sloan  
 Lastewka  
 Lebel  
 Lefebvre  
 Lincoln  
 MacAulay  
 Malhi  
 Mancini  
 Marchand  
 Marleau  
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
 McCormick  
 McKay (Scarborough East)  
 McWhinney  
 Mercier  
 Minna  
 Murray  
 Nault  
 Nystrom  
 O'Reilly  
 Paradis  
 Peterson  
 Phinney  
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
 Proctor  
 Redman  
 Robillard  
 Rocheleau  
 Saada  
 Shepherd  
 Steckle  
 Stewart (Northumberland)  
 St-Julien  
 Telegdi  
 Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)  
 Valeri  
 Vautour  
 Whelan  
 Wood—161

Perron  
 Sauvageau  
 Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
 Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT, 1999**

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made earlier today, the House will now resume consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before the vote I spoke on the motion before the House. I spoke for about 10 minutes in French. I could do 10 minutes in French and 10 minutes in English and do the same speech again, but I will try not to do that.

As I said in my 10 minute speech, I am very discouraged and displeased with the way the government has acted again. We could call it the 50th anniversary of the Liberal Party legislating people back to work, which I do not believe is democratic at all.

● (1920 )

When we look at the charter of rights and freedoms, we have equality of rights. When we talk about equality of rights in a country, how can there be equality of rights when the Atlantic provinces do not deserve the same wages as the rest of the country? That is not equality of rights. That is not what Pierre Elliott Trudeau was talking about at that time as a Liberal, and supported by the Liberals.

Every time the government has negotiations it goes the easiest way. It comes to the House and legislates the workers back to work. It makes sure we cannot debate it to defend the people we were elected to work for. Those people we were elected to work for are not only in one group, the group which has all millionaires. It is not only those people. It is the little people, the ones who get up in the morning to make sure that industry continues, the ones who get up in the morning to make sure that all the programs of the government are working.

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Anderson  
 Bulte  
 Debieu  
 Folco  
 Graham

Assadourian  
 de Savoye  
 Desrochers  
 Fournier  
 Longfield

*Government Orders*

The senators did not have to go on strike. The MPs did not have to go on strike. We did not have to go on strike, but we had our increase. I think it is a shame, when we talk about equality of rights, that the people who are working for the Government of Canada in the Atlantic provinces have different pay. What is the problem? Are we not allowed to have industry in the Atlantic provinces? Are we not allowed to have work? We have to punish those people by cutting employment insurance because they are using it too much because the government is not doing its work and creating a good economic atmosphere.

The government says that we have to take food off the tables of the working people and their families. That is not enough. Now we have to treat the workers of the government differently. The workers who work in an office in Bathurst, New Brunswick are not treated the same as the ones who work in an office in Edmonton, Alberta. Does that make sense? No.

The people of Atlantic Canada are not pleased with the Liberal members of the government who send them letters which say "While talking to some P.E.I. strikers, it was indicated that they plan to lobby local Liberal MPs to ask whether or not these MPs will vote against their government to support their constituencies in Atlantic Canada". They say that they receive letters from MPs from the Atlantic provinces saying "We are supporting you". The people of the Atlantic provinces do not only want words, they want action. They want the Liberal MPs who have been elected to support them, not just in words and letters, but to stand for them because they were elected, the few that are left, by the people of Atlantic Canada.

There are no Liberals left in Nova Scotia. There are just a few in P.E.I. There are only three in New Brunswick and there probably will not be any left after the next election because of the way the Atlantic provinces have been treated by the Government of Canada, this Liberal government.

The Liberals are acting the same way as the Conservatives did in 1989 when they legislated people back to work under the Brian Mulroney government.

That happened again in 1991, under the Conservative government, under Brian Mulroney. The Liberals said "Let us in there and we will not do that. We will treat our workers the right way". That was until they got elected and we see what is going on today.

Today they want to put farmers against workers. They want to put workers against farmers. Whose fault is it? It is the fault of the Liberal government which is not taking its responsibilities. Do like the charter of rights and say equality for everybody.

Whether a worker comes from New Brunswick or Manitoba they should be paid the same because they are doing the same job.

I am an MP from New Brunswick. I get paid the same as the members from Windsor. I get paid the same amount as the members from Saskatchewan. That is what is called equality.

• (1925 )

What did the minister say? "No, it is not true. We pay MPs differently. Some are getting paid more because they stay in the region". He is not telling the truth. The wages of the MPs are the same across the country.

I remember not too long ago that there were some who were not paid the same, the RCMP. I remember they went to see my predecessor, Doug Young, and he negotiated with the government to get the same wages. I never heard about them again. Does PSAC have to go to see Doug Young? Is he the one who will save this country? Is he the only one who will be able to get the wages for the people of PSAC? Is that the way it works? Does somebody in the Liberal Party have to be paid by the back door? Is that the way it goes?

It is very sad that this government does not treat its people across the country equally. Those people did not have to go on strike. There is a way to do it if the government is serious and if it cares about democracy. The people of PSAC have proposed something. "Why does the government not give us binding arbitration? If it gave us binding arbitration we would agree with the arbitrator". The arbitrator would come down with a decision. He would evaluate both sides and give a good contract to both sides, and PSAC would agree to that, but it will not agree with what the government is doing today.

There are people working in prisons. What has the government done for them? There are even recommendations on the floor and the government will not even wait for those recommendations. Those people will have to take the 2%, the 2.5% and the 1%. That is not democracy. That is not the way to do things. We are beginning to be treated in the same way as the people in Mexico are. That is wrong. It is totally wrong. The people of this country never thought the Liberals would be that bad, as bad as the Conservatives. People thought if they put the Liberals in things would be a lot better, but no way.

If we look at the wages of the people working for the government and the way they are getting treated, if we look at the people who are having their EI cut and the way people who are suffering every day, that it is not something to be proud of. They cannot be proud of the Liberals. The Atlantic region has learned its lesson now. In Nova Scotia they got rid of every one of them. In New Brunswick we are almost there. We have a bit of work to do yet, and we are going to do it. It needs to be done.

We have to be proud of the workers in our country. We have to be proud of those who get up in the morning to work hard for our country. We have to respect them. They are the base of our country; our working people, men and women. The NDP and I will never accept our working people being treated this way.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this important debate

*Government Orders*

tonight on the special legislation forcing certain public servants back to work. But before we deal with the actual content of the bill, what we are debating now, and until 11 p.m., is the gag the government is imposing on us. This is an attack on democracy, at least on parliamentary democracy.

The government is in such a rush to get this bill passed that it wants to gag parliamentarians. In my opinion the special legislation is already a breach of democracy, but to deprive parliamentarians of their right to speak is an attack on democracy.

• (1930)

The people in my riding elected me to represent them, not to sit in my seat and passively watch as special legislation is passed constraining much of the population, because it involves public servants. The people want their members of parliament to express their fears. I think many public servants met with their members individually and spoke of their expectations and claims.

I have had the privilege of serving my electors, who are affected by this bill. The union members, including the general labourers with the coast guard working in Quebec City, came to me to say they considered it unfair they were being treated differently according to regions, they did not consider one category of worker should have a different salary because of where they live in Canada.

That is the case. They objected and came to ask me "Do you think your salary should be the same as that of a member of parliament from Vancouver or Newfoundland?" I answered "Naturally, it is a matter of equity". There is a lot of talk in the House about—and increasingly, Bloc Québécois members are talking about it—pay equity. We must eliminate the differences in pay for jobs traditionally considered masculine or feminine. We must not only reduce the gap, but eliminate the differences. We consider that an important right.

I heard people in my riding, not only women but also men, say they agreed with that. All this has come up in the negotiations on labour relations.

Yesterday, the government had a knee-jerk reaction. Today, it is resorting to closure to quickly end the matter. Why is the government so anxious that it is using closure?

I am convinced that the majority of Liberal members are not very proud to adopt special legislation. I would even say that some are ashamed of such a measure. They are ashamed, they are not proud of such a measure, but they are forced to support it. As we know, the government imposes the party line when members vote on such issues. Members do not agree with that legislation, but they are forced to follow the party line and support it, because they fear that they will be ejected from the party and perhaps even have to sit as independent members. They prefer to side with the majority and,

in some cases, not be present during debate, and certainly not take part in debate.

Many members can vote against their own opinion, but it is quite a bit harder to do so during a vote in the House. I understand why there are very few Liberal members here this evening. We cannot allude to members' absence, but we can talk about their presence. Very few are here this evening to discuss the issue of freedom of speech for parliamentarians. Very few want to enjoy this freedom which is limited, since the debate will come to an end at 11 p.m.

Today, I was at the industry committee. Throughout the day, for hours on end, I had to fight with other members so that the hon. member for Mercier could finish the speech she spent a whole weekend preparing and which summarized the testimony heard in the past two or three weeks.

• (1935)

It was unbelievable the trouble we had getting permission for her to finish her speech. Almost every week lately, this government has been moving time allocation. It is as though our constituents had elected us to sit in our places and do exactly what the majority or the establishment required of us, to keep to ourselves what our constituents tell us and not to make it known in the House.

But is this building, this institution, not called parliament? What is a parliament? The last time I looked in a dictionary, it was a place of speech, the site of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure your knowledge of history is as good as mine, so I do not need to remind you that not just hundreds of thousands, but millions, of people died fighting for freedom of speech. They died so that their fellow citizens could continue to exercise their democratic rights.

We are in this place, supposedly the very symbol of democracy, and the party in power wants to limit the time spent debating a topic as important as the right to strike.

There is another right and that is the right of association. If we recognize that people have the right to form unions, we should be logical and ensure that they can exercise the other rights that flow from the right to negotiate.

If we look at the history of this government and its predecessor, what do we see with regard to the labour rights of federal public servants? In 1982, a bill was introduced to freeze the salary of some 500,000 workers. In December 1989, back to work legislation was passed. In October 1991, we had legislation saying that the employer's offers would be imposed unilaterally if they were not accepted. There were threats.

In April 1992, we had Bill C-113, which imposed a two year freeze and a unilateral extension of the collective agreement. In

*Government Orders*

June 1993, Bill C-101 gave the government the right to require a vote on its final offers during any negotiations. In June 1994, Bill C-17 extended the freeze for two more years as well as the collective agreement. Salaries were frozen for six consecutive years. Again, this approach was criticized by various stakeholders.

Then, in 1996, we had Bill C-31, through which this Liberal government wanted to start contracting out. In 1992, the federal government closed the Pay Research Bureau, thereby avoiding taking into account facts and figures which contradicted its claims. In 1993, Bill C-26 on public service reform gave a great advantage to the employer by making it judge and jury on issues related to the workplace.

We could go on and on. I want to protect federal public servants. Some people may wonder why a sovereignist would do that. There are federal public servants everywhere, including in Quebec. Since Quebecers pay federal taxes, part of that money is used to pay public servants. Some of these people do a good job. I am not one of those who think that federal public servants are necessarily bad people. On the contrary, many of them are competent and qualified workers.

• (1940)

What we are dealing with here is the right to strike, to bargain, to organize. This is one of the rights recognized by the United Nations, which makes us a supposedly democratic society.

I have been in this House since 1993 and have had numerous opportunities to note that the Liberal government is not motivated by a very keen sense of democracy. Anytime it runs into a problem, gag orders are used., not just at the end of a session.

At this point in time we are not faced with a huge legislative agenda. I am not the only one to say so; a number of political observers have said the same thing. There are not very many bills. There would probably be enough time. There is no great urgency, yet we are being forced to get the discussions over quickly.

It was the same thing in committee, as I have said.

On top of that, we Quebecers are dealing with an increasingly centralizing government, which is flouting the Constitution and its various provisions.

Bill C-54 clearly establishes trade as a provincial jurisdiction, yet e-commerce is being used as a pretext for passing a bill aimed at creating federal legislation to protect personal information in the context of commerce. This is a provincial jurisdiction.

We have seen the strategies the government is making use of, for instance the millennium scholarships. The government knows very well that it cannot hand out grants to students in other provinces, in Quebec and elsewhere, directly. What does it do? It creates a foundation that will go over the provinces' heads to give grants to

students. This is a way of circumventing democracy, of doing indirectly what it cannot do directly.

When it can take direct action, it is often borderline, a bit dubious, as in the case of the environment, and the member for Jonquière knows what I am referring to.

The environment was not mentioned in the Constitution of 1867. This is a concept that comes up more now. Since it was not specifically mentioned in 1867, much as it did when it patriated the Constitution in 1982, the government is using grey areas to justify invading these jurisdictions.

It sees the provinces as lesser governments and itself as a higher government to which all others are subordinate, a government that wants to set national standards.

There is another point to consider as well. I often meet young people, as all members do in their ridings. Young people often express their opinions of the Bloc Québécois, but they do not always realize what is going on. They tell us all the parties look the same and ask us how we are different. My reply is that Bloc Québécois members have always defended democratic values, respect for freedom of speech, respect for the right of association, fundamental freedoms that must be preserved. We constantly have to uphold such rights.

In the present system, questions must be asked. I am not saying this has to be sorted out this evening. In the United States, they hold presidential elections. Here, we hold an election to elect a party and members to represent ridings, but it is the party that gets the most members elected that forms the government and the majority rules.

• (1945)

The Liberal Party did not receive 50% plus one of the votes in the latest federal election. The Liberal Party got the most ridings, which gives it a majority of five seats. Supported in its position, the government is trying to dish that up all the time, in committee and in the House, forcing us to act at its speed and to pass its policies.

They say "Keep talking, you members, it will get you nowhere. We will do the deciding". For government backbenchers, it is the will of cabinet that counts, and the ministers impose the will of the Prime Minister.

If we look at that, Canada is not the United States. It is not as powerful as the United States, but if we compare the powers of the Prime Minister and of the President of the United States—with a veto in Congress and in the Senate, which is not the case here—the Prime Minister can do what he wants most of the time.

This person who is currently the Prime Minister is imposing the party line on the people in his party. We have special legislation before us, even though many members, men and women, oppose it, because they find it too precipitous and they do not support different pay for different regions.

*Government Orders*

Let us discuss that a little. I listened to my New Democratic colleague from Acadie—Bathurst. He is quite right. He comes from one of the poorest regions in Canada. Moreover, people there are told “You come from a poor region. You have less benefits. We know that the industrial strategies of the federal government are targeted so as to make Ontario rich”. There is no other way to put it. This is done at the expense of the regions.

People in remote areas are told “In addition to that, the public servants who work in your region will be paid less”. We are talking here about workers who belong to groups such as general labour and trades and ships’ crews. Because they work in poor regions, these public servants are paid less.

This increases regional inequalities. If public servants are paid less in these regions, they cannot spend as much as other public servants. They cannot make the same contribution to their region’s economic development. This is not fair.

Public servants have come to my constituency office, including people who belong to groups such as general labour and trades, ships’ crews, hospital services, general services, and even firefighters. I promised them I would tell my colleagues in the House what they told me, since I was elected to represent them. I promised them I would try to make government members realize that it is not right to force these workers to immediately go back to work by passing special legislation. I must also say on their behalf that it is not right for the government to use closure, so that other citizens cannot hear what we have to say on this issue.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-76, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services, is to get the public service workers who are currently on strike back to work.

The bill also gives wide latitude to the government in imposing the working conditions and salaries it wants, including those for the 4,500 correctional officers who have a strike mandate.

With this bill, with its pernicious effects on correctional officers, according to its press release of March 22, the government wants to “ensure the safety of the Canadian public”. This is a totally fallacious argument.

• (1950)

This government knows very well that, if it wanted to ensure public safety, it had only to bow to the majority conciliation report, which was unanimously accepted by the unions representing the correctional officers. From that point on, the threat of a correctional officer strike would have been avoided, without any need of unjustified special legislation.

The federal government justifies these drastic measures in the form of Bill C-76 with the pretext that the prairie farmers are losing income and people’s income tax returns are not being processed

because of the picketing. In my riding of Jonquière, we have a taxation data centre. I think the workers who demonstrated had the right to do so, and the Revenue Canada workers at the Jonquière centre respected their right.

I cannot say the same for the government. I thought that in Canada people still had the right to unionize and that workers, when they had good reason to do so, could strike, because they had followed the entire process that could lead them to a strike mandate.

Today, I am not so sure. The government’s approach right now, introducing special legislation, makes me think there are things to hide. It is part of a fair balance of power.

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** What? Speak up. What is there to hide?

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Mr. Speaker, when my dear colleague opposite speaks, I will listen. So I ask you to tell him to allow me to speak.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to give the hon. member a chance to speak.

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the hon. member opposite says the government has things to hide, let her say what they are, but she has no intention of doing so. It is easy to make statements and gratuitous insinuations.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid this is not a point of order.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Mr. Speaker, we recognize your great wisdom.

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** You cannot say what we are hiding. It is easy to make accusations.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Please, calm down. We have the whole night to talk. So, cool it. Your turn will come.

Mr. Speaker, let me recapitulate.

Negotiations with the officials representing the 4,500 correctional officers at table 4 led to a majority conciliation report—and I emphasize the words “majority conciliation”—that was unanimously approved by union members. Unfortunately, the employer, which happens to be this government, tabled a minority report. I wonder why. Why did it not take into account the majority report tabled by a third party? This is one reason why I do not think the government is very honest in its approach.

Negotiations at table 2, which involved workers from groups such as general labour and trades, ships’ crews, hospital services, general services and firefighters did not lead to a majority conciliation report, because the chair of the conciliation board, the employer and the union tabled three different offers. The gap

*Government Orders*

between the offers from the employer and the union is not insurmountable, provided the government acts in good faith.

Here is what is included in the bill. The government's offer for table 2 is lower than its previous proposal. The cat is out of the bag. The government is using its power to introduce a special bill to lower its offers. Before tabling its bill, the federal government was offering 2.75%, compared to 2.50% now.

• (1955)

The government is obviously trying to take advantage of the introduction of this bill to get the upper hand in a situation where it is both judge and judged.

Have table 2 workers not had their salaries frozen for 6 years? I would like to go over what has been happening to employees in various sectors for the last six years. I will take the case of construction workers in my riding of Jonquière.

Carpenters in Quebec's federally regulated sector earn \$14.75 an hour. That is because their salaries have been frozen. In Jonquière, carpenters earn \$21.46 an hour, and the Office de la construction du Québec pays \$24.94 an hour.

A federal government mechanic is paid \$14.05 an hour. In Jonquière, a class B mechanic earns \$20.92 an hour and an FTQ mechanic in construction is paid \$24.49. Clearly, this wage freeze put in place six years ago has dealt a serious blow to the purchasing power of these workers. And this is not the offer being made by this government, which it has reduced since introducing the bill. Something must be done to eliminate the ever-widening gap vis-à-vis comparable sectors in the private sector.

Apart from the pay issue, there are regional rates of pay. This is ridiculous. Do people realize that the rates of pay of federal workers in Quebec, Newfoundland and British Columbia are not the same? How can this be? They are doing the same work but have three different salary scales.

The government's offer to table 4 was known. There was a majority conciliation report. Why did the government choose to ignore it? The bill will allow the government to impose its conditions and to pay no heed to this majority report which, I repeat, was produced by a third party, and unanimously endorsed by the union.

Through this back to work legislation the government is trying to impose a collective agreement on workers at table 2 and 4 claiming it is standing for taxpayers' interest. I doubt this very much. This could not be further from the truth. What the government really wants to do is set the public against the rights of the workers. In fact, if the government was really interested, picket lines could come down today. All it would have to do would be accept the majority conciliation report concerning table 2, and binding arbitration for table 4.

In general, we oppose back to work legislation. Why? Because it should only be a last recourse. Have all the other options been exhausted? We believe they have not. Striking is a worker's fundamental right and back to work legislation would abolish this right. The government should accept going to arbitration. The blue collar workers would then put an end to their pressure tactics.

Since 1991, the federal government has renewed the framework agreement in the civil service through legislation passed by this Parliament. Today, as the framework agreement has been divided into seven bargaining tables, it is essential for the government to reach a settlement negotiated in good faith.

• (2000)

If the strike by blue collar workers is harming the interests of other Canadians, it must be understood that exercising one's right to strike always has direct or indirect repercussions on society. If we were to prohibit any strike that harmed other people, the right to strike would no longer exist.

I come from a unionist background. The riding of Jonquière is a workers' riding. For the last 50 years, these people have worked hard in their negotiations with their employers to achieve collective agreements in which they made sure their bargaining power and the balance of power between them and their employers was respected. I do not think this government has any respect for that.

Let us review briefly what happened in the past. I am astonished. The federal government has constantly used its legislative power to pass special legislation. I will give a list of some of these measures.

In 1982, it passed Bill C-124 to freeze the salaries of some 500,000 workers. In December 1989, we had back to work legislation, Bill C-49. In October 1991, it passed Bill C-29 which said that the employer's offers would be imposed unilaterally if they were not accepted. The Canada Labour Relations Board said this measure was unfair.

In April 1992, we had Bill C-113 which imposed a two year freeze and a unilateral extension of the collective agreement. Even the International Labour Organization chastised the government for its lack of support for union rights.

In June 1993, another bill was brought in, Bill C-101, which gave the government the right to impose a vote on its final offer in any negotiation. In June 1994, the current government introduced yet another, Bill C-17, which imposed two more years of wage freezes and added two years extension to the collective agreement, for a total of six consecutive years of wage freeze. Once again, the International Labour Organization denounced this process.

The year 1996 brought Bill C-31, with which the federal government moved into contracting out. In 1992, the federal government closed the Pay Research Bureau, thus avoiding being forced to deal with contradictory facts and figures. Bill C-26, on public service reform, in 1993, gave the employer a major advan-

tage, making it once again both judge and party in workplace related matters.

As the member for Jonquière and as a member of this House of Commons, I am opposed, as are all members of the Bloc Québécois, to this bill which tramples on the fundamental rights of workers.

**Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP):** Madam Speaker, having been an employee of Parks Canada and been in the GS group, I understand the situation well, but it is still very difficult to comprehend what is going on with what we have before us today.

Today, for the 50th time, the government has resorted to time allocation and closure. Not only is it denying Canadians the right to strike, but it is denying democratically elected members of parliament the right to debate it.

• (2005)

Members will not have the time to debate this bill forcing a return to work and will not have the time to properly study it to make changes to it.

[English]

What I am saying here is that we were elected democratically to debate issues in the House. Unfortunately due to this undemocratic process we cannot debate it in the House like we should be allowed to.

[Translation]

As my colleague from Winnipeg Centre was saying yesterday, the bill was prepared on the run. There is no mention of Nunavut, for example. It does not harmonize regional rates; it does not reflect the best offers the government made at the bargaining table. The blue collar workers have not had a salary increase in years, but the workload has increased because a number of jobs have been cut.

[English]

Regional rates of pay discriminate against 14,000 blue collar workers in Canada, including 1,500 in the Atlantic provinces. Atlantic federal blue collar workers are the ones most discriminated against. We get discriminated against quite often in the Atlantic.

Can someone argue that a maritimer deserves less money than a westerner doing the same job? That is what we are seeing here. This government seems to think it can.

[Translation]

It is important to look at the situation. Employees are asking the government to eliminate the discrimination that exists with

### *Government Orders*

regional rates of pay. It all seems very complicated. The government is trying to tell us that it keeps regional rates because they are in line with those in the regions' private sector, but we have proof that this is not true.

From 1981 to 1997, when I worked for the public service, I held several positions in the CR and GS groups. When I was a CR, that is a clerk—

**An hon. member:** In PEI.

**Ms. Angela Vautour:** —In PEI, my salary was the same in Prince Edward Island as it would have been in Vancouver. This is fair, because these positions were evaluated and the same salary was paid for the same work. This is not complicated.

When I bought my milk in Prince Edward Island, where I was a CR, I was paying the same price as the GS who worked in Prince Edward Island national park. However, that person was paid less than the one working in the national park in British Columbia.

How can this government tell us it is impossible to remove this discrimination for all sorts of reasons?

[English]

It is not hard to understand. It does not matter where one lives. Do we really think people living in Newfoundland are paying less for their food than someone in central Canada? Newfoundlanders are being paid less and I can guarantee that they are not paying less for their groceries. It is the opposite. We have a government today that keeps pushing inequity and discrimination among employees.

I am hoping that Canadians are realizing what these employees are asking for. It is simple. They just want to be paid the same amount of money for the same work they are doing no matter where they are living in this country. The way it is now, the government has actually divided the whole country. Depending on where one lives a different salary is being paid.

I want to stress that when a secretary is working in New Brunswick, if that secretary is a CR-03 that CR-03 gets the same salary as a CR-03 in B.C.

• (2010)

The loaf of bread for the CR-03 in New Brunswick is the same price as the GS category in New Brunswick whose salary is up to \$3 less than the one in B.C.

If anybody can figure this one out and say it can be justified I will be available after my 20 minutes to sit down and listen to their argument. There is no argument even though my colleague from P.E.I. on the other side of the House is saying there is an argument. There is no argument, none that makes sense to anybody.

We do not have to be accountants to figure this one out. I worked in both those positions and not once did my level of standards

*Government Orders*

change because I was into one and then the other. I still had to pay the same amount for everything.

It is very important that the public realize that what we are talking about here is total discrimination. Every blue collar worker across the country should be supported on this because the only thing we are fighting for in the House is justice and equality.

We have a government that loves inequality. Look at the pay equity issue. We have the Prime Minister's signed letters saying "Yes, we shall honour the tribunal decision". All of a sudden they get the decision and oops, no, I guess he is allowed to change his mind.

[Translation]

But that does not make it right. This government likes to say one thing and do another. The regional rates affect 1,500 people in Atlantic Canada. These people work in Kouchibouguac national park, Fundy national park, Louisbourg and Cape Breton Island. They are everywhere. All they are asking for is to be paid fairly for their work like their colleagues in other parts of the country.

[English]

We depend on blue collar workers. We need them. There are firefighters, hospital workers, workers in national parks. They supply goods and services to Canadian military troops. They fight fires in national defence bases. In some airports unfortunately they are starting to disappear because they are cutting them. In Nova Scotia 22.1% were cut, 24.4% in New Brunswick and 27% in Newfoundland. Instead of getting rid of the regional rates of pay we will just get rid of the employees and take care of the problem. I guess that is the direction the government is taking.

**An hon. member:** Some cuts don't heal.

**Ms. Angela Vautour:** Exactly. Some cuts don't heal. We have our workers in national parks. We have a whole team that is trying to fight this, the team at table 2.

I was actually one of these members when I was elected because I was the GS. I am not inventing this. I was one of them. I was actually sitting at table 2.

[Translation]

When I was elected in 1997, I was a member of the table 2 negotiating team. The table 2 members are as follows.

[English]

The negotiating team at table 2 is Paul Anstey representing the Atlantic. We have Gary Smith, Rene Kitson, John Shaw, Gary Fraser representing B.C., Paul Brewer, Leslie Hamill, Judith Scott representing NCR, Kevin King, Steve Covell representing the prairies, Mike Benoit, John Irving representing Ontario, Abdelkader Elkak, known as ElKak, Denis Dupre representing Quebec, Byrun Shandler representing the north, Nycole Turmel as an

officer, and the negotiator is Luc David. Their researcher is Doug Marshall.

It is important to recognize these workers because they have been fighting at the table. They have been fighting for all the blue collar workers. It is important. There is a team that wanted to negotiate.

● (2015)

Unfortunately, the other side, the Treasury Board, had no intention of negotiating. It does not need to negotiate any more. It pretends that employees have the right to strike, until there is a disruption, such as this rotating strike, a little inconvenience here and there. We have to remember that when employees inconvenience us a little bit, they are fighting for our children's future.

My 13 year old will be looking for a job, hopefully when he is out of university, that is if I am still here and can afford to put him through university. I may be back to where I was before. Today a lot of poor people will never go to university, but let us assume my child will make it through university. I want him to be able to find a good job with good security and with half decent pay.

That is all the negotiators are asking for. They are asking for what we want for our children.

[Translation]

But the thinking is that, because there are strikes that inconvenience us, we must stop this, that and the other. These people are fighting for our children's future.

Do people who earn good money today know why that is? Is it because we have a government that offered everything?

Who negotiated the good benefits enjoyed by employees nowadays? Who negotiated leave to care for a sick child. Who negotiated health insurance? The unions did. These benefits were not handed over on a platter. This was negotiated in the hope that it would benefit our children, our children's children, and would last a long time.

But governments keep on wanting to destroy it all. It is important for Canadians to understand that workers are fighting for them. They are fighting for young people. We have young people working here. They will want to have good jobs later on. They will want to buy a house, have a family. People cannot do this if they do not earn money. They cannot do this if they do not enjoy job security. We know the government does not want to give it to us unless we fight for it. It is important to remember how things work.

For the past two years, federal employees have been trying to negotiate a collective agreement with Treasury Board. It is very difficult to negotiate with a government which is still promoting inequality in this country. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Hundreds of thousands of people are homeless across the country and the government keeps on closing its eyes.

*Government Orders*

Thousands of unemployed workers have no income while there is a \$25 billion surplus in the employment insurance fund.

These decisions perpetuate inequalities in this country, let us not forget it. Canadians must remember this. The government wants to ignore all kinds of people. What was the unfair treatment of students at the APEC summit in Vancouver all about?

Another example of the unfairness encouraged by the Liberal government is its refusal to abide by the decision of the human rights tribunal on pay equity. It is all the same. I myself was a victim of pay inequity when I was a CR and an ST. Promises are things of the past. They are forgotten now that they got elected.

They are saying: "Sorry, we do not need to keep our promises. We only make promises to get elected". We remember that. The elections in Nova Scotia are a case in point. The results of the next elections in Nova Scotia remain to be seen. I believe there is a risk in New Brunswick as well. I could name many more.

Even today we see another example of unfairness. The federal government is refusing to recognize a national pay rate, which means equal pay for equal work. This is not complicated.

• (2020)

It is time this government shouldered its responsibilities and did the right thing for its workers.

One Liberal member appears to believe that MPs' salaries are not the same country-wide. Let us correct that immediately. My salary as an MP—not my operating budget, but our actual salary, the cheque that is made out to me—is the same as that of a member for Vancouver or for Winnipeg. The salaries are equal, unless a person is a minister or a parliamentary secretary. Perhaps, though, the Liberals are paying themselves more. That may be what is going on.

Speaking of raises in salary, I was in table 2 for the negotiations. Then I was elected, and then people said to me "Now you will be in a position to vote yourself an increase". Imagine that.

Public servants can never turn up at the table and announce "Mr. President of Treasury Board, we have voted ourselves a raise, and that is what we want". But we can. I did not accept my raise, because I do not believe in such a system. It is a rotten system.

There are some employees who want to sit down and negotiate. They accept that they cannot give themselves a raise like we can, but even then we have to contend with a Liberal government that has refused to negotiate.

When we see that MPs can vote themselves a raise, this raises questions. A recommendation was even made for there not to be a raise, but it was not heeded. A committee decides whether we should have a salary increase or not, and we have to accept these decisions.

We were able to give ourselves an 8% increase as MPs, but how many public service employees got an 8% increase? We must not forget that 8% of \$25,000 is a lot less than 8% of \$65,000. And yet this is what we see, and it goes on.

Let us look at employment insurance. In the Atlantic region, we would say we are being hit on again, and again and again. When they made these cuts, 31 of 32 members were Liberal. When that all changed after the federal election, they said "What will we do? No one is representing the Atlantic". Things could not have been worse than when there were 31 out of 32. The 31 of the 32 said to the other members "Go ahead, cut. Forget the Atlantic".

At least today, there are voices speaking on behalf of the poor, women and workers seeking justice and the elimination of the discrimination to be found in regional rates, workers who are working very hard and who deserve the very best.

[English]

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it has been some time since I have been able to address the Chair and this chamber. I hope that my cough and my voice will allow me to conclude my speech.

Here we are again to debate Motion No. 21 tonight. Between 11 o'clock and midnight after we vote on this we will begin debating Bill C-76, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services. We will go all night, until the wee small hours, until we have finally concluded with the vote on third reading of the bill. We will probably be here until about the time that most people will be thinking about getting up to go to work tomorrow morning.

• (2025)

Why are we doing this? Why are we pushing the bill through the House in this manner tonight? Why is the government's closure motion being debated right now? It is largely because of the slipshod, shoddy mediocre thinking that characterizes the Liberal government. This need not be the case tonight. There has been plenty of time for the government to meet with its employees, to negotiate a settlement that is fair and which is agreed to by all parties concerned, but that is not the case.

This government has allowed the process to go on and on without taking its employees seriously, without giving them the respect that is due to them. These employees have their backs against the wall and have said "We have to do something to force a settlement so we will begin rotating strikes". We have been pushed into what is an emergency for thousands and thousands of Canadians.

The bill will force over 14,000 members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada back to work. They have been on rotating strikes this past month. The bill pretty much forces all PSAC workers back to work, regardless of whether or not they are on

*Government Orders*

strike. Some of them are not on strike right now. The legislation intends to close the loophole for those correctional officers who will not be in a strike position until Friday. The government has allowed itself the slack to have cabinet proclaim this if it is needed. What kind of legislation is this where nobody really knows what is going on?

It is not unusual for this government. When the government was first elected in 1993 it came in with a promise to cancel the Pearson airport contract. By golly it did and it is still a mess. The Pearson airport is in such a mess that Air Canada is suing the corporation for hundreds of millions of dollars.

Think of the cancellation of the helicopters. Helicopters are needed by the emergency workers. Helicopters have still not been provided and the government is still debating about which machines to purchase.

Think of the immigration situation. People who would be a credit to our country are being denied entry at the borders. Instead, outlaws and criminals are allowed in.

Think of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They are concerned that in the near future they could have a shortage of as many as 1,000 members across the country, with a shortage of 500 RCMP officers in British Columbia alone.

Tell me what kind of government that is. Tell me that it is not mediocre thinking by a slipshod government that allows our country to be served so poorly.

In my constituency of Cariboo—Chilcotin the trade agreements have been a problem for the producers of softwood. I think of the quota agreement, a quota which I spoke so vehemently against. Why could we not use the dispute settlement mechanisms that are available? No, we have a quota agreement. The best this agreement could do is close down the small mills and the new producers and have their quotas go to the large mills and the established producers. The worst it could do would be to have the large mills not find this an acceptable agreement. The worst is what we got. More mediocre thinking.

It occurs right across the country and it has been so detrimental, so harmful and so hurtful to our citizens. It is the people who go to work every day, the people who will get up tomorrow morning at about the time we pass this bill with the Liberal majority. It is those people who are hurt by these government policies. I hope they understand the seriousness of this kind of mediocre leadership.

I do not think we will find many people in the country who are surprised with what is happening here. They are not surprised about the dispute between PSAC and the federal government. They are not surprised by the rotating strikes by PSAC members.

• (2030 )

They are not surprised by the number of federal services affected by this labour disruption. We are very sympathetic with those people. I am very sad to say that this has become such an emergency that we need some kind of resolution, so I will be voting for the bill but with deep regret.

We should think of our constituents who are in need of a resolution and think of the mediocrity that has brought us to this position. Canadian taxpayers are seriously affected by it. The Minister of National Revenue stood and said that they were about 1.2 million claims behind this time last year in terms of processing.

We should also think of grain farmers who have been suffering over past years with low grain prices and now have their backs against the wall. They desperately need to get their grain loaded on to ships and delivered to overseas customers.

This is undoubtedly the busiest time of the year for Revenue Canada. Many Canadians have already filed their income taxes and are anxiously awaiting a little bit of the money the government has taxed out of their hides. We should think of the rotating strikes that have caused the processing of these returns to be so slow and of farmers, many of whom have already gone bankrupt and many others who are threatened with bankruptcy. Are we to ignore them?

Even though this could be explained as a major inconvenience for Canadian taxpayers, there is a growing number of citizens who will be more than inconvenienced. They will be seriously hurt by the long term effects of the strike. The sad part of this strike is that it need never have happened.

Without the money from the sale of their grain many farmers will be unable to plant their crops and will face the consequences of lack of income for long periods of time. Thank goodness there have been no picket lines and the weighing has been able to continue during the strike by some 70 grain handlers. Thank goodness strikers have understood the seriousness of this consideration, and I thank them for that.

The official opposition called for an emergency debate on the issue last week. We called on the government to act. Farmers and taxpayers are depending upon a resolution of this problem. It is with real disappointment and reluctance that I have to support the legislation.

My colleagues and I strongly believe that this heavy handed approach, an approach I will talk about a bit later, is only a short term fix. It merely adds to the problems in the long term.

The government has not looked at other means of settling this labour dispute. It has not looked at a third party resolution to it. It has not looked at final offer selection arbitration, which is what we would propose as a reasonable way of doing it.

*Government Orders*

What is final offer selection arbitration? It would allow both parties to negotiate until they reach a conclusion that is satisfactory to both, unless it is not possible. Both parties would be invited to present their final best offer. The final best offers would be received by a neutral arbitrator and in the mind of the arbitrator the fairest offer would be accepted. There would be no cherry-picking of what is good from one and what is good from the other. One final offer would be accepted. This would focus the mind on the very best offer possible.

As many of my colleagues have mentioned throughout the debate leading up to this point, final offer selection arbitration is official policy within our party. We will be pushing the government in this debate to adopt this policy.

• (2035)

My NDP colleagues talk about this being the end of negotiations. Forget it. This is simply a mechanism for dealing with an intractable solution that leads to hardship for many people who are not involved. There has to be a better way and Canada is one of the countries that has the most difficulty in settling its labour disputes.

My colleagues and I know that legislation such as the bill before us tonight should only be used for national emergencies. I do not believe that the dithering, the waiting, the delaying and the lack of taking this situation seriously are acceptable reasons for allowing it to become a national emergency. There is no need for that kind of emergency. This is simply as a result of dithering, a lack of concern and a lack of respect.

Those people who are being hurt by this situation will agree that there must be a better means of resolving such disputes than what the government has put forward. There has to be a better way than ramming it through late at night. Their livelihood depends upon it. They deserve better.

Given the current financial hardships of many Canadians, and I think especially of farmers and those people who are unemployed and are depending upon a little bit of money in their tax refunds, they do not need more obstacles in making their living.

The approach that the government is using tonight is not a new approach. Anyone who has followed the events in recent years may recall that the Liberal government used the same heavy handed tactics to end the dispute with Canada Post last year. What has been the result? Sixteen months later it is not even negotiating with the postal workers. How is that for credibility?

While the union is still waiting for the negotiations to begin the government would have us believe that the current situation is all PSAC's fault. That simply is not true. The government's various stalling tactics have not helped the situation in any way. The current legislation will do nothing to help mend any relationship

between the union and the government when they head back to the negotiating table.

Why does the government not have a long term policy that would allow the opponents to deal peacefully in these negotiations and would allow employers to deal peacefully with their employees to settle serious disputes? Why is there no means of third party mediation or arbitration? Why is the government not using these? Why is it bringing these issues to a conclusion through heavy handed legislation?

We should have known that the government would use last minute tactics to dissolve the current labour dispute. It is really not resolving it. It is sweeping it under the carpet, trying to hide it or get rid of it. The consequences are still there. We see it all the time in the House of Commons with the government's use of time allocation and closure.

Is it not interesting that less than six years after the government was elected to power this is the 50th time allocation or closure motion in the House of Commons. This is a dark anniversary. We have seen the Liberal government invoke censure of debate. Citizens of Canada elect their representatives to come to the House of Commons to represent them and then find that representation is not possible because of closure and time allocation.

Is it not interesting that one debate lasted 30 minutes before the vote after time allocation? This is the 50th time tonight. It is shameful and a total disregard for the democratic process. We oppose this restriction on our right as members to represent our constituents.

• (2040)

We oppose the government's last ditch ineffective approach to force legally striking workers back to work. We also acknowledge the overwhelming need for a resolution. This is the government's responsibility. It is the government's fault that it has come to the situation with which we are faced tonight.

I would like to make a couple of points about the legislation. Part I of the legislation, once assented to, comes into force 12 hours later. Once this occurs, this part of the bill will order all striking workers back to work and will prohibit any further strike activity so that government operations can resume.

What will this do to the morale of employees? They will not have a say and will be told to do it. The government is saying that it is not concerned about their needs and that their negotiations do not mean anything. Further, this part of the bill provides for the enforcement of these orders. Failure to comply with the provisions outlined in the bill will result in financial penalties of up to \$10,000 a day.

*Government Orders*

Part II of the legislation covers basically the same provisions as part I. However, part II deals with the few correctional service officers who will shortly be in a legal strike position. They are not even in strike position but they are included in the legislation. This part of the legislation will not come into force unless it is proclaimed by order in council. Here we have cabinet taking over from the House of Commons once again.

Once again I voice my reluctant support of the bill. I am sorry to have to do so. We should have never been forced into this situation in the first place. The government has forced us into a position where there must be a resolution, but because of government intransigence and government lack of responsibility we are left with a much less than satisfactory means of settling the dispute on behalf of the nation.

The government should be condemned for its ill thought, heavy handed approach in forcing ends to disputes. However we need to keep in mind the need for important government operations. Government has become so big and has intruded so deeply into the lives of people that without these services Canadians suffer. We simply cannot cut them off. These services must be maintained.

As we do this on behalf of all Canadians, on behalf of grain workers and on behalf of taxpayers, I am sorry we have come to this position. I beg the government to think about what it is doing to our country as it so carelessly administers the affairs of the nation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today social peace is in jeopardy.

Before making judgements on the situation, we might want to know what are the origins of the problem we are faced with today. We have Western farmers who want to move their produce, we have correctional officers who are negotiating improvements to their working conditions.

The government with surpluses in its coffers says it too wants to negotiate as stated by the spokesperson for the Treasury Board, who said on November 12 "We want to settle with the Public Service Alliance of Canada and ensure collective bargaining remains a key element of labour relations between the government and its employees".

The government stated last November that it wanted to have good human relations, good labour relations with its employees. This must be translated into concrete actions.

• (2045)

The government implemented a reform of the labour code in 1967. It granted powers to its employees. It allowed them to be unionized, it gave them the right to negotiate work agreements. It

granted them the right to refuse to work if they believed they were not getting the pay they deserved. This is called the right to strike.

When we give a right to workers, and at the same time the means to exercise this right, which is the least we can do, we have to expect that they will use every means at their disposal to get what they want.

If a union does not have the right to strike, how can it be heard? It is similar to the situation of Quebec, which has been putting demands before the federal government for 30 years but is still lacking the ultimate weapon it needs to be heard.

As soon as Quebeckers have expressed clearly their desire to achieve sovereignty, the federal government will have no choice but to sit at the table and negotiate.

We can see that the federal government, which has not yet yielded to this custom, refuses to negotiate, as it refuses to recognize the situation with Quebec.

There are 49% of Quebeckers who said "We have a human relations problem. We have an economic relations problem as well as a political relations problem with Canada. We should sit down to try and resolve these problems". But the federal government says "There is no problem since 51% of Quebeckers say they want to stay with us. There is no problem. We do not need to listen to the mere 49% who say they want to separate".

The federal government has the same attitude in the labour dispute we are facing today. There are only seven bargaining tables. Only two of those are causing problems at this time. It is not worth dealing with them. The government says it is dealing with them. It wants to crush the workers as quickly as possible to shut them up so life can go on and it is no longer bothered by these things. It will behave as if there never was a problem.

It will say "The problem has been resolved. You see, we just crushed them. We stomped on them. We stomped on them and now we can start afresh".

But those people who have not had a negotiated agreement in seven or eight years, how do they feel today? There were given the right to strike, they were given the right to negotiate, but they cannot exercise that right. How does the government intend to deprive them of that right? Through special legislation.

A special bill on labour relations is like a notwithstanding clause in the Constitution. If Quebec—to name but one province—which has a notwithstanding clause, had used it for anything and everything, what would the federal government have said? It would have said "the notwithstanding clause is an exceptional tool which, ideally, should practically never be used. We should always manage to reach an agreement through discussion, through negotiation, before using this ultimate tool.

*Government Orders*

It is the same thing with labour relations. What happens when rights, and the means to exercise them, are given to a group, only to be removed later through special legislation?

● (2050)

The government has done that four times since 1971. Was it a life and death situation each time? Was it, on each of these occasions, the only means left? One only needs to look at the current situation to know. The other situations were no more serious.

It is true there are problems with the current situation. It is true that the two sides do not agree, but have all other means been tried? I say no because, at least at one of the bargaining tables, the union had accepted the majority conciliation report.

This being a minority report, drafted by an independent arbitrator, one of the solutions would have been to have the government say "We bow to the majority conciliation report, we accept the conditions, we sign".

In the case of another table, the union, having been told by the government that its demands were exaggerated, and unreasonable, responded "We are prepared to take these demands before an impartial arbitrator. We are prepared to bow to the arbitrator's judgment as to whether our demands were really exaggerated and unreasonable".

The government said no, because it feared the arbitrator could suddenly find it was in the wrong, and it could then no longer impose its philosophy, its way of thinking; it could no longer impose working conditions.

The government is acting as it does in all other areas. It assumes an arrogant stance, disdainful of the workers, of the smallest members of society, under the pretext that it is protecting the safety of Canadians.

Was the government concerned about the safety of Canadians when it picked their pockets to create an employment insurance surplus? Well in excess of 87% of PSAC members were among those affected. Hundreds of thousands, even millions, of ordinary workers had their pockets picked. I use that term advisedly, because they had no choice in the matter. There they were, and the government just helped itself.

Of course, this was probably for their own good. So much for their own good, that the government ended up with their worldly goods. It did not have anything to do with safety. At that time the government had no scruples.

**Mr. Claude Drouin:** It is always the fault of the federal government.

**Mr. René Laurin:** My colleagues opposite would do well to be a little more attentive, and to consider what we are saying, because we are talking about the unreasonable things they are doing and

they do not realize it because they are not listening. They rarely listen. They do not listen to the public, the unemployed, women, students and seasonal workers, who are saying "Stop, we are out of breath, we cannot go on".

They are not listening to that. They are not listening this evening either, because they are afraid of hearing the truth. They are afraid of hearing people talking about real things. Each time we talk to them about it, they say any old thing to avoid listening. And this is what they are doing as I speak so they do not hear me. They are talking. They are trying to talk to me. I am certainly not going to listen to them this evening.

● (2055)

Special back to work legislation, I have experienced it in other lives, before I entered politics. I know what it means. I know what it means for the employer and for the employees as well.

In certain cases, 20 years later, the wounds are still there. They can be felt in society, in the family, in labour relations and I could even say in political terms.

It has always been possible to lead a horse to water, but it has never been possible to make it drink. While it is possible to use special legislation to force people to go back to work, by imposing thousands of dollars in fines to those who do not comply with the act, it is impossible to force them to put their heart into it. It is impossible to force them to work with zeal, to continue to work generously for their employer, to do a good job, to work with dedication, and to be respectful of their own responsibilities, including toward those to whom they must provide services as public servants.

We cannot force workers to do that because these are feelings. These are personal feelings. An employee is willing to behave in such a way if he feels his employer respects him and does not treat him like a number. An employee works hard if he knows he will be appreciated, if he knows his value will be recognized. Politicians across the floor should know what it means to get recognition, given all the millions they spend to ensure their visibility.

Why do we want visibility? To be recognized. But this is not only good for members of parliament. It is also good for employees who work with their heart, who work to provide for their families, including their children's education and future. This is why people work.

The salary is not an employee's first motivation. It is the employer's respect and the recognition of who we are, of our contribution. This is what respect from one's employer is all about.

Does the government expect to promote this kind of work atmosphere with a special bill? We would resign ourselves to such a measure if it were an exception, if we had been negotiating forever and if experience had taught us that there is really no way to reach an agreement, that we are in a cul-de-sac, that we are too far

*Government Orders*

apart. Then we would have to accept resorting to special legislation, to an exceptional measure. However, this is not the case.

Since 1991, this exceptional measure has become the rule. It is the easy solution used to render workers powerless. Tomorrow morning, they will praise them in the House. At the first opportunity, a Liberal will jump up and make a member's statement saying that we have a wonderful public service and devoted public servants in Ottawa. There will be a ceremony next fall at which medals and awards will be handed out. The downside of that party is what is happening tonight.

• (2100)

I do not know what PSAC employees will be thinking at the next public service awards bash. I do not know how many of them will thank their employer. I do not know how many of them will comment on its kindness and sincerity in organizing an awards ceremony.

Can these people do this with any sincerity? To appear sincere, it is not enough to look the part. One must be sincere through and through, and that is harder to carry off because it involves actions and attitudes, not just words.

We should not be surprised that public service workers are frustrated and have taken the action they have. They believe in their demands. According to the our information, what they have asked for is similar to what has been offered in other job categories and, where there are differences, they are prepared to submit them to a neutral arbitrator.

If the government is truly sincere, it should also let an arbitrator decide. The problem will be sorted out. Employees will return to work tomorrow morning. Western farmers will be able to sell their wheat. Correctional services employees will be back on the job. Hospital workers at Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue who look after veterans will continue to do what they did before, and what they are still doing.

As evidenced by the information I obtained today, these people work conscientiously with patients and veterans who are hospitalized. They continue to provide services. They are doing their best to find other means of penalizing the employer without penalizing patients. This takes dedication, diligence and professionalism.

The government should be more grateful and should accept to go back to the bargaining table. I am not telling the government to start giving unions everything they ask for. That is not what a collective agreement is all about. That is not what bargaining is all about. Bargaining involves sitting down together and engaging in a process of give and take. But to do that, the parties must sit down face to face, discuss and determine what the demands are and what can reasonably be granted. To do that, one must also be able to listen.

The government ought to return to the bargaining table, listen to what the union has to say and then ask itself questions like: Is it in the national interest? Is it in the taxpayers' interest? Is it fostering social peace or is it continuing to refuse to give these workers a decent salary and decent working conditions while dipping into the pockets of taxpayers to accumulate huge surpluses?

I hope these thoughts will help government members take a more positive position before the night is through. Let us hope they do.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important debate. However, I think it has been some time since Canadians were advised of exactly what is happening.

Yesterday morning the government House leader took the initial steps to table in the House an appropriate motion that would lead us basically to back to work legislation. It is not as easy as simply tabling legislation, having a debate in the House, having a vote and dealing with the matter. Now we are having some procedural problems and I think it is worth reflecting on what is actually happening.

The debate started today and it is now 9 o'clock in the evening. We will be going until about 11 o'clock. However, we are not debating the legislation right now, as members know; we are debating whether we should limit the debate once we get there. I think that most Canadians watching will understand that they have heard a broad range of dialogue on a number of matters which are, quite frankly, unrelated to the issue before the House, which deals with what the government believes to be an urgent situation.

• (2105)

We have heard, for instance, an NDP member suggest that there has been, in her words, a little bit of a disruption for Canadians. That is probably the largest understatement of the facts. Now a Bloc member has risen to suggest that we go back to the table. There comes a point in time at which going back to the table does not work. We cannot make it work if the parties are not prepared to be at the table in good faith.

We are presently debating Motion No. 21, which is related to the government services act. The NDP and the Bloc Quebecois have strong union ties. They are here debating and arguing the union's position. They will be opposed to this legislation because of their strong union ties.

Reform Party members have also cautiously entered the debate today and have used it in a way to try to play both sides of the fence. However, they will be supporting this legislation tonight because they know that this is not a little bit of a disruption. Many of their constituents, the Canadian farmers, particularly the western Canadian grain farmers, are hurting, and they are hurting badly.

*Government Orders*

There comes a point at which we have to act. That is why the Reform Party will be voting for this.

The legislation itself, Bill C-76, was tabled by the President of the Treasury Board yesterday, March 22. Basically it will impose an immediate return to work for some 14,000 operational group employees represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, known as PSAC.

The proposed legislation also seeks the authority to impose the terms and conditions of employment for these employees who are presently waging rotational strikes. Canadians will know what rotational strikes are. It is a common tactic of unions to disrupt services on a sporadic basis and in an unknown pattern. It is terribly disruptive, not just to those who are stricken by it, but also to those who at any point could find themselves being dealt with by the unions and the strikers.

I had important meetings with finance officials today and the finance building, just down the street from the Parliament Buildings, was totally sealed off. Federal employees of the federal finance department were unable to go to work today. They were unable to discharge their responsibilities.

Maybe Canadians are going to ask themselves whether this is constructive in dealing with labour relations matters, whether being at the table is better than being in front of some building stopping people from doing their job. It happens all the time. I think Canadians are probably getting a little fatigued at what the NDP might call a little bit of a disruption, which translates into a major disruption of virtually every facet of government business.

This does not only affect government. It also affects Canadians who have filed their tax returns and are waiting for refund cheques, and grain farmers who are losing millions of dollars each and every day because their grain cannot be moved.

These are not little disruptions. These are major disruptions in the economy and in the operations of Canada. It also seriously affects the small businesses which employ a tremendous number of Canadians. I want to emphasize that these are not little disruptions.

Canadians should know that for almost two years we have been negotiating this collective agreement. It is not something that has just started and, as the Bloc member would suggest, we should get back to the table. An awful lot of work has already been undertaken. Every reasonable option has been exercised to try to get a settlement in these rotating strikes.

However, it has not worked and there comes a point at which a responsible government has to say that it will not let Canadians be held hostage any longer on these matters and that it must act, which is exactly what is happening. Canadians should feel confident that the government is taking the best possible route to bring an end to

this disruption to so many aspects of Canadian life by getting people back to work. That is what is important.

• (2110)

The President of the Treasury Board has said in the House on a number of occasions recently that the cost to our economy is millions and millions of dollars each and every day. The proposed legislation that the minister tabled yesterday is the last possible resort. The government's position is that this is the last possible resort. There is nothing else we could possibly do to end this situation without bringing in back to work legislation.

What are we talking about in terms of the urgency to deal with the strike? The government is of the view that it cannot allow any further disruptions in services, which inconvenience Canadians, especially when their safety and security could be at risk. There are actually safety and security issues on the table. We cannot tolerate any further impact on the Canadian economy and on our businesses. Real economic disadvantages to Canadian businesses are being affected by these rotating strikes.

We cannot afford to lose the revenues from operations for which we are accountable to the Canadian taxpayer. It is a responsibility of the government to be responsible to the taxpayer, to manage the affairs with which it is charged. The only way we can do our job at this point is to deal with this legislation.

Strikers do not have the right to impede the work of other employees providing services to Canadians. I believe this is a principle which has not been respected in this matter which we have been dealing with. The unions have not respected Canadians' rights to continue to operate their businesses and to provide services.

In western Canada the stoppage of the grain shipments has affected farmers and the business community. It has raised concern among our international customers about the reliability of grain deliveries. This is very, very important. Canada has contracts and agreements which it must meet. There are going to be consequences if we are unable to meet our contractual obligations because of these disruptions. There comes a point at which we cannot wait. That is why this legislation is a last resort.

The grain shipments at the port of Vancouver alone are worth \$60 million per week. The cost keeps mounting every day the system is shut down by the striking workers. That is a lot of money and a lot of people are affected. Canadians have to know that.

Travellers are also being affected by the strike activity at airports across the country. I do not think I have to remind Canadians of the kinds of disruptions we have experienced at airports from time to time because of strikes. Why is it that Canadians so often are held hostage at the worst possible times? When are we going to have

*Government Orders*

good faith bargaining so that collective bargaining can work? Does it work? It appears not when the Government of Canada has to come forward with back to work legislation. I think there has to be better faith shown by the bargaining units on this matter.

The strikes have also been causing some difficulty in our ability to collect taxes such as the GST. There have been delays, particularly with respect to reimbursements to taxpayers. Taxpayers get a significant amount of reimbursements, such as GST rebates. There are a number of taxpayers who are presently waiting for their income tax returns. As a chartered accountant I always tell my clients to file early if they are getting a refund because they will get a prompt refund.

The Minister of National Revenue stood two days ago, and I think even yesterday, and had to admit to the House that because of these strikes about 1.2 million Canadian tax returns have not been processed. They are behind. I suspect that of those 1.2 million about one million are owed refunds, which those people need. Because of these strikers, Canadians who need their tax refunds are not going to get them when they need them. Canadians are not going to get their refunds and that is not fair. It is not fair to hold Canadians hostage.

The operations of some departments have been severely impacted by the strike activity. They include, as we have heard many times today, national defence, the coast guard, Public Works and Government Services Canada.

With regard to the legislation, a proposal has been tabled asking parliament to authorize the government to impose an immediate return to work of some 14,000 workers represented by PSAC. The legislation also seeks the authority to impose terms and conditions of employment for these workers who have been waging these rotational strikes across the country for the past two months.

• (2115)

The proposed legislation allows the government to implement—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to communicate my views as a member of parliament. I respectfully listened to the NDP member speak in the House and now the NDP member is trying to disrupt again. I understand that the NDP member has a different point of view, but I respect her opinion to have a different point of view and I wish she would show the same respect to me.

To continue, the proposed legislation seeks the authority to impose terms and conditions of employment for the workers who have been waging these rotational strikes across the country for the past couple of months.

The legislation also allows the government to implement, if necessary, a collective agreement for some 4,500 correctional officers if their talks with PSAC break down. The government must fulfil its obligations to maintain the safety and security not only of the correctional institutions but of Canadians as well. There are safety considerations and the security of Canadians is at risk because of the rotating strikes.

The government's proposed legislation is presented to this place in fact as an action of last resort. Canadians must understand that every reasonable effort has been made. To demonstrate, I have here a document which shows the chronology of the negotiations that have been ongoing.

Canadians should know that this started back on October 17, 1996. On October 17, 1996 the parties signed a memorandum of understanding establishing the table structure for negotiations with PSAC. That is how long ago this started. We can look down the list at the various significant events that have occurred since October 1996. On March 12, 1999 the talks ended without reaching a settlement. They could not reach a settlement. At that point government had to act.

It has now become not just a collective bargaining issue, it has become an issue for all Canadians. All Canadians are now involved. All Canadians are impacted. The member who is heckling will understand that very well. She will understand it from her constituents who are going to call her and share with her some of the disruption in their lives as a result of the bad faith bargaining that has gone on.

With regard to the status, and I think this is also a very important aspect, the government's preferred option in these matters has always been a negotiated settlement. We have seen that before. I know that when we had the mail disruption the former labour minister continued to defend the collective bargaining process. Time after time the government has said that we must let the collective bargaining process run its course, that we have to respect it. And we did. But there came a point at which Canadians were involved and the impacts on them were such that the government had to act. And it did.

We respected the process and the same occurs here. It is the same situation. The situation is that Canadians have now been drawn into this in ways which were never intended. The collective bargaining process has now invaded the living rooms of Canadians. They have taken Canadians hostage by their actions. This has to stop. This is why the government has to be responsible in these matters, to respect the collective bargaining process, but also to respect the needs of Canadians, of Canadian small business, of grain farmers, of ordinary Canadians. They are who we have to protect.

Canadians will be interested to know that agreements have been reached with 87% of the unionized workforce, including more than 100,000 PSAC members. Significant progress has been made but until we get the rest of the union representatives on side, we cannot

move forward. This thing is dead because the process is being held up by 13%.

• (2120)

Canadians are being held hostage by 13% of the PSAC members. This is absurd. This is why the government has to act responsibly and do the right thing by getting this legislation through the House. That is the job we were elected to do and it is the job we are going to do. Canadians should be assured of that.

The employer has also made concessions. Canadians should know that this is not a one way street. We do not dictate each and every thing. We act in good faith. Here is the good faith.

The government has accepted to reduce the number of regional pay zones by 30% for these workers. This is a very significant concession. In addition, wage increases of 2.75% in the first year and 2% in the second year have been offered. These increases are consistent with those already accepted by other public service employees. It is fair. It is equitable. It is acting in a responsible fashion on behalf of all Canadians, including those involved in the collective bargaining process.

With what has gone on today and in hearing this debate, members of parliament, all of whom have responsibilities not only in this place but in their ridings and also to their families, are going to be here tonight until about 11 p.m. at which time this segment of the debate on Motion No. 21 will be completed with a vote on it.

Then we are going to start the process of debating the actual piece of back to work legislation. After going through all of the stages of the bill in one sitting, if we are lucky sometime between 4 and 5 in the morning we will vote on the legislation and it will pass. I do not want Canadians to worry about staying up to see whether it will pass. It is going to pass. Before the rooster crows tomorrow, this bill will be law. Canadians will be back to work and small businesses will be taken care of.

It is too bad. Today is March 23, my daughter's 17th birthday. I would like nothing more than to spend a little bit of time with my daughter but I am here doing my job like all of these other members. Members will be tied up in this place until 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. because the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP have decided that their links and their responsibilities are to represent the union position only, rather than the position of Canadians and their constituents to do what is fair, to do what is right and to do what is right on behalf of Canadians. That is what is important.

We are here doing our job. Canadians will understand. They will hear some things. The Liberals are not going to be talking too much on this because the important thing is that we have to move forward on this legislation. We are not going to take advantage of the time of the House, of all the pages and all the people who are here

### *Government Orders*

keeping this place running. We want to get this legislation dealt with in a fair and democratic manner, which is our job in this place, and we will.

I thank the member from the NDP who has heckled me throughout my speech. I feel invigorated that I did not miss any of the points I wanted to make. I hope the member will get some sleep tonight because tomorrow is another day.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise with some regret to speak on Motion No. 21.

I accept the premise of the government that the Treasury Board has painted itself into a corner from which it cannot extricate itself by any means other than back to work legislation. Because we are dealing with an emergency situation, I will support the government's initiative in this respect tomorrow morning when it becomes necessary but it will not be with any degree of happiness because this was not necessary. It never should have gone this far. There is no reason that it should be this way.

The hon. member obviously did not hear my speech last night because he says I changed my mind. I have often noticed that members of his party get confused.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh.

• (2125)

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** If the member will shut his big mouth for 10 seconds, I will repeat what I said last night. I said that the government's move to take in 14,000 workers who were in no way affected or in no way involved in the strike which is tying up the ports was a Machiavellian move, and I will stick by that. I did not say that I did not support back to work legislation. I hope the hon. member has that straight in his head now.

This is an emergency. It is an emergency on the prairies in particular. The livelihoods of thousands of people on the prairies, including farmers, truckers, elevator operators and railroaders, are on the line. PSAC made a strategic decision to target the grain terminals because it knew that was the tender spot. That was the most vulnerable target it could hit and it decided to go for broke. Now we are going to see the results of that.

Contrary to what my friends in the NDP might say, there is truly an emergency. This is not a joke. This is very serious. We have to do something about it. A grain train has not left the prairies for over a week. People are in a very bad state. The trains are not moving and we are getting into the season when road bans are beginning to go on. People will not be able to move their grain to the trains. Something has to be done. Because of the government's ineptitude, the only thing that can be done at this point is back to work legislation.

*Government Orders*

We have been having these problems for 30 years. There is nothing new under the sun. The grain movement in this country has been constantly victimized by labour disputes. It never seems to end.

Not too many years ago this government said that it was going to solve the problem and it brought in its wonderful Bill C-19. The only problem with Bill C-19 is that whoever drafted it was asleep. We tried to point out when the bill was being presented to the House that there were holes in it, that we cannot protect an entire system by forcing certain segments of the industry to perform. There will always be somebody left on the outside who can tie it up.

In this case it was the grain weighers in PSAC. Treasury Board has mismanaged negotiations with these people. Because the government has removed the right of arbitration for PSAC, we now have this situation in western Canada where we are being held hostage by a tiny little group of 70 workers. To deal with a 70 worker nuisance, the government has decided to burn the house down. It has brought in this legislation that will affect 14,000 people. This is indefensible. It is Machiavellian.

When a house is burning, and it is burning right now, the first thing that has to be done is to put the fire out. Then there has to be somebody watching to see that it does not flare up again. After the fire has been fully and properly quenched, then the necessary steps are taken to see that it is not going to happen again, that it is not going to restart.

In this case a very obvious solution would be to provide final offer selection arbitration. This is a solution we have been advocating in this House for three or four years. It is a solution that has been widely used. It works. The government is certainly not unfamiliar with the mechanism. It has used it. It is my understanding that in this particular instance PSAC would agree to it. It would accept final offer binding arbitration. The only people who do not care about arbitration and fairness are the members over there because it is not in their interests.

• (2130)

The government has boxed itself in and 14,000 workers are affected. Not all of them are even on strike. It is suspected they might go on strike. Since these folks are too lazy to be here over the Easter break, they have decided to legislate them back to work before they even hit the bricks to save time and energy.

The government also seems to think that some prison guards might walk out during the Easter break. It does not know that, but if I may use the word strike in a different connotation the government has decided to have a pre-emptive strike.

The government claims that Revenue Canada has a backlog of more than a million tax returns but PSAC flatly denies it. It says it is actually a little ahead of the average production compared with previous years. Somebody, whether it is the President of the

Treasury Board or the leader of PSAC, is not telling the truth. I am not about to try to guess which one it is, but somebody is giving us the gears. That is a rather important consideration.

It is not surprising to me that the government introduced legislation that will affect 14,000 people in order to get 70 people back to work, which could have been done with a very simple targeted act. This is the same government that passed pre-emptive legislation against three or four million Canadian gun owners not too long ago in order to deal with a couple of hundred criminals who might have used guns. This is typical Liberal attitude: get them in the throat before they have a chance.

Many members want to address this question tonight. I will be addressing it again when we get to committee of the whole. With that I will let it go for now. I have made my position abundantly clear.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of deep sadness and anger that I rise in this House this evening to oppose this motion and this unjust and unfair legislation.

The government knows full well that the NDP and the Bloc Québécois would never let such an anti-democratic bill be passed without putting up quite a fight. Therefore the Liberals used their majority in the House to limit debate. Make no mistake: this is an affront to democracy.

Usually back to work legislation contains a clause providing for binding arbitration as a way to settle disputes. But in this case, instead of arbitration, the legislation imposes on workers a collective agreement of the government's making. It also applies to federal prison guards, who are not even on strike. This is incredible and truly unfair.

This bill undermines the democratic rights of Canadian workers. We in the NDP oppose this unjust legislation.

[*English*]

I turned on the television news last night and witnessed with absolute astonishment in a rare moment of joy the Reform member who has just spoken in the House, the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, saying that the Reform Party would stand up for workers and would oppose this Liberal legislation. He was huffing and puffing and saying that the Reform Party is here to speak on behalf of public servants.

I did my best. I could not believe it. This is the same Reform Party that has been so blatantly anti-worker from the time it first came to Parliament Hill. This is the Reform Party that spoke out in favour of right to work legislation, that slammed the labour movement and so on. Suddenly that articulate, loud mouthed little member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands is defending workers. It was incredible. It was too good to be true. Guess what happened

today. We found that the Reform Party was in bed with the Liberal Party once again.

• (2135)

I say shame on the Reform Party. Shame on the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands. When Reformers had a chance to stand up for workers they caved in. Who will they vote with tonight? They will vote with the Liberals. They will vote against workers. They will vote against farmers. They are voting against some of the poorest paid public servants in the country.

Let us look at Canada's obligations under international law. Canada has signed a number of major international conventions with the International Labour Organization, the ILO, that oblige us to bargain collectively.

[*Translation*]

We have signed conventions that oblige us to respect the rights of Canadian and Quebec workers.

[*English*]

Last year Canada commemorated the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. This legislation and this motion make an absolute mockery of Canada's international obligations under the ILO and under United Nations conventions.

Let us be clear. This is not the first time the Liberal government has shown contempt for our international obligations. Just a few months ago the United Nations committee on economic social and cultural rights pointed out in very harsh language, strong language, powerful language, that the government was not respecting the rights of poor people, homeless people and jobless people in Canada, and that the international covenant we signed on economic, social and cultural rights was being ignored by the government.

The government is ignoring our international obligations as it has done on more than one occasion under the International Labour Organization. It is not just doing that. We in Canada have a charter of rights that Canadians collectively adopted. I had the privilege of being a member of the committee which drafted that charter of rights and passed it with great fanfare. One of its basic rights is freedom of association. Those freedoms, those basic rights, those fundamental freedoms that all Canadians take for granted have once again been totally overridden in legislation.

We look at war veterans who fought hard for these rights and these freedoms. We look at merchant seamen who fought long and hard for these freedoms, who worked long and hard for these freedoms under very difficult circumstances. The legislation makes a mockery both of our international obligations under the ILO and of our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

### *Government Orders*

A number of my colleagues have spoken very eloquently in opposition not only to this draconian closure motion but to the legislation itself. Again I pay tribute to my colleague from Winnipeg Centre who has led the fight on the legislation from the beginning. He is out of the labour movement himself. He knows firsthand the importance of respect for not only collective bargaining but for the basic freedom of association.

My colleague from Winnipeg Centre; my other colleague, the member for Churchill, who will be speaking to the legislation; and others have pointed out many of its very serious flaws. One of its most outrageous flaws is the fact that we have back to work legislation applying to correctional officers who have not even walked off the job, who are not even on strike yet. They are being sent back to work without any terms in writing. It is absolutely unbelievable and unprecedented.

• (2140)

Let me be very clear. For almost 10 years I had the privilege of sitting on the justice committee of the House of Commons. I travelled to many prisons in the country and met personally with correctional officers and prison guards. The working conditions of these prison guards are disgraceful. In many cases they are overworked and underpaid. The value of their work is not recognized through decent pensions. In many cases they face very dangerous and intolerable working conditions.

The government is treating these dedicated and hard working employees with absolute contempt. We in the New Democratic Party say shame on the Liberal government for its treatment of correctional officers.

Let us look at the working conditions of those who have been on strike. We are talking about some 14,500 members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. In my own province of British Columbia how many are we talking about? The largest group of these employees is at Esquimalt in Victoria. In Vancouver the largest group is at the grain commission. A significant number of these workers in British Columbia are those who work at Rogers Pass, at Glacier and at Mount Revelstoke National Park mainly doing highway maintenance. They also have folks who work in stores at Revenue Canada and other departments.

These are not fat cats. These are not people who are being paid excessive wages. These are hard working blue collar workers whose wages have been frozen for seven long years and who have not had a negotiated collective agreement for some fifteen years. All they are asking for is fairness, justice and collective bargaining, and the government says no to all of that.

The member who just spoke talked about grain commission workers. Grain commission workers were behaving very responsibly for most of the last eight weeks. They were going to work. They were not putting up any picket lines. However, when the elevators started applying for exemptions so that the grain would not have to

*Government Orders*

be weighed they started picketing. By the way, they only picketed those elevators that had applied for exemptions. The ones that did not were not picketed.

I have personally spoken with the president of the Grain Workers Union, Ron Burton, who is one of my constituents. It took a responsible approach and is again treated with absolute contempt by the government.

These workers are particularly upset to hear the President of the Treasury Board saying that their wage demands are excessive. In his words. These workers point out that senior managers got increases of something like 17% to 25%. Members of parliament even got increases greater than what they were demanding.

I say on behalf of these workers that it is absolutely nonsensical to suggest that these increases were in any way excessive. Let us just take a moment to look at what was actually on the table when the talks broke down. When the talks broke down on March 12, about 10 or 11 days ago, the union's position on the table was 2%, 2.75% and 2% with a 30 cent sweetener in the last two years. That is not even catch up money. That does not even catch them up to seven long years with no increase whatsoever.

The government and the union were not that far apart. I think it was a little over 3% or 3.1% that they were apart or around \$8 million between the two. Let us take a look at that figure for a minute. Eight million dollars would have ensured that farmers were able to get their grain through. Eight million dollars would have ensured that some of the lowest paid federal public servants would have been treated with dignity and respect.

The government has brought forward the hammer of closure and is imposing a collective agreement all for \$8 million. I say shame when in fact one contract alone that was lost for a week was worth over \$9 million. It makes no sense whatsoever.

These are hard working employees. I have spoken with a number of them in my constituency office. They have talked about some of the difficulties they face like any Canadian in a situation such as this. They have mortgages to pay, families to look after and kids they are putting through post-secondary education so they will get a decent education in the future. This Liberal government treats them with nothing but disrespect and contempt for the collective bargaining process.

• (2145)

I think it is important to point out as well, as my colleague from Winnipeg Centre noted in his remarks, that with massive cuts that have been taking place in the federal public service with this Liberal agenda, deregulation, privatization, fighting back against any progressive labour education, we have the same number of workers who are being called on to do more and more work. A heavier and heavier burden is being borne by these workers. There is a much greater stress and strain in the current workplace. Yet

they are told forget it, and seven years without any decent increase whatsoever.

That is not the only way in which federal public servants are being hammered by the Liberal government. The fact is in a number of different areas the government has shown how little respect it has for its public servants. Women in the federal public service are still waiting for pay equity. The government continues to fight against equal pay for work of equal value.

[*Translation*]

It is totally unfair that women working in the public service still have to fight today for fundamental rights to justice and pay equity.

[*English*]

We know as well the government is anticipating a major public service pension grab, something like \$30 billion in federal public service pensions and the government wants to get its hands on that. Instead of treating its employees with respect, what does it do? It tries to grab public service pension money.

This legislation has been thrown together in such a short time that in many respects there are some very serious drafting flaws in it. The new territory of Nunavut has been left out entirely from the legislation, completely ignored. In defining workers under the terms of the proposed collective agreement I note that the definition of common law spouse in English actually does reflect the collective bargaining position that was achieved through other public service negotiations and recognizes that common law spouse includes gay and lesbian partners.

[*Translation*]

However, in the French version of the text, "conjoint de fait", or common law spouse, is defined as follows:

Il existe des liens de conjoint de fait lorsque, pendant une période continue d'au moins une année, un employé a cohabité avec une personne du sexe opposé et l'a présentée publiquement comme son conjoint et continue à vivre avec cette personne comme si elle était son conjoint.

We have a French version that denies the fundamental rights of same sex spouses, while the English version reads as follows:

[*English*]

Common law spouse includes those relationships. Mr. Speaker, I know that you have certainly taken an interest in this issue, recognition of same sex relationships and common law spouses, and I know you will be as concerned as I am with respect to this disparity in the recognition of the two statutes.

Certainly we will be seeking clarification of this issue during the debate in committee of whole. I have spoken already with the President of the Treasury Board and with the government House

*Government Orders*

leader. They have both indicated that it is the intention of the government to recognize same sex relationships for purposes of these collective agreements, but I hope that will be clarified during the course of debate in committee of the whole.

While I am on this subject, it is also important that the relationships of gay and lesbian people be recognized under the public service pension legislation as well. We are still waiting for the government to move forward to amend that legislation which will hopefully come forward in the very near future.

I want to note as well the issue of correctional service members, those I talked about earlier who are covered by this legislation. These are the public service alliance members represented by the table 4 negotiating team. They went into a third party conciliation process.

• (2150)

There was a conciliation board report released on March 19. These workers accepted the recommendation of the conciliation board. They were prepared to accept that and live with that even though it represented a significant compromise on their behalf. They said they were prepared to accept that. Treasury Board walked away from the table and refused to sign that agreement. So much for that. So much for fairness to correctional service workers. It was a very different Liberal Party back in 1991.

**Mr. Lou Sekora:** I wonder if Clark pays for his jet.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** The loud mouth member from Coquitlam was not here then. I remember when other Liberals were here in 1991 and the position they took when the Conservatives were in government. The Liberals at that time stood up for the public service. They were prepared to defend the public service.

[Translation]

They were there with the public service, but now what are they doing? Absolutely nothing. They are imposing upon these same workers totally unacceptable working conditions.

[English]

Let me once again appeal to the government to recognize that these 14,545 members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada at the table 2 negotiations and the some 600 correctional service workers at the table 4 negotiating team deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Instead, this government is using the jackhammer of closure to ram this legislation through the House.

[Translation]

We in the New Democratic Party will do everything we can to oppose this legislation and support these workers everywhere in Canada. This legislation, this motion is an affront to democracy.

[English]

This is an assault on our international obligations. This is an assault on freedom of association. I say shame on the Liberal government for betraying the workers of the public service of Canada.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I take no pleasure in rising today to speak to Motion No. 21 by the government house leader, introducing the President of Treasury Board's Bill C-76.

I would like to begin by pointing out that the result of the motion in question, which has been debated since around 11 o'clock this morning, and will be voted on later tonight, is that we are discussing this bill within a closure motion. This means that the government has restricted the time of debate, thus preventing all members of this House from voicing their concerns about this bill.

This way of proceeding is far from exceptional. It has become a habit with this government. It crops up as soon as there is any opposition to steps taken by this government. By refusing to allow the House to debate freely, by restricting debate, the government is denying the role the House must play in the legislative process.

This closure motion on the motion by the Government Leader is the 50th time this government has gagged the opposition members. It is an unfortunate reality that this is the 50th time the government of that little guy from Shawinigan has taken the House hostage by preventing it from debating.

Once again, this is a blatant denial of parliamentary democracy. It is not surprising that more and more people are questioning the real power MPs have in this House. By acting this way, the government shows it uses Parliament as it pleases, setting aside the usual rules of debate and preventing members from doing their job properly. It is with the same kind of logic that the President of the Treasury Board introduced Bill C-76.

This bill entitled an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services is special back to work legislation affecting two categories of workers, namely those in the operational services group, the federal government's blue collar workers, also known as table 2, and corrections officers, also known as table 4.

• (2155)

With this bill, not only does the government want to force the hand of the unions involved, but it also wants to set the rules and impose working conditions without negotiating in good faith.

This lack of good faith is nothing new; negotiations between the two parties have been dragging on for too long. The federal government's blue collar workers have been without a collective

*Government Orders*

agreement for about two years and their salaries have been frozen for six years. The same goes for corrections officers.

And yet, these workers, like so many others, have done their share to help the Minister of Finance table a balanced budget. Like the unemployed, they helped eliminate the deficit. Unfortunately, these workers do not seem to deserve the generosity of the government, which prefers to invade provincial jurisdictions with their money.

It is interesting to illustrate the bad faith of the employer in the case of the blue collar workers, the famous table 2. At the start, the federal government offered them a 2.75% increase. It changed its mind however. Figuring that the offer was too generous, it reduced its offer to 2.5% for the first year in this bill.

In the negotiations over the past two years, it is understandable that table 2 union members had no hesitation using their right to strike, which they had obtained on December 16, 1998. So, in a perfectly legal context, the union is exercising its means of pressure by holding rotating strikes across the country since January 18.

That is permitted under the rules of bargaining. According to the government, the union's demands are unreasonable. If that is true, why is the government refusing arbitration in order to establish the merits of these demands? A party outside the two bargaining parties could decide on the merits of the union demands.

The reason is very simple, and the problem is a big one. The fact is that, as of February 15, the government, in its infinite wisdom decided to suspend the binding arbitration provided under the Public Service Staff Relations Act until 2001.

The attitude of the government leaves workers no option but to strike. The special legislation, in addition to denying the blue collar workers means of pressure will impose a collective agreement. How ironic, given that the expression "collective agreement" means an agreement between employees and employers governing working conditions.

The government could have resolved this dispute by negotiating in good faith, but it preferred to drag its heels and in the end impose its views and upset the balance between the parties. Naturally, it is easier to be both judge and judged. Under the false pretence of protecting the economy, the President of the Treasury Board is taking federal public servants hostage.

If we are to believe the government, the die is cast and this legislation is the final recourse. Yet, surprisingly, federal blue collar workers are not on a general strike. As for correctional officers, they committed the irreparable error of announcing their intention to use pressure tactics.

And yes, that is right, table 4 workers are not even on strike. They will be in a strike position on March 26. The government will force them to return to work when they have not even gone out, and will impose a collective agreement despite the fact that the union approved a majority conciliation report.

This is another edifying example of negotiation. In effect, the government is telling these workers to accept the offers it is making or have working conditions imposed through special legislation.

● (2200)

One wonders whether this government is aware of the working atmosphere it will be helping to create with such tactics. Respect for the principle of bargaining in good faith is a far better alternative than unilaterally imposing working conditions.

When a union applies pressure, it is true that the public can be inconvenienced. But the public is smart; it too understands that these workers are not getting their fair share. The government could end this situation by simply negotiating in good faith.

We demand that the government withdraw this undemocratic bill and get back to the bargaining table, this time with the intention of negotiating in earnest. Thus Quebeckers and Canadians will receive the services they are entitled to, and government employees will be able to provide these services under good working conditions negotiated between two partners respectful of each other.

It is obvious to me that beating workers into submission with back to work legislation will have very real consequences. We might see the labour climate degenerate without necessarily ensuring that services to the public are provided adequately.

This is not the first time that the government, with the little guy from Shawinigan and the President of the Treasury Board at its head, has raised arms against workers.

Let us mention among others that this same government is refusing to abide by the ruling on pay equity, which involves mainly women. Similarly, it is refusing to discuss the issue of orphan clauses which discriminate against young people, it is refusing to include antiscab provisions in the Canada Labour Code, while such a measure has proven to be very effective in Quebec. Let us remember the back to work legislation regarding postal services.

I could go on for ever. I have the feeling people opposite are listening, this is extraordinary. The examples of unfair action on the part of this government are increasing. One thing remains constant though: when it comes to depriving workers of their most fundamental rights, the government acts like grease lightning.

*Government Orders*

We should also point out that the right to negotiate has been abrogated for 8 of the last 15 years, and for 11 of those years, ships' crews and hospital personnel have worked under a non-negotiated regime imposed by the federal government.

There have been many such laws pushed through by both Conservative and Liberal governments in this House. In August 1982, Bill C-124 froze the salaries of some 500,000 public servants. In December 1989, there was the back to work legislation, Bill C-49. With Bill C-29 in October 1991, the employer threatened unilateral imposition of its offer if it was not accepted.

It is noteworthy that the Labour Relations Board characterized this latter approach to negotiations as unethical. It is curious that the portion of Bill C-76 that applies to correction services officers smacks of the same thing.

In 1992, we had Bill C-113, which imposed a wage freeze for two years, as well as working conditions. In 1993, Bill C-101 entitled the government to require unions to vote on offers. In 1994, Bill C-17 imposed two more years of salary freeze. Enough is enough.

• (2205)

Bill C-76 clearly demonstrates that the Liberal government denies its employees' and all unionized workers' right to negotiate. Since the right to negotiate of necessity goes along with the right to strike if negotiations reach an impasse, what the government is in fact also denying is the right to strike.

This is a striking conclusion to reach in a democratic society where the right to strike is an integral part of the right of association. In the case of the federal blue collar workers, the government is refusing binding arbitration and is preparing to pass back to work legislation which imposes a collective agreement, if one dares to call it that.

For these employees and their union, this is a dead end. It is in fact the denial of their freedom of association—after a six year salary freeze.

The only solution is for the government to bargain in good faith. These negotiations have been going on for two years, without an agreement. The blue collar workers have been using pressure tactics, rotating strikes, since January 18, about two months. It is now up to the government to show its good faith. It is high time indeed the government, which dragged its feet at the bargaining table, got down to serious business.

Georges Clémenceau, the great French statesman, said—listen carefully, this is a real eye opener—and I quote “Parliament is the greatest organization we ever invented for committing political errors, which have the great advantage of being repairable, whenever the country wants to repair them”.

There is a lot of wisdom in this quote from Clémenceau. It is not too late to prevent the occurrence of the political error the

government is preparing to vote on. The conciliation report approved by the workers at table 4 need only be implemented and the arbitration involving workers at table 2 requires approval only. In choosing instead to suspend the sword of Damocles over the head of his employees, the President of the Treasury Board will clearly prove the claim of Machiavelli “Politics has nothing to do with morals”.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to enter into the debate today. In the event that members present or individuals watching on CPAC are not aware of what is happening, we are debating whether we should press a bill through in one day. It is called closure. It is called “Let's not debate the issue, let's just do it.” Of course that brings us to a real solid dilemma.

There are a lot of people in Canada whose futures depend on what is happening here. There are some people whose futures will only be marginally affected and there are others who will be affected in a major way.

I was just trying to think of some sort of analogy. Why did we get into this? It was a little over a year ago that we had a problem at Christmastime when the post office workers were no longer willing to work without a contract because their contract had expired. They went on strike.

It was not long before the government decided that it was time to take action, and it did. It brought in legislation and very quickly we, collectively in this House, legislated them back to work, even though they did not then have a contract and, incredibly, still do not. It is 16 months later and we still do not have a solution.

What do we do when there is a collision of interests?

I really have a soft spot in my heart for the farmers who are facing such a financial crunch these days. This has been such a tremendously difficult year for them. They are facing the next year with great trepidation. There are a lot of farmers who just simply do not have the cash flow to keep on farming. When that happens, not only can they not keep their farms going, the value of those farms really goes down because of the whole situation in the agriculture scene. What they have worked for all of their lives, and in some instances for more than one generation, is at risk. Their land and their farming operations are at risk.

• (2210)

Of course farmers have to put up with so many variables. They have the weather. They have the prices of grain. They have all of these different kinds of issues that affect their—

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am wondering about the matter of relevance in this case, because I thought the member was speaking against the bill and it strikes me

*Government Orders*

that he is speaking in favour of it. Is the line of reasoning that he is following relevant?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In the opinion of the Chair, the hon. member for Elk Island was not only relevant, but cogent.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time of the night I need that kind of affirmation. Had I known I was going to be here at ten minutes after ten debating this tonight I would not have worked until twenty after one this morning.

This is a very important issue. We are talking about cash flow for farmers. We are talking about the delivery of grain. We are talking about the sale of grain which brings their income. These are the farmers who, as I was saying when I was so kindly interrupted, are at large risk because they do not have the cash flow to sustain their operations.

I do not know whether there are many members in the House who have had that experience. I have. I grew up on a farm. My father bought it. It was really tough in the 1930s when he got into farming. There were a number of years when he had no income, and if it was not for the fact that we kids did not eat very much I think he would have gone bankrupt. We saved him, and hon. members can see that later on we made up for it. It is certainly true that it is very, very tough to be a farmer.

These farmers are now facing the cost of putting in their crops for the coming year. They just had notice that the cost of fuel is going up substantially. They have all sorts of crunches, and at the same time we have a small group of people who, because of this government's failure to reach a contract with them, feel that they are forced or obligated to hold rotating strikes to press their particular issue. This is so unfortunate. It comes at such a bad time.

As a matter of fact, I do not think there ever is a good time for a strike or a labour conflict. It really is better if we can work together, bargain in good faith, come to agreements and motor on.

About 20 years ago a friend and I had a little business. It happened to be a dairy business. We had about 50 cows, or a little more, and we milked them morning and night, seven days a week. We never took Christmas Day or Easter off because when one has a dairy operation it demands one's attention every day, without fail. Whether one is sick or not, it does not matter; one has to look after the cows or they will not maintain their health. They need to be milked every day.

What happened? There was a strike at the dairy which picked up our milk. Suddenly, just like that, the truck did not come to empty our big chrome-plated tank of milk every day. We ended up putting 5,000 gallons of milk down the drain every other day. We lost our income and we really had a tough time. It set us back fantastically.

It was simply because they did not have an agreement. It was a tremendous hit for us.

• (2215 )

We have an obligation to each other. Often we hear in the House, particularly from the Liberals that we are such a compassionate society. I agree. We need to work very hard and care for and look after each other. There are times when we are in conflict. Sometimes our rights conflict and collide with the rights of others and desperately so.

I know it is essentially impossible to reach but there should be times when labour unions and others say, "We know we are entitled to this but we cannot let these other people down and put them at risk to that extent". I think that is a breakdown. Right now I am putting the blame on the unions but I am also putting the blame on the employer, in this case the Government of Canada.

I had a great meeting with one of the PSAC members last Saturday. I am told it is their opinion that the government has not bargained in good faith. They have some requests, some demands, some positions they want in their new contract and the government is just saying nyet. The government is refusing. By the way, for the translator who needs to put it into English, nyet is Russian. The government is saying it will not do it.

The union wants to have the same salary for the different classifications across Canada or at least some move toward that. That does not seem to be terribly unreasonable to me. As the hon. member opposite has said, the government did move partially toward that. Perhaps it is part of a process. Maybe the unions should be a little more patient and say that it got a little bit this time and next time it will get a little more.

It is a required process. We need to consider what our actions mean to others. This Liberal government has to think of what this action means. It has already talked about the implications for thousands of Canadians who are waiting for their income tax refunds. The government needs to think very hard about what this means to the prairie grain farmers. We have emphasized it so much in the last four or five months. It has been a tremendously difficult crunch for them.

There is an attachment to the land. When one farms the same property, as my family has done now for over 60 years, one gets very close to the soil. I often think that I can empathize with the natives of our country who identify with the land. Some of us come to this part of the country, we cover it with concrete and asphalt and we do not get close to the land.

My dad is 87 years old and he still gets excited every time the harvest comes off. He still goes out every day to the farm during seeding and harvesting to see how the boys are doing and what is going on. He would love to drive the tractor but unfortunately with

*Government Orders*

the huge equipment nowadays that is not always possible because it takes considerable skill. He has a great interest in this. It is devastating to families, to people like my brother and my dad, to even contemplate that their business operation is so threatened that they may lose what is theirs and what they have worked for, for now into the third generation.

I want to share an experience I had. I have indicated many times in the House that I worked as a mathematics instructor at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. In 1982 the institute went from being governed by the government directly to being operated by a board of governors. My colleagues honoured me by electing me as the founding chairman of the staff association. My responsibilities were to get the organization up and running, build a constitution that worked and all those things. We also had our first collective agreement.

As a matter of fact after serving for five years, my gift, my token, my memento of that five years of service was a beautiful work of wood art. One of the members of our woodworking section handcrafted a copy of the first collective agreement with our signatures on it. That sits on our coffee table with great pride.

● (2220)

I want to say something about that first agreement. Before we were under a board of governors, we were forced members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. As professional staff, most of us would have chosen not to be under that union but we were obligated because we were civil servants of the province of Alberta. We did not like some of the things that happened. We thought that the union was sometimes unresponsive to us. When we formed our own staff association, we said one of the things that we were going to solve right at the beginning was the problem of dispute resolution.

There are two levels of dispute resolution when it comes to labour agreements. One is the ongoing one, where members who are under the collective agreement feel that they are not being treated fairly under the terms of that agreement. That usually yields a grievance or some other mechanism to try to solve that difference of opinion. The other area in which there is room for the correction of a disagreement is the negotiation process itself.

When an agreement cannot be reached in negotiations and hence an agreement cannot be signed, the old-fashioned way in Canada and in much of the western world is for the unions to withhold their services. They go on strike and force the hand of the other side.

In the case of industrial businesses and manufacturing plants there is a tremendous economic loss to the employer. In the case of educators, there is usually a gain to the employers when the employees go on strike. The employers save the money of the

salaries when the employees are on strike and invariably the students catch up on their studies later on.

We argued that because we were in an educational institute, it was to the advantage of the employer if we went on strike and it did not force the employer's hand so could we come up with something better. I am very proud to say, and I think I had some leadership influence, that some very fine people worked on that original collective agreement. One of them was a guy by the name of Percy Bell. There were others as well but Percy in particular really leaned into the problem.

In our first collective agreement we had a provision that took away our right to strike. Many people in the union camp would say that was a huge error, but the fact is it was done by mutual consent. It was not forced by one side. We were able to persuade our members that under that regime we would be better off than if we were to have the right to strike.

We built into our collective agreement a very rigid process for resolution of a dispute at the time of contract negotiations. It was right down to the day. I do not remember the details but we said that so many days before the expiry of the contract each party had to present their opening positions, which clauses of the contract they wanted to open. Two weeks later they would give their positions on those contracts. There was a time line for arranging for meetings. There was a time line on how frequently those meetings could be held when people were named to meet and so on. It was all spelled out in the agreement.

I am proud to announce that it worked very well, at first. Now I will drop the bombshell. For the most part over the years the Government of Alberta has been a good government. Unfortunately, the government threw a monkey wrench into this process. We usually had a collective agreement before the old one expired. We would come to an agreement. There was no arbitration. There was no mediation, but when it finally came to that, we had the time lines set out for naming a mediator and the mediator's decision was binding and final. It was all spelled out.

● (2225 )

What happened was the Alberta government made a mistake. It passed into its labour legislation a little clause that said that in the event that an arbitrator or a mediator is required to make a decision on a collective agreement, he is required to take into account government policy. That annoyed me because it totally skewed and really nullified a very good process.

What happened was that before the negotiations began, the government would simply make an announcement. For example, it would simply say that this year its policy was no raises more than 2%. We then knew that if we ever went into arbitration we would

*Government Orders*

get 2% because the arbitrator was obligated to take into account that government policy.

That was a very unwise decision because it took away from the process the element of fairness which makes it trustworthy.

I wish we could do that with the post office and with PSAC. I wish we had a better way of resolving a dispute in the final agreement than simply clawing at each other with the power of strikes and all of the bad feelings that generates, the impasses which are brought along and the tremendous implications to so many innocent bystanders, like the farmers or the people waiting for their income tax refunds. It is long overdue.

I am very proud to say that one of the reasons I like the Reform Party and its policies is that in our policy for labour management we are promoting the idea of final offer binding arbitration. It is a mechanism which I am absolutely convinced will work because I have been in an environment where it did work.

I emphasize that it needs to be brought into being by consensus and not by a forced vote. A convincing case needs to be put forward to both sides that they would be better off under that regime than under a strike regime. If they buy into it and accept it, then it will work because the parties will be amenable to it. If they have agreed to it, they will make it work. If it is imposed on them, they will not.

I am so dead set against the high-handed government imposing its will on workers and other citizens simply by pulling the string of a majority government. It is wrong, anti-democratic and does not serve the best needs of Canadians.

When we come to the vote, we are asking to get the show on the road. I regret to say this but unfortunately I think it is necessary to get these people back to work while we solve this problem. However, I for one am not going to rest until we have a long term solution so we do not have this problem recurring over and over again. There is a better way.

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention that the hon. member for Halifax West and I will be splitting our time.

Before I begin my discussion on this bill, I want to wish happy birthday to Whitney, the 17 year old daughter of the member for Mississauga South. Hopefully, we can have her father home sometime in the next few days to spend her birthday with her.

The issue we have been discussing is one of extreme importance. Sometimes in this House we tend to take for granted some of the things that greatly affect the lives of individual Canadians. We forget what we are doing to the workers and individual Canadians as people. We forget the effect we have on their lives in some of the actions we take.

That is what is happening today. The government is invoking back to work legislation. Make no bones about it. In essence, we are taking away the democratic right of individual Canadian workers to fair and collective bargaining and the result of collective bargaining.

The government will argue that it was backed into a corner and that Canadians are being held hostage. They would only be held hostage if they were taken somewhere, carted off into a corner and nobody gave them a chance to get out. The bottom line is that the government is not a hostage and Canadians are not hostages. The government willingly created the situation we are dealing with today.

• (2230)

In 1997 the government through legislation removed the possibility of binding arbitration. It vehemently indicated through this measure that the workers had to get back to work. Numerous Reform and Liberal members say that the farmers are suffering because of the workers.

The New Democratic Party and other members, as well as the workers, are made out to be enemies of farmers. What needs to be emphasized is that those workers gladly asked to be under the Canada Labour Code. Canadians need to know that grain weighers wanted to be under the Canada Labour Code and the government refused to let them be. Under the changes that took place to the Canada Labour Code in Bill C-19 they would not have been in this situation. They would have been working. The bottom line is that the Liberal government did not make any effort to allow those workers to be under the Canada Labour Code. That would have ended the whole situation of today. If we want to put blame, let us put the blame where it should be.

Let us talk about the other issues and the other workers that fall into this area. We must understand that when it comes to farmers and grain movement that did not have to happen. Correctional workers and guards, those who are not on strike, are being ordered back to work in the legislation. Where is their right to the free and democratic collective bargaining process? It does not exist with the government.

As each and every Liberal on that side of the House votes in the next few hours, let them remember that every vote they make stomps out the democratic rights of thousands of workers in Canada. That is the picture the government is portraying to all business in Canada and worldwide.

The hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas was very eloquent in his comments that we are looked upon as an example of how labour action should take place, how collective bargaining should happen. Canada sells itself as a great place in that regard. What has been done today sets that back. No longer can we say look at us, we know how to do things. We are not perfect but we have processes

in place that are beneficial and right for all Canadians, for workers, and ultimately for the benefit of society.

There is no question that the correctional workers who are not even on strike are being stomped on totally. The collective bargaining process was used with the postal workers and in many other instances. There was back to work legislation but they still had the right to conciliation, to work toward an agreement. That is not the case here. Heavens no. We have gone a step further. It is not just back to work and then a conciliation officer working with them. Even if they have not come up with an agreement yet, the bottom line is that we have allowed the bargaining process to take place, which is not happening here.

The government has gone a decade or two or three back in working relationships and labour relations by not allowing a conciliation process to take place with those workers. It has now imposed the entire contract on them with no conciliation process.

Next I will discuss regional rates of pay. I wonder if any member of the House could justify why it is okay for members of parliament from Sydney, Nova Scotia, Halifax and Charlottetown, or the solicitor general from P.E.I., to feel that they should be making less than the member for Mississauga South simply because of regional rates of pay.

• (2235 )

Is that fair? Do they believe that east coast people and people in Saskatchewan should be paid less? If they believe that then each and every one of them should stand and say they should be giving the difference back to the Canadian people. Otherwise they should be opposing regional rates of pay. Each and every member that supports the bill tonight is saying that regional rates of pay are okay. If they really believe that they should put their money where their mouths are.

I would love to have more time to deal with this issue, but since I am splitting my time with my hon. colleague I will allow him to speak.

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to have the opportunity tonight to address this issue. We are dealing with a motion concerning the disposition of a bill regarding the resumption of government services.

The motion speaks about Bill C-76 which in essence is back to work legislation that takes away from employees their legal right to strike. We are very concerned about this kind of legislation. Over the years employees have fought long and hard for ways to enhance their situation to make sure they are not dealt with unfairly. One of those ways is the right to strike if they are not being treated fairly. Now the legislation forces them to abandon that particular avenue of redress.

### *Government Orders*

The interesting part is that we are dealing with a legal strike involving about 14,000 blue collar workers across our country, 1,500 of them being in Atlantic Canada. This is very significant for Atlantic Canadians.

Why are these workers striking in the first place? Many people have spoken about what has taken place and why these workers are striking. It has been mentioned over and over again that regional rates of pay is one of the key issues. It is of particular concern to Atlantic Canadians. Far too often we on the east coast find that we are receiving less than those in other parts of the country. Regional disparity is reinforced by regional rates of pay.

Right from the outset of the strike, members of the public in my constituency were calling and supporting the workers. They could not understand why the government could not see that it was patently unfair to have different rates of pay across the country for basically the same work.

It was interesting to note that the President of the Treasury Board stood on one occasion in the House to mention that MPs had different rates of pay. That was not true. MPs do not have different rates of pay. We all have the same basic pay. We may receive different budgets for operating our offices depending on where the constituency is located, but we all receive the same basic level of pay.

Therefore it is very difficult to understand why the government cannot understand how unfair it is to workers who are working day in and day out to put bread on their tables at a much lower wage than many other people are receiving in the country.

Why are we opposed to closure and time allocation? We are opposed because they take away the right of parliament to fully debate an issue. The government has seen fit on many occasions to use these tactics to draw to a conclusion issues that should be more fully discussed and debated so the public will have the benefit of knowing that its views are put forth through its elected representatives.

The government is not serious about allowing full debate or full examination on a lot of issues. The government is not serious about finding positive solutions to many of the problems facing society. This is particularly true in Atlantic Canada. Quite often we see situations within our constituencies that call for solutions. The solutions are pretty simple if there is a will to get to the answer. Far too often the government is not willing to resolve such issues.

I think for example of the issue of pay equity. We see people who are owed money because they have not been paid fairly. It has gone through several levels of adjudication and rulings have been made. Yet the government is not hurrying to end the issue. The government seems to be in a great haste to bring an end to this strike and resolve the issue we are now facing, but there are many issues that

*Government Orders*

it seems to be very slow in bringing to a conclusion. Pay equity is one of them.

• (2240)

I recognize how much Atlantic Canada could benefit from a very positive and constructive national shipbuilding policy. We do not have such a policy and the government is not in any hurry to bring about a policy which will enable the trained labour force in our area to take advantage of its skills and come forth with a strong shipbuilding industry.

Let us look at the replacement of the Sea King helicopters. We see incident after incident where these helicopters are causing people concern. Accidents are taking place yet we are constantly told that it will be dealt with and a strategy will be brought forth in due course. We do not see the haste and urgency being displayed tonight surrounding this strike when it comes to such an important issue for our military and for our country as replacement of these search and rescue helicopters.

We can look at instances where industries are closing down in different areas. Not too long ago in my home riding of Halifax West the Volvo plant closed down, putting many people out of work. I have communicated with the government about trying to assist in finding an answer to the problem and trying to encourage new industry to come in to replace the plant that closed down. However there has been nothing but silence from the other side. We do not see that kind of urgency around problems that should be addressed. Yet we see it when it comes to depriving workers of their right to strike and their right to a fair and decent wage.

We do not see any urgency on the part of the government in dealing with the Devco situation where many miners are out of work or will soon be out of work. They are looking for fairness and a settlement that will enable them to carry on with their lives. We do not see any great plans taking place with respect to economic development for many depressed areas of the country. The government picks and chooses its priorities when it wants to come in full force and find a quick and easy solution.

There is a small black community in the riding in which I live inhabited by a lot of elderly people and a lot of young people. That community does not even have a central water supply to provide them with safe and clean drinking water. I have been struggling now for months on end to try to see what kind of help could be forthcoming from the federal government to assist the community in having a supply of good drinking water. The results are pretty pitiful thus far, but I will not give up.

I will continue pushing on this issue. If the government can move with the kind of haste we see tonight to bring an end to a legal strike and to bring an end to legitimate action that workers have taken to try to resolve their situation, it can move with the same

kind of speed, interest and willingness to resolve an issue facing a community that has struggled for years and years to overcome discrimination. It has fought to maintain its place in society and it cannot even get hooked up to a water supply in an adjacent community.

That kind of thing causes me to wonder where government priorities are. It gives me great concern when I see grants being given to organizations to produce senseless books with jokes about females and such activities taking place and being supported by the government. That is tied in with the same concern I have about the action being taken here.

It is very important as we deal with these issues to deal with them from the point of view of asking ourselves whether we are treating people in the manner that we would like people to treat us. If we use that rule in our dealings with other people we will always find the right answer. We should treat other people in the same way we would want them to treat us. That should be our guide no matter what we are doing. Whether we are passing back to work legislation or looking for solutions to other problems, we should always ask ourselves if this is the way we would want to be treated ourselves and use that as a guide as we move forward.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, would you allow me to take part in this debate? I draw your attention to the fact that Bloc Quebecois members have not spoken for a long time.

• (2245)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve is quite correct. The purpose of the debate of course is to have one side heard and then the other side. Over the course of the evening, in the last three hours, there has been one Liberal, there have been many Blocs, many NDP and some Reform. Right now we are hearing from the member for Vancouver—Quadra.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to enter this august Chamber tonight to speak, but I was moved to tears by the splendid orations, Ciceronian in style, and I think we are all indebted to the member for Elk Island for that moving account of life on the prairies in an earlier age. His eloquence swept across the House. I can assure him that outside the Chamber grown men and women deputies were in tears. It was a moving and eloquent address. We are all indebted to him and we can assure him that the northern provinces of Canada, the northern regions of our western provinces, did him right when they gave him this hand-carved statement, the constitution of his association, which he founded and upon which he left his imprint, his style, his

*Government Orders*

personality. It stands on his coffee table, as he said, as a constant reminder of what it is to be a Canadian.

One reads the rules, one studies what is carved, if not in stone, carved in wood, and one provides inspiration for generations of children.

This may not be mathematics in the new style, but it is certainly mathematics in the old style, back to the 19th century. We are indebted to the member for Elk Island.

Mr. Speaker, you were very indulgent to him because you were also I think moved by his oratory. I distinctly heard him utter words—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Speaker should point out to the hon. member for Vancouver—Quadra that the Speaker is a graduate of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and certainly would allow a great deal of latitude when it comes to the laud of that fine institution.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney:** Mr. Speaker, when I heard him utter those forbidden words I remembered “Nyet. Sdez on ne govorut po russki”, but you allowed him the indulgence because oratory is so rare in this Chamber. We mumble our words and we perhaps are lulled to sleep by a monotonous cacophony of sounds, usually from the opposition, but sometimes even from this side.

The reminder of the 19th century drew me back to Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, a household word for many people. Mr. Justice Holmes uttered the well known words upon businesses affected with the public interest.

I think we should perhaps examine the concept of rights of society, rights of individuals, rights of associations in a contemporary context.

What were the businesses affected with the public interest? Mr. Justice Holmes referred to people by these honourable professions: lock keepers; innkeepers. There is a distinction: people who conducted ferries; people who conducted rooming houses, not gaming houses; all of these objects. But the kernel of all this was that this was an area where state and the individual in society were in collision and rules and regulations were required. So I suppose one of the larger areas in which we could have benefited from northern Alberta's or northern Saskatchewan's learning was where to draw the line in these particular cases.

Businesses affected with the public interest have their own regime, their own regulations and certain privileges and immunities that the general public do not have. I suppose that is one of the issues for our society today, the growing public domain. Some would say it is too large. We think on this side of the House that we have the right balance. But nevertheless, are there privileges, are there immunities that ordinary citizens do not have? Is there, in that sense, an implied social contract to accept the continuance in work,

even under conditions which would not be tolerated in a purely private domain?

• (2250 )

It is a resolution that modern jurists, trained in the concept of balancing interests, balancing community interests, balancing individual interests, know that decisions can only be rendered in the context of specific cases. I think in this sense I would have preferred more argument on the other side of the House addressed to this issue.

I am getting this in letters and communications to me, and I have asked myself professionally, for example: Should teachers be allowed to strike? Should university professors be allowed to strike? Should nurses? Should doctors? Should people who perform essential services? I think we do need, in terms of defining a new social contract for the new millennium, to have an extended debate on issues such as this in the give and take to which this House is accustomed. I do not believe we have heard it tonight. I think that is a pity because an opportunity, at some length, has been lost.

I am reminded again of a point that was discussed with—can I say some heat—by the member for Elk Island and by members on his side of the House. It seems to me that some of the hon. members opposite were saying that they were barred from access to this House. None of us would attempt to bar the member for Elk Island from access to this House. That would be a formidable confrontation and we would certainly want to avoid it.

Nevertheless, in the 16th century the great preoccupation of parliamentarians was resisting people who tried to bar their access to parliament. It was the king and the king's courtiers and others, the commoner, rushing to the House who might never arrive.

In the Polish parliament it was said, because they had the strange concept of the liberum veto, that a single negative vote was enough to prevent any decision being made. The only thing to do was to apply the word that the member for Elk Island uttered so eloquently, nyet. However, before he could utter nyet and veto, they would lop off his head. The liberum veto, as late as the 18th century and the third partition of Poland, had its necessary corrective, the right to cut off heads. It is an old Polish custom, but I was reminded of it when I heard the eloquent speeches opposite of how members were barred from coming to parliament.

I once gave an opinion, free of charge I must say, to a member of the other house. Why do so many of us cast stones against that other house? I once visited the chambers, the rooms, the offices of members of the Senate and I saw those red carpets. Ours are green. The grass is green. When we visit the offices of the Senate we see that beautiful red plush velvet. I was overcome by a senator who embraced me and said “Somebody has committed a crime worse than death in relation to me”. I asked “What have they done?” The senator said “They tried to serve a process on a senator in the

*Government Orders*

house". Serving a process in the House, is that an impediment to the efficient conduct of a parliamentarian's work? Speakers of the House have been known to scribble notes during the hearings of the House. It has been observed. Is it an impediment to a member's or a senator's function to be served with a traffic ticket violation by a police officer?

I was appalled when I heard this. I empathized with the senator concerned, one of our most attractive senators. We discussed alternative, more moderate controls, to take a further step beyond Mr. Justice Holmes.

We do agree that senators are not above the law, that senators are subject to the principle of equality before the law. Senators should pay their traffic violation tickets too. But are they effectively to be immunized from this equality before the law because they cannot be served?

I think looking for a pragmatic resolution to this problem, Mr. Speaker, you would examine the issue: Are there alternative methods of service of summons?

• (2255)

The suggestion I made to the hon. senator was that she make herself available to be served in her residence or in her taxi coming to the Senate, but not in the Senate itself. The principle was an inviolate one. The House cannot be used for service of ordinary legal processes. A member cannot be arrested in the House. That is why I come back to the 16th century.

I sympathize with those who felt on a picket line that they were polite and maybe a member was not polite. Nevertheless, the inviolability established against an arbitrary king, a sovereign king who said "I am king and I am above the law", was that he could not bar members from coming to parliament. When King James I said to Sir Edward Cook "You say I am subject to the law. Mr. Chief Justice, I am above the law. I am the source of sovereignty", Chief Justice Cook replied in the eloquent phrase "Non sub homine sed sub Deo et lege"; not subject to God but subject to the law of the land. That is a very eloquent principle.

The member for Elk Island could well counsel his colleagues with the wisdom that comes from the accumulated experience in northern Saskatchewan. In those long winter nights he could say they are also subject to the law. The more moderate control in this case would be to advise the member for Elk Island's colleagues to step nimbly around those obstructing their passage. The alternative, more moderate control is that you can waltz around them. That is the way. The member for Elk Island would agree with me. He could exercise a skater's waltz around the obstruction.

If we have solved this problem of sanctity of parliament that members cannot be barred from coming to the Hill, it is worse now than the offences of the 16th century committed against parliament

because then parliament had the remedy. It had its dungeons and it cast the miscreants into the dungeons. There is a case to be made for cleaning the dungeons, cleaning the Augean Stables. Let us have access to those dungeons. We can protect the member for Elk Island. We can protect his colleagues and his cohorts from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment on the way to the House. Bring back the dungeons.

It occurs to me that in considering this matter at this stage of the evening we have to study the old precedents. We have to reject, as the member for Elk Island would in his Ciceronian tones, the notion that all of the past is bad. We can learn from the past.

Mr. Speaker, you and I watched the Academy Awards two nights ago. We saw the resurrection of Queen Elizabeth in two personalities. We saw the past as beautiful. Life is beautiful. We do not expect the member for Elk Island to imitate *La Vita é Bella* and to dance on the backs of chairs. But we do expect from all members of the House respect for the past, respect for precedents, but in a very dynamic sense the interpretation of precedents in a creative way that responds to our expanding destiny for the new millennium. The time is with us. The new millennium is arriving.

To examine the dilemma of how to balance the conflicting interests in this period of rapid change, the societal interest, the individual interest, is the question. What is the answer? It calls for Solomonic judgment and the answers are to be found in those hidden valleys in northern Saskatchewan.

I ask the hon. member from the Trent University area, are there not hidden valleys in his original native land? There are parts of Wales that have not been visited since the Romans were there. People in these lost valleys have the virtues of yesterday. They have the old values. They have all the things that we depend on to build and maintain—

• (2300)

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney:** Laurier said that the 20th century belongs to Canada. The 21st century belongs to the member for Elk Island and people with old-fashioned values. We will join him in preserving them. We will join him in reviving the dungeons, cleaning the Augean stables, throwing in those who would stand in the way of parliamentary privilege, throwing in those who would serve a writ on a Senator in this parliament building; intolerable, sir, and a taint to our privileges and immunities.

I take the opportunity to have a discussion on Senate reform. We respect our co-ordinate institution. We love the Senate and the senators. We are waiting only for the rebuilding of this House to occupy those offices in that end of the building, to remove the red carpets, to introduce—

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As always, I want to thank the Liberal Party for the standing ovation every time I get up to speak. I do wish to remind the member for Vancouver Quadra that he was the one who voted against his own members—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That is not a point of order but all hon. members will be pleased to remember that everything we say here is in *Hansard* and will be there to be read tomorrow.

The member for Vancouver Quadra has about 30 seconds left.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney:** We would say to all those who are here that we are celebrating this House, its august traditions. One's understanding is there is an arrangement on both sides of the House. We have exercised it to the full. We are voting according to our conscience. We respect the opposition. We would all like to get home early of course, but nevertheless we play our part. All of us may qualify for an academy award next year.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

In a spirit of camaraderie, I seek unanimous consent to speak for 20 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for the member to speak?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 11.05 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

• (2305 )

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (2335 )

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 358*)

**YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anders	Assad
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brown
Bryden	Byrne
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Casson	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clouthier
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cullen	Cummins
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Duhamel	Easter
Eggleton	Epp
Finestone	Finlay
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Grewal	Grey (Edmonton North)
Grose	Guarmieri
Hanger	Harb
Harvard	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jackson	Jennings
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keys
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Lowther	Lunn
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McTeague
McWhinney	Mifflin
Minna	Mitchell
Murray	Myers
Nault	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly

Pagtakhan  
 Parrish  
 Peterson  
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
 Proud  
 Ramsay  
 Reed  
 Richardson  
 Rock  
 Schmidt  
 Sekora  
 St. Denis  
 Stewart (Brant)  
 St-Julien  
 Szabo  
 Thibeault  
 Torsney  
 Valeri  
 Volpe  
 Whelan  
 White (North Vancouver)  
 Wood —159

Paradis  
 Peric  
 Pettigrew  
 Pillitteri  
 Provenzano  
 Redman  
 Reynolds  
 Robillard  
 Saada  
 Scott (Fredericton)  
 Serré  
 Steckle  
 Stewart (Northumberland)  
 Strahl  
 Telegdi  
 Thompson (Wild Rose)  
 Ur  
 Vanclief  
 Wappel  
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
 Wilfert

Forseth  
 Gauthier  
 Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)  
 Guay  
 Hardy  
 Herron  
 Keddy (South Shore)  
 Lebel  
 MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
 Marceau  
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
 Ménard  
 Muise  
 Plamondon  
 Price  
 Robinson  
 Solomon  
 St-Jacques  
 Vautour

Gagnon  
 Girard-Bujold  
 Godin (Châteauguay)  
 Guimond  
 Harvey  
 Jones  
 Laurin  
 Loubier  
 Mancini  
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
 McDonough  
 Mercier  
 Picard (Drummond)  
 Power  
 Proctor  
 Rocheleau  
 St-Hilaire  
 Stoffer  
 Wasylycia-Leis—63

## NAYS

### Members

Alarie  
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
 Bergeron  
 Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok  
 Bigras  
 Borotsik  
 Brison  
 Casey  
 Crête  
 Desjarlais  
 Doyle  
 Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)  
 Dumas

Asselin  
 Bellehumeur  
 Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—  
 Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
 Blaikie  
 Brien  
 Cardin  
 Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)  
 Dalphond-Guiral  
 Dockrill  
 Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)  
 Duceppe  
 Earle

## PAIRED MEMBERS

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 Bulte  
 Debieu  
 Folco  
 Graham  
 Lefebvre  
 Patry  
 Pratt  
 Speller  
 Turp

Assadourian  
 de Savoye  
 Desrochers  
 Fournier  
 Gray (Windsor West)  
 Longfield  
 Perron  
 Sauvageau  
 Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
 Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.





# CONTENTS

Tuesday, March 23, 1999

<b>Canadian Human Rights Commission</b>			
The Deputy Speaker .....	13265		
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>			
Mr. Adams .....	13265		
<b>Interparliamentary Delegations</b>			
Mr. Proud .....	13265		
<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>			
Mr. Adams .....	13265		
<b>GOVERNMENT ORDERS</b>			
<b>Government Services Act, 1999</b>			
<b>Motion that debate be not further adjourned</b>			
Motion .....	13265		
Mr. Boudria .....	13265		
Motion agreed to .....	13266		
<b>Government Business No. 21</b>			
Motion .....	13266		
Mr. Bachand (Saint-Jean) .....	13266		
Mr. Johnston .....	13267		
Mr. Guimond .....	13267		
Mr. Johnston .....	13267		
Mr. Johnston .....	13268		
Mr. Mancini .....	13269		
Mr. Hoepfner .....	13271		
Mr. Hoepfner .....	13273		
Mr. Hoepfner .....	13274		
Mr. Dumas .....	13274		
Mr. Stoffer .....	13276		
Mr. Power .....	13279		
Mr. Brison .....	13281		
Mr. Bailey .....	13282		
Mr. Richardson .....	13284		
Mr. Guimond .....	13284		
Mr. Breikreuz (Yorkton—Melville) .....	13287		
Mr. Bellehumeur .....	13289		
<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS</b>			
<b>World Meteorological Day</b>			
Mr. Adams .....	13291		
<b>Happy Birthday, Mom</b>			
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13291		
<b>Liver Disease</b>			
Mr. Cannis .....	13292		
<b>Year 2000</b>			
Ms. Torsney .....	13292		
<b>Roger Giguere</b>			
Mr. Duncan .....	13292		
<b>Canadian Francophonie</b>			
Mr. Drouin .....	13292		
<b>Epilepsy</b>			
Mr. Scott (Fredericton) .....	13292		
<b>Basketball</b>			
Mrs. Chamberlain .....	13293		
<b>Impaired Driving</b>			
Mr. Jaffer .....	13293		
<b>Ginette Reno</b>			
Mr. Bergeron .....	13293		
<b>Computers</b>			
Mr. Bellemare .....	13293		
<b>Public Service</b>			
Ms. Vautour .....	13294		
<b>Mental Impairment</b>			
Mrs. Dalphond—Guiral .....	13294		
<b>London and St. Thomas Real Estate Board</b>			
Mrs. Barnes .....	13294		
<b>Chad Blundon and Lisa Robichaud</b>			
Mr. Power .....	13294		
<b>Elmira Maple Syrup Festival</b>			
Mr. Myers .....	13295		
<b>ORAL QUESTION PERIOD</b>			
<b>Building Contracts</b>			
Miss Grey .....	13295		
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	13295		
Miss Grey .....	13295		
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	13295		
Miss Grey .....	13295		
Miss Grey .....	13295		
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	13296		
Mrs. Ablonczy .....	13296		
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	13296		
Mrs. Ablonczy .....	13296		
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	13296		
<b>Employment Insurance</b>			
Mr. Duceppe .....	13296		
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	13296		
Mr. Duceppe .....	13296		
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	13296		
Mr. Crête .....	13297		
Mr. Pettigrew .....	13297		
Mr. Crête .....	13297		
Mr. Pettigrew .....	13297		
Mr. Pettigrew .....	13297		
<b>Nuclear Waste</b>			
Mr. Robinson .....	13297		
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	13297		
Mr. Robinson .....	13297		
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	13297		
<b>Building Contracts</b>			
Mr. Jones .....	13298		
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	13298		
Mr. Jones .....	13298		
Mr. Manley .....	13298		
Mr. Strahl .....	13298		



Mr. Ménard .....	13321
Mrs. Picard .....	13321
Mr. Godin (Acadie—Bathurst) .....	13322

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Tax on Financial Transactions**

Motion .....	13323
Mr. Nystrom .....	13323
Mr. Easter .....	13324
Mr. Tremblay .....	13324
Ms. McDonough .....	13325
Mr. Epp .....	13327
Mr. McWhinney .....	13328
Mr. Assad .....	13329
Amendment negatived .....	13331
Motion agreed to .....	13332

**Criminal Code**

Bill C-219. Consideration of motion resumed .....	13332
Motion negatived .....	13333

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**Government Services Act, 1999**

**Motion that debate be not further adjourned**

Mr. Godin (Acadie—Bathurst) .....	13333
Mr. Dubé (Lévis—et—Chutes—de—la—Chaudière) .....	13334
Ms. Girard—Bujold .....	13337
Mr. Bélanger .....	13337
Ms. Girard—Bujold .....	13337

Mr. Bélanger .....	13337
Ms. Girard—Bujold .....	13337
Mr. Bélanger .....	13337
Ms. Girard—Bujold .....	13337
Ms. Vautour .....	13339
Ms. Vautour .....	13340
Mr. Mayfield .....	13341
Mr. Laurin .....	13344
Mr. Drouin .....	13345
Mr. Laurin .....	13345
Mr. Szabo .....	13346
Mr. Szabo .....	13348
Mr. Morrison .....	13349
Mr. Robinson .....	13350
Mr. Sekora .....	13353
Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral .....	13353
Mr. Robinson .....	13353
Mr. Epp .....	13355
Mr. Adams .....	13355
Mr. Epp .....	13356
Ms. Desjarlais .....	13358
Mr. Earle .....	13359
Mr. Ménard .....	13360
Mr. McWhinney .....	13360
Mr. McWhinney .....	13361
Mr. McWhinney .....	13362
Mr. Stoffer .....	13363
Mr. McWhinney .....	13363
Mr. Ménard .....	13363
Motion agreed to .....	13364

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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 135 • NUMBER 202B • 1st SESSION • 36th PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, March 23, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

## CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 23, 1999

• (2335)

[*Translation*]

SECOND READING

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-76, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services, be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the bill to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services. But I would first like to say that the government's calls to reason have been heard.

I am extremely pleased to inform the House that the joint efforts of our negotiators and those of the Public Service Alliance of Canada have resulted this evening in an agreement in principle for the 14,000 blue collar workers—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

[*English*]

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** To confirm this, I am extremely pleased to report to the House that this evening—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

[*Translation*]

I know that all members want to hear what the President of the Treasury Board has to say.

[*English*]

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** I am extremely pleased to report to the House this evening that as of just a few hours ago and with much effort on the part of the government and union negotiators, we have reached a tentative agreement for striking blue collar workers.

• (2340)

[*Translation*]

I think this agreement in principle is fair and generous. I have always said that negotiation was our preferred solution, and I have the proof in my hand. Our determination to act in the interests of

taxpayers, while respecting the interests of our employees, has borne fruit.

This last-minute agreement must not, however, sidetrack us from the reasons we are sitting at such a late hour. Canadians throughout the country have been the victims of rotating strikes by PSAC members for ten weeks now. Not only do the effects of these strikes concern the government but they were the subject of an emergency debate in the House last week.

This agreement in principle does not guarantee that the strikes will end. Union members can ratify or reject this agreement. That is the price to be paid for respecting the right to strike, a democratic right that is part of the collective bargaining process.

A responsible government cannot, however, wait for the decision of union members and we must therefore continue our efforts to ensure Canadians the return to the normal federal government services provided by blue collar workers and the maintenance of those services provided by correctional officers in Canadian penitentiaries.

In recent months, the Treasury Board Secretariat has signed numerous collective agreements with over 87% of its employees. The Government of Canada has shown on many occasions, including this evening, that it respects the collective bargaining process. This evening, the government is asking parliament to force its 14,000 blue collar workers to go back to work and to accept a collective agreement.

We are also asking parliament to adopt measures that might be necessary to ensure that the some 4,500 correctional officers remain at work and resume negotiating as soon as possible.

We want to avoid a strike and the absence of functional correctional services, which would pose a threat to the safety of inmates and Canadians.

The decision to request parliament's authorization to impose special legislation was not made impulsively. In fact, it is an agreement that will allow us to ensure the operation and maintenance of government buildings and of health services in federal institutions.

After 10 weeks, the impact of these walkouts on Canadians and on government operations is being felt.

*Government Orders*

[English]

Canadians as much as the government can no longer accept that passenger travel continues to be disrupted in the country's airports. We cannot accept either that tax and GST collections have become so much more difficult. This House should know that one million taxpayers will experience delays in their tax refunds because of these strikes.

[Translation]

Put simply, many low income families and many small businesses will have to wait for the refunds to which they are entitled and for which they have an urgent need.

This is not to mention the most vulnerable in our society who, every year, rely on the free services provided by Revenue Canada's tax clinics. The rotating strikes have prevented many Canadians from having access to these services.

[English]

The operations of national defence, the coast guard and public works have been considerably disrupted by picket lines and the withdrawal of services by these workers.

[Translation]

The strike also affects our grain exports, thus threatening an important sector of the Canadian economy, and also our international trade relations. In the port of Vancouver, dozens of ships are waiting to be loaded—

[English]

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The government knew a couple of hours ago apparently that it had a settlement. The minister is standing in the House speaking about the settlement.

What I would like to know is if there is anybody today, right now, on job action. If that is not the case, I would like the minister to—

• (2345)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. House leader for the official opposition may have an excellent question but this is not the time for questions and comments. This is debate and the minister has the floor. I am afraid that is not a point of order.

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver harbour, scores of ships are sitting idle, waiting to be loaded, which translates into expenses in the millions of dollars in each case. The impact of this situation on western farmers is very serious, since they can no longer move their grain to foreign markets. Farmers cannot afford such losses and bear the negative consequences of the strike any longer.

The situation is so serious that the president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the biggest farmers co-operative in the country asked—

[English]

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is this settlement agreed upon or is it not?

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The minister is making a speech on second reading of this bill. He is entitled to do so and I invite hon. members to allow him to conclude his remarks.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, if there has been an agreement it does not mean that it will be ratified, unfortunately. That means that there has been an agreement at the level of the negotiators and if we want to stop the strikes, if we want to ensure the movement of grain, we have to pass this law. Ratification may take a number of weeks. It may be rejected by the workers. What we want to stop is the movements that have been taken by the strikers in blocking the movement of grain. I am sure farmers in the west understand that situation.

The Canadian Wheat Board has revealed that it has lost sales worth millions of dollars because the delivery of the grain could not be ensured. At present, unless the law is passed the delivery of grain cannot be ensured.

[Translation]

If parliament does not authorize the government to force workers back to work, we might lose further contracts abroad.

This in turn would cause job losses in Canada, and tarnish our international reputation in a world where prosperity depends on foreign trade.

[English]

Increased tensions on the picket lines have resulted on occasion—

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to know from this government whether or not there has been agreement to stop job action.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid the hon. member is out of order. The minister is making a speech on a bill. The member is asking questions. He is not raising a point of order. I would ask him to please refrain from interrupting so that we can get on with the debate.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** In the public interest, Mr. Speaker, the government must exercise its responsibilities with concern both for the principles that underline healthy labour relations and for sound management of the country's affairs. This is a delicate balance that pits respect for a bargaining process we believe in against the need to ensure the common good.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

The dispute between the employer and the correctional group is of a different nature and represents a particularly worrisome threat to public safety.

Without an agreement on the number of correctional officers necessary to maintain order in federal institutions, the government can no longer ensure the safety of both inmates and employees working in these institutions.

The government has the obligation to protect the safety of the public, but I would also like to stress the moral obligation of the union with regard to the common good and the protection of Canadians. This is why this legislation must be implemented even if we have reached an agreement with the negotiators.

[*English*]

With the agreement we have with the negotiators, while it ensures that if it is ratified the situation is solved, we cannot say that at present and the only way to prevent the strikes from affecting the movement of grain is to pass this law.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to seek the unanimous of the House to have questions and comments of the minister.

• (2350)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the President of the Treasury Board has reached an agreement that none of us were made aware of as these proceedings were going along. This is indicative of the process of negotiations over the past two or three months, in fact, over the past two or three years. Canadians are kept in the dark along with the union negotiators.

While there may be an agreement in principle, the minister clearly did not indicate to me that this covered all the bargaining tables, the blue collar workers and the corrections workers. No one is left uncovered by this agreement in principle. That was not totally clear to us in this House. A bit of discussion with the House leaders before announcing it would have made all the difference in proceeding smoothly tonight and getting on with this business of getting the workers back on the job.

Up to this point no minister on that side of the House has stood up and said "I am responsible for the mess that we find ourselves in today. I am responsible for the negotiations that did not happen. I am responsible for not coming to an agreement before we got into an emergency debate and got into back to work legislation" which no one in the country wanted to see except the government.

We are left in the situation of looking at faulty back to work legislation tonight. There was a simple solution available to this government and that was to bring in back to work legislation with final offer selection arbitration as part of the terms.

What we have is back to work legislation which will impose an interim settlement penalizing the workers from the position the government had last offered; i.e., they were going to have lower pay and the question of increments was not covered.

What we have here at this late time is a government trying to poke and penalize the negotiators and the union people with whom it will have to start renegotiating with tomorrow.

The President of the Treasury Board did not sound very confident that it would not go through. We are left in the same situation of not knowing what is going on. He said he has an agreement in principle but only time will tell.

We will support this but only to ensure that farmers get their grain moving and their income sustained and so workers can get back to work. We will be bringing in amendments to this final offer arbitration to rid of the dictative terms of this minister and this government that are totally unsatisfactory to the union people on whom he is imposing it.

We have had unanimous agreement to allow me to share my time and I will be sharing it with the member for Wetaskiwin.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for the member to share his time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, being a man of few words, I am sure I will not use the remaining 35 minutes.

• (2355)

I have been looking forward to the debate here tonight but when the minister comes into the House and makes an announcement as he has—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Laurin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

It seems to me that my colleague from the Reform Party rose on a point of order. You took his intervention as a point of order, but it would appear that we have resumed debate without your saying so and inviting the speakers to identify themselves.

Are we still on a point of order about the sharing of time or have we resumed debate?

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have resumed debate, but there is a case where time will be shared with the unanimous consent of the House.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. René Laurin:** I have nothing against that, Mr. Speaker, except that you never indicated to the House that we were resuming debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We resumed debate because the member indicated that the member for Wetaskiwin would use the rest of his time, and that is why he has the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if the government was this close to coming to a resolution of the problem in the beginning it is, to say the least, jumping the gun to bring in back to work legislation.

I have said in the House I do not know how many times in the last few days that this is no way to cement relationships with staff. This is no way to work on labour relations, to bring in back to work legislation when a tentative deal has been all but hammered out and the government brings in back to work legislation.

I suggest that is using the official opposition and everybody on this side of the House in a very suspicious manner. I object strenuously. This is a despicable move. Why is it done at this late hour?

It would seem to me that the timing of all this is simply for the convenience of the government since we will be on a two week break and the minister thought it would be a perfect opportunity to suck in the opposition parties and have them go through all this terrible debate, spend all night here and well into the morning, working on something the minister knew darn well was nothing but a pressure tactic to make his agreement come to fruition.

I still think it would be a great idea if we were able to question the minister under these circumstances. I ask once again for the unanimous consent of the House to have questions and comments of the minister for 10 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the House give its consent to have questions and comments to the minister for 10 minutes?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** I noticed it was not the backbenchers who said no but the minister himself who does not want to answer any questions.

This puts an entirely different light on the situation. If we have a tentative agreement hammered out between PSAC and the Government of Canada, what are we doing here talking about back to work legislation? Why are we not talking about final offer selection arbitration or something that will—

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member asked if there would be consent to have questions and comments to the minister for 10 minutes.

I have just verified with the minister that it certainly would be acceptable to him, to give him an opportunity to further expand on the answers he gave a while ago. For our part we would be agreeable to that.

• (2400 )

**The Deputy Speaker:** I again ask the question. First, is the hon. member for Wetaskiwin prepared to reiterate his request because he has the floor. If so, are members prepared to give consent to have a 10 minute period of questions and comments to the minister? Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe this. We have a party that says it stands for the working class, that it is going to be the champions of the working class. Yet, it has turned down an opportunity to question the very minister who is in charge of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

This puts a totally different light on the situation. We have a situation where we are trying to legislate people back to work who are at work. I cannot think of a more ridiculous situation to find ourselves in. God knows we did not put ourselves in this mess. We have been advocating final offer selection arbitration as a means to settle disputes without having to go through the pain and the agony of having to legislate people back to work.

We find ourselves in a position where we have to acquiesce and legislate people back to work. The minister all the while has been coming up with an agreement. He has had it for at least two hours and did not bother to tell us about it. How do we know that he has not had this agreement for longer than two hours? He tells us it has been two hours but we have no way of knowing that.

Lo and behold when the government agrees that we can question the minister, the Bloc says no. It is unbelievable.

**An hon. member:** It is a credibility problem.

**An hon. member:** What do you know about credibility?

**An hon. member:** Pay attention. You will learn something about credibility. Why are we here tonight?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Wetaskiwin has the floor.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, I do not mind a little help. I am getting tremendous encouragement from my colleagues and even some good words of advice.

*Government Orders*

We are going to have to completely rethink our position on this. Things have completely changed from this morning when we started debating this. If I were the House leader, I would be saying that all bets are off at this moment. Things have changed completely.

No wonder they say that Treasury Board does not bargain in good faith. It does not deal with us in good faith.

I would like one more time to ask if there would be unanimous consent for questions and comments of the minister.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will do that in a moment. There is a point of order from the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if there has been a misunderstanding of the request that was made by the hon. member from the Bloc from the Reform Party. Given some of the commotion that was taking place at the time he made the request, I would again ask for unanimous consent that the minister be permitted to take questions for a defined period, 10 minutes or more. I ask that that be put to the House once again.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair is more than happy to keep putting this question to the House. Might I remind hon. members that on the motion by the minister that has been moved, assuming it is carried, the House will go into committee of the whole later on this bill. I have no doubt that the minister will be in the committee of the whole and will be here to answer members' questions in committee of the whole. I stress that that is still a possibility and I remind the House of that.

I will put the question to the House again. Is there unanimous consent that there be a 10 minute period of questions and comments to the minister?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

• (2405)

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe what I am hearing.

I know when we get into committee of the whole we will get an opportunity to speak on our amendments and to question the minister. The time spent between now and when we do go into committee of the whole may be a total waste of effort. If we were to get some clarification from the minister at this point, if he were to be forthright with us, we may be able to save ourselves a whole lot of effort and time, if we were just able to ask the minister some questions.

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am sorry and I am not challenging the Chair in any way but I do not know who said no. It is my understanding that the Liberals would like to allow the minister to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The Chair does not wish to ever put itself in the position of identifying who in the House has said no. When hon. members seek consent, they may wish to accuse others of having said no. It is not for the Chair to intervene in this matter. The Chair put the question as I have done four times this evening already on this issue. On every occasion I have heard a no and I have never said where I heard it from, and I will not. Other members may say so. I will not.

I heard a no and that was the end of it. The Chair tries to be very attentive in these matters because we know that on occasion we have been in trouble for having tried to put something through when there has not been consent. I am very cognizant of the wishes of hon. members in this regard. There have been nos. I would prefer not to get into any of that discussion.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, just for old time's sake, I would like to make my favourite point, the need for a permanent dispute settlement mechanism rather than going through the agony of legislating people back to work. Let us face it. If we go through with this exercise and legislate these parties back to work, parties who may or not be in a strike situation any longer, we still have done nothing whatsoever about their contract. We still have to have some sort of mechanism to deal with their contract. Therefore, we need to have final offer selection arbitration.

Having gotten in that commercial message, I would ask one more time, maybe third time lucky, if we could have a 10 minute question and comment period with the President of the Treasury Board.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for a 10 minute question or comment period to the minister?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we start, is the hon. member for Wetaskiwin finished his remarks or will it go back to him at the conclusion of the 10 minute period?

**Some hon. members:** Back to him.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments to the minister.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to know from the minister just when he found out that there was a tentative agreement. At what time did he know that?

I feel that the opposition in this House has been truly sucked in by this government. Government members knew darn well there was a tentative agreement coming and they set us up in this House.

*Government Orders*

They made an announcement as though we should stand here and clap for them when they knew all along there was a tentative agreement.

Why is there not cessation of job action when they have a tentative agreement? According to the Treasury Board official here in the back room, he says that was not attained. I would like to know why it was not. As far as I am concerned, this official opposition has some real problems now with the integrity of what went on over there.

• (2410)

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, I knew about the agreement taking place at about 10.10 tonight. The agreement was the result of difficult negotiations that have continued with the blue collar workers. This afternoon I heard about the various elements that were involved. I indicated that I was ready to agree to the various contents. The negotiations took place between our main negotiator and Daryl Bean's negotiators tonight between 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock. I was told at 10.10 that they had initiated an agreement.

The problem of course of having an agreement of that type is that since we now have a negotiated collective agreement this is what eventually, if it is ratified, must become the agreement between the parties.

However, the possibility of the blue collar workers continuing their strike is not only there but it was mentioned to us that it was likely that it would continue because until that agreement, which is an agreement between our representatives and those of the union, is ratified by the membership, which may take one, two or three weeks, the right to strike continues.

Therefore, we still need to pass the law as it is. I will introduce amendments at the next stage with the possibility that the collective agreement that we have just negotiated, if it is ratified, will become the conditions of work with the parties.

[Translation]

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what is going on here tonight is very surprising. I will tell you that I worked in the labour movement for 20 years and this is the first time I see anything like this.

I said in my speech, and I will repeat it for the minister, that this government has done all it could to push these 14,000 public servants to go on strike. It did all it could to provoke this strike and it did all it could to crush it.

Now the minister is telling us that there is an agreement in principle. We all know that, when an agreement in principle is reached under the sword of Damocles, when one is under the threat of back to work legislation, usually that agreement in principle is final.

Therefore, not only has the government succeeded in provoking that strike, but it has used the House of Commons to apply extra pressure on its employees. People say they agree, thinking they can go back to work and everything will be settled, but that is not so. Moreover, the government will even force these employees to go back to work even though there is an agreement in principle. I find this totally unacceptable.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, you will have noted that there are two groups of persons mentioned in this bill. The first are the blue collar workers. I believe it is incorrect to say that, if there is an agreement in principle, it is automatically ratified because in the case of the prison guards there was an agreement in principle with our negotiators and a recommendation for acceptance by PSDAC, but then the employees rejected it. This is an immediate example of non-ratification of an agreement in principle.

Continuing, there are two groups of workers. The prison guards are designated as essential, anyway, and as I have said, some 500 or 600 of them are not covered by the essential service designation. Clearly they must be covered, and this is why we must have the bill.

Since the rotating strikes cannot be stopped by agreement in principle, the bill must be passed so as to put an immediate stop to the rotating strikes.

• (2415)

[English]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question may seem quite similar. If the table two bargaining group has reached a tentative agreement, and seeing as there is an order from the new CIRB about the picketing on the west coast, grain shipment is not a factor any more even if the table two workers were to carry on any kind of a job action. Would it not seem, then, that we are carrying on with the legislation for the table four workers, the CX workers?

It seems to me that this is no longer back to work legislation. This is legislation to designate the table four CX workers as an essential service to take away the right to strike for any of the corrections officers who are left there. Is it still back to work legislation or is it designating these CX workers?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, the act is still necessary for the CX workers. Once again, they should be designated essential and they are not. We need back to work legislation to prevent them from striking. It is still necessary for blue collar workers, because the agreement in principle by itself does not prevent them from striking. There have been indications that they want to continue their rotating strikes unless there is back to work legislation that prevents them from striking.

Given the fact that they can still interrupt the movement of grain, by the way all through the period until ratification and continuous-

*Government Orders*

ly if it is not ratified by them, which is a possibility, we therefore need back to work legislation.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is very simple. Everyone here wants to see farmers being able to ship their grain. How do you expect us to support the legislation when you are standing here before us tonight—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member will address the Chair, please. The hon. member for South Shore will please address the Chair.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Mr. Speaker, how does the minister expect us to support the legislation when he stood before parliament tonight and said he had negotiated in bad faith? He has not negotiated in good faith. The question is simple.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I understand what the member means. We have been negotiating with the union. We have been at the same table. We knew what the differences were between the two of us and finally tonight at 10 o'clock we reached an agreement.

However, the agreement itself is an agreement in principle. If it is not ratified the strikes can continue over time. Therefore we need the act to prevent the strikes in the meantime, to prevent the strikes if there is no ratification by the employees, and to prevent a strike by the prison guards.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, seeing as that the President of the Treasury Board saw fit to raise tonight that he and his government had an agreement in principle, is he willing to table that agreement in principle so that we can work with it tonight?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, I know that our negotiators have initialled that agreement. I do not know if it can be tabled tonight. We obviously have at least one copy that has been initialled. I am not sure it is available. If it is, we will produce it for the hon. member.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask for unanimous consent of the House to adjourn until we get the tentative agreement.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, I did not say that it could be produced. I indicated that I would check if it could be produced.

I have my main negotiator here. I can probably get the answer in a few minutes. If it cannot be produced, it cannot be produced.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to adjourn until the document is produced?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege to explain why I believe my privileges and the privileges of the opposition parties in general have been compromised this evening by this evening's activities.

• (2420)

Approximately an hour ago we were asked to vote in the House on Government Order No. 21 which dealt with the way the bill before the House at this time was to be handled. What that motion said was that all stages of the bill must be dealt with and we would continue debating, without ceasing, all stages including committee of the whole until such time as the bill was completed.

Prior to that vote having taken place, the President of the Treasury Board and others on the government side of the House knew that a tentative agreement in principle which directly affected the bill had already taken place. That information was knowingly withheld from the official opposition and the other opposition parties on this side of the House because the government knew it would affect the vote that took place on Motion No. 21. In other words, the government withheld information that was critical to the decision making process of every member of parliament on this side of the House, and it did so deliberately.

Not only does the tentative agreement affect the entire process we are to go through tonight, but by deliberately keeping this information, by holding it to its chest and just saying "vote on that, commit yourself, make a decision as a member of parliament and I will just keep this information secret", everyone on this side of the House had to make a decision based on half-truths and innuendo when the government knew that the truth was available and yet refused to share it with us.

When a vote comes before the House and the government deliberately withholds information that affects my decision on how I voted, I believe my privilege has been compromised. I would ask you to rule in that way, Mr. Speaker, because I consider it a travesty that the vote was taken when the minister kept that information from me and from every member in the House. That is not right and he knows it.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I can certainly understand the hon. member's frustration. He makes a good point that we did not have all the knowledge we might have been able to have before the vote. His frustration is compounded by the fact, as his House leader said, that they were sucked in. They voted for closure and now they are embarrassed that they voted for closure, that they voted for the government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am not sure that the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona is addressing himself to the question of privilege that has been raised.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, just to respond to the question the hon. member across the way raised, which he says is a question of privilege, I do not believe the privileges of anyone have been negatively affected by anything government has done.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** I beg hon. members to listen briefly to what I will say because I intend to state to the House that in fact such was not the case. The President of the Treasury Board indicated that shortly after 10 o'clock this evening a tentative agreement had been reached.

He rushed over to the House of Commons to inform us as soon as possible. A vote started at eleven o'clock. While the division bells were ringing, I alerted all the other House leaders that I had heard an announcement was imminent and immediately after the vote was taken the President of the Treasury Board made that announcement to the House. In fact what has been demonstrated is the exact opposite of what has been alleged.

On the point raised by the hon. House leader from the New Democratic Party, if members are entitled to vote against a measure, others are entitled to vote for it. Both propositions are equally legitimate and there is no question of privilege.

**An hon. member:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am dealing with a question of privilege. I will not hear a point of order until I have dealt with the question of privilege. I will deal with the point of order after the question of privilege has been disposed of.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** Mr. Speaker, a while ago, the President of Treasury Board told us that he would look into the physical possibility of tabling the document on which there was an agreement.

Could the President of Treasury Board tell us what progress he has made in his search?

• (2425)

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a question of privilege. I called for comments just on that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly believe that my privileges in the House have been affected.

The government House leader knew of the agreement in principle. We on this side of the House did not. We only knew that the government had some announcement to make. As a result, how

could my privileges not have been affected by their not announcing before the vote that in fact there was an agreement in principle?

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of privilege. The hon. government House leader has just admitted that he is in essence an accomplice to what took place because he came into the House and made reference to the fact—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I do not think we are advancing the cause by saying what happened among various members.

The question before the House was and is whether any hon. member's privileges were violated in any way by the non-disclosure of certain facts that may or may not have been in essence, as appears now from the answers we have, true at a certain time earlier this evening prior to the vote.

The Chair's view is that members' privileges of freedom of speech have not been impaired in any way by this non-disclosure. While members may have a grievance and a complaint, it is not one that affects their privileges. Accordingly I feel there is no question of privilege to be raised here.

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to extend the questions and comments for another 10 minutes. I have not had an opportunity to ask a very short question of the minister, as I am sure is the case for many members present. We could resolve this a lot quicker by extending it. I ask for unanimous consent to extend the questions and comments of the minister for another 10 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There is a certain amount of confusion here. The Chair was asked to ensure that, in order for the debate to progress and so that we could do our job as parliamentarians, we could be able to look at the agreement, the written text, and all the information.

Does the Chair intend to ensure that we will have that information in due course, because we submit to you that this is really where our privileges as parliamentarians are being affected?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair is not in a position to ask that documents be tabled unless the House itself has asked for them. At the present time there is no motion or order for production of documents made by the House. Therefore, the Chair is not in a position to do so.

*Government Orders*

The minister said he would answer a few questions, and would table the agreement arrived at, if possible. Then the minister said something about that. We might want to debate this, but for the time being let us resume debate on the matter before the House.

Would the minister like to add something.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, I only wanted to say that according to the information I received from our negotiator, both parties have agreed not to reveal the details of the agreement at this time.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Power:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. I want to make the point that my privileges have definitely been infringed upon this evening in this debate.

If there were a tentative agreement at 10.10 this evening and I voted at 11.40, one hour and 30 minutes later, everybody on this side of the House voted on the assumption that there was a work stoppage, that there was no tentative agreement, and everybody on that side of the House voted knowing there was a tentative agreement. I guarantee everybody's privileges on this side of the House were infringed upon.

• (2430)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid that I have already ruled on that point of order. It was the same one raised by the whip of the official opposition. That is not a question of privilege.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I would like some clarification on your ruling. Do you believe there was indeed a breach of parliamentary privilege when the government withheld information and lied to the House? We would like to understand the meaning—

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Members have certain privileges that are defined in the materials that are on the table. They can read Beauchesne's and Erskine May and they can read that there are certain privileges.

The privilege of freedom of speech is one of those privileges. There is a privilege of freedom from arrest and so on, but there is not freedom of information or guarantee of information.

What we have here is a situation where the minister has indicated that the agreement cannot be produced. He is not in a position to table it. Members will have to continue without the agreement. That is the point.

I recognize the hon. member on debate.

[*Translation*]

I did not give the floor to the member on a point of order, but to resume the debate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify something that is very important at this time in this House.

A deliberate omission is a grave contempt according to Erskine May's 22nd edition. A deliberate omission is a form of contempt. The government deliberately misled the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, for your information, I do know Beauchesne's and Erskine May, and if those members bothered to read it they would see it in there.

**Mr. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a point regarding the House leader's point and that is the fact that what was presented by the President of Treasury Board this evening does not change the substance of the issue. It does not change the substance of the issue. The fact is that there was an agreement reached—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It is quite clear that the points of order and the questions of privilege, while of interest, will not resolve the issue before the House.

We are on debate and I suggest that we get back to the debate on second reading of the bill before the House. The Chair is running out of patience on points of order. I will hear a few more and then there will be no more. They are getting very repetitious and I cannot continue all night.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I only ask that you would rule on the House leader's point. The House leader of the Reform Party has brought up a very germane point to this debate.

In Erskine May, the textbook which you quoted earlier, it says that a deliberate omission by the government constitutes a contempt of this place. In my opinion, and I think it is pretty obvious what any layman's interpretation would be, there was a deliberate omission to make sure the opposition parties did not have that information in their hands when we voted on a key vote at close to midnight on a key motion on which closure had been imposed.

If it is a deliberate omission, and by their own omission it was in their knowledge, in their presence, in their hands well before this House voted on Motion No. 21 put by the government, then it was a deliberate attempt to withhold information from the official opposition and the opposition parties in this House.

• (2435)

The vote that was held afterward means that every single member of parliament on this side of the House was deliberately

*Government Orders*

misled and left out of the information circle that had a crucial effect on the vote which followed.

If that was deliberate, and if it is in Erskine May, then, Mr. Speaker, I think you should find the minister in contempt of the House and I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, obviously questions of bad faith are not mentioned here, but this is a question of bad faith.

The motion on which the vote took place was on a motion for closure. It had nothing to do with the act itself. I have already indicated that the bill itself is not changed by the fact that there has been an agreement in principle. The need for the bill to be passed is not affected by the agreement in principle. It is not affected, on the one hand, because the blue collar workers have not ratified the deal and can, therefore, still strike with the same effect that they have had in the past 10 weeks. The prisoner guards can also still strike. Therefore, the substance of the act does not change.

The vote that took place was on a motion for closure which was not affected in any way, shape or form by the tentative agreement that was reached tonight.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, not to belabour the point, but the question that needs to be asked is quite simple. Were the Liberal members, especially the backbenchers in this House of Commons, given access to that information at 10.10 p.m., long before the opposition members were? That is the question. Were the Liberal members given access to that information an hour before the members on this side of the House?

The whip of the official opposition is absolutely correct. It is quite probable in all circumstance that the Liberal members were given information long before the members of this House. If that is the case, the minister is in contempt.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, our point is still valid. The minister is incorrect in his assertion. The vote taken was not on closure. The vote taken happened to be on Motion No. 21. The minister is incorrect. This government or this minister is in contempt. It is in Erskine May and we want it remedied tonight, now.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, if I understand the allegation of the opposition, it is that somehow a member of the government sitting on this side of the House failed to disclose something during the debate that preceded our vote at about 11 o'clock. I hope it has not escaped the notice of members opposite that, by my recollection, no member of the government front benches was speaking at that time. I think I recall opposition members speaking at that time.

Secondly, just prior to 11 o'clock, as one government backbencher, I did make an attempt to ascertain the status of a number of things. In reply to my questions I was told that I would have to wait for the hon. treasury board president's speech to the House.

I think the opposition members are whistling here at 12.40 in the morning.

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** Mr. Speaker, to offer support to the House leader of the official opposition, I want to make a couple of points.

We were told by the minister after we voted that there was a tentative agreement. I would suggest that what that means is that the union executive is going to recommend this to its membership. That is crucial information that we must have before taking the vote. The vote was not on closure and we are not in routine proceedings.

We are planning to sit in this House all night, for 24 hours, and that is information that should have been provided to us.

• (2440 )

Out of the courtesy to the union, we should be giving it an opportunity to accept that tentative agreement as opposed to turning this into a national crisis. That is very germane to the issue at hand. It is unbelievable that the minister would not come in and say, before the vote, that he had some information for the House.

I agree that it was deliberately withheld. We are aware of members of the backbenches who were talking about this before they came into the House. That has just been brought to my attention.

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, I quote from Beauchesne's. Citation 93 reads:

It is generally accepted that any threat, or attempt to influence the vote of, or actions of a Member, is a breach of privilege.

If the minister knew this information at 10.10 p.m., and I was asked to vote later without that same information, the minister, by not giving us that information before the vote, was trying to influence the vote. I use Beauchesne's to back up that argument.

I ask the Speaker to rule on the issue. The minister knew before we voted. I was not allowed to vote with the full knowledge of what the minister knew. That is a breach of my privileges.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, this is factually incorrect. Surely the hon. member who raised this, who was himself a speaker of a provincial legislature, knows better than to make these claims. It is because he is a credible member that he should not say these things.

The title of the section that the member is quoting from is entitled "Interfering with Members". It has to do with the fact that

*Government Orders*

a policeman attempted to stop a member from having access to the precincts of parliament. That is the premise of the section from which he is quoting. He is trying to indicate through reference to that section that somehow he might have voted differently on a previous order of the House—government Motion No. 21 standing in my name, not the one before us, Bill C-76, in the name of a completely different minister—and that either I or he has interfered with him. That is incorrect. So are a number of other allegations that have been made.

When I came into the lobby at approximately 10.45 p.m., it was the first I had heard that a tentative agreement was possible, the details of which I knew nothing and which were revealed almost immediately by the President of the Treasury Board as soon as we finished voting.

Everyone here has acted in good faith. Everyone is trying to do what is best for the people of Canada. That is still our determination. That is still what we want to do. Everyone in this House knows it. Even those who are disagreeing with us know that we are working for that common good, with no other objective in mind.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I have listened closely to what the hon. government House leader has said. However, by his very admission what we heard was that at least one other member, other than the President of the Treasury Board, knew about this.

The point that has been made by the opposition House leader is still very relevant, that perhaps not only members on this side of the House have been denied the privilege of this information that is very telling and would impact on how members would cast their votes, but also members of the government side of the House. They would have very much liked to have been informed that a tentative agreement had been reached.

We are talking about the process in government Motion No. 21, the process that would very much impact on the way this debate was to be constructed and the vote that would finally be taken on the bill itself. This is information that was purposely withheld. Therefore, I suggest that there is a breach of the privilege of hon. members which would impact on the way that they would cast their vote. It is a *prima facie* case.

I suggest that there is enough evidence before the House for the Chair to make a ruling on this matter.

• (2445 )

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, in relation to the comments by the government House leader, that section on interfering with members is not totally to deal with police interference in the House. I go by section 92:

A valid claim of privilege in respect to interference with a member must relate to the member's parliamentary duties and not to the work a member does in relation to that member's constituency.

The member's duty in this House is to vote with full knowledge of what he is voting on.

The government House leader is correct that I was a Speaker in a former House. If any minister tried to pull this thing in my House he would have been held in contempt. Before I voted on this issue, this minister knew that an agreement had been signed, as did the House leader, but they did not relay that information to this side of the House, Her Majesty's official opposition and other opposition parties. That is holding this House in contempt and they will pay the price for that with the Canadian public.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition must be joking because the vote that has been taken is a vote on closure. I have checked. That is what Motion No. 21 does. Mr. Speaker, it was only after you called orders of the day that the bill was introduced for the first time. The information that we had an agreement in principle was irrelevant to the vote on Motion No. 21. It has nothing to do with it. No privilege was breached. There was no information that was relevant for the vote on Motion No. 21. I made the first speech at second reading of the bill and that speech mentioned that there was at that point an agreement in principle.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I will show the minister how much we are joking. When you find the minister in contempt I have a motion that I will present and table in the House. Mr. Speaker, at some point when you make the decision on contempt we have the motion here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair is ready to deal with the question of privilege that has been raised. Members should regard the facts of what has transpired and the explanations that have been given by hon. members who have participated in the points of order that were raised, including the House leader and the whip of the official opposition, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, the President of the Treasury Board, the government House leader, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough and the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona who had something to say on this matter.

While all the issues that have been raised are no doubt important, the fact is the Chair is in a position where a decision is to be rendered on the question of whether there has been a *prima facie* contempt of the House committed by the minister by reason of the failure to disclose the fact that a tentative agreement had been entered into some time earlier this evening and before the vote took place in the House on a motion.

• (2450 )

I want to stress the quality of this motion to the House. It was one that suspended the rules of the House in relation to the proceedings on this bill and we are now debating the bill before the House.

*Government Orders*

I note that the motion that dealt with the suspension of those rules was adopted and following that the bill was called. On the very first speech on the bill the minister disclosed to the House that in fact an agreement had been reached. It was his speech, his opening remarks on the bill.

Given the timing at which that started and given the fact that the vote took place very shortly after an agreement had been reached, I am not satisfied that the minister deliberately attempted to mislead the House on a prima facie basis and I am not therefore prepared to have a motion go forward at this stage. I believe it would be out of order.

I believe what is in order is for members to proceed with debate on the bill before the House and of course they are free to express their views as to the agreement, as to what the minister said about the agreement in the course of that debate and indeed to vote against the bill. I think that in the circumstances that is a reasonable way of proceeding given the fact that this agreement was achieved quite late.

In the circumstances I believe we should now proceed with the debate and I therefore call for resumption of debate on the bill.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, since I would have voted exactly the opposite, I request that my vote on Motion No. 21 be reversed and I be recorded as being against that motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Such a request will require the unanimous consent of the House. Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, because of the information that was deliberately withheld from us which you ruled was not in contempt but which is material to how I would have voted on Motion No. 21, I would ask that my vote be reversed. If I had known what information the minister had I would have reversed it. I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to reverse my vote on Motion No. 21 and oppose that motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow me to reverse my vote that was taken earlier due to the fact that the government deliberately withheld critical information.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** Mr. Speaker, I also ask the consent of the House to reverse my vote on Motion No. 21.

I feel very strongly that the information was—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, we have given permission to the government to proceed in an emergent fashion in what we consider to be an emergent situation. Because of information known only to the minister and to a few select ministers in his cabinet which was withheld from me, if I had had that information I may have voted differently. I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to change my vote.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being recognized. I am looking forward to entering into—

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just so I am clear on this, you have resumed debate. Is there a period of questions and comments or are we moving on to the next speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are no questions or comments on the first three speakers on second reading in a debate. The minister was number one. Number two split his time so there were two speakers in slot number two.

• (2455)

This is slot number three. There will be no questions or comments. The member for the Bloc did not rise so I went to the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Perhaps I can clarify this. Prior to our getting into points of order and questions of privilege, you allowed our member the additional time that was left. You said you would come back to him in debate. We expect you to honour—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I asked him if he was finished his remarks and he told me he was. That is why I then went ahead with the 10 minute questions and comments period. We will get the blues, but

*Government Orders*

it was very clear. I was quite emphatic with the hon. member for Wetaskiwin. Before we began the 10 minute period of questions and comments to the minister I asked the member for Wetaskiwin if he had concluded his remarks. He told me he had. That is why I called for resuming debate and looked around to other members in the House.

**An hon. member:** You are wrong.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member says I am wrong. I recall asking the question and I remember the hon. member giving me the answer. Perhaps the hon. member for Wetaskiwin will recall whether I asked him that question and if he did not give me that answer.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, the way I recall this, when you rose and asked if I was finished or if I would prefer to continue after the debate, I nodded that I would prefer to continue after the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have no objection. If the hon. member wishes to continue I am prepared to go back. I assume the House will agree to that. I am not trying to cheat him out of his time.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I am sorry for the misunderstanding.

It was the understanding of this House that we were dealing with—

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I and other members have heard an hon. member across accuse me of making an untrue statement to the House. I probably have most faults on this earth but I am not lazy and I am not a liar. Hopefully I will have the support of hon. members when I ask that not be said in here about anybody, including me.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sure all hon. members know that the use of the word liar is unparliamentary and that they would refrain from the use of the word. The Chair did not hear the word. If hon. members used the word I am sure they would want to withdraw. The hon. member for Wetaskiwin has the floor.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, when this situation was first debated in the House last week it was brought in as an emergent motion by my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake. We approached this issue on the basis that this was an emergency. Part of the emergency was that there was grain shipment stoppage at the west coast ports yet again, one that we were assured would never happen again because of the provisions in part one of the Canada Labour Code. The industrial relations—

**Mr. Jean Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. At 10.15 p.m. the President of the Treasury Board said he had a tentative agreement and that he could share it with us in five to ten minutes. We are now in debate and the information of the tentative

agreement could very well change the debate we are in right now. Will the minister give us—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. This question has been asked several times. I do not believe it is a point of order. We have resumed debate now and I would urge hon. members to allow the hon. member for Wetaskiwin to continue with his remarks.

• (2500 )

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we approached this on the basis that it was an emergency situation. Indeed we felt that it was. There was a grain stoppage at the port of Vancouver. We were assured by the labour minister of the day that would never happen again because of provisions in Bill C-19, the amendments to part I of the labour code.

Lo and behold exactly what we had predicted came true. One of the unions at the port went on strike. A picket line was set up and other unions refused to cross it. Therefore, Canadian grain was not reaching port and we were losing customers that we could ill afford to lose.

We were also under the impression that the tax centres were not operating and Canadians were desperately in need of their tax returns. As a matter of fact everyone knows they can file tax returns as early as January 1. We were given to believe people had filed for their rebates but they were not getting them because of slowdowns and rotating strikes that were taking place by PSAC at those centres.

Now we find we have a completely different set of circumstances. It begs the question, what is the emergency now if we have a tentative agreement? It also begs the question, if we have a tentative agreement, how does the union respond to that? Do the negotiators for the union go back to the union members and say “You guys had better sign this because if you do not, they are just minutes away from bringing in back to work legislation anyway”? What kind of position does this put the PSAC workers in?

I do not think this is any way to negotiate with employees, whether you are a staunch union person or not. This is no way to cement labour relations. I do not think this is any way to utilize the opposition parties of this House either. It is a very disrespectful way.

We agreed with the Government of Canada that this was an emergency and it was going to be treated as such. Otherwise why would we be in this chamber at 1 o'clock in the morning debating something that we have agreement to? It is absolutely insane to be doing this in this fashion.

If the government was so close to signing an agreement with these people, the minister could have come in virtually at the eleventh hour and said lo and behold he has a ministerial statement to make that all is well but let us proceed with this back to work legislation. The President of the Treasury Board could have taken

*Government Orders*

five minutes of time from the member from Vancouver prior to the vote and made that announcement. If necessary, we could have adjourned the House for 15 minutes while the caucuses determined what their positions were going to be.

We did not arrive at this position by drawing numbers out of a hat. We had a caucus meeting, as did everyone, and we arrived at a position on this. We said we are going to arrive at a position that is based on something we feel is an emergency situation in Canada and we are going to do it by consensus in our caucus. I am sure everybody arrived at it this way.

Excellent points have been made that not only were we labouring under lack of information that the government had but the government's very own backbenchers were also. This is an absolute sham and a tremendously disrespectful way to use parliament's time and resources.

What is the emergency now? I am sure a few government members will stand up on debate. I would like to have them explain to me where the emergency is. As a matter of fact, we now hear that perhaps there is not a backlog of tax returns after all. Perhaps they are a bit ahead of the schedule where they were a year or two ago.

• (2505 )

This is about the shabbiest handling of a bill. It defies logic. This is kind of a Keystone Cops situation that could only be bested in the funny papers. This is a sham and a ridiculous use of this institution.

No one in the House wants to see the grain shipments flow unimpeded from the farm gates on to the high seas more than myself and my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake. I was pleased when through you, Mr. Speaker, and largely your efforts and your concurrence that he was able to get an emergency debate on this very issue. I thought hurrah, perhaps we are going to make some headway here.

This is absolute silliness. The next time this government comes to us asking for back to work legislation, we are going to look at it with very jaundiced eyes. We are going to be extremely suspicious of its motives.

I know Mr. Speaker will say that we must never impugn motives in this House, but when we see time after time this sort of prank, for lack of a better word, pulled in the House, then it is small wonder we should be suspicious and sometimes impugn motives.

While we are talking about shifty operations, let us talk about last Friday. Last Friday we were asked out of the blue with about three seconds notice to give unanimous consent to the government. The first thing we asked was what would the unanimous consent be for. It was for closure so that we could put these militant people back to work. They are striking. They are tying up the whole country. We have to put them back to work. It is an emergency. It was not even explained to us that well. The government said, "Trust us. We are from the government and we are here to help

you. Trust us. Give us your vote. Give us your unanimous consent". I have heard that one before, the cheque is in the mail.

We were asked to give the government unanimous consent and we said no, that we would give our consent perhaps when we had had an opportunity to assess what it was the government was asking our consent on. First that and now this.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I am trying to follow this debate here. It seems to me as though you have lost control of the House. In fact, there is noise all over this place and I cannot follow the debate. That is my privilege and I would like it protected.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I must say that I was able to hear the debate but I am aware there is some noise in the House. I am sorry that the hon. member could not hear, but I know hon. members will want to hear the hon. member for Wetaskiwin in his remarks, as I am listening. The hon. member for Wetaskiwin.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, I know that not everyone in the House is listening to my words of wisdom, but I know Mr. Speaker is hanging on every word.

All of us here are interested in seeing Canada work as a cohesive unit. We are very much concerned about the fact that once our reputation as a reliable shipper of goods is damaged, it is extremely difficult for us to get it back. We are continually in a catch-up situation. We are continually trying to regain where we might have been or where we would have been. We cannot say we want to get back to where we once were shipping grain because we never really reached a zenith. We always seem to be slipping back.

We all would like to see these labour disruptions absolutely minimized. There are absolutely no winners in this situation. I know the people in the unions do not strike simply because it is 2 o'clock on Tuesday so they are going to have a strike. That is not the way it is decided. It is a very gut wrenching decision for them to withdraw their services, to go without pay, to walk the picket line and to suffer the scorn of some of the people who pass by. It is a very big decision for them.

• (2510 )

I submit that when they have gone without a contract for two years at a time, it is small wonder that they take some kind of job action. We have to ask ourselves what kind of an employer would ask their employees to go without any kind of an agreement for two years at a time.

Looking back in the records I have found that since April 1997 some of the bargaining units have been totally without a contract. That is indefensible. There is no way under the sun that the minister can defend that kind of a record. If he had and if he had agreed to final offer selection arbitration being included in this bill, then perhaps all would not be lost.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Rochelleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise at this late hour in a context that was not necessarily planned, but very revealing.

When the government House leader introduced the bill yesterday, he spoke of a sad day.

[English]

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I have not made any comments in regard to what has been going on tonight. One thing I have been mulling over in my mind is that I would have abstained on the vote that we had at 11.15 p.m. on Motion No. 21 had I known that this tentative agreement had been reached. I would have liked some time to study the tentative agreement before I decided how I would vote.

I request that before we continue any more debate that that vital document be tabled. We may have to suspend the House for the time being or do whatever we have to do, but that thing is vital to how I would have voted.

In the meantime I ask that I be allowed to abstain from having voted on that motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there consent that the hon. member's vote be changed on the previous motion to an abstention?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Rochelleau:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the government House leader said yesterday, in his presentation, that it was a sad day.

[English]

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

We have talked about this tentative agreement. As a member of parliament I feel I have every right to have knowledge of what it is about before we carry on with the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There has been the request. The minister has given his answer previously.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Rochelleau:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying—

**An hon. member:** For the third time.

**Mr. Yves Rochelleau:** —for the government House leader, it was a sad day, yesterday. Today is a very sad day too.

We are witnesses to the tragicomic behaviour of the government, which is showing the world, on television, how arrogant it can be, of what disdain it is capable. There is a sort of deception in its behaviour, given what it hid from us earlier.

This confirms completely all the claims, all the frustrations that the union movement and the public service unions have criticized for a long time, whether we are talking about the Public Service Alliance or the members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who complained of this government's day to day operations. We have a perfect and glaring illustration of that this evening.

• (2515)

We will get back to the basic issue. We will get back to the substance as if nothing had been said, because there is not much there. It is all right not to bother about what the President of the Treasury Board said earlier, because it is not worth it.

Let us get back to the context of the legislation used by the government to force back to work employees who belong to the general labour, ships' crews and trades groups, that is table 2, and the correctional officers, or table 4. As members know, the bargaining process was divided in seven tables.

This is what the minister should talk about, instead of rambling like he did earlier.

Incidentally, workers in the general labour group earn an average of \$31,000 per year. A salary increase is, therefore, definitely in order. There is nothing outrageous about such a measure, on the contrary. This would show some openness, particularly considering that the salaries of these workers have been frozen for six years and that they are now paid an average of \$6 less per hour than blue collar workers in the private sector or at the municipal level. These Canadian public servants are earning an average of \$6 less per hour than workers who hold similar jobs.

Before the minister's rambling, the state of negotiations was that a conciliation report had been submitted by a third party, the conciliator, and that report had been accepted by the union.

Perhaps the President of the Treasury Board should begin by listening and by taking a closer look at the conciliator's opinions and the results of his research, which was endorsed by the union. Perhaps it would be easy for the government, the employer, to take this route.

I think this is already expecting too much. The President of the Treasury Board prefers talking with another distinguished colleague, who likes to dip into workers' pockets, much like he does. They make a fine pair during this debate about the future of public sector workers and of workers in general, nattering on when it would be more in the public's interest if they were to listen.

We can see that Quebec is very well represented in this cabinet, the people with the real power.

*Government Orders*

So, for table 4 there is a conciliator's report that has been approved by the union, while for table 2 it is high time the parties, particularly the government, agreed to binding arbitration to try to resolve the situation.

It must never be forgotten that this is a legal strike, where in fact a strike is going on, by a legally recognized union that is part of our institutions and that has the right to strike when it feels that the offers being made are not acceptable. It is therefore based on a balance of power which is also inherent to our labour relations and should include bargaining in good faith and in a civilized manner. This is precisely what the employer, the government, has not demonstrated, in our opinion.

• (2520)

We want the government to negotiate. The government is in a period of negotiation, but it seems to be more inclined to legislate than to negotiate.

Instead of saying that the government is more inclined to legislate than to negotiate, we should rather say that, in the recent past, since 1982 actually, bona fide bargaining has been the exception. The government would rather legislate.

Since 1982, it has obviously given the preference to its role as a legislator, and it has outrageously neglected its role as an employer who should be bargaining in good faith, like any employer, and taking legislative action only when public interest is at stake—which is not the case now.

Historically, legislative action in labour relations have been a constant occurrence since 1982. Let me give a list.

I did not pick year 1982 out of the blue. We should remember the context. The neoliberal philosophy was all the rage then, and the likes of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were in full flight and having an influence on all governments in the western countries. Canada has been part and parcel of the devastation that spelled setbacks in existing social benefits, and in collective agreements, including working conditions and the union movement itself. The Liberal government gleefully entered the fray with Bill C-124, an act concerning compensation that affected everybody. Its purpose was to control the compensation of 500,000 workers in sectors directly or indirectly under the Canadian government. That was in 1982.

In 1989, we had Bill C-49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services. That title is almost identical to that of the bill now before the House. It was back to work legislation for workers in hospitals and for ship crews, and these groups are again today the target of a special treatment.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

When my colleague from Trois-Rivières talks about the workers' fate, when he talks about the employer's responsibilities, would it be possible for the President of the Treasury Board and for members of the Liberal Party of Canada to listen instead of throwing paper at each other—

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Order, please. The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot makes a good point. It is getting late. We could give each other the dignity of paying attention to each other. If we do not want to do so, there are the lobbies for social events.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** Mr. Speaker, in 1989, we had Bill C-49, a second special bill, the Government Services Resumption Act, which provided for the return to work of a particular group of employees, who were as much a problem for the government then as they are today and who have been the victims of government policy, namely hospital workers and ship crews. That was in 1989.

In 1991, two years later, the Public Sector Compensation Act imposed all conditions of employment, leaving no room for negotiation, mediation and arbitration.

In 1992, the next year, Bill C-113, the Government Expenditures Restraint Act, provided for a two year extension of the salary freeze and the term of the collective agreement.

In 1993, Bill C-101, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act, gave the government the right to impose a vote on its final offers in the course of any negotiations within the public service.

• (2525)

In 1994, Bill C-17, the Budget Implementation Act of 1994, extended the collective agreement and the wage freeze for another two years, for a total of six years of wage freezes. The government pushed back the collective agreements already signed, arbitrarily using and abusing its legislative powers when it was in fact acting as an employer in this context.

The same thing happened in 1995. As members can see, almost every year, some special legislation was passed. Bill C-76, the Budget Implementation Act of 1995, provided for the elimination of 45,000 positions in the civil service. In fact, it was more like 55,000 jobs that were abolished.

This was direct interference in the collective bargaining process and had devastating effects on some classes of employees, including the general services group represented at table 2 who saw the number of positions reduced by 41% between 1995 and 1998. In

the general labour and trades group, the number of positions dropped by 33%. For a government that brags about creating jobs, it introduced bills that had a devastating impact on the labour movement and on the job situation.

The last of this series of legislation, except for the bill before the House tonight, was Bill C-31, the Budget Implementation Act of 1996, which truly undermined the financial security and job security of employees. This bill provided for contracting-out and also suspended—and we are still reeling from that initiative—for three years the right to go to arbitration as a way to settle disputes.

There is one point to be made on this issue. It is a little easy in the government's situation. Besides, it does not matter whether it is Conservative or Liberal, this proves our point that it is all the same. In that regard, it always boils down to the same thing, more or less, with respect to the Constitution. As for labour relations, it is more or less the same people who think the same way.

It is a little too easy, when we see how the government can restrict the recourse to arbitration and, at the same time, refuse to limit and suspend its power to designate employees who, as we know, have different prerogatives and powers since they are designated.

In 1999, we have this Bill C-76, which is a back to work legislation.

This legislation can legitimately be referred to in terms of a bludgeon or big stick legislation. It suits this government's culture, because when talking about big stick we can think of baseball bat, and when talking about baseball bat we can think of cayenne pepper. When we think of the very modern means this government used in its response to demonstrators who came legitimately to show their discontent, we know that dogs were used. We have seen it here in Ottawa. Some people have been bitten. In the history of that culture, when talking about demonstrators, we know that police grab people by the throat in order to intimidate ordinary citizens.

This illustrates very well the culture of this government, which is going nowhere and has in fact been the object of the interest of not only Canadian organizations but also international organizations.

The Canada Labour Relations Board, in its wisdom, blamed the government at least twice for its actions as a legislating employer. The International Labour Organization also blamed the Canadian federal government four times. The "most beautiful and best country in the world" was blamed four times by the International Labour Organization, which represents not only governments but also unions and employers.

• (2530)

On four occasions since 1982, this government has been blamed internationally in its management. We know what it means to

### *Government Orders*

belong to the ILO, the International Labour Organization. The ILO's statement of principle provides—and the Government of Canada has made a commitment to it, as member—that:

In freely joining the ILO, all Members have endorsed the principles and rights set out in its Constitution and in the Declaration of Philadelphia, and have undertaken to work towards attaining the overall objectives of the Organization—

All Members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation arising from the very fact of membership in the Organization, to respect, to promote and to realize, in good faith—

Good faith is not easy.

—the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions.

These principles include, the freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the eradication of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Unless it can be proven otherwise, Canada is still a member of the ILO. That means that it is violating both the spirit and the letter of the convention it signed.

**An hon. member:** Shameful.

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** The way this government has dealt with labour relations has resulted in a negation of the Public Service Alliance members' right to negotiate freely during eight of the last fifteen years. During eight of the last fifteen years, we have been forced to adopt legislation and our working conditions were legislated on.

In the case of the hospital services and ships' crews groups, salaries and working conditions have been legislated on during eleven of the last fifteen years. This is totally unacceptable. It is a shame. It proves the carelessness and the incompetence of this Liberal government.

This rather bizarre behaviour is once again illustrated by the government House leader. The hon. leader, who represents Gengarry—Prescott—Russell, is a great parliamentarian.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** He is not here.

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** No. He is one of those who do not listen.

He distinguished himself when he was in opposition, much more so than as a government member for that matter. He distinguished himself as a member of the so-called rat pack. He was very aggressive then. So aggressive, so compassionate that a few years ago he was on the picket lines with the Public Service Alliance members to condemn the conservative government.

And today? He is now one of the main participants in this debate to oppose the same Public Service Alliance of Canada, which he supposedly supported only a few years ago.

*Government Orders*

This is typical of this government: a bunch of hypocrites.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Yves Rochelleau:** There is an aspect that this government seems to completely overlook, and that is what happens the day after workers have been forced to go back to work.

What about the managers' attitude? What kind of attitude can we expect from these people? Where is the incentive for public service managers and, more importantly, for the public servants who are being treated with such arrogance and contempt today?

If the government can show such contempt for the House of Commons as it did this evening, imagine what these people are capable of on a daily basis, with employees who must be respectful and loyal, particularly since job security is very tenuous within the federal public service.

• (2535)

Underneath all this lies a real human resources management issue. There is an issue of actual productivity to be expected from employees who are well treated, well understood and well respected by their employer. We do not have that. Even the tiniest of small businesses, whose owner is all worked up because of the market situation, is not worse. This government manages like an incompetent boss with a piecemeal approach to dealing with human resources.

Let us hope that there will be a huge political price to pay. I am thinking about the members from Quebec, starting with the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Human Resources Development. They will have to pay a huge political price for their lack of credibility.

When they come to us with their talk of social union, we will remember, because this is the same disdain that we sense in the House today for workers as for in the provinces, Quebec in particular, where there is no recognition of Quebecers as a people, no longer even any recognition of Quebec as a province like the others. Slowly but surely, the provincial governments are becoming regional governments in this new Canada they are concealing from us, this unitary and centralized Canadian.

**An hon. member:** Totalitarian.

**Mr. Yves Rochelleau:** Totalitarian it is. What we are dealing with here is a dictatorship in the making. No need to mince words. A dictatorship in the making that is re-elected every four years, particularly with the unique Liberal Party of Canada, which acts as if it personally owned all the institutions.

In my opinion, the reign and the domination of this government are coming to an end. As for Quebecers, we know how to leave all this behind in short order.

We should all be feeling a great sadness. The government House leader was right in his opening remarks. This is all very sad, exceedingly so. What worries me is seeing these employees treated with so little respect and so much disdain. I wish public service managers all the best in the days, weeks and years ahead, because this sort of event is not forgotten.

[English]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be able to join the debate even though it is the middle of the night. I have mixed feelings about being able to speak now.

I firmly believe that we are being dragged through nonsense for nothing, to sum it up. We know now that in the last few hours there has been some movement on the government's part in terms of reaching the tentative settlement we are talking about. In fact we saw the government move very close to the union's position when talks broke off on March 12.

Everybody seems to want to know what was in the tentative agreement. I know exactly what was in it. It went from 30 months to 24 months. It went from 2.5% to 2.75%, which was the union's position on March 12, although it wanted a 30 cent upper. In the last year the 1% gets knocked off. We were very close, so why was the country dragged through weeks and weeks of rancour, animosity, hostility and inconvenience if the government had the money in its pocket? It has found it now. Why have we been dragged through all of this nonsense and why do we find ourselves here now? I cannot understand it. Personally it is very frustrating. That is table two, the 14,500-odd trades people. The government seems to have found a way to solve the problem and put these folks back to work.

• (2540)

Another thing in the agreement is the zones, the real reason the workers from Atlantic Canada felt it was necessary to take the drastic measure of withholding their services. The zone pay is offensive to everyone who has spoken to it. The government found satisfaction there. Now it will merge the Atlantic provinces with Quebec into one zone. That makes sense. That is what the union was calling for all along. The government wanted to merge Atlantic Canada with Saskatchewan. That was its great idea for merging into one zone. Yes, it will go down from 10 zones to 7, but that was ludicrous.

Another thing the union recommended was that one of the zones should be the three prairie provinces combined: Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. That is common sense. It is a natural district with a community of interest and similar costs of living. Now the government seems willing to let the union do that.

The third difference is that Banff will be rolled into British Columbia for the purposes of pay zones. Again that is exactly what

*Government Orders*

the union asked for on March 12 before talks fell apart and the workers had to hit the bricks.

If we found the will, the money and a way a couple of weeks later, it begs the question why. Why did we force this strike and why did we put all these people out? It is beyond reason. That is why I say it is absolute nonsense.

It leads me to believe that it was ideologically driven. I am not trying to imply ideological driven as in bust the union or something like that, but there was a secondary goal, a secondary objective the government was trying to achieve by coming in through the back door, that is the 600 to 800 corrections workers, the table four corrections workers.

The government had it within its ability to settle in that regard as well. The conciliation board came down with a ruling on March 19 to which the union agreed. It said it could live with it but the government said no and two days later tabled back to work legislation.

Given there is no justifiable or good reason to keep table two out or to even go through the whole painful process of back to work legislation for table two, the government is really shooting for table four. It is trying to do what it did with the postal workers strike, trying to achieve some secondary goal through the guise or through the packaging of back to work legislation.

Why is the government not honest about what it really wants to do? Why does it not come through the front door and say it wants to designate these 800 workers as essential services? Then we could deal with it. We could have an honest debate about it. It should not try to achieve something by subterfuge or by stealth, which is what it boils down to.

We have been hearing a lot of passionate speeches from very odd sources. We have had to listen to members of the Reform Party, although I see they do not have the same courtesy to stay and listen to us. It has been painful to me as a trade unionist to listen to them paint themselves in the last couple of days of debate as the champions of the working class. Somehow they are the saviours of workers and champions of the union movement. What a crock, frankly.

I do not know how much we can get away with saying after midnight, but what absolute excrement.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if you would inform my hon. colleague who is speaking now for the socialists that there are Reformers in the House and that it is not up to him to mention whether or not members are present.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member is quite correct. We do not refer to the presence or absence of other members in the House.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. While we are on the subject of the Reform Party and its role with unions and its

reputation about being great trade unionists, that party sent around a book to the various members of parliament. It is about unions and right to work laws, how to bust unions essentially. That book came to every member of parliament to promote right to work legislation which everybody here knows is a misnomer for a legislative agenda specifically designed to stop workers from doing their job of elevating the wages and working conditions of the people they represent. It is a very detailed, complex book.

● (2545 )

What we have heard over the past couple of days is the Reform Party saying that it has been speaking on behalf of workers, et cetera, and then tonight voting for closure, voting to shut down debate. They are always saying that this government has introduced closure or time allocation 50 times, so here is the 50th anniversary and they all stand up and vote for it because they are so eager to take away the workers' democratic right to withhold their services. The great champions of the working class. It is actually quite galling. It is very galling for me as a trade unionist to have to listen to that.

It is valuable to spend some time and talk about that basic democratic right. Now that we have moved off the debate on closure we are on the substance of the issue, the actual bill, the back to work legislation.

The right for workers to withhold their services is basic and fundamental. It is recognized in our charter of rights and freedoms. It is recognized at the ILO and the United Nations and it is recognized as a peaceful means for settling an impasse, the most peaceful means, frankly. In the history of impasses and any kind of long protracted arguments or battles things used to fall to violence, whether it was a skirmish over a border or any other kind of long disagreement like that.

What we have in labour relations is a way to try to solve that. It is through free collective bargaining—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am really sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre. Was it the hon. member's intention to split his time with the hon. member for Palliser?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I will be using the full 20 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member has 12 minutes left.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, let us look at the reasons workers take that drastic step of withholding their services. It is a tool and an instrument to apply pressure to a situation, an argument or a debate. We believe it is the only really effective tool workers have to try to elevate the standards of wages and working conditions for themselves, their families and the people they represent. It should not be tampered with and it should not be entered into lightly when one withholds anyone's rights. It is getting to be more and more

*Government Orders*

common. It is a slippery slope in this House. Twice in the very short period I have been here we have had to go through this whole debate and we have seen people having that right withheld.

We come from a caucus that believes all labour has dignity. We believe that fair wages benefit the whole community. We believe that the workers involved in this job action have very justifiable grounds for doing what they did. It has been pointed out by many speakers that they have had seven years without a raise. Some of the trades people in table 2 have gone 15 years without a negotiated settlement. Their settlements have been imposed for that whole period of time.

Is this the country that believes in the right to organize and the right to free collective bargaining? This is the way it treats its own workforce. It really is fundamentally wrong.

Last June I had the honour of going with the minister to the ILO in Geneva. In light of the adverse pressures of this country that would see unions stamped out I was very proud to see our Minister of Labour stand up at the ILO and reiterate the fact that Canada does agree with and supports the right to organize, the right to free collective bargaining and yes, the right to withhold services, the right to strike if deemed necessary.

It is quite a contradiction to be standing in the House six or eight months later having this debate and watching the government side quite willingly go down the road that would simply strike those rights and freedoms that workers should have.

• (2550)

Unions have played a role in elevating the standards of the whole community as I pointed out. Whether it is health and safety issues, wage issues or whatever, we should be very grateful.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am really sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I wonder if the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia would mind sitting in one of the chairs.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** A woman died today in New York City who was the last survivor of a fire in 1911 at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory. This fire killed many factory workers in this terrible sweatshop. The reason I tell this story is that in 1991 in Hamlet, North Carolina a fire occurred at another factory for the third time from the same cause. The owners of this factory used to lock the doors from the outside because they were concerned factory workers were stealing chicken byproducts. The workers were stealing the gizzards and the wingtips to take home and make soup. This was a right to work state so the women were very poorly paid. This factory caught on fire for the third time and 128 women died scratching at the doors trying to get out. That happened in 1991.

Where unions are not given the ability to function and prosper and do their job, we see standards slide as in the right to work

states which is what the Reform Party is promoting here. In the free states of the United States where free collective bargaining is still allowed and not legislated away, we see much higher social conditions on just about every measurement we can think of, whether it is wages, money spent on education or health care issues.

I think we should pause and reflect when we are engaged in such an unsavoury pastime as taking away worker rights. I think it is fitting that we take pause and reflect on what unions have done over the years to make our communities better places to live.

I want to dwell a bit on the actual case in point which is the strike that is about to be terminated by this back to work legislation. I have been getting a lot of letters sent to my office from public service alliance members. These are personal letters, some handwritten, from people encouraging and thanking the NDP for all we are trying to do to keep their issue alive.

These people are reminding us about the issues of not just the pay zones but the differences in pay between the public sector and the private sector. It used to be that it was almost comparable. As a carpenter I could work in the private sector for \$20 an hour and I could also work in the public sector for a comparable amount of dough. Now that spread is \$5, \$6, \$7 an hour different because wages have been frozen for so many years. Workers have fallen way behind.

Workers can take some comfort that even though they got a lower wage they had job security. Over the last couple of years there is no more job security. Everybody in the public sector is working with that sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. They are wondering who is next.

After that added insult to injury there was always the comfort level that they got lousy wages and not much in the way of job security but there was a reasonable pension plan. People could feel good about that. On April 15 the President of the Treasury Board announced he was going to loot the surplus of the pension plan, take the \$30 billion surplus out of the pension plan and use it for God knows what.

I would think there is a huge political price this party will pay if it has the unmitigated gall to dip its hands into that pension plan and try to take that surplus. That is workers' money. It is deferred wages. It is paid to workers for their purposes. If there is any surplus, it should go to indexing the pension to raise benefits or give it back to the workers who actually deserve that.

• (2555)

When I talk about a political price, the irony is that an awful lot of public sector workers vote Liberal, which has been a long history and tradition of public sector workers. Everybody knows that Tory times are tough times. They got the heck kicked out of

*Government Orders*

them by the Mulroney government and they were kind of relieved when the current Liberal government took over in 1993. I am sure they were optimistic that they would get some kind of break. I think a lot of them worked very hard to put that government in.

What do they get for it? Looted pension plans, about a third of the civil service laid off, kicked right out of a job, frozen wages for six, seven, eight years. Thanks a lot. I think they are fed up. I think the some 150,000 members of the public service alliance are justifiably angry and there will be a political price. The next time around I do not think the Liberals can count on that kind of support.

It hurts me as a trade unionist to even have this debate, especially in the middle of the night. It hurts all of us to be here, I suppose. It is such an unnecessary thing. As I said at the start of my remarks, we should not be here at all. If the government had the money to sweeten the offer tonight, why did it not have it on March 12 and prevent this whole disaster, this whole two or three weeks of misery that it put people through?

We cost out what the spread is. They were only three percentage points apart when the talks fell apart on March 12. Between the union position and the government position it was 3.1%, \$7.8 million a year. They have lost more than that by closing down the ports and with the impact of the strike in that period of time. It does not add up from a cost point of view.

Another matter is the way this whole back to work legislation has been treated. This is the package, 534 pages without an executive summary, without even any reference to what the wage increase was to be. People have to go up with this book the size of a Manhattan phone book to their offices to try to tabulate and calculate the offer that we are being asked to vote on. When government members give us a book that size and then tell us we are to have time allocation and closure, not only is there no time to debate this properly, there certainly was not time to go through it.

We think this collective agreement that forms part of the back to work legislation is probably loaded with all kinds of, if not deliberate changes that we cannot find, omissions that we do not have time to find, omissions such as the one on page 3 that in the English translation contemplates same sex couples and in the French translation says that a common law spouse is a union between a man and a woman or talks about people of the opposite sex. That is just one example we found without digging too hard. We found that in the first five minutes. How many more errors are there in this pile of stuff here that we are forced to deal with?

The real issue now is why will the government not accept the conciliation officer's report for the table 4 corrections officers. Why are we voting on back to work legislation for corrections officers who are not on strike? They have not lost a day's time. They are not on strike. How do we vote people back to work who are not even out on strike? It is ludicrous.

The question we need the Treasury Board minister to answer is why he will not accept his own conciliation board recommendations for settling the table 4 talks.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, tonight the government has achieved what some would consider previously to have been the impossible. It has united trade unionists with fervent believers in the free enterprise system in opposition to its inaction in creating this crisis tonight.

• (2600 )

We just heard from a trade unionist describing his opposition to the government in its position on this issue which led to the crisis tonight. As someone who believes strongly in the free market, I recognize, as does our party, the importance of the trade unionist movement within the free market. Without the labour movement the free market cannot operate effectively.

This early morning debate on Bill C-76 is an example of what happens with a visionless, leaderless government. The direction that this government has refused to take has led to this crisis tonight. This is a government that only deals with issues once they have reached the boiling point. Only once the issues have reached a crisis will this government actually look seriously at addressing an issue. It will not deal with issues that appear on the horizon and take a long term approach to solving the problems. It waits until the crisis develops. It is 911 government and it is unacceptable.

For instance, we were told that there was a \$9 million grain sale lost due to the government's inaction this week. Some information I have on the difference between the final offer that the government made and what the union had agreed to previously was about \$8 million. This government spent \$3.6 million on marketing the recent budget because the budget was not good enough to sell itself. It spent \$500 million to cancel a helicopter contract.

This government has no sense of priorities, except the priorities of political expedience. This government is not interested in addressing the long term issues that affect Canadians, particularly going into a new millennium. The government is not focused on the long term future. It is solely focused on the next election.

To avoid these types of important issues affecting Canadians which lead to these kinds of crises is completely irresponsible. It is appalling for a government of Canada to behave in this manner.

Governments should play a leadership role in human resource management. Human resource management is evolving significantly and has evolved significantly over the past 20 years in the private sector. In fact, in Canada the private sector has leaped ahead of government in human resource and labour management. For instance, Chrysler Canada was one of the first companies in the

*Government Orders*

auto industry to have unions represented on its board of directors. In companies today management is working with employees to create long term plans, to address issues, to develop better products and services for better prices for the consumers. In doing so they are creating better morale for their employees and better services ultimately.

The government, in its approach to labour management, is doing the exact opposite. It is bludgeoning the unions whenever it has the opportunity to do so. It is not interested in providing better services to Canadians. Frankly, it is shocking.

Government has a role to lead in labour management. If it will not lead, we would like to see the government follow the examples of some of the companies in the corporate sector that are actually doing the right thing. There are examples.

It is absolutely shameful what the government has done tonight. First the government let this crisis develop without taking any responsibility. Tonight when it had the information that there was a tentative agreement, it withheld that information until after a vote, denying it to members on both sides of the House. Members on that side of the House should be as upset as members on this side of the House. There has been a breach of the privilege of all members. Information about an agreement that had been reached was not provided to members. The government manipulated parliament tonight. It demonstrated a contempt for parliament. I was elected in June of 1997 and I have not seen this type of contempt. I think members who have been here longer are absolutely appalled that the government has behaved in this manner.

• (2605 )

It is not surprising that the government is acting in this way. We have seen this government act irresponsibly and in contempt of this parliament on a number of issues. In fact, there has been a decline in the role of the private member that has been precipitated since this government was first elected.

I am going to speak to one of the issues concerning this labour dispute. It is the issue of regional rates of pay. Our party believes very strongly that it is fundamentally unfair that the government will pay people differently based on the regions in which they live in the country. It is hypocritical. All members of this House receive the same level of pay. It creates a ghettoization of the public service. It is not consistent with the type of labour-management practices in which the Government Of Canada should be leading.

Now that the government has allowed this dispute to boil into a crisis, the government has chosen to pit the interests of one group against another. That is typical of this government. The interests of the grain farmers and people involved in the grain industry in the

west are being pitted against the interests of blue collar public sector employees.

There are a lot of agricultural interests in the Annapolis Valley, which is in my riding. One of the things I have always noted about farmers is that they are very fair people. I do not believe that any farmer in the west would feel comfortable with the fact that his or her interests were being pitted against those employed in the public sector as blue collar workers. It is absolutely shocking this divide and conquer attitude that the government is willing to take in pitting farmers against blue collar workers in the public service.

Tonight, after having withheld the information to this House of the fact that a tentative agreement had been reached, the government proceeded with the back to work legislation that should be used as a last resort when all other avenues have been exhausted.

In my opinion, it is a violation of good faith to use this back to work legislation as a sledgehammer to bludgeon labour to create some sort of advantage. It is not consistent with good faith negotiations. The government has hit an all-time low in labour relations. It is continuing to drive morale in our public service lower than it has ever been.

For any member of this House who has read the recent report from the Senate on the public sector, co-chaired by Senator Stratton and Senator Cools, they will know that our public sector in Canada is at a critically low point in its history.

There was a time when there was pride in participation or service to one's country through the public sector. This government has systematically worked to erode the confidence that our public sector employees have in their own government and in their service to the public. It is absolutely inappropriate.

Tonight the government has not only demonstrated contempt for parliament, it has demonstrated complete contempt for the collective bargaining process and contempt for the public service.

The government has refused to table the tentative agreement. Members of parliament do not have the ability tonight to study this agreement, to deal with it logically and to use that knowledge to help base a decision on the proceedings. The government has manipulated the opposition parties by withholding information. It has been a travesty of democracy. There has been no respect for parliament or labour.

The government deserves to be noted as having completely enshrined its role as the patron saint of hypocrisy. The Prime Minister claims that he cannot remember why he was marching with PSAC a few years ago. Perhaps he also cannot remember why he claimed that he was going to rip up the GST and the free trade agreement.

*Government Orders*

• (2610)

This government is not interested in consistency in policy. The Liberal Party opposite is not interested in doing the right thing or actually having any consistency on important issues facing Canadians. It is interested in one thing and that is winning elections at all costs, even if the casualties are Canadians, even if they are blue collar Canadians, even if the casualty is democracy and the sanctity of this House. All it is interested in is power at all costs.

The actual agreement is jeopardized by the government holding a gun to the union's head at this point. The government is actually still trying to tell the House that in some way it is negotiating in good faith. We do not buy that over here. The government is negotiating in bad faith.

I heard one person from the Reform Party say earlier that they felt they had been sucked in and manipulated by the government. There are members here who would have voted differently had they had the information.

I am pleased that our party did not support the closure motion.

**An hon. member:** What about the farmers?

**Mr. Scott Brison:** I hear a Liberal member opposite ask "What about the farmers?" Perhaps he should have been standing up for the farmers when they needed help this past fall. The government sat on its hands during a time when there was a significant farm crisis and again waited until that crisis reached the boiling point before it even dealt with the issue.

Again the government is choosing to pit farmers against blue collar workers. It is absolutely unconscionable and unacceptable for parliamentarians to stand by and let this happen.

I am shocked tonight at how the government is treating blue collar workers. I am beyond being frustrated at how the government is treating parliament and I am ashamed to have played a role as a parliamentarian in this charade that the Liberals have created. It demeans parliament and it demeans the rights of workers in Canada.

I hope that with a little soul searching the Liberal members opposite will recognize, particularly those members on the back benches, that they too were manipulated tonight by a government with its power concentrated on a very small group of people. It not only has contempt for members on this side of the House, for the blue collar workers in PSAC, for the farmers against whom it pitted the interests of the blue collar workers, but it also has contempt for its own members on that side of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Call in the members.

• (2655)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 359)*

**YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy  
Augustine  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bennett  
Bevilacqua  
Bonin  
Boudria  
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)  
Bryden  
Calder  
Caplan  
Casson  
Cauchon  
Chan  
Chatters  
Clouthier  
Collenette  
Cullen  
Dhaliwal  
Discepolo  
Drouin  
Easter  
Epp  
Finlay  
Fry  
Galloway  
Goodale  
Grose  
Hanger  
Harvard  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Hoepfner  
Iftody  
Jaffer  
Johnston  
Karetak-Lindell  
Keyes  
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
Konrad  
Lastewka  
Leung

Adams  
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Barnes  
Bélanger  
Bertrand  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonwick  
Bradshaw  
Brown  
Byrne  
Cannis  
Carroll  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Charbonneau  
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)  
Coderre  
Coppes  
DeVillers  
Dion  
Dromisky  
Duhamel  
Eggleton  
Finestone  
Fontana  
Gagliano  
Godfrey  
Grey (Edmonton North)  
Guarnieri  
Harb  
Hill (MacLeod)  
Hilstrom  
Ianno  
Jackson  
Jennings  
Jordan  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)  
Knutson  
Kraft Sloan  
Lee  
Lincoln

*Government Orders*

Lowther	Lunn
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Manning
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
Mayfield	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McNally
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Mills (Red Deer)
Minna	Mitchell
Morrison	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Penson	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Proud
Provenzano	Ramsay
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson
Ritz	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Schmidt	Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora	Serré
Solberg	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
St-Julien	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibeault
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Vellacott
Volpe	Wappel
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Wilfert	Wood—158

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott	Alarie
Asselin	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bigras
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Borotsik
Blaikie	Brisson
Brien	Cardin
Cadman	Cummins
Crête	Desjarlais
Dalphond-Guiral	Doyle
Dockrill	Duceppe
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duncan
Dumas	Forseth
Earle	Gauthier
Gagnon	Girard-Bujold
Gilmour	Godin (Châteauguay)
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Grewal
Gouk	Guimond
Guay	Hart
Hardy	Herron
Harvey	Keddy (South Shore)
Jones	Laurin
Lalonde	Loubier
Lebel	Mancini
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Marceau	McDonough
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Mercier
Ménard	Muise
Meredith	Power
Picard (Drummond)	Proctor
Price	Rocheleau
Robinson	Solomon
Scott (Skeena)	Stoffer
St-Hilaire	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Strahl	Wasylycia-Leis
Vautour	
White (Langley—Abbotsford)—72	

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Assadourian
Bulte	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Folco	Fournier
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Lefebvre	Longfield
Patry	Perron
Pratt	Sauvageau
Speller	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Milliken in the chair)

**The Chairman:** Order, please. House in committee of the whole on Bill C-76, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services.

Shall clause 2 carry?

(On Clause 2)

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to start the debate with some questions. We have many unanswered questions on this bill that I think Canadians would like answered. It is only right that we get answers to those questions.

I am glad to see that the President of the Treasury Board and his officials are here. Perhaps he could give some clarification to the Canadian people.

He mentioned in the House that he has an agreement in principle. Could he describe whether he has any agreement from the striking PSAC workers that the rolling pickets would cease and desist during the time that this vote is being taken? It is important for Canadians to know what kind of assurances they have, if any, that the strikes or pickets are going to be held off.

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, there are no assurances from the union that they will stop the rotating strikes or that they will not have rotating strikes between now and the time of ratification.

• (2700)

Since we do not know if it will be ratified, if it were not to be ratified then there is a possibility the strikes would continue.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up question to that. If the union has recommended acceptance of this contract, and I assume then that it feels this is the best deal it can make, and the government is satisfied it is the best deal, it is fair to all concerned, does the Treasury Board president not feel that he may be endangering the ratification process by what we are doing here this evening? Basically what we are doing is sticking a sharp stick in the union's eye.

*Government Orders*

If it was all done in good faith and we are taking the union's word that it will promote this among its union workers, and this agreement in principle does that, I think all of us in the House say we are willing to live with it if the union and the government are happy.

Does the President of the Treasury Board not feel it is jeopardizing that ratification vote by telling the union workers "notwithstanding your agreement in principle, we are going to hit you with a great big club called back to work legislation"?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, we do not feel this because we know that if there had been no tentative agreement, the law would have been passed. The workers would have been sent back to work. The workers also know that we have come to a tentative agreement and they have not given us any assurances between the time of the tentative agreement and the time of ratification.

We have to protect Canadian people during that period of time. The workers will have to choose to ratify or not and they will have the choice between the collective agreement that would have been included in the law as presently drafted and the new one and another collective agreement, the one that has been agreed to in principle that contains more benefits than the one included in the law.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, my question for the minister relates to the definition and in particular to the provisions which are included in the collective agreement affecting gay and lesbian partners of public servants.

As the minister knows, in other collective agreements that have been negotiated with the federal public service benefits have been extended to gay and lesbian partners. In the English language definition of common law spouse, the definition reads as follows: "Relationship exists when for a continuous period of at least one year an employee has lived with a person, publicly represented that person to be his/her spouse and continues to live with the person as if that person were his/her spouse".

[Translation]

In French, the definition of common law spouse reads as follows:

Common law spouse Il existe des liens de conjoint de fait lorsque, pendant une période continue d'au moins une année, un employé a cohabité avec une personne du sexe opposé et l'a présentée publiquement comme son conjoint et continue à vivre avec cette personne comme si elle était son conjoint.

[English]

I wonder if the minister could clarify and confirm that it is his intention to extend the benefits of the collective agreement fully to same sex partners and that the French language definition of conjoints de fait will be amended to reflect that equality.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the member has brought that difference between the English and French definitions to my attention today. The English definition is the right one. The French definition, the one contained in the regulations, will be amended deleting the words that are not in conformity with the English version.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Chairman, just for clarification, is it then the intention of the government to extend these benefits to gay and lesbian partners of public servants covered by the collective agreement?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, yes it is.

• (2705)

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board who is not covered under this agreement. Which workers, please?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, basically under the agreement there are two groups that are covered, table two, the blue collar workers, and table four, the CXs, the correctional workers. The agreement covers only these two groups.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister how he explains the fact that, over the years, ever since 1982 as I mentioned before in my presentation, the times when the federal government has actually managed to get along with its employees have become the exceptions to the rule? How does he explain the fact that this government is incapable of finding ways to come to an agreement with its employees?

Is there something in the process that is wrong or flawed? Is the problem the competence of the public servants? Is the problem the orders that are given by the government?

How does he explain the fact that the government, no matter which party is in power, is unable to get along with its employees?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, before the two groups that we are talking about, table 2 and table 4, we reached negotiated settlements over the past two years with 87% of our employees. If we include blue collar workers, this brings the number of employees with whom we have negotiated collective agreements to almost 95%.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I have three brief questions for the minister responsible.

Would he agree to update the House specifically on the instructions he gave to the government negotiators? Who are they? What is their background in negotiation?

*Government Orders*

Secondly, what specifically caused him to lose confidence in the possibility of reaching an agreement with the correctional officers' representatives? At what point did he lose confidence and what specific instructions did he give to the negotiators?

Is he going to be able to sleep tonight, knowing that he has made a mockery of democracy?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, the instructions to the negotiators for members of the correctional groups were the same as were given to most of the other bargaining tables, in other words a 2.5% increase the first year, a 2% increase the second year and a whole series of provisions dealing with things like parental leave, annual leave depending on seniority and so on. Our instructions were the same.

Second, we have complete confidence in our negotiators because they have made it possible for us to reach agreements with 87% of our employees this year in difficult circumstances.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Chairman, my question pertains to the discriminatory practice of paying workers in one region of the country, members of the public service, less for work of equal value for the same work done in another region of the country.

I would like to know from the minister whether there is any intention on his part or his negotiator's part to delve into this issue with a mind to making an equal rate of pay across the country. Will the minister enlighten the House as to whether he is amenable to moving toward this in the future?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in most cases regional rates are the rates that permit equity in terms of the rewards for the work done. This is because the cost of living and market conditions vary in the various regions of the country.

This is so true that in a department like external affairs there are groups of countries defined according to cost of living, difficulty of being there, the element of nearness or being very far away, very isolated, and there are compensations for all of these factors.

In the RCMP there are cost of living adjustments for instance. Our regional rates adapt themselves much better to living conditions, the cost of living and local market conditions.

• (2710)

In the present negotiations we have reduced the number of regional rates from ten to seven. That was one of the difficult parts of the negotiations but we succeeded in getting agreement between employers and employees.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, if this back to work legislation pertains to the grain weighers, what does

the minister intend to use as a method to settle the contract once he gets the workers back on the job?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, what we have in the tentative agreement is a list of conditions of work that will take place once the contract has been ratified by the workers. We have a tentative agreement that has been initialled by us and by the representative of the workers.

The back to work legislation has to apply in the interim period which is between now and the time when the agreement will be ratified. During that period there is no guarantee that there will be ratification. There is no guarantee by the employees that they will not have strikes.

The conditions of work will apply in the interim period, unless it is ratified, and they will continue to apply if it is not ratified. Those are conditions of the present contract.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, now that table two is less of an issue and now that certain terms will be recommended by the union to its workers for ratification, I would like to ask about table four.

We now have the report of the conciliation board to the chairperson of the Public Service Staff Relations Board. It is a detailed ruling that came down from the board on March 19.

What is it about this report that the government cannot see fit to implement knowing now that the union finds it okay? The union has seen this report and finds it tolerable or to its liking and will vote for it. Why can the government not simply say now that it also accepts the findings of the conciliation board and use this as the settlement for what has been going on?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, even though we have an agreement that has been initialled by the negotiators once again this does not cover the period between now and the moment of ratification. For that time we still have to prevent strikes from taking place. We have to take into account the possibility that the agreement will not be ratified.

In terms of the CXs the conciliation board report is equivalent to an increase in compensation of about 11% compared to the 2.5% and 2% that have been the basic compensation. What PSAC was asking for was equivalent to about an 18% increase in salary. We cannot accept the conciliation board report because it is clearly excessive in terms of all the other agreements we have negotiated.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, everyone knows that the very reason for this bill's existence has ceased to exist.

The government decided to bring in legislation because it thought no agreement would be reached; since an agreement has been reached, the reason for the bill no longer exists.

*Government Orders*

Starting now, should the government not provide instead that for the group of correction officers who are not on strike, who will not be going on strike because they are not in a legal position to do so for two days, should it not provide in the bill something that would allow 24 or 48 hours for reaching a settlement, without the legislation as such applying to them?

It has already been proved that there is no need for special legislation, since a settlement has been reached, while the whole principle of the bill was based on the fact that the government thought it could not reach an agreement, and an agreement has in fact been reached.

Could the government not show good faith and give correctional officers a chance to put this in a collective agreement, without having to take the special legislation route?

• (2715)

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Again, Mr. Chairman, in the case of the blue collar workers themselves, the reason we still need back to work legislation is because there is a transition period between now and the time when the agreement is ratified, and if the agreement is not clearly ratified by the members, they have to be prevented from causing more problems for western farmers, in particular.

In the case of the correctional services officers, in theory, they do not have the right to strike. They have all been declared essential. A strike did not take place, this time. Of course, we cannot take the chance that the 500 or 600 correctional services officers who currently have the right to strike could actually do so, because already a riot in just one prison makes the lives of inmates and staff very difficult. This is why they must be included now while they do not have the right to strike.

The fact that they would be able to go on strike on Friday or Saturday forces us to include them.

[*English*]

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, when this evening began there was no tentative agreement. Now there is a tentative agreement which substantially changes the whole nature of the discussion.

I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board a simple question. Is it his intention to table in the House tonight the tentative agreement which we are now discussing?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** No, Mr. Chairman, and I have given an answer in this regard. There has been an agreement with the negotiators, the union representatives and ourselves that it would not be revealed.

The agreement, as I mentioned, was signed late last night. Therefore the agents of the employees want to have time to explain the agreement and present it to their members.

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps members of the House would also like to understand what is in the tentative agreement because it affects what we are doing tonight.

If the President of the Treasury Board cannot present the agreement or table the agreement in the House, could he at least explain the substantive points in it that make it different from the current collective agreement or the one that would be perpetuated if the legislation were passed?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** I am told, Mr. Chairman, that the agreement includes the basic 2.5% and 2%. There is also a long list of improvements in terms of holidays. For instance, they can have five weeks of holidays after 18 years of employment rather than 19 years and so on.

Another advantage has been given to them. There are five steps in each classification. One step has been added or reduced. I am told that the increase that was offered to them is 2.75% instead of 2% and there is a small increase in the salary or wages they get per hour.

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions. The hon. government House leader told me earlier that he did not believe that there was any provisions for the corrections services people, but the minister just informed the House that group four, the corrections people, were included.

Are the corrections people included in this tentative agreement? If there is an initialled tentative agreement I can take it that all the issues are resolved. If that is the case, would it not be in our interest to give the workers an opportunity to ratify it before we proceed?

The minister is not willing to table the document in the House for members, but the union will be taking it to its membership and it will therefore be in the public domain. Obviously they have to know what they are voting on.

Why will the minister not give members of the House an opportunity to see the agreement when in essence it will be in the public domain as the union membership must see what is in it if it is to vote and ratify the agreement?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in the agreement only the blue collar workers are covered. The CXs are a different table. It would be a different agreement and there is no agreement with them. The agreement that was initialled tonight covers only the blue collar workers, what we call table two, but they are both in the law.

• (2720)

On the other question, there is agreement between the unions and ourselves that they would not be tabled for reasons that are easy to understand. Yes, the union may reveal it, but we cannot break our

*Government Orders*

word to the union that we would not reveal it until there is an agreement on it.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions. Could the President of the Treasury Board inform the House of what the total cost difference is between the agreement outlined in the bill now before the House and the tentative agreement that was arrived at with the table two workers?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I am told that the cost is something like \$5 million out of a total bill of about \$500 million. Therefore the difference is about 1%, perhaps 0.9%.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Chairman, the obvious question that flows from that is why on earth the government put Canadian farmers and Canadian public servants through this agony for \$5 million of taxpayers money.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the basic question is that what was asked by the unions and their negotiators was much more than this. The reason we have an agreement is that they have come down to a level that makes sense in terms of the employees in our view and in terms of the employer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, the President of the Treasury Board has partly justified using this special bill to impose working conditions on the basis of the fact that there have been financial losses in a number of areas, including grain handling and transportation.

Could he inform the House of the total amount of the financial losses caused by these work stoppages?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the figures have varied from day to day. I am told that there have been up to 20 ships immobilized in Vancouver's port.

There have been up to 1,300 grain cars immobilized there as well. A \$9 million contract has been lost, according to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

In any event, the farmers themselves have seen their wheat exports drop significantly. I think that in the west it was clear that this was an emergency that was costing them millions.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** Mr. Chairman, can the President of Treasury Board tell us about what he has criticized as a slow-down in the processing of income tax returns?

Can he give us figures? He made it sound terribly serious, whereas according to our information everything is going fine as far as processing returns is concerned.

Is there not something of a discrepancy between what the President of Treasury Board has announced as a major problem that

required him to intervene by means of special legislation, and the reality?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** No, Mr. Chairman. I have been kept informed on a daily basis of the output at the Department of National Revenue by its Minister, Mr. Dhaliwal.

In the initial weeks, the backlog in uncompleted or non-processed returns was 900,000. A few days ago the Minister of National Revenue told me that the backlog was 1.2 million returns.

[English]

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, the Canadian Grain Commission is headed for about a \$26 million loss over the next couple of years on its operating deficit because the volume of grain moving is such that it cannot cover its costs.

Is there anything in this agreement that prohibits the Canadian Grain Commission from either eliminating positions or doing what is necessary to create the efficiencies and effectiveness of operations so farmers and others do not have to be charged excessive user fees in order to pay these guys to stay at work doing nothing?

• (2725)

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, there is nothing in the agreement, I am told, that affects the operations of the Canadian Grain Commission.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Chairman, I would like clarification on the facts of the case with regard to market conditions as to zone pays and that sort of thing. The example of the RCMP was used.

It is my understanding that the pay difference for Winnipeg, Vancouver and Peterborough is zero, that the only difference is in the northern living allowance and isolated post regulations. Is it true that, as the minister stated earlier, market conditions dictate the RCMP too?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I am told there is a cost of living adjustment in the Vancouver region also because of cost of living conditions.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, the President of the Treasury Board said earlier that all issues had been resolved.

He also said earlier that there was no guarantee that strike action would not be taken on the part of the union concerned. Did the government approach the union to secure an agreement not to proceed with any strike action before ratification?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, we asked the union that in the negotiations and it said no. It wants to have the right to strike until ratification.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, on what grounds could the minister say that all the issues have been resolved if the union maintains a potential strike position? How do we know that the tax centres, for instance, are not still vulnerable to strike action under the status quo?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the member is right to say that this is indeed the difficulty. The various questions that have been resolved are the questions that had to do in particular with the various clauses in the collective agreement, but the reason we have to continue with the law and bring forth back to work legislation is that this risk exists. We have been told that there may well be strikes between now and ratification.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Chairman, the fact remains though that the CX guards, the table four correction workers, are not on strike.

Here we have back to work legislation that is ordering people back to work who are not on strike. Surely the minister will accept how very odd this looks to the general public.

If the real goal is to take away their right to strike in the future, why is that not coming to us in a bill that actually says that? Why is it tucked into the back to work legislation dealing with table two workers?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** In fact, Mr. Chairman, all the correctional workers should be designated as essential services, which means that there is no right to strike. It is because of a quirk, a loophole that was used, that now 500 to 600 of them have the right to strike.

We believe that they must not have the right to strike because they provide essential services. We are re-establishing the position that should have existed where none of them had the right to strike.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Chairman, why is this not coming to us by way of separate legislation dealing with designating these workers essential? Why is it coming to us in back to work legislation which has nothing to do with workers who are not out on strike? We cannot send people back to work who are not out on strike and we should not be voting for something like that tonight.

Why is the minister not introducing some kind of legislation on a separate basis to designate these people and then we could have argument and debate fairly on that one issue?

• (2730)

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, these people have already been designated as essential workers and they do not have the right to strike. As I mentioned, 500 to 600 of them now have the right to strike because of a quirk. We are correcting that quirk. Because there is the possibility that these 500 to 600 would strike, and they have indicated that it was their intention to disrupt the services in penitentiaries and so on, we have to bring in back to work

legislation that will prevent these people who unfortunately now have the right to strike from having that right in the future.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board if his attitude means, as far as the government's strategy as the employer is concerned, that he has crossed out the report by the conciliator, the neutral, impartial intervenor whose proposals were endorsed by the union? Does it mean that the employer does not intend to give any weight at all to this report and that it prefers to legislate strategically?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in the case of the blue collar workers there was a conciliation report that we were ready to accept but the workers decided to reject.

In the case of the corrections employees, there was a report that was in our opinion excessive and that we decided not to accept. Both sides have an equal right to accept or reject. We decided not to accept it.

However, there are clauses in the conciliation report for the correctional workers that are in our opinion very useful. We have already indicated to the union that we are ready to accept them.

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak to the amendment to clause 7, but in fact it could stand for all the government's amendments.

I would like the minister to confirm something for me. We have been told that there is no guarantee that the collective agreement resulting from the settlement that has been reached would be the one that would take precedence if it is only ratified in the next few weeks.

Given the way the clause is drafted, is there not a possibility that the government could order that the conditions in the legislation will take precedence, instead of waiting for the actual results of the bargaining? Is this clause water-tight enough to ensure that the settlement will take precedence over a government fiat?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, our intention is clear. We have said what we intend to do and we hope that the way the amendments are drafted expresses our intention equally clearly. If the initialed agreement is ratified by the blue collar workers, that is the agreement that will become the contract between the employer and the employees.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Chairman, I have two brief questions for the minister.

While both teams were at the negotiating table, did the PSAC negotiators agree to forgo job action during the ratification period if the government were to give up and delay its back to work legislation?

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the union has indicated that it is not ready to let go of the right to strike during the ratification time period.

**Mr. Charlie Power:** Mr. Chairman, how long does the minister expect this ratification or rejection process to take?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the normal period for the ratification process is four to six weeks. In this case the union negotiators have indicated to us that they will try to do it within two weeks.

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, the President of the Treasury Board has made no mention of the Canadian Grain Commission. Is there anything that prohibits the Canadian Grain Commission from eliminating positions in order to create efficiency and effectiveness in the Canadian Grain Commission?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, there is nothing in the agreement on that subject.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I ask a question specifically relating to the solicitor general group, group four. Some time ago that bargaining group had two options other than negotiations when there was a problem. They could either have conciliation and the right to strike or they could have binding arbitration.

• (2735)

This government has taken away their right for binding arbitration and has left them only with conciliation and strike. So they went for conciliation, and the conciliation panel, never mind that there was a dissenting report, there was a majority report. They are prepared to accept that. The only thing that the government has left them is conciliation and the government is rejecting that.

It was only through a slip-up on the part of the government. In actual fact it was a big slip-up, mainly because there were unfilled positions that did not get designated and the government could not designate something it said was not important enough to fill, then it turned around and filled them. That is why it has the problem.

The position now is that the only thing left for these people is conciliation. They went that route and accepted it. The government is saying, "We are going to designate you so you cannot go on strike. We have taken away arbitration and now we will not accept conciliation".

How does the President of the Treasury Board justify the fact that the government has taken away the two options they had? It has taken away strike and it is going to designate them. How are they ever in good faith supposed to negotiate with this government when the government has totally emasculated them and taken away

every opportunity for action against the government? They rely only on the goodwill of government and that is not very strong these days.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that even when the right to arbitration existed, the PSAC, the CXs, have never used it.

Second, the conciliation board report is a useful instrument, but as I mentioned, in the case of the blue collar workers we thought that the conciliation board report made a lot of sense and the blue collar workers refused it. We used exactly the same right in this case. Also we have to remember that in the case of the CXs, in December we had had an agreement with the negotiators. Hon. members will remember that even the union thought that the agreement with the correctional officers was a good one and recommended to the union to accept it. But in the end, the employees did not accept it.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Chairman, as the minister will be aware, Canada has undertaken international obligations with the International Labour Organization and it is signatory to a number of international labour conventions.

I wonder whether the minister could indicate whether he has gauged the acceptance of the bill which is now before the House against Canada's international commitments under ILO conventions. I would suggest through the Chair that in fact Canada is in breach of our ILO conventions through this legislation.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, we have evaluated that agreement in terms of domestic law, of Canadian law and not in terms of international law.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Chairman, the obvious question is if Canada is serious about its obligations under international law and particularly these conventions that we have signed, why on earth is this government refusing to evaluate the legislation against that and refusing to respect those international commitments?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, our basic desire of course is always to come to negotiated settlements. In cases like this, I think it is clear that the domestic law predominates.

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. Could I ask why it seems that almost everybody is getting supplementaries but I did not?

**The Chairman:** I did not see the hon. member rise, unfortunately. The hon. member need not worry. I will come back to him in due course.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I will ask a supplementary because the answer to my first question will help me with the second question.

• (2740 )

In response to my colleague from the Kootenays and to my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, it was not made clear to my satisfaction at least as to whether this legislation relative to the CX employees will permanently put them out of the range of strike. Will this permanently refuse their ability to strike?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** No, Mr. Chairman. That is done through other means. It is the designation as workers in essential services.

In the present case we have a specific problem. We are solving it through the back to work legislation until this agreement expires and another one replaces it.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, in the definitions group specific agreement means any agreement specified in schedule 1. The second part of the bill deals with schedule 2.

It strikes me that the government is basically saying to its workers that they have a right to strike up to the point that they want to strike. Is that not what it is saying? In other words, we are having to deal with the legislation we have at the moment at 3.40 a.m. because of the inability of the government to come to an agreement with its workers. Having reached a point where it cannot come to an agreement with its workers, it then removes the right to strike.

I ask the President of the Treasury Board, what is the purpose of having a right to strike for people in the public service if when they choose to exercise that right we are forced to vote on back to work legislation thereby removing that right?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in the case of the CXs, because they are designated as an essential service the right to strike does not exist. This has been a choice that has been made because the security of prisoners and other people is involved.

In the case of the blue collar workers, it is obvious that the right to strike is not absolute. When there is an emergency situation like there is in terms of western grain, then at that point the government has the ability, and it has used it in the past, to bring the workers back to work because the security, safety or economic life of Canadians is involved.

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** Mr. Chairman, before I start, is this the supplemental I did not get or is this a new one which will give me a supplemental?

**The Chairman:** If the hon. member wants it.

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** Mr. Chairman, I want to finish off with the answer I did not get from the President of the Treasury Board.

### *Government Orders*

I specifically asked how unions and more specifically the CX employees are supposed to bargain in good faith if the government takes away every single tool that they have. He said that the arbitration has not been used, yet the government saw fit to take it away from them.

Now we have a situation where they are designated. The government is saying it still left them with the right to conciliate and strike. If the government does not like the report of the conciliator, it will take that right away from them too, but the government will keep rights on its side. We have an incredible imbalance.

One of two items that is in this proposal of the conciliation board, and there are only two, deals with pay and training. I am a member of the subcommittee studying the CCRA. I have been in the Pacific region and I have been in Atlantic Canada. Training is non-existent. Guards are being asked to do a job which they do not know the details of or what the rules are because there is no training. That was one of the two items.

If this is such an unacceptable conciliation report, is the government saying it does not care what they make, it does not care if they are trained and it does not care if they have any rights any more? How is the CX employee supposed to bargain in good faith when the two things the government said that were their tools in the event of a failure to settle a dispute are taken away? How are they supposed to negotiate in the future if they are told no arbitration, no strike and it will not accept conciliation unless it says exactly what the government wants it to say?

• (2745 )

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in fact the past history proves that we have been able to come to agreements with them. We were very close to having an agreement with the correctional officers before. There was an agreement accepted by the negotiators but, as I mentioned, it was not ratified by the employees. Clearly, over the past years we have been able to come to agreements with them.

In the conciliation report there were four items. One was, of course, wages. There was training. There was another one about a study that will establish if really they are or should be equivalent to RCMP officers, and so on, and we have agreed to that one as well. Out of the four elements we have agreed to three. I think our record shows that we have been able to come to agreements with them.

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** Mr. Chairman, I still have not received an answer to a question twice asked. How are the CXs supposed to negotiate in good faith with the government in the future when they are being told they are designated, they cannot go on strike? They have had the right to binding arbitration taken away from them and the government has now proved that unless the conciliation report says what the government wants, it will not accept that either.

*Government Orders*

How in the future are they supposed to bargain in good faith in light of what the government has done to them this time?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in the end it is always the market that determines if a level of salaries or wages is acceptable. In this case we have no problem with rates that are offered in the negotiated settlement. We have no problem recruiting prison guards.

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, we now have a tentative agreement. We have an imposed settlement, this 500-page plus document. We have had questions about what is now seeming to boil down to a concern about what happens between now and ratification in terms of the government's concern that these people will be able to strike.

If that is the issue, and that appears to be a very big part of the issue, I want to follow up on earlier questions by other members and ask the government why it does not bring forward simple legislation that just deals with keeping people on the job between now and the eventual ratification of the agreement, and forget about this imposed settlement that we have all been bogged down with in this place today.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Because, in fact, Mr. Chairman, the agreement may not be ratified. We have already had the problem with the CXs where there was an agreement with their negotiators. It was put to a vote of the employees and it was not ratified.

We have three problems that can only be solved by passing back to work legislation. The first one is the problem between now and the moment of ratification. That means that for two to four to six weeks the farmers in the west would be submitted to the kind of rotating strikes that have taken place in the past few weeks. I think we have come to the judgment that the farmers in the west are not ready to accept that.

There is also the possibility that the agreement will not be ratified. If it is not ratified, of course, we need back to work legislation for the same reasons: the emergencies that have been created, in particular in the west. In terms of the CXs, as I have explained, we have to have back to work legislation that will prevent them from striking because we cannot afford a strike in the essential services in the penitentiaries.

**Mr. John Duncan:** Mr. Chairman, my question really has not been addressed. The reason it has not is because I used the words "eventual ratification". The government has proved that the way it is going to bargain is that it is going to legislate people back to work anyway. That is a given.

It does not have to all hinge on ratification of this agreement. We can talk about eventual ratification. In terms of the corrections officers, the corrections table, I think that surgical legislation is another option for the government rather than this huge, imposed settlement.

Can the minister please tell me why that is not an option?

• (2750)

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in the case of the CXs, there are 500 to 600 prison guards who at present have not been declared essential services. They will be in a position to strike on Friday of this week. We have to prevent their ability to strike in this case because their work is an essential service.

In the case of the blue collar workers, we know what the strikes have produced in the last few weeks. We know the state of emergency which has been created in Vancouver, as well as for western farmers. We want to prevent that state of emergency continuing during the period of ratification which, once again, could be two, four or six weeks. We have been told by authorities in the west that they cannot continue even for that period of time, even for another two weeks, without these people being prevented from having rotating strikes.

Of course we have to consider the possibility, which does exist, that ratification will not take place. Then, obviously, we would have to have back to work legislation in any case.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, I am sure that other members of parliament must have been as disturbed as I was to hear that the minister admits not even having considered whether or not this legislation was in conformity with Canada's commitments at the ILO. Could the minister tell us, when it comes to labour legislation and to legislation which is arguably in violation of these international commitments, if it is the policy of the minister and of the government to not even bother subjecting this kind of legislation to an analysis which would indicate whether or not it was in violation of these agreements? Surely this is disturbing.

It would have been better if the minister had said that they subjected it to this kind of analysis and came to a different conclusion than I might have come to, but the minister said that he did not even bother to consider whether or not the ILO commitments were relevant in this case. Could he indicate if it is government policy to completely ignore the ILO? If it is government policy, would he care to defend such a policy? I would not.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, we operate in the context of Canadian law and Canadian law reflects public interest. We try to make sure, and usually we do, that the agreements we bring together are in conformity with Canadian law and meet the test of Canadian law. It is this parliament that passes the law. We do our utmost to fit this test. The ILO is not a test that is asked of us in terms of serving the public interests of Canadians as expressed in Canadian law.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Chairman, this is getting to be a more and more interesting and ridiculous claim. I wonder what the Minister of Foreign Affairs would think of this view as he goes around the world rightly preaching the value of international agreements when

the President of the Treasury Board says he is only answerable to Canadian law in this case.

In what context would the President of the Treasury Board argue that he is answerable to international law? Is there any context in which he would be answerable to international law, international labour law in this case, if he is not answerable to it at all in a case like this?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, in a way, what can I say? We are bound by Canadian law because it is the law that applies to us, so we put it into place.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to find out from the President of the Treasury Board whether there was an offer, in the agreement, from the government and a response from the union for the people who were already on strike regarding the possibility that they might return to work as early as tomorrow, while the agreement is ratified.

Was there an offer from the government on this, and was there a response from the union on the possibility that the employees would go back to work and the agreement would be ratified later on?

[English]

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, our negotiator has asked specifically for that to be done and the negotiators for the union have said no.

**Mr. Charlie Power:** Mr. Chairman, when I asked the minister if PSAC negotiators were willing to give up job action during the ratification period in return for the government giving up its back to work legislation, the minister answered that the union was not willing to give up its strike option. Was this position forced on the union because the government would not relent and give up its right to back to work legislation?

• (2755)

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, we believe it is in the public interest of Canadians, because of the emergencies that exist, to have back to work legislation that will prevent strikes as of now. That is why we want to introduce back to work legislation.

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could tell us what will be the lower level of the hourly rate, the highest hourly rate and the average hourly rate under the new contract.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I do not have that information. Since the agreement was signed only late tonight we have not been able to calculate it. However, we would not give out that

information because we are not going to reveal the details of the negotiated agreement.

**Mr. Ted White:** Mr. Chairman, could the minister then please give us the lowest hourly rate, the highest hourly rate and the average hourly rate under the old contract?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, my negotiator does not have that.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Chairman, I realize that we are not just asking questions here. I might launch into a 25 minute speech just to keep everybody's attention. Then again, maybe I will not.

I have a couple of questions for the President of the Treasury Board. I hope he realizes the difficulty that he has put parliamentarians in and even Canadians as they try to evaluate this bill.

Basically he is saying to vote in favour of this bill and to support the agreement, but we cannot see the agreement because it is secret. In other words, he is telling us to trust him. "I'm from the government and I am here to help". It is one of those things that one has an awful lot of difficulty believing.

Why would he suggest that parliamentarians, and Canadians in general, would want this thing rammed through parliament, given the stamp of approval, when he cannot tell us what we are voting on because it is a secret? Why should we do that?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the general parameters that I have given them tonight are the 2.75% and 2%, plus the increase in salaries. I have mentioned some of the advantages, such as holidays, parental holidays and so on. The existing agreement is available for everybody to see. On that basis one can see what the general parameters are.

As I have mentioned, we have an agreement with the union which we will not reveal because the union wants to present it to its members first. However, I believe it is quite clear to members what the general parameters of the agreement are.

In terms of the CXs, I have indicated what the results were of the conciliation board, what the percentages were and why we believe they cannot be accepted.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Chairman, I do not think we could get a union worker to vote on what the minister just said. That is like saying "Oh, you saw the old agreement. The new one is better, so just vote for it and you will be happy". Obviously the union would not go for that. Yet here in parliament, parliamentarians are being asked to just trust this government. I guess it is something that we could live with, but it makes it really difficult to be gung-ho for. It is hard to vote for something that amounts to tens of millions or hundreds of millions of dollars, or whatever, when we are not sure of the details.

*Government Orders*

I would also like to point out this idea of the emergency that is seizing the nation right now. There are going to be darn few people watching this because the real emergency of course is going on over in Europe. This idea of an emergency gripping the nation is a little hard to believe. The grain is moving. That is not the emergency. There is nobody picketing in any major sustained way. I do not see an emergency there. Emergency is a kind of an overplayed word here, I think, unless one is the victim of an overactive imagination.

• (2800 )

The procedure we are going through tonight of committee of the whole is a proposal that the Reform Party has made. Each minister should go through this at the tabling of every bill in the House. Whether I agree with the minister or not, I think it has been an excellent process to go through. When a minister tables a complex bill and comes in with his officials and answers questions like this for an hour is an excellent idea and would improve the House of Commons tremendously. I do approve of what is going on here tonight. I think it is great.

During a press conference today the president of PSAC, and I cannot use the words because they are unparliamentary, said some things of the Treasury Board president that were very uncomplimentary. He said that the President of the Treasury Board is not correct when he said refunds from Revenue Canada are behind schedule. He says they are ahead of last year's schedule at this same time. In other words, he says they are ahead of where they were a year ago.

Could the President of the Treasury Board explain whether he believes the PSAC president?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I believe it is an emergency and it is important. The Reform Party itself judged it proper to have an emergency debate on the question. I listened carefully to what Reformers said and they gave all kinds of elements about western farmers that to me would indicate there was an emergency situation.

Yes, I am aware, perhaps unfortunately, of the words the president of PSAC had. I always speak kindly of him. Perhaps we are both wrong in our assessment of each other.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Treasury Board president why he is crying a few crocodile tears on behalf of western farmers. The minister knows very well he has thrown up a smoke screen for the poor job that the wheat board minister has done in selling our wheat.

Western farmers have sold off-board grains at record high prices while the Canadian Wheat Board has sold less than 50% of the wheat board grains at record low prices. If they want to gain some brownie points with western farmers, give us a voluntary wheat

board and there will be no problem with strikes on the west coast. Get up and act like a government and let farmers take over their own business.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I see the hon. member's position.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, PSAC workers were trying to get the same wage for doing the same job as members in other unions working for the federal government. PSAC workers were asking for the same wage as those working for CUPW. Did the workers from PSAC get the same wage for doing the same job as other members working for different unions within the federal government?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that there are different rates for every function. Even within one collective agreement there are sometimes hundreds of rates for very different classifications.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Chairman, I am sorry, but that is not good enough. People are doing the same job with the same qualifications and the same merits as somebody else doing the same job with the same qualifications and the same merits in a different union but both working for the federal government and yet they are getting paid very disparate amounts of money.

• (2805 )

For example, crane operators in my riding were getting paid \$16 an hour where crane operators in other unions working right beside them were getting paid 50% more. That is a huge inequity. Was that rectified in the negotiations that were just undertaken?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, because there are that many unions and because these rates are determined by collective agreements what we do in the federal government is let the collective agreement process determine the wages. This is the system we use.

Now that we are introducing the UCS, the universal classification system, we will at least have a classification system that will be standardized and will enable us to correct some of these discrepancies.

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, I have a question relating to the PSAC workers, particularly in the Atlantic region.

The President of the Treasury Board said that the regional rates are based on adaptation to living conditions. I have two questions.

First, how are those local living conditions assessed, on what basis are they assessed? Second, are they open to change or review if the living conditions change during the life of the agreement?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, these rates could always be changed even in the middle of a collective agreement. They would

*Government Orders*

have to be changed by mutual agreement. That is the process we have.

We have adaptations every time we renegotiate these rates. We try to take into account local living conditions in order to get the negotiating rates to reflect local conditions.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Mr. Chairman, I have a supplementary for the president. I know it is late and he might have forgotten my first question.

What are the living conditions based on? How are they measured? What is used as the yardstick say between Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Toronto and Ontario?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, when the initial rates were negotiated I was told there were studies of living conditions, cost of living and so on. These are arguments that are brought up by the union in order to determine the rates for each location.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, the President of the Treasury Board has indicated to us, as I understand it, that the government has an agreement but it really does not have an agreement. There are some initials on it but they really do not have to abide by anything.

Does this great announcement he made a few hours ago have any meaning whatsoever or are we in exactly the same position, from a purely practical point of view, as we were in yesterday?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the process works in such a way that these negotiations take place between the negotiators of the government and the negotiators of the union. They reach a tentative agreement, as they call it, and initial it. However, this agreement does not have the force of a collective agreement until it is ratified by a majority of the members.

This agreement does not have force of law. It is not a collective agreement and it cannot be applied. However, now that we have a tentative agreement it means that since we prefer to have a negotiated settlement rather than a legislated one we will introduce amendments in the law that will permit us, if this initial agreement is ratified, to put it as the collective agreement that will serve as the instrument of relationships within the parties.

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board what good is a tentative agreement or a preliminary without a no strike commitment. It is just a piece of paper.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, once the agreement is ratified and becomes the agreement between the parties at that point there is a no strike agreement. There is a contract between the two parties, but until that agreement has been ratified it does not have the force of law and therefore the employees can strike.

• (2810)

**Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, the President of the Treasury Board earlier said it was a glitch that allowed prison guards to strike. My understanding was an administrative error by this department.

Since PSAC does not seem to have been doing too good a job representing correctional service workers according to newspapers, they have been organized under a more militant union.

It appears to me that the government is using grain transportation and tax returns as a cynical cover to play one group against another and it is really the correctional service that is the point of this legislation.

If that is really the minister's intention would he have introduced this legislation if it were only about shipping prairie grain?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, we would have had to introduce the act purely for the CXs, for the correctional officers, given that in this case they should not have the right to strike. They are designated as essential and there was that possibility of a strike.

However, in the case of the blue collar workers, we believe, and I think a lot of the people in the Reform Party agree with us, that there was a state of emergency. The communications from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the communications from the Canadian Wheat Board, the communications from the Saskatchewan government were quite clear that there were conditions there that were threatening the livelihood of farmers and that is in good part why we are bringing in back to work legislation.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, it is impossible to have a legislative collective agreement. What we have is a legislated forced settlement. There is nothing collective about it.

The minister and his department knew years ago that a day was coming up when 600 or 800 so-called CX workers, prison guard workers, would have a legal right to strike. He gives the perception to the House that it was a surprise and they were caught off guard that they would have this legal right to strike.

Why did they not bring in special legislation strictly for that purpose instead of trying to hide it through the back door and call it legislation as he is trying to do?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, if we had been able to solve that question through a negotiated settlement there would have been no need for legislation because the situation would have rectified itself through common agreement. In this case, because there was no agreement, we have to legislate.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Chairman, the President of the Treasury Board has not answered the question.

*Government Orders*

The question is quite simple. His department knew months ago that these workers had a legal date to strike. Why did he make it a perception in the House that it is a surprise to him? Why is he including it in this massive 534 page document and calling it back to work legislation when in essence what he should be doing is introducing special legislation specifically for those workers?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I do not think so because these workers are all designated essential. In this case when new positions were created they had to be defined and then registered. When people move into existing positions they have to be reconfirmed as essential workers. That unfortunately was not done. I could say it is not the fault of Treasury Board, but this does not matter. In this case it was not done and the result is that there is a risk of a strike and that is why we have to introduce legislation.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, the President of the Treasury Board caused much unnecessary controversy and skepticism last evening when he stood as the first speaker on second reading of the bill before us to present his statement regarding the tentative agreement.

• (2815 )

My question for the minister is very simple. He told us last night that he had learned about this tentative agreement at 10.10 p.m. and presented it to the House in vague terms after the vote was taken on the motion to expedite the passage of Bill C-76.

Why did he not bring the information before the House before the vote so that members such as myself could consider all relevant material that was germane to the bill? Why did he not bring it to the House before the vote instead of after the vote?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I thought that had been solved when the question of privilege was argued. The right argument is that this fact was not one that would affect the motion to expedite debate but this fact was a force essential for the discussion of the bill. I learned about it at 10.10 p.m. and I was here at about 10.40 p.m.

I barely had time to change my speech in order to be able to make my first statement on that news. During that first statement, as the member may recall, I indicated what had happened. I also indicated that because of the CXs and because of the time period before ratification for blue collar workers we still needed the type of legislation that was in front of us. I do not want to resurrect that but that is how it happened.

**Mr. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chairman, I raised the matter because I am in principle supportive of the need for this kind of legislation, but my support and that of many other members for the legislation has become very tenuous because of the sequence.

It did appear to us that back to work legislation might be necessary on an emergency basis. For that reason many of us voted

to expedite it. Then we discovered all of a sudden that a tentative agreement had been reached and the predicate of an emergency seemed to suddenly disappear.

I have a second question for the minister. For how long has the President of the Treasury Board known that his negotiating team was close to reaching a tentative agreement with the PSAC union? How long did he know that they were closing in on an agreement and how long did he withhold that information from the House?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I do not agree with the term withhold, but I will go with the reason for the legislation. Unfortunately the way that negotiations take place means that we still need the back to work legislation in terms of emergency for the CXs. That is clear. That is half the legislation.

The other part of the legislation deals with table two blue collar workers. The fact that there is a period of time when strikes can take place before ratification and the fact that ratification is not assured indicate that the requirement for back to work legislation continues to exist.

In terms of the emergency itself, we had an emergency debate. We dealt with that question and we came to the conclusion that there was an emergency.

Negotiations take place all the time more or less seriously. There was a meeting between our chief negotiator and the head of PSAC between 8 and 10 this evening. I was told after the final meeting between the two of them that they had reached an agreement.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Chairman, I am sure it is no secret to the President of the Treasury Board that the Reform Party very much supports the use of final offer selection arbitration.

Does he favour the use of final offer selection to settle cases like that of the grain weighers?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, these are options that could be considered. One of the reasons we have taken away arbitration was that we were in the process of introducing universal classification systems where all kinds of salary adjustments had to be made. This is why at present we do not have them, but arbitration in a number of cases is a very useful way of dealing with these problems.

• (2820 )

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, I heard the President of the Treasury Board talk about arbitration, but I was talking specifically about the use of final offer selection arbitration in which both parties are required to submit their final offer and the arbitrator takes all of one position or all of the other. Could he comment on that for me, please?

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the member probably has more knowledge of that specific type of arbitration than I do. I will just indicate that there are various types of arbitration. They all have pros and cons. If one of them is more efficient obviously we should give it more weight.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Chairman, my question for the treasury board minister has to do with some of the costs that came out of this strike.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada and the government botched these negotiations to the point where serious financial harm happened to farmers, in particular, along with many other suppliers and service industries. Those costs deal with added on farm storage of grains, lost sales overseas and the loss of Canada's reliability as an exporter. That will cost farmers into the future.

I would guess that the fault is about 75% on the government and 25% on the Public Service Alliance of Canada in botching these negotiations. Is there anything in that agreement to pay farmers, the innocent third parties, the moneys they have lost in this strike action?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I am informed that there are none.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Chairman, could I get a commitment from the treasury board minister to begin an investigation to determine the exact costs to farmers and to take action through legislation to compensate them?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, we will look at these possibilities.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Chairman, in my riding many of PSAC members, in particular workers on the base at Esquimalt, were working at levels just slightly above welfare levels but were acting out of a sense of duty to the military for which they worked as civilian members.

I want to know whether or not the raise these workers obtained was equal to, greater than or less than the raise we as members of parliament voted for ourselves last year.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the rate we got was 2%. In this case the basic settlement was 2.5% and 2% just as the base.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Chairman, these people have been legislated back to work four times. This is the fourth time we are attempting to do it.

In order to avoid these problems in the future, will the President of the Treasury Board include in the contract an opportunity to engage in either final offer arbitration or binding arbitration to prevent strike actions that have impaired our economy, or a solution that would get us out of the problem of ordering these

workers back to work against their will while enabling them to have a legitimate out?

We could develop a solution that would be fair to the government, the taxpayers and the workers who are trying to get a fair resolution to their grievances.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I underline the fact that we have been able to negotiate collective agreements with our members in more than 87% of the cases. However I will consider the possibilities my hon. colleague mentioned.

● (2825 )

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** Mr. Chairman, I would not like to leave on record two inaccuracies that were mentioned tonight. The first was when the President of Treasury Board said that they took arbitration away this time because of a whole series of new classifications. I want the record to show that the right to arbitration has been taken away for two successive years at budget time, not just for this set of negotiations.

It was also stated that the conciliation recommendation covered four areas when it covered two. It covered pay and it covered training. The training clause was watered down so much that even I do not accept it. Yet they were prepared to accept it.

The President of the Treasury Board specifically said that by comparison wage parity with the RCMP was included. Wage parity with the RCMP would require about a 38% increase. The conciliation report ranged between 12.5% and 14.2%. Let the record show accurately what happened and not what has been stated by the President of the Treasury Board.

The question I would like to ask goes back to what I asked three times now and did not get an answer to except under the most insulting terms CX workers could possibly imagine. I asked how they could possibly negotiate in good faith with the government in the future, given that the government had taken away arbitration and given that the government had essentially rejected conciliation, had taken away their right to strike and had said it would designate them.

His response the third time I asked the question was that if they did not like it they could quit because there were lots of people who would work for less. Prisoners work for \$5.65 a day. Perhaps the President of the Treasury Board will get the prisoners to look after themselves, or maybe the CX employees could lock themselves up because it seems they would have more rights that way.

I would like to ask this question for the fourth time to see if I can get a logical and acceptable answer. Will the President of the Treasury Board tell the House how employees like the CX group will be able to negotiate in good faith with the government in the future when they have lost the right of binding arbitration, when the government rejects their conciliation, rules them back to work

*Government Orders*

instead of allowing strikes and goes to full designation? How will they negotiate in the future?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the member unfortunately will get the same answer because I do not know of any other answer to his question.

The four elements in the conciliation report are training, parity or not with the RCMP, a step taken off the bottom and a step added at the top.

The member is right when he says there has been a prescription for arbitration twice: one in the last budget for the reason I gave and one in the budget at the time we imposed restrictions. At that point we indicated that we wanted to be responsible for the settlements and did not want a referee to be responsible for them.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Chairman, we have been listening to the President of the Treasury Board saying over and over again that it is necessary to designate the 600 or 700 CX people who are left over.

However, as recently as March 22, the Treasury Board and the Public Service Alliance of Canada signed a memorandum of settlement saying that it was understood and agreed that the 608 positions identified were not designated within the meaning, et cetera. Item No. 3 said that the parties further agreed that the employer would not seek any change of the non-designated status of the positions until subsequent notice to bargain was served in the next round of bargaining, et cetera.

The treasury board and the Public Service Alliance met all day on March 19 to hash out the agreement that they would not do anything to go after these non-designated people, and now we are facing legislation, the heaviest hand of all, being imposed in the House of Commons. I guess I am asking for some explanation.

If the memorandum signed on March 22 said that we could survive with this number of non-designated people, why is it now an emergency and all of them have to be designated immediately with such a heavy instrument or a blunt cudgel, one might say?

• (2830)

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, the answer is easy. Before that agreement was made, there were 900 people in that situation. That agreement solved it for 300, but unfortunately it did not solve it for the 500 to 600 that were left. For these 500 and 600 we still have the need for back to work legislation.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Chairman, my information shows it was actually 1,200 when the application was started on February 19. The fact is that the language in here is fairly clear: The parties further agree the employer will not seek any change to the

non-designated status of the positions in this appendix until subsequent to notice to bargain being served in the next round of bargaining involving the correctional. The government clearly built in a strategy on how it would get these other people designated in the next round of bargaining.

Is it not being intellectually dishonest to sign this on the 22nd and one day later try to slam this through with the back to work legislation? Clearly something needs more explanation.

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, I am told there was an emergency in these two institutions where these 300 people were. That emergency was solved for these two situations. However, the rest of the problem remained. Once again that is why we have to have back to work legislation for these essential services.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, I would like the President of the Treasury Board to clarify one thing.

When we were discussing blue collar workers' salaries, we asked why people on the east coast were paid less than others. The case of members of Parliament was used as an example. The President of the Treasury Board said that certain MPs were compensated at a higher rate than others. I think that all MPs are paid the same amount whether they come from the east coast, from New Brunswick, from Vancouver or from Edmonton.

I know all MPs receive the same salary. The only thing which is different is the travel expense budget for members who live further away.

What was said in the House is not correct. People in the Atlantic provinces deserve to be paid the same salary for similar jobs as the people in the west or anywhere else. In the collective agreement signed with the union this evening to be submitted to its members, is there some reference to the fact that people in the east will be paid the same for the same work as those in the rest of the country?

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** Mr. Chairman, my colleague is of course referring to the fact that federal MPs are all paid the same no matter where they come from. What I said earlier was that members of provincial parliaments receive different salaries. This can be proved. You only have to look at the difference between the salaries of MPs in Newfoundland, for instance, and Ontario. That is what I said.

Regarding regional rates of pay, I said that equity involves adapting to local circumstances and the local cost of living. That is what we are doing.

If we look at the case of the blue collar workers, the Atlantic region benefits enormously under the agreement we have now.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I just want it to be clear. It is as if the minister said to the House that MPs from Newfoundland or elsewhere were not paid the same. We are not at the provincial level. We are at the federal level.

An MP gets the same salary whether he comes from Newfoundland, New Brunswick or Vancouver. Do the people who work for the federal government not deserve the same salary, whether they come from Newfoundland or New Brunswick or Vancouver or Edmonton, no matter where throughout the country? I am talking about salary here, not expenses.

• (2835)

[*English*]

**Hon. Marcel Massé:** I have understood what the member has said.

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 3 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

[*English*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 4 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 5 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause agreed to)

[*English*]

(On clause 6)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Bill C-76, in Clause 6, be amended by replacing lines 14 to 16 on page 3 with the following:

“bargaining agent and the employees until the earlier of

(a) the day they become bound by a single collective agreement concluded by the employer and bargaining agent, and

(b) the day they become bound by the collective agreement referred to in subsection 7(3).”

[*Translation*]

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment agreed to)

[*English*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 6, as amended, carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 6, as amended, agreed to)

[*Translation*]

On clause 7

**Hon. Don Boudria (Government House Leader, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Bill C-76, in Clause 7, be amended by adding after line 3 on page 4 the following:

“(6) If the employer, the bargaining agent and the employees become bound by a single collective agreement concluded by the employer and the bargaining agent before terms and conditions of employment applicable to the employees are prescribed under subsection (1), subsections (1) to (5) and section 9 are deemed to be spent.”

[*English*]

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment agreed to)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Clause 7 be amended by adding after line 28 the following:

(c) the introduction of seven new pay zones to be reconfigured in the following way:

(i) Merge Zone 2 Atlantic with Zone 3 Quebec; (ii) Merge Zone 6 Manitoba, Zone 7 Saskatchewan and Zone 8 Alberta; (iii) Add Banff, Alberta to British Columbia.

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment negated)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Bill C-76, in clause 7, be amended by deleting lines 1 to 3 on page 4.

*Government Orders*

● (2840)

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment negatived)

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Bill C-76 in Clause 7, be amended by replacing lines 17 to 35 on page 3 with the following:

“7. (1) The President of the Privy Council shall, after the coming into force of this Act, appoint a mediator-arbitrator and refer to the mediator-arbitrator all matters that, at the time of the appointment, remain in dispute between the parties in relation to the conclusion of a new collective agreement.

(2) The mediator-arbitrator shall, within ninety days after being appointed,

(a) endeavour to mediate all the matters referred to in subsection (1) and to bring about an agreement between the parties on those matters;

(b) if the mediator-arbitrator is unable to do so, hear the parties on the matter, arbitrate the matter and render a decision;

(c) ensure that any agreement or decision referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) is in appropriate contractual language so as to allow its incorporation into the collective agreement; and

(d) report to the President of the Privy Council on the resolution of all such matters.

(2.1) The mediator-arbitrator has, with any modifications that the circumstances require,

(a) for the purposes of the mediation referred to in paragraph (2)(a), all the powers of conciliation commissioner under section 84 of the Canada Labour Code; and

(b) for the purposes of the arbitration referred to in paragraph (2)(b), all the powers and duties of an arbitrator under sections 60 and 61 of that Act.

(2.2) The time during which the mediator-arbitrator may perform the duties and exercise the powers under this section may be extended by the President of the Privy Council or by mutual consent of the employer and the bargaining agent.

(2.3) As of the day that the mediator-arbitrator reports to the President of the Privy Council under paragraph (2)(d), the collective agreement shall be deemed to be amended by the incorporation into it of

(a) any agreement resolving the matters in dispute between the employer and the union arrived at before, or pursuant to, mediation; and

(b) any decision of the mediator-arbitrator in respect of any matters that were arbitrated.

(2.4) The terms and conditions prescribed under subsections (1) to (2.3) constitute a single”

You have no doubt understood that, for the Bloc Québécois, it is essential that we come back to a process which provides for arbitration in the negotiations between the government and its employees. I think there is a monumental shortcoming here, and in the past the government has taken advantage of its employees. This

has been shown time and time again. It is high time that this situation be remedied.

Well aware of the good faith and the capabilities of the President of the Treasury Board, I am certain that he will implement this very fine recommendation. I know I am pushing it a little when I mention capabilities, but we will let the minister answer, as we know he is capable of acting in good faith if he wants to.

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment negatived)

● (2845)

[*English*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 7, as amended, carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 7, as amended, agreed to)

(On clause 8)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That, Bill C-76 in clause 8, be amended by replacing lines 7 and 8 on page 4 with the following:

“collective agreement referred to in paragraph 6(a) or the collective agreement referred to in subsection 7(3), whichever is applicable, has effect”.

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 8, as amended, carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 8, as amended, agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 9 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 9 agreed to)

*Government Orders**[English]***The Chairman:** Shall clause 10 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 10 agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 11 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 11 agreed to)

*[Translation]***The Chairman:** Shall clause 12 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 12 agreed to)

*[English]***The Chairman:** Shall clause 13 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 13 agreed to)

*[Translation]***The Chairman:** Shall clause 14 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 14 agreed to)

*[English]***The Chairman:** Shall clause 15 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 15 agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 16 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 16 agreed to)

*[Translation]***The Chairman:** Shall clause 17 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 17 agreed to)

*[English]***The Chairman:** Shall clause 18 carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 18 agreed to)

*[Translation]*

(On clause 19)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Government House Leader, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Bill C-76, in Clause 19, be amended by replacing lines 28 to 30 on page 7 with the following:

“bargaining agent and the employees until *the earlier of*

(a) the day they become bound by a collective agreement concluded by the employer and the bargaining agent, and

(b) *the day* they become bound by a collective agreement referred to in subsection 20(3).”**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment agreed to)

*[English]***Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That a new clause 19.1 be added as follows:

“That no agreement shall contain any differential rate of pay based on geography after January 1, 2001, with the exception of allowances made for hardship postings”.

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?**Some hon. members:** No.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment negatived)

• (2850)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 19, as amended, carry?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 19, as amended, agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 20 carry?

(On Clause 20)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Bill C-76, in clause 20, be amended by adding after line 20 on page 8 the following:

“(6) If the employer, the bargaining agent and employees become bound by a collective agreement concluded by the employer and the bargaining agent before terms and conditions of employment applicable to those employees are prescribed under subsection (1), subsections (1) to (5) and section 22 are deemed to be spent in respect to those employees”.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

*Government Orders*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment agreed to)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That clause 20 of Bill C-76 be amended by replacing lines 25 to 36 with the following:

“20(1) The Governor in Council shall implement the recommendations of the report of the Conciliation Board to the chairperson of the Public Service Staff Relations Board as delivered to the parties on March 19, 1999”.

If we have any real commitment to the whole process of free collective bargaining, if it has not fallen completely by the wayside, we will accept the recommendations of the conciliation officer. The government and the Public Service Alliance jointly went into conciliation in good faith thinking that the outcome would be recommendations by that board. The board made the presentation after considering all the facts put before it. It carefully looked at the idea of harmonizing the corrections officers with the RCMP, but it actually fell short of that. It therefore is not a very radical recommendation. It is very much a compromised position in the best spirit of a good conciliation officer's report.

We believe that we have put this whole thing to bed in a peaceful way and have sent a good message to the country. We all want to go to bed. We could stop short of this heavy-handed intervention of back to work legislation. We could have a negotiated settlement, or the next best thing to it, which is the implementation of the recommendations of the conciliation board.

I would ask for the support of the House for the motion.

• (2855)

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Chairman:** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Chairman:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Chairman:** In my opinion the nays have it.

(Amendment negated; Yeas, 66; Nays, 127)

[Translation]

(On clause 20)

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That, for reasons of conformity, Bill C-76, in Clause 20, be amended by deleting lines 18 to 20 on page 8.

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment negated)

• (2900)

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Bill C-76, in Clause 20, be amended by replacing lines 31 to 42 on page 7 and lines 1 to 7 on page 8 with the following:

“20. (1) The President of the Privy Council shall, after the coming into force of this Act, appoint a mediator-arbitrator and refer to the mediator-arbitrator all matters that, at the time of the appointment, remain in dispute between the parties in relation to the conclusion of a new collective agreement.

(2) The mediator-arbitrator shall, within ninety days after being appointed,

(a) endeavour to mediate all the matters referred to in subsection (1) and to bring about an agreement between the parties on these matters;

(b) if the mediator-arbitrator is unable to do so, hear the parties on the matter, arbitrate the matter and render a decision;

(c) ensure that any agreement or decision referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) is in appropriate contractual language so as to allow its incorporation into the collective agreement; and

(d) report to the President of the Privy Council on the resolution of all such matter.

(2.1) The mediator-arbitrator has, with any modifications that the circumstances require,

(a) for the purposes of the mediation referred to in paragraph (2)(a), all the powers of a conciliation commissioner under section 84 of the *Canada Labour Code*; and

(b) for the purposes of the arbitration referred to in paragraph (2)(b), all the powers and duties of an arbitrator under sections 60 and 61 of that Act.

(2.2) The time during which the mediator-arbitrator may perform the duties and exercise the powers under this section may be extended by the President of the Privy Council or by mutual consent of the employer and the bargaining agent.

(2.3) As of the day that the mediator-arbitrator reports to the President of the Privy Council under paragraph (2)(d), the collective agreement shall be deemed to be amended by the incorporation into it of

(a) any agreement resolving the matters in dispute between the employer and the union arrived at before, of pursuant to, mediation; and

(b) any decision of the mediator-arbitrator in respect of any matters that were arbitrated.

(3) The terms and conditions prescribed under subsections (1) to (2.3) constitute a new”

*Government Orders*

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment negatived)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 20, as amended, carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 20, as amended, agreed to)

[*English*]

(On Clause 21)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved:

That Bill C-76, in clause 21, be amended by replacing lines 24 and 25 on page 8 with the following:

“collective agreement referred to in paragraph 19(a) or a collective agreement referred to in subsection 20(3), whichever is applicable, has effect”.

**The Chairman:** Shall the amendment carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall 21, as amended, carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

(Clause 21, as amended, agreed to)

[*Translation*]

(On clause 22)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I move:

That Bill C-76, in Clause 20, be amended by adding to line 28, after “20(3)”, the following:

“or a master agreement reached between the employer and the bargaining agent”.

• (2905)

Mr. Chairman, this is an amendment that would make the bill more balanced.

Since it has just been decided that you can have either a collective agreement by special legislation or a negotiated agreement, this amendment is designed to ensure that the parties will be able to amend the agreement by mutual consent, not only in the case of the agreement provided for in the legislation but also in the

case of an agreement resulting from an understanding reached by the two parties.

Without the amendment, we are giving additional powers in the case of the agreement resulting from the special legislation, while an agreement resulting from bargaining could not be corrected in the future, could not be adjusted to new labour market realities as they develop.

This is an amendment that would improve the bill and is practical and functional.

**The Chairman:** Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Amendment negatived)

[*English*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 22 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 22 agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 23 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 23 agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 24 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 24 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 25 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 25 agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 26 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 26 agreed to)

[*English*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 27 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 27 agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall schedule 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders*

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Chairman:** Shall schedule 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

• (2910)

[*English*]

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

**The Chairman:** Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Title agreed to)

(Bill reported)

**Hon. Marcel Massé** moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 360*)

## YEAS

## Members

Adams  
Assad  
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Barnes  
Bélanger  
Bertrand  
Bonin  
Boudria  
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)  
Bryden  
Cannis  
Carroll  
Catterall

Alcock  
Augustine  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bennett  
Bevilacqua  
Bonwick  
Bradshaw  
Brown  
Calder  
Caplan  
Casson  
Cauchon

Chamberlain  
Charbonneau  
Clouthier  
Collenette  
Cullen  
Dhaliwal  
Discepolo  
Drouin  
Easter  
Epp  
Finlay  
Fry  
Galloway  
Goodale  
Grose  
Harb  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hilstrom  
Hubbard  
Iftody  
Jaffer  
Johnston  
Karetak-Lindell  
Keys  
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
Konrad  
Lastewka  
Leung  
Lowther  
MacAulay  
Malhi  
Manley  
Marchi  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
Mayfield  
McGuire  
McLellan (Edmonton West)  
McWhinney  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Mitchell  
Murray  
Nault  
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
Pagtakhan  
Paradis  
Penson  
Pettigrew  
Pillitteri  
Provenzano  
Redman  
Richardson  
Robillard  
Saada  
Scott (Fredericton)  
Serré  
Steckle  
Stewart (Northumberland)  
Szabo  
Thibeault  
Torsney  
Valeri  
Volpe  
White (North Vancouver)  
Wood —153

Chan  
Chatters  
Coderre  
Copp  
DeVillers  
Dion  
Dromisky  
Duhamel  
Eggleton  
Finestone  
Fontana  
Gagliano  
Godfrey  
Grey (Edmonton North)  
Guarnieri  
Harvard  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Hoepfner  
Ianno  
Jackson  
Jennings  
Jordan  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)  
Knutson  
Kraft Sloan  
Lee  
Lincoln  
Lunn  
Mahoney  
Maloney  
Manning  
Marleau  
Massé  
McCormick  
McKay (Scarborough East)  
McTeague  
Mifflin  
Minna  
Morrison  
Myers  
Normand  
O'Reilly  
Pankiw  
Parrish  
Peterson  
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
Proud  
Ramsay  
Reed  
Ritz  
Rock  
Schmidt  
Sekora  
Solberg  
Stewart (Brant)  
St-Julien  
Telegdi  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Whelan  
Wilfert

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott  
Alarie  
Bellehumeur  
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)  
Bigras  
Brien  
Cadman  
Crête  
Ablonczy  
Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Bergeron  
Blaikie  
Brisson  
Cardin

*Government Orders*

Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais	Dockrill
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Earle
Forseth	Gagnon
Gauthier	Gilmour
Girard-Bujold	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Godin (Châteauguay)	Gouk
Grewal	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Hardy	Hart
Harvey	Keddy (South Shore)
Lalonde	Laurin
Loubier	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mancini	Marceau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McNally	Ménard
Mercier	Meredith
Muise	Picard (Drummond)
Power	Price
Proctor	Rocheleau
Scott (Skeena)	Solomon
St-Hilaire	Stoffer
Strahl	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Vautour	Vellacott
Wasylcia-Leis	White (Langley—Abbotsford) —66

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Assadourian
Bulte	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Folco	Fournier
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Lefebvre	Longfield
Patry	Perron
Pratt	Sauvageau
Speller	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Venne

● (2920)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

[*English*]

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I want to inform the House and the people listening to us that if the division bells had rung for 15 minutes as usual, I would have been here to vote with my party.

**Mr. Paul Mercier:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have just arrived and I too would have voted with my party.

[*English*]

**Hon. Marcel Massé** moved that the bill, as amended, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will not make a speech. I would like to thank all the people in the House, especially those from my party who have gone through the night in order to support it. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I ask the concurrence of the House to share my time with the member for Wetaskiwin.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just to give the House notice, we tried so members are going to sit here for a while.

● (2925)

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, tonight I believe we are about to—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake has the floor. I am sure all members want to hear his speech.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

In the spirit of co-operation that we have tried to demonstrate this evening, perhaps the Chair would seek the same consent that it sought a while ago. I would invite you, Mr. Speaker, to invite the hon. member to seek the same consent again to see if it works better.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Speaker, I no longer ask for that consent. I would like to speak my full time.

We are debating Bill C-76, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services. The short title is cited as being the government services act, 1999.

Tonight we have had amendments in committee of the whole to put in place the tentative agreement that was announced tonight by the President of the Treasury Board between the government and the table two blue collar workers of the PSAC union.

I would like to note that we have had the bill along with a booklet setting out the details and the wages that are part of the back to work legislation. We attempted to get the details of the tentative agreement which is now part of Bill C-76. However, we were unable to get them tabled in the House even though we are expected to debate those very provisions. It is not particularly fun or appropriate to have to debate something when we do not have the exact facts in front of us, but we will debate what we have.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-76 is in two parts. The first part deals with the operational groups. Being the chief critic for agriculture, the one I am particularly concerned with is the grain weighers at the west coast ports. The second part deals with the corrections workers in our federal penitentiaries who are not designated essential.

Tonight we came to debate this back to work legislation in good faith and with good intentions. But tonight the government handled the issue of the surprise announcement of the tentative agreement in much the same way that I believe it has handled the negotiations with the unions over the past three months, with confusion, a lack of complete facts, and a spinning of the facts which left no trust and no faith in the process.

Back in 1993 when the Liberals took over as a majority government, many workers across the country were in a wage freeze. They knew at that time that the wage freeze would end. In 1997 the Public Service Alliance of Canada gave notice that bargaining would be taking place.

• (2930 )

At that time it would seem to me that it would be incumbent upon the negotiators, and I guess the ministers responsible for the negotiations, to set a timetable to ensure a bargaining agreement was in place at the expiry of the wage freeze. That would have had the advantage of there not being a strike because there would have been an agreement.

If there was no agreement and a sensible and reasonable timetable had been set out by the treasury board minister, he could have looked at back to work legislation at a much earlier point.

We ended up with a whole lot of innocent third party Canadians seriously being harmed by the negligence of the government to get the agreement in place and by the fault of a certain number of union negotiators not to work in conjunction with the government. I said earlier that if I were to apportion blame I would probably put about 75% on the government and 25% on the union.

Let us talk about what has happened in the past with regard to grain exports and the agriculture sector as it relates to stoppages due to wage negotiations. In the last 26 years there have been 12 work stoppages at west coast ports. We could think about that for a minute. Almost every two years there is a stoppage in grain movement to the coast.

We must remember that every time there is a stoppage of grain movement to the ships going to our customers overseas it costs our farmers money. It costs the union people who have to go out on strike pay and it hurts our reliability.

This year the Canadian Wheat Board has exports of a little over 50% of what they were a year ago. We are seeing the cumulative effect of our grain sales being considered unreliable to our customers overseas. We cannot apply a dollar and cents figure to that very easily. However we could look at the sales of our competitors, the

Americans for instance, which are down only about 10% as compared to ours being down close to 50%.

Of the 12 work stoppages we see that 9 of them involved grain and 7 of those involved back to work legislation specifically because of grain stoppages. Both the Sims commission and the west coast port inquiry identified grain disruptions as a catalyst for back to work legislation in labour disputes at west coast ports.

I do not happen to have the chronology of the House as to who was in power over the different years, but I happen to know they involved the Right Hon. Lester Pearson, the Right Hon. Pierre Trudeau and the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker who came from my home province and was just one fine fellow.

This situation should not have been any surprise to the government sitting here today in 1999. There are 26 years of history. I look at the other side of the House and I know there are members over there who have been here for at least 28 to 30 years. I believe the Prime Minister has something like a 34 year record. If the leader on the other side cannot remember the harm, the damage and the tremendous number of stoppages of grain movement to the west coast, there is no hope of a negotiated wage settlement being done in a proper manner, on schedule, and in time to prevent the harm and the hurt by farmers.

• (2935 )

The Western Grain Elevator Association is representative of Sask Pool, Agricore, a new grain company out west, United Grain Growers and Cargill. These grain company foresaw major problems with their exports of non-wheat board grains and wheat board grains that they were handling on behalf of the board.

On January 27, 1999 they sent a letter to the treasury board minister and to the Prime Minister identifying that a big dark cloud was looming on the horizon, a cloud of disruption, a cloud of trade and losses to farmers, and a cloud of loss of exports of grain in particular. I do not think the government bothered reading that letter too much because it went ahead with its negotiating plan which resulted in the mess we see here today.

Along with my colleagues I had to force the government into an emergency debate to get this movement going. What did we see? We saw trickery on the part of the government up to the very last moment when it brought in a surprise tentative agreement at a late hour.

The treasury board president tonight in committee of the whole identified that he would consider the possibilities of doing an investigation and determining what were the actual costs to farmers as a result of the loss of exports during the strike by grain weighers. We should hold him to that. Can we imagine the billions of dollars in loss over the last 26 years, not thousands or millions, that my grandfather and my father and the grandfathers and fathers of many people in the House suffered due to a lack of action by governments of the day? The disappointment is that the present government

*Government Orders*

cannot learn from the mistakes of the past, some of which were committed by present sitting members, I might point out.

Who will pay for the losses of these farmers? When we look at the Canadian Wheat Board and its loss of sales due to the snow storms of 1996-997, we see that the Canadian Wheat Board went after the railways. It negotiated a settlement with CN. We will never know how much it got. Then later it achieved a \$15 million settlement with CPR because farmers were innocent third parties. The railways saw fit to move products and commodities other than grain and gave preference to commodities like coal, sulphur and whatever. As a result there was a liability on behalf of the railroads to the wheat board and therefore to farmers. Tomorrow and on future days I will be calling upon the wheat board and the government to identify the costs to farmers and to compensate them for those losses.

The government brought forth the agriculture income disaster assistance plan. The agriculture minister bears full responsibility for that plan which went out to farmers. We found from the initial reaction of farmers who filled out those forms that the plan would not help them very much when it came to financial compensation.

• (2940)

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I fail to see a quorum in the House. I wonder if you would take a count.

*And the count having been taken:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** We have a quorum.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Speaker, getting back to the commitment to compensate the farmers, it is absolutely vital because of the financial situation they are in which gave rise to this emergency debate.

If there is financial hurt out there, how can the government not consider compensating farmers for financial loss caused by the government and the Public Service Alliance of Canada negotiators? It is only fair. It is only right. Why should farmers suffer due to the actions of other people?

There is nothing in Bill C-76 that will prevent this situation from happening again on the expiry of the tentative agreement, if it is ratified. We will see the same old routine of the last 26 years. In about two years time we will see another strike, another crisis, another back to work piece of legislation, and another loss of a \$100 million to farmers. There is no hope from the government as to its future commitments in two years.

Maybe the election will come along before then and I will walk over to the other side to take care of agriculture issues along with my compatriots in the Reform Party. We will see how that works out in the future.

We have the opportunity today, not in two years time, for the government to put final offer selection arbitration into the legislation and into the negotiations it has a tentative agreement on. In all the comments of the President of the Treasury Board in this regard he never said that he had tried to get that back into the legislation for the 70 grain weighers in particular. It was kind of like the official opposition brought it up so maybe now he would think about it.

Farmers and other Canadians need a lot more than he will think about it and try to do something. They need it to be put into legislation. It could have been in Bill C-76. It could have been in the amended Bill C-26, but it will not be part of the legislation.

We have covered the costs and the idea of final offer selection arbitration. Another part that has not be thought of is that maybe the 70 grain weighers should be considered an essential service. They have held up 115,000 farmers who tried to ship their grain to the west coast. It would seem to me they are a monopoly service. They are essential to the well-being of a significant chunk of the population of the country.

Over the next few months before this parliament recesses we will see that there will be a lot of pressure from the opposition side to move in that direction to protect the farmers. We will be looking for support from the government side to bring that about.

• (2945)

The treasury board minister said that the reason we needed this legislation was because between now and the point of ratification there might be another strike. The tentative agreement did not really cover a lot of the things that needed to be covered, including trying to have the no strike provisions put in so it did not have to continue on with hammering the democracy of this parliament with closure.

I heard the hon. House leader from this side speak earlier about the fact that this government has used closure 50 times between the 35th parliament and this one today. This closure that we are speaking on today is the 50th. If that is democracy, it is democracy being abused.

Closure is the kind of legislation that should be available, but it should be used more along the lines of the notwithstanding clause as opposed to being used more in the way of the government dictatorially trying to get its way in this parliament. We have seen that abuse tonight and that is why we are sitting here at this early hour of the day speaking about Bill C-76.

We went through hours of amendments, some of which were very good. My friends in the Bloc, in fact, brought up the final offer selection arbitration. I thought that maybe that amendment would be one that would really improve this bill. What did we get? We saw the government members yell that great amendment down. As

*Government Orders*

a result, we now continue on with this bill without that key part in it.

We have in this bill a requirement about the grain that is mostly from western Canada. However, I would like to point out that we are also going to be talking very shortly about grain from central Canada. I speak particularly of Ontario, because I am a little more familiar with it. The seaway is going to be opening up. The terminals at Thunder Bay are going to be opening up and there are going to be boatloads of grain going down the seaway and out to our customers on the other side of the Atlantic to South America.

We know there are a few Liberal members of parliament who represent the seaway area in Ontario. Maybe we will see a lot more action to make sure that the seaway stays open and that those jobs and those farmers in Ontario are well taken care of.

Why could that not also have happened for the western farmers? This government is supposed to be taking care of all Canadians, but it seems that it likes to take care of itself.

Earlier today and yesterday we heard serious allegations about the Prime Minister in regard to golf courses and hotels in his own riding. These allegations border on a conflict of interest problem.

We have the second reason that the Treasury Board says we have to have this legislation here. It is because the grain has to keep moving. I certainly agree that the grain has to keep moving. This legislation is the only way that is going to happen. As a result, I am going to vote for this legislation because it is that important.

Western farmers cannot be held to pay for ruinous type legislation and ruinous type negotiations in labour-management talks that this government seems to be bringing forth all the time.

● (2950 )

The third reason had to do with the CXs. The CXs are the corrections workers, and I have corrections workers at Stony Mountain penitentiary in my riding. I have spoken to some of the union workers there and they are not a very happy bunch. They have been mistreated in previous negotiations with the government and they obviously have not experienced good faith negotiations in this round of talks.

In the Stony Mountain penitentiary we have an educational and training centre, not only for the guards and the union operators, but also for the prisoners who are housed there.

We had a situation over the past few years where all of a sudden the contracts for that training happened to end up with a group of educators based primarily in Ontario. At one time our local school boards managed to get those contracts.

Once again we see government interference. It is a strange method. I have not exactly had time to look into this, but I am giving the government notice tonight that I intend to look into it and determine just what it was that managed to have our local school boards not be able to win any of these contracts.

All of these things add up to why these corrections workers were in the past, and still are, unhappy with the negotiations. That is why we once again have this legislation being brought in to force them back to work.

I do not know why they have to be forced back to work. The Treasury Board minister has informed us that there are about 500 of these people who are not covered as essential workers, possibly as many as 600. Union negotiators have told me that there are 720. That is part of the problem in dealing with the government and I appreciate that maybe the negotiators for the unions had the same problem in getting hard facts and commitments.

As another example of a lack of commitment, I have been arguing since early December when the Estey report came out to get a commitment from the transportation minister and the Canadian Wheat Board minister that the report actually was important, that it had to be dealt with and that it should be moved along.

I tried to get this commitment through letters to the ministers and inquiries during question period to try to get them to move along.

I was part of an industry group that was trying to move these ministers along and get a commitment from them. As of this day we still have no commitment as to where they stand on it, whether we will move ahead, move backwards or move sideways.

That is the same lack of commitment that we see in trying to negotiate these wage agreements with the various unions around the country. In particular, I am speaking out on behalf of the corrections workers, some of whom are my neighbours and friends, and in fact I would like to say that they should not have been included in this back to work legislation. The jobs of the 500 to 600 workers they are talking about could quite easily have been done by the other thousands of employees at the corrections offices.

If they had set up pickets, it well may have turned out that other union workers would not have crossed their picket lines. Once again, we would have the same situation that we have with the grain weighers on the west coast. When they put up a picket line the other unions would not cross it.

● (2955 )

Now we see that the government understands that this is a problem. In regard to the corrections workers, it has built into Bill C-76 the fact that while this agreement is on the go, and once it is ratified, there will not be any strike action and the work will have to continue on.

*Government Orders*

It was vital to get the grain moving. We had to ensure that the western farmers were covered, as well as the west coast workers. However, in fairness, there should have been a negotiated settlement and we should have continued on with the negotiated settlement with these corrections workers. Instead they will be arbitrarily forced back to work if they go out on strike, which I assume they will if this is not passed.

We are going to see the same thing with the corrections workers that we saw with the postal workers. We are going to see them 16, 17 or 24 months down the road with no contract. With the grain weighers, in two years, which is the average before another stoppage comes along, we will be in the House again with back to work legislation and a big crisis. That could happen before the next election if this bill is not improved.

I will have to check how the House works with regard to the technicalities, but I would like to think we could move some amendments tomorrow at third reading stage that would bring in final offer selection arbitration that we so desperately need in this legislation.

It is time that I pass along to the next speaker, who will no doubt be saying a lot of the same things I am saying. I have pointed out clearly where this government has fallen down. The people of Canada will know it. The western farmers will know it. The unions will know it. One last attempt to put in final offer selection arbitration will be made.

I am going to support this bill to get these workers back to work and to keep them on the job just because of the drastic consequences there are to the western Canadian economy and the whole Canadian economy due to the lack of productivity, and for the individual farmer trying to make a go of it this spring with all the vagaries of agricultural life, such as drought, too much rain, floods and all of those things.

This government has really turned the House off tonight by the way it has handled the closure motion and by bringing in the tentative agreement at the last minute.

I would now ask that the member for Wetaskiwin be permitted to speak in the time remaining.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Is there unanimous agreement?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the House for its co-operative spirit in allowing me time to have the last seven minutes of debate on third reading.

We have just gone through a very arduous and painful exercise in the House and I do not think any of us are looking forward to repeating this any time soon, but the truth of the matter is that we are destined to repeat it. As my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake

pointed out, it might not be all that long until we do have to repeat this. With the record we have seen since we came here in 1993, this is a recurring dream. It is like the summer reruns. They happen over and over again.

• (3000 )

Time and time again we have to face the unpalatable and drastic task of legislating some group back to work. I am totally at a loss as to know who is the winner in a situation like this. It is certainly not the members of this House. It is certainly not the government as the employer and certainly it is not the employees. There are no winners.

Why do we continue to put ourselves through this sort of task when it is not necessary? Some third party always suffers in these instances. A party that has absolutely nothing to do with the conflict that is taking place, the labour strife, suffers just the same.

My colleague from Selkirk talked about agriculture. This is about more than the farmers. The economy of Canada is quite dependent upon agriculture. Agriculture is still one of the largest employers in the Canadian economy. The spin-off effect from agriculture is huge.

We have all talked about the importance of our good name and reputation as a dependable supplier of goods in the world market. Yet we find miraculously on the last day at the eleventh hour the minister comes into the House and says that wonder of wonders, they have reached a tentative deal.

It makes us wonder just how far apart the parties were in the first place. It makes us wonder whether or not we were misled. It makes us wonder whether there was a deal in the offing as we were gathering to consider this legislation. It makes us wonder whether both parties were utilizing the grain. We cannot say that labour knows that grain is a flash point, that it is a hot button. The government is certainly aware of that as well. It knows that we cannot hold up the grain shipments. We know that it is going to create action, action that none of us are going to enjoy.

The reason I say there is no reason to go through this is that we have a method available to us, if only the government would choose to implement it. I am speaking specifically to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Labour. We need to implement final offer selection arbitration so that these matters can be settled amicably. We have all talked about how a negotiated settlement is far better than an imposed settlement. I think we all agree with that.

In the spirit of final offer selection arbitration, I would like to move the following motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-76, an act to provide for the resumption and continuation of government services, be not now read a third time but be referred back to committee of the whole for

*Government Orders*

the purpose of reconsidering all of the clauses with the view to provide final offer arbitration as an alternative to legislating agreements or workers back to work.

• (3005)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to know whether I must speak to the amendment immediately, or whether I speak as planned in my turn on—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The debate is on the amendment.

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** In that context, then, I advise you immediately that I shall be sharing my time with my colleague for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Does the hon. member for Trois-Rivières have the unanimous consent of the House to share his time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their understanding.

I would like to begin by thanking all my colleagues for their very significant moral and physical support throughout this long debate which, to all intents and purposes, has dragged on since last Thursday. All staff in the offices of the whip, the leader and the research unit have been of invaluable support throughout the debate.

Returning to the merits of the question, there are two categories of worker particularly affected to which I wish to draw attention.

And, before I forget, I also thank my administrative assistant, Lucien-Pierre Bouchard, who has, as usual, with the greatest of good will, been of inestimable help to me, especially intellectually.

• (3010)

There are, therefore, two categories of public servants affected by the measures taken by their employer, who is also the legislator.

First of all, obviously, I have in mind the correctional services officers, who are once again being pushed around. Yet these are the workers who experience, on behalf of society, what might be termed the decline of the American empire. Their working conditions continue to deteriorate, their work pressures are continually on the increase because of our overcrowded prisons and the risks of contracting serious illnesses—AIDS among others—from the slightest physical contact in which blood may be exchanged.

We know that these people are living the increasingly acute problems that our society is faced with, a bit like the schools, sadly.

We can only hope that the government will perhaps be more understanding with this group of workers, who do not deserve to be treated the way they have been for years, because they do provide services, in dreadful circumstances, day in and day out. We must be aware of that, and try to imagine what it is like to face such dreadful working conditions constantly, doing a job that probably no one else would want.

So, it is incumbent on the employer, the President of the Treasury Board, the Department of Justice or of the Solicitor General to take all necessary measures to ensure that these people are treated with more dignity.

There is another group of employees that I want to talk about, that is the members of coast guard, because I am the Bloc Québécois critic in this area.

I had the privilege of meeting them some weeks ago, in Quebec City. They are very courteous and very competent and they not only provide great services to the public, in particular to the recreational boaters, but they are also very important as a group for the economy, some carrying out important rescue duties on the St. Lawrence River. Furthermore, and this is what I want to underline and I would appreciate it if the President of the Treasury Board also took this into account, these people have made a considerable effort in terms of the restrictions, the downsizing and the restructuring in the federal public service.

These people have accepted to merge services that are not necessarily compatible, and to take training courses because their tasks have changed over the years. Through new operational procedures, they have made it possible for the Canadian government to enhance productivity and save \$13 million a year. As a reward for the sacrifices they have made, they were promised special treatment when the great negotiations came around. But, in actual fact, these promises have not been kept.

They are being treated just like everybody else. They do not have any special status in the ongoing negotiations. I wish the President of the Treasury Board would pay attention, because these people are very deserving in view of their generous attitude towards their employer. They have been co-operative, innovative, creative, responsive, and they have made substantial savings possible in the operations of the department.

Today, the door is being slammed in their faces, when a commitment, at least a moral commitment, had apparently been given to them by their immediate supervisors that the government would reward them in due course. But nothing has been done.

This is not a big group. There are maybe 350 to 400 people who, we are told, have had an exemplary behaviour as servants of the state and of the public. But today, they receive the same harsh treatment from that giant employer, the Government of Canada, which is unable to make the distinctions that sometimes need to be made.

*Government Orders*

• (3015)

To come back in a more general way over this day, which is a historic one, once again, I have to say that every day we adopt special back to work legislation is a sad day, historically, a black day in parliamentary history.

To better understand what is going on, we have to give some background to indicate where today's back to work legislation fits into the strategy of the Canadian government. Therefore, we have to go back to 1982.

It can never be overstated that we are dealing here with a type of behavior that is deeply rooted in ideology. We are in the midst of a neo-liberal trend, where individuals like Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Reagan had all the latitude in the world, in the new global order, to set the course, for which we are now paying the consequences.

However, it had all started earlier, when the powers of governments began to be limited in order to force them to curb their spending and give up more and more of their responsibilities. Important measures were taken during the 1980s and the 1990s that led to governments giving up their responsibilities and getting rid of thousands of employees, about 55,000 employees apparently.

As for giving up responsibilities, I will give an example.

To cut its costs and do its share in a collective effort to reduce costs or to expand the Consolidated Revenue Fund, as we all know, the coast guard has set a new fee structure, which was imposed arbitrarily on users, especially icebreaking service users.

The Bloc Québécois has played a key role in bringing the government to show more compassion and wisdom. It made to government back off significantly in order that users, and above all foreign users, keep wanting to do business with Canada, in particular with Quebec and Montreal, at a reasonable cost.

Now an aspect that is less known, a natural phenomenon, or in any event one resulting from the way we use the St. Lawrence River is bank erosion. Previously, the riverbanks were under the Coast Guard's responsibility.

There were complaints about erosion. Now there are very serious problems. It seems that, in some regions in Quebec, 15 feet a year are lost to erosion. This is a lot. Over three to five years, it is 60 feet of land that disappear due to erosion.

Previously, there was an organization that felt concerned, and that was the coast guard. But now, the coast guard does not care. Apparently, there was devolution of this responsibility to municipalities. To turn to the Government of Quebec is out of the question; it would be too embarrassing. But municipalities do not have money, they do not have a budget for that, and everyone is passing the buck. Municipal taxpayers, including private ones, could see their own property eroded year after year with nobody in

the country feeling concerned. In the past, however, these people were looked after.

This is part of the so-called rationalization, and it is a result of the fact that employees were cut, a lot of employees were cut—55,000 of them—and now we are obliged to let go of responsibilities previously appropriately assumed by the public service.

I know that, in my region, Trois-Rivières, in the riding of Champlain, huge rocks were used for back filling so in the spring there would no longer be the disastrous erosion.

• (3020)

So, this is a very practical example of what happens when the public service is attacked rather blindly and much more ideologically than claimed. It all happens without discussion, vision or transparency. They administer Monday to Friday, biweekly. Years and months go by. The next day it rains. Out they go in it. There are no plans. No accounts are given. They say neither where they are going nor from whence they came.

**An hon. member:** We have had it.

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau:** It is just beginning. The minister responsible for regional development should get used to it, because if there is one department that is the subject of all our criticism, it is his.

They like to attend all sorts of meetings to sing the praises of Canadian federalism as part of the government's only strategy, which is to be visible on the eve of a new election. They excel with public coffers, as we saw recently in Trois-Rivières, where for \$200,000 they were after rather abusive things in terms of visibility. This is the only real concern of the government.

In 1982, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, there was special back to work legislation, an intrusion into the field of labour relations involved in existing collective agreements. It is disgraceful.

It means that negotiating in good faith has become the exception for this employer, who also makes the laws. It has become the exception when the exception should be—and common sense tells us this—that the government, at times, when a situation becomes too difficult and the public interest is at stake, would resort to its lawmaking powers.

Today, it prefers to legislate rather than negotiate. That is typical of this government.

The farmers know it and the International Labour Organization knows it too. It is not for nothing that the ILO has on four occasions blamed the government, Progressive Conservative or Liberal, it makes no difference. For those who are unaware, the ILO is made up not just of governments and unions, but also of bosses, the good old friends of this government.

*Government Orders*

When one thinks of the Liberal empire in Canada, one immediately thinks of the healthy campaign funds that keep it going. So when these influential people criticize the federal government, it is no small matter and should be a source of concern for the President of the Treasury Board. As a good manager, he should be worried. He should be embarrassed today to have behaved like certain of his predecessors and taken the extreme action he is still taking today to force people back to work.

The President of the Treasury Board and the minister responsible for regional development are not the only ones to have shown their true colours. We could mention the Minister of Human Resources Development and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, but especially the government House leader right now. We mentioned him in our first speech. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is a good example. Historically, he has always been very aggressive.

The government House leader has been like that throughout his career. That was how he was seen by the Prime Minister in the days of the rat pack. He made a name for himself in labour disputes, even supporting PSAC members on picket lines. What has become of his motivation today? What has become of his convictions? They are nowhere in evidence.

• (3025)

He is now in charge of doing the government's dirty work, while he used to unequivocally support the positions of the unions, which look a lot like the positions the union is still defending nowadays.

Let me conclude, much to the relief of the two stooges, by once again urging the President of the Treasury Board to take some responsibility for the consequences these so-called negotiations and the passing of special legislation will have.

Can the President of the Treasury Board imagine what the atmosphere in the workplace will be like day in and day out in the departments, now that the government has again use its special power, which is becoming the rule, now that both management and workers have again realized that the government has shown them no respect and no recognition and has treated them badly. It will be nasty.

I used to be a Quebec public servant, and things can get very nasty when decisions come from on high, when arbitrary and drastic measures are taken, as they were today, and especially when workers realize that their employer, instead of showing them some respect, would rather make their lives miserable.

I am convinced that the people in the Outaouais, the federal public servants in the Outaouais whose political stripes are well known, will remember this when the time comes. And that time may come much sooner than we expect.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Madam Speaker, you seem to be full of energy this morning, just like me. First of all, I will begin by repeating that something extremely sad—

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask for unanimous consent of the House so that the members who unfortunately could not participate in the vote taken about an hour ago at the report stage of Bill C-76 could have their names recorded.

I will read the names of these members and I would ask for unanimous consent of the House so that they could be recorded as having voted.

These parliamentarians are the hon. member for Saint-Jean, the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm, the hon. member for Rosemont, the hon. member for Témiscamingue, the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, and the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

I ask that they be recorded as members having voted against the government's motion at report stage. I will submit a copy to the clerk.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Is there unanimous consent to allow the Bloc members whose names have just been read to be considered as having voted?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Madam Speaker, in spite of the fact that a new day is dawning on Parliament Hill, you can easily see that we are still very much in the gloom, because this is an extremely dark day for democracy.

No parliamentarian deserving of the name can be proud of what has occurred in the last few hours. What happened? The government imposed special legislation on workers, not just ordinary workers, but people who carry out their duties under extremely difficult conditions.

• (3030)

I am referring of course to correctional officers, who work in prisons. Their right to a negotiated collective agreement was denied, rejected and trampled on. There will be a price to pay for this.

This government has a rather ambiguous attitude. When it comes to equity, the general behaviour of government members is somewhat like *The Silence of the Lambs*. They are silent. They are not there when the time comes to act in fairness. However, when the time comes to act repressively, like a dictator and with a total lack

of consideration for our most democratic values, I must admit that—and I will name him, even though I have some affection for him—the government House leader is among those most despicably involved in this repressive process.

We will remember that. We will remember this day in March, when the government stomped on people's most democratic rights.

Before going into the full significance of today's vote, I must thank those who have been with us through this night. I am referring to the guards, the library staff, the cafeteria staff, our support staff, particularly Jean-François Lafleur who was extremely helpful.

Those people showed strength in adversity because they knew that with the Bloc Québécois they could build democracy. They have, through the years, allowed the voice of those who believe in negotiation to be heard in parliament.

I cannot find the words to say how sad and disappointed we are. All the more so since in our everyday contacts with the President of the Treasury Board, we found that he was rather a pleasant person to deal with. How could this man fall into this trap, which is the first step towards a lack of democracy, which will lead him to the worst abuses?

Nothing in his personality inclines him to such behaviour, except for a lack of vigilance we do not accept. We refuse, as members of Parliament, to be required, in 1999, to deny workers who fulfil an essential task in our society their rights. I have the greatest respect for workers of the public service, and even more for those who, downstream or upstream, deal with organised crime. I cannot understand why the President of the Treasury Board acted the way he did.

A few hours ago, he informed the House that an agreement had been reached with representatives of one of the bargaining tables. On the basis of what logic and for what reason did the minister not give negotiations another chance? Would it not have been possible to reach a negotiated agreement in the next few days?

There will be a price to pay for arrogance. Intolerance also has its price. This government cannot behave the way it does without exposing itself to being punished by the voters. It will be, and it will have deserved what it gets.

The saddest thing is to see how some government members are pharisees, whitened sepulchres. When they were in opposition, they could not find words strong enough to condemn those abuses and it was quite something to see them praising the values of dialogue, commitment and negotiation.

• (3035)

Do members think that our fellow citizens believe this kind of utterly hypocritical rhetoric, where, when they are on one side of

### *Government Orders*

the House, they say one thing, and when they are on the other, they say something else?

This is not the kind of political game we, in the Bloc Québécois, want to play. We sovereignists have too much respect for the institutions of parliament to accept such a behaviour.

I would like to say a few words about the member for Outremont who, first of all, is a lawyer and has a great deal of respect for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As a member of parliament who has a good knowledge of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and who knows that it is part of the modern Canadian identity, how can he accept that, today, the government is trampling on one of its principles, the right to negotiate one's working conditions? There is one word to describe that kind of behaviour and that word is pharisee.

What is really at stake here? Since it was elected in 1993, the government has been utterly incapable of showing respect for public servants. The federal public servants are the people who deliver services to our fellow citizens every day. They do so under trying conditions. As we know, they are doing it under trying conditions because of our ageing population, because of pressure on the public service, because our fellow citizens are living longer and need services more frequently.

These people are not paid a lot, and their demands are hardly excessive. Often they join the public service because they want to serve. On the darker side, the track record of the government is one of compulsive, chronic, recurrent and sustained incapacity to negotiate with its employees.

I say it again, the Liberals will pay for it at the next election because, in a few years, when we go over their track record we will remember their arrogance and intolerance. Again, the public can count on the opposition, the Bloc Québécois, as an efficient ally to fight against this kind of behaviour, which is unacceptable in a democratic country.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Contempt will be short lived.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** As my colleague for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans said, contempt will be short lived, even in ministerial garb.

This being said, I would like to show, through a number of examples, what this government is like in action, what makes it tick.

Is this government the one that passed pay equity legislation? Could a government member, could someone across the way rise and say "Yes, on the issue of pay equity, we delivered the goods"? *The Silence of the Lamb*. They cannot because they have not done it.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Despite all the pressure, they have not moved on the issue; we will remember this. The obscure screams of

*Government Orders*

the famous backbenchers will not change a thing. And the screams of the obscure backbenchers will not change a thing.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

• (3040)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Order, please. I cannot hear our colleague who is addressing the House. I would ask you to please join me in listening to what he has to say.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Madam Speaker, you would do this House a big favour if you would provide a sedative, at the expense of the opposition if necessary, to the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, and I assure her that this is just a friendly remark.

On the issue of pay equity, this government's record is not good. But let me talk about another issue where, when the Liberals were on this side of the House—and I am thinking of the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel—they could not speak loud enough to criticize the government. That issue was anti-scab legislation. All the members of the rat pack were mobilized on this issue.

Can somebody tell us where we are today on this issue? Do we have in the Canada Labour Code provisions similar to those that exist in Quebec? The answer is a shameful no.

Let us look at this government's record.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Madam Speaker, I would ask the members to remain calm because there is nothing I want more than to enlighten this House, especially government members.

The member for Trois-Rivières, whom the House should applaud for his excellent work—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** An enlightened spirit like few others on that side, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières reminded us earlier that, in recent years, nearly 50,000 jobs were eliminated in the public service. And the President of the Treasury Board was the killer of those jobs.

Was that done democratically? Was that done through negotiations? Was that done with respect for the workers? No. They were forced to take severance packages that often fall short of their expectations.

The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell must not forget that this behaviour is shameful and that the government should repent.

I also want to address another stigma. I feel so strongly about that that I have trouble talking about it. I am referring to the employment insurance reform. Where was the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine when the reform was brought down?

The Silence of the Lambs. Where was she when it became increasingly difficult to qualify for maternity benefits? Where was she when the qualifying conditions for first time workers became tougher? Had it not been for the Bloc Québécois, this would have gone unnoticed. That is the reality.

I cannot say it strongly enough, it is a sad day. It is a very sad day, indeed. You have before you a concerned and sorrowful man. Rest assured that we will never accept a situation where workers, the very ones who are building this society and giving the best of themselves, are deprived of their collective bargaining rights.

Let it be known that all the members for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell of this world will not be able to stifle the Bloc Québécois.

• (3045)

Among the great international tools used for the promotion of human rights, we know very well that the right to collective bargaining is at the very top of the list of rights that are recognized. I know that certain government members went to law school. How could we, as parliamentarians, accept today that workers be denied this right? We cannot accept it, we will not accept it, and we will always be there to fight that battle.

I would like to talk about another reality, a reality that the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel must surely understand. The member offers an image of great stability, but the boundaries of his riding are more unsettled.

Let us talk about poverty. Let us talk about what the government has managed to do concerning the issue of poverty. Where is the just society promised by Pierre Elliott Trudeau when we know that 20% of Canadians, due to government policies, are getting poorer?

Who has solutions to propose for the fight against poverty? Certainly not members on the government side. I do not even want to look at them. Who has solutions to offer? The Bloc Québécois has. Our colleague from Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques fought to improve the employment insurance system. My colleague from Shefford had also interesting things to say on this issue.

In a few hours, I will be tabling an anti-poverty bill. What is in an anti-poverty bill? I would appreciate some sign of support for such a bill.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** This bill will call for the inclusion of social condition among prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. The member for Outremont studied law, but that is not where he spent most of his time, because I am told he skipped his social law courses. He took criminal law, was very keen on business law, but he was not there for social law.

Had he taken the social law courses, he would know that social condition led, in Quebec, to the improvement of the Quebec

charter of human rights, the most thorough legislation in Canada, which has contained provision on social condition since 1977. This has led to a significant improvement in the situation of people on social welfare, single parents and persons with disabilities.

Imagine, as we speak, there are eight provinces with provisions on social condition, and the federal government is one of the last bastions permitting discrimination on such grounds. We will not tolerate that. I would hope that the member for Ottawa—Vanier will join with the Bloc Quebecois to speak with an enlightened voice for once.

We have a whole lot of solutions to propose on the subject of poverty. All we ask is a little attention. We do not think this is too much.

I would like those watching us this morning, with their orange juice and toast, to know that we have been sitting since Tuesday evening at 5:00 p.m., that we have been the voice of the workers, and that we will not let these people be deprived of the right to collective bargaining. We will continue to be this voice in Parliament.

We know that you cannot count on the ministers, and I do not pay them tribute.

• (3050)

[English]

**Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it would be a lie for me to say that I am happy to be standing here in this early morning light trying to convince this Liberal government from riding roughshod again over the backs of Canadian workers.

Why is it that it always seems to be the Liberal government that has the most difficulty with the working people of this country organizing and standing up for their rights as equal citizens of this great country? The Liberals, despite their lofty rhetoric, have always been the first to turn their guns, in some cases quite literally, on Canadian workers.

I look to my own island of Cape Breton and talk to people of my grandparents' generation. They remember the strikes of the twenties, thirties and forties. They remember a Liberal government that sent in soldiers to guard the property of British mine owners against the men who had worked and died in the pits, and that ordered Canadian soldiers to shoot Canadian workers on June 11, 1925.

It is a transforming experience for any community to have the army that is sworn to protect you ride down your city streets with guns drawn and blazing. Because you are a worker, because you refuse to stand the gaff of a government and society that treats you

### *Government Orders*

as a slave to foreign capitalists, you are now an enemy of the country you love.

Perhaps this is why Cape Bretoners have maintained a long and honourable tradition of union activism and have always been quick to speak out against oppression and exploitation.

It is that constituents from my riding support the Public Service Alliance of Canada members, the men and women who have in their hands the fragile structure of our public service; our health care system, our parks and national monuments and the agencies that connect Canadians to their government.

Over the past seven years these people have been on the front line as the Liberals here in Ottawa sold off the family silver to pay off the deficit. Not that that fight was not an important or necessary one. But why is it that the Liberal Party always seems to think that crises must be solved by attacking the middle class and working people? Why is that when they are presented with any dilemma they feel that they, the members of the private gentlemen's clubs of Ottawa, should create policies which the working people from coast to coast to coast are forced to pay for?

It is not the members of the government who have had to endure the cuts to health care. They have not had to endure the effects of their cuts to government departments where regular Canadians must often wait weeks before their case is dealt with by a stressed and overworked PSAC member. They have not been forced to see the effects of their cuts on their children in the schools. Not so for most children who endure leaking roofs, old books, and teachers whose class sizes go up and up as their colleagues are fired or pushed into early retirement.

No, it is a remarkable thing about the Liberal Party, this ability to hurt regular citizens and then to tell us that it is all for our own good. When banks pay not one penny in income tax, a single mom with a low paying job pays thousands. But that is for her own good. Telling a senior citizen that because of cutbacks his drug plan will not be processed on time, that is for his own good.

It is strange that the Liberal Party is viewed as the party of the centre in this country because when I look at its history I see a party that, when necessary, takes good ideas from wherever it can find them. I see a party that on its own has never had a good idea, that has never had any ideas beyond the absolute necessity of winning election after election, principles, policies and decency be damned.

I come from Nova Scotia where we have been cursed by a system of political patronage that could compete with the southern United States. We are used to having our roads paved if we vote the right way and having them torn up if we vote the wrong way. We are used to seeing the graveyards send ringing endorsements of Liberal candidates. For Liberals in my province, short term jobs with a Liberal contractor, just enough to qualify for EI, are the Liberals' ideas of good social programs.

*Government Orders*

That is why I have a tough time stomaching this government's endless speeches about how it is helping Canadians do this and that, how it has made life so much better for all of us, and how we should be grateful for the stewardship it has provided us.

Should my constituent who was refused federal housing assistance be happy for the piece of plastic sheeting that she uses as a roof for her trailer? Or the man who needs to decide between paying the rent that keeps him off the streets or paying for the drugs that keep him alive, should he be happy for that?

• (3055)

No doubt many people are happy with this government, the people that are in the top 1% income bracket who run the corporations and own the banks that give such huge donations to the Liberal Party every year. Those people who think Brian Mulroney was too progressive and too tough on business are thrilled with this government. Of course they are.

Instead of government of the people by the people for the people, we have a government of the people by the Liberals for the Liberals. They just cannot stand it when we the people say that we are fed up with that kind of government, when we want something that is for all the people, not just those fortunate enough to inherit fortunes from the shipping industry, an example that just happens to spring to mind.

Then the Liberals start to do the only thing they know how to do, they lash out. Just as they did on June 11, 1925 in Cape Breton when the troops ran down women and children in the streets. Just as they did in 1997 in Vancouver when Canadian students became the enemies because they were angered that their government supported and defended brutal dictatorships. They too have learned what it is like to have the Liberals decide they are the enemies of their government.

Now we have the strike by the PSAC workers who are upset that they are paid one wage while their contemporaries are paid more or less depending on where they live. What is so bad about that? It is a case of one rule for one and another for the other. While lower ranked staff are paid differential rates, their managers are not.

Here is a challenge for the Liberal members. If they are so supportive of regional discrimination as the President of the Treasury Board says he is, how about they volunteer here and now to have their salaries decided based on where they live. When I look across the way, it is no surprise that I do not see any takers. Maybe they are too tired to jump on board, or maybe deep down they see the obvious, that this issue is not what the government says it is about.

It is not about workers trying to sabotage Canada's public service. It is not about radical trade unionists trying to pull down

the government. All this is is a group of Canadians supposedly protected under Canadian law and the Canada Labour Code. They exercised their rights to free and fair collective bargaining and they waited year after year for their employer to sit at the table with them and discuss demands that seemed obvious in their validity to most people. Equal pay, equal standards. What is so hard to deal with in those four words?

Equality has gone out of favour in this country. Now this government, not happy with making the rich richer and the poor poorer, has decided to create artificial divisions from province to province, territory to territory. No, this is not a surprise. We expect nothing different from this government.

That is why I am proud to sit on these benches, a member of the party that introduced universal health care and pensions to Canada, the party that believes in those things because they are right and not because it was electorally convenient to adopt them a few years ago. It is a party of conviction and principles and most important, a party that supports Canadian workers.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The hon. member for St. John's West on debate.

**An hon. member:** Give it to them, Charlie.

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Madam Speaker, I am not sure we have much left to give them. We have given them all our logic and all the benefit of our wisdom and the government members never seem to accept very much of it. I suspect it will not be any different this morning than it was last night, yesterday or last week.

We have a few points to make about what has happened here in the last 24 hours. Our caucus has a few things to say about how the government has handled this issue. Yesterday when I first spoke on this matter I said that the government was acknowledging by the way it did this that it had two fundamental failures.

One is its fundamental failure in how it runs this House. Whenever the government House leader has to bring in closure, an act that takes away the rights of the members of this House of Commons, he acknowledges a failure in managing this place properly. That is something all 301 members deserve and expect. All Canadians expect us to have the rights of this House of Commons every single day. If the government cannot manage its business any better, if it has to run from crisis to crisis, then maybe the government House leader should look at exactly how he does his job.

The other failure was the failure of the President of the Treasury Board, the minister responsible for collective agreements, the minister responsible for making sure we have in place a collective bargaining process that has an opportunity to work.

*Government Orders*

• (3100)

If there is a case where this pending strike has been ongoing and the collective agreement has been ongoing and needing to be negotiated for two years, why did we end up with 14 days of negotiation in two years? What happened to all the other days in those two years that were not used to solve this problem? That is why we have been here for the last 24 hours.

The third mistake, if there was a mistake to be made worse than the other two, is how the House was managed last night. Some people in the House had access before a crucial vote to very crucial information about a vote that we were taking about collective bargaining in Canada.

Why did the President of the Treasury Board and the government House leader not acknowledge that they knew an hour or so before any of us voted that there was a tentative agreement? It is absolutely unfair and unacceptable. It may not be illegal but it certainly is immoral and unfair to all of us as members of the House of Commons to allow some persons to have knowledge before they vote and some persons to have that knowledge 40 or 50 minutes later, after the vote was taken.

That is one of the reasons we spent most of the night here. The government did not give the opposition the facts. It did not give us the truth as to what was really happening. As long as those kind of things happen in this place, the opposition will fight for its rights. We will fight for the rights of Canadians who did not get a fair shake in this collective bargaining process.

Another strange thing happened last night that none of them seem to understand. The President of the Treasury Board should have come in last night and made a wonderful announcement that there was a tentative agreement as a result of the collective bargaining process, which is what everyone wants to see happen. He should allowed it to be the end of the evening. Instead he had to come in and rub the faces of the people in the PSAC union in the mud and say they were given a collective agreement, which might not be really what was wanted. In case it is not accepted it took away the right to strike anyway. What kind of logic is that?

If a collective agreement is negotiated in good faith and is accepted by members of PSAC, why are we taking away the right to strike from people who are not now on strike? Why was it not part of the negotiating process for the President of Treasury Board to simply ask the member of PSAC to give up their right to go on strike during the ratification process? Any agreeable, acceptable union would be happy to do that provided the government was fair enough to take away its right to rush in here and pass back to work legislation.

My suspicion is that the government was not willing to give the union any assurance that it would not come in and pass back to work legislation. As a result, the union quite probably said that if the government would not relent on its back to work legislation it

would not relent on its right to go on strike during the ratification process.

It was all done very wrongly. The whole collective bargaining process is now wrong for all public servants of Canada. How can the issues they want to negotiate through the collective bargaining process be done? There cannot be binding arbitration and there can only be strikes if it suits the employer. That is a no-brainer. Who will go on strike? Who can go on strike? The minute they do it is taken away through the process we have before us in the House of Commons.

I will repeat today what I said yesterday. If workers are deemed essential, whether they are grain handlers, transportation workers or workers in prisons, and their services must be available for good governance in the country, they should be made essential workers and given binding arbitration. Then most persons would accept as a fair and reasonable way to govern the taking away of their right to strike. In this case the workers have given up everything and the government very little. As a result we will continue to have a series of union and employer problems for many years to come.

Certainly from our point of view not only salary issues are involved. There is a terrible unconstitutional law that has been implemented by Treasury Board. A person in St. John's, Newfoundland, who does clerical work for the Government of Canada gets paid an entirely different wage from a person who does the same work in Calgary. How can there be discrimination in the country based upon where one happens to live?

• (3105)

I do not care about the business of disrupting labour markets. The minister thinks that if he pays an equivalent wage or a slightly higher wage to a person in St. John's, Newfoundland, than he pays to a person in Calgary he will disrupt the labour market in Newfoundland and will not be able to find employees for the private sector.

The government does not know yet that there is a 35% unemployment rate for young people in Newfoundland. It does not know that there is a 20% unemployment rate for all adults in Newfoundland. There are no jobs. In the last three years we have lost 30,000 Newfoundlanders. Is that labour market disruption? Is that affected by the Government of Canada paying lower wages in Newfoundland than in other places? Those are the kinds of things that have to be negotiated through collective agreements.

All I can say about this process is that there does not seem to be a collective bargaining process any more. It is intimidation by the majority. It is bullying by government that forces people to accept certain things which are not acceptable to them in a normal, negotiating process.

From the point of view of this caucus we are very disappointed that the Government of Canada tries to pit farmers against workers

*Government Orders*

in Newfoundland. Sometimes it picks on, in this case the poorest paid in the public service. They are bullied by a government which tries to use farmers to intimidate them. It is a totally wrong process. It is a disgusting process.

The way members of the House of Commons were treated last night in the vote was disgusting. This party and this caucus do not vote for those kinds of shenanigans in the House, not now and not ever.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to join with all my colleagues who consider that the government acted in a very cavalier way, to say the least.

The farce that took place last evening and last night left many members puzzled, particularly when they heard the President of the Treasury Board deliver his unexpected message around 2.30 a.m., if I remember correctly.

In my view, it was certainly unique. Having been in the labour movement for 20 years, I know that with back to work legislation pending, usually, if the government reaches a last minute agreement, workers agree to go back to work. But the government went even further.

I said it in my first speech and I repeat it. The government wanted this strike. The government did all it could to provoke this strike and then it did all it could to crush it. It could have crushed it just like that, without any offer from the workers. When it reaches an agreement at the last minute, I think it is important that the government say "Now, we will not add insult to injury and we will see to it that workers go back to work peacefully".

One basic issue remains. What about the consequences? What will the consequences be in a union where the majority of the 14,000 workers accepted the government's offers and still are subjected to back to work legislation?

There is a problem there, and there could be trouble. I am thinking in particular of the 400 workers at the military base in Saint-Jean. These 400 people are mechanics. These are people who make the lowest salaries in the federal public service.

They looked at the negotiation process in general and saw the government make interesting offers to other tables. When their turn came, the government, which is both negotiator and legislator, said: "We do not have much money for you folks". These people felt let down. I think this will certainly have an impact on their productivity.

To go back to work with a bowed head, with the feeling of having been whipped, is not always easy. People will say "Will I be loyal, totally loyal to my employer? Did my employer show me any respect?" These are all questions that people are asking.

• (3110)

Perhaps they are not all great trade unionists, but they are fathers, mothers, ordinary people who ply their trade as best as they can, and after more than 6 years without a raise, several collective agreements were imposed on them. My colleague from Trois-Rivières explained that clearly—over a period of about 15 years, there may have been 11 imposed agreements.

These people have had their collective agreements imposed on them often. They say "What is the point of trying to negotiate in good faith with an employer?"

I think the aftermath is always difficult, in such cases. I have seen employers being very hard on their employees. I have seen employers be very tough with their employees, but seldom as tough as what I just saw here in the last 24 hours.

When a negotiator in the private sector goes and negotiates with a union, there is a power relationship that comes into play. If the right to strike is legal and workers exercise that right, everybody understands. However, the dynamic here today is very different, because the government is the entity that will be legislating should negotiations fail, and the government is in a position to make negotiations fail.

I think that is what happened. This government made the negotiations fail in order to impose, by special legislation, a back to work order. I do not need to explain in any great detail that not only it imposed such legislation but also it did so after the employees, at the last minute, said "We have an agreement in principle, we are going back to work".

So, I think this will be added to the government's record, a rather negative one, in my opinion, with respect to workers, because this is not the first time it shows it is anti-workers, and anti-unions too.

I raised several examples the other day. A few examples come to my mind. There is the surplus in the federal public service pension fund, to which the President of the Treasury Board said they were going to help themselves. I made a connection with former Singer employees, the Singer retirees. For more than two years, I have been asking the government, as the trustee for that pension fund, to give that money back to the workers. The government kept repeating no, no and no. Yet, the government was the trustee, the watchdog of the fund.

Why did the government say no? Because it intended to dip into the surplus in the federal public servants' fund.

There are no end of examples of this government's approach to labour relations with its employees and with the public in general.

What kind of example is the government setting for employers today? Is it a positive one? Is this not a negative message that is

being sent, that acting in bad faith might work? But it only works in the short term, because in the long term people are less productive, more disloyal, because they feel they have been let down by the government.

Other examples given here over the past weeks and months include the EI fund to which employers and employees contribute. Once again, there is a huge surplus in this fund and the government should be using it to improve the system instead of using it to pay down the debt.

So there is all sorts of evidence that this government is going after workers. This is a rather sad day for me. When one removes one's union hat, as I have, and dons the hat of an MP, one has to remain pretty open-minded because in society, in our riding offices, in the House here, we run into people from all walks of life.

But is the first principle not to serve voters as well as possible? Has this government served voters well today? I think not. It is not just that it has wronged 14,000 people, but it will leave the public with the idea that it is alright to act in bad faith, that a government can block negotiations, bring them to a complete standstill, withdraw from the bargaining tables, and make offers way below what unions are asking for.

• (3115)

At the last minute, even though it knows that this will not work, the government withdraws and says "Now I will act as a legislator and I will impose back to work legislation and set the working conditions myself".

On behalf of the 400 people I represent at the Saint-Jean military base, I think things will not go easily today at the military base. Of course, when I am back in my riding, I will contact the union president. However, I am proud that the Bloc Quebecois stood up throughout this debate.

We have managed, so far for almost 36 hours, to prevent the government from rushing this legislation through the House. This is not the first time; as I said in my speech, the Bloc Quebecois is the only party that has always defended the workers. When there was the postal strike or when the rail workers were legislated back to work, the Bloc Quebecois was on the side of the workers.

Hopefully, the workers will not forget that the Canadian government does not serve them. Hopefully, people in Quebec will see that the Bloc Quebecois is on their side. Fundamentally, it may have to do with our financing method, since many workers contribute to the Bloc Quebecois' campaign fund, and they do not contribute thousands of dollars.

We get \$5 and \$10 bills from unions and individuals. When the time comes to defend them, however, our hands are not tied, as the

### *Government Orders*

Liberal Party's are, by connections with the major corporations, and the big banks and insurance companies. When the time comes to force government workers back on the job, the Liberal Party will boast of it, for a multitude of reasons.

They claim income tax return processing was slowing down and that grain was piling up in the west. These are nothing but pretexts. The government would have grabbed onto any pretext for accomplishing its ends. I believe the government is a far from exemplary employer, since it is sending such a negative message to all those who are required to negotiate collective agreements, whether in the public or the private sector.

The Bloc Quebecois cannot, of course, subscribe to such a farce. Tonight we have been the spectators and performers in another performance, a dramatic comedy. The government turned up with offers at the last minute. So there we were at 2.30 or 2.45 a.m., saying "Hooray, at least we get to go to bed. It's over." But this was far from being the case, for the President of Treasury Board arrogantly pulled his last ace out of his sleeve, and told us "We are still going to force these people back to work. We will continue with the legislation and we will take it to the very end". I repeat, this was just adding insult to injury.

I am proud to say that not only did the Bloc oppose the measure from the beginning, but that it will oppose it to the very end. Everybody had a hard night, but I think that the Bloc will be in a position to tell the workers, in my riding as well as in all of Quebec, that we tried to set an example and to make the government change its mind.

Unfortunately, unless a new card comes out at some point—and I would be very surprised because it would be a trump card for the workers—it will not. It would be so nice if the government said "We will withdraw the bill. People will go back to work. There was an agreement and we are now confident that people will go back to work. They don't want to have back to work legislation hanging over their head".

In conclusion, I will say that the government used the House of Commons to force employees back to work and to threaten them to the very last minute, and when the employees signed the agreement, the government decided to go ahead with its strategy, just the same. I find it unconscionable as I said yesterday. It is a sad day for the Bloc and for the workers and I hope that the government will pay a political price for its actions.

Members of the Bloc who have federal employees affected by the bill in their riding will make a point of explaining to these workers what really happened. I am sure that the workers will support the Bloc and say that it took the right decision in staying up all night, for 36 hours, to defend them and to oppose the govern-

*Government Orders*

ment, which once again proved that it is against unions and against workers.

• (3120)

[*English*]

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to spend a short while discussing this back to work legislation. I do not want to get into how inappropriate and ineffective it is or the necessity of it. I want to talk about the impact the government's inaction can have on the community and the area I come from. In particular, I want to talk about the government's inability to come to an agreement with the grain handlers.

Quite often when we discuss this issue the first issue of concern is the prairie farmer which is only right. Whether they be primary producers of grain, the forest workers, or in the fishing community, the primary producers always seem to get the short end of the stick. I certainly have a great deal of sympathy for the impact any delay in the transfer station system can have on the prairie farmer.

I understand something like 70 grain handlers are affected. We are not talking about a large group, but they do have the ability to shut the system down. The question is why did the government not take action long before it got to this critical point? That is the key issue.

Somewhere along the line somebody is missing the boat. Somebody does not understand how the transportation system works. Somebody does not understand that since the Crow rate was removed, the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert, and the Fraser port to a lesser extent, on the west coast are not so much in competition with one another as they could be in competition with American ports. This is simply because of the ease with which farmers could transport their grain south of the border and ship it through the port of Portland or even the port at Sacramento, California.

The possibility exists that the competition for British Columbia ports is not among themselves but it very well could be with ports south of the border. If a trickle of grain starts being shifted south of the border even down to the Mississippi, in short order there is going to be a flood. That is the key issue in my view. How do we protect the transportation route and keep that grain going out through the port of Vancouver? I think the government has completely ignored this issue.

The matter of the grain handlers is only one small issue. The other is the transportation issue. The government has sorely neglected that aspect of it as well. The taxation regime and so on which our railways have to cope with is far in excess of that which the American lines have to cope with. Sooner or later that grain is going to be shifted south of the border and with it will go a great deal of prosperity. The dollars that accrue to Vancouver through the shipment of prairie grain are huge and we should not ignore that.

This action taken by the government was unnecessary. Had it bargained honestly and openly in the beginning, an agreement could have been reached with the workers. That was demonstrated last night when an hour before he made the announcement in the House, the President of the Treasury Board was aware that an agreement had been reached, an agreement which should probably allow the continued shipment of grain through the port of Vancouver. If that agreement could be reached last night, it certainly could have been reached a week ago. The money was obviously there to satisfy those people.

Another aspect of this bill which concerns me has to do with the prison guards who are also part of this negotiating table. I do not think anybody in my community would resent those guards being given a substantial raise. The work they do is dangerous. They operate under tremendous pressure. The support they have had from the government is almost non-existent. It is a job I sure as heck would not want and I do not think too many people in this chamber would want. I do not think those people have received the respect they deserve from the government. It is sad that it has come to that.

• (3125)

When we look at the wages these people are paid in comparison to police officers, it is simply an outrage. Why money could not be found to pay these people the kind of dollars they are worth is simply beyond me.

Why back to work legislation has been used when nobody is off the job is a mystery to me. If these people are essential workers, then treat them as essential workers. Bring in essential legislation that would define them as such and let us get on with life. But do not impose back to work legislation on them when it is inappropriate, as it is today.

I reiterate the despair I feel in the fact that the government has simply neglected the country's transportation system. The Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Fraser ports face a peril if more care is not taken to ensure that the transportation system in Canada remains viable and competitive with that of our American neighbours. As I said earlier, it only would take a trickle of grain to find its way over the border, down through the rail system to the ports along the west coast or down to the Mississippi and there will be a flood. The cost and loss to Canadian taxpayers, and the job losses in Canada, will be huge.

I urge the government to wake up. It has been a long night but it is time to wake up and address this issue in the way it should.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Madam Speaker, I do have a question for the hon. member who just spoke.

It is a valuable point to raise concerning the problem we will be running into with our transportation system and the total lack of vision the government has shown.

*Government Orders*

We are missing a more important point. In the collective bargaining system the government supposedly bargained in good faith with the grain handlers and PSAC workers. An agreement was reached and the government turned its back on that agreement. The government came into parliament the very night on which it reached the agreement and said it was going to force the workers back to work. Why bargain? Why is there a bargaining system in place? It begs the question.

Either there is a system where people sit down and discuss issues in a reasonable and rational manner and come up with solutions, and then abide by those solutions, or there is not. The government has completely turned its back on that system. It is a travesty of justice without question. Why did the government go down that route to begin with? Why did it say it would bargain and then not abide by the rules as set out by the government? I do not understand it. I do not think anyone can understand it.

A greater issue is the regional rates of pay. This has nothing to do with grain handlers. The grain handlers are just an excuse for the government. It conveniently found that in western Canada \$18 billion worth of grain exports were being held up. It was a convenient excuse for the government to force everybody back to work after it had already worked with them. There is something seriously wrong.

• (3130)

We sat here all night and discussed the bill and participated in vote after vote after vote and clause by clause consideration in committee in the whole. Obviously the government had one thing in mind and is walking out of here with the same thing in mind, that it will bargain in good faith on one hand and enforce legislation on the other hand.

The Liberals can blame it on the grain handlers or blame it on PSAC. They can try to create all the bogeymen that we want to create, but the fact is that those are not the problems. The problem is the Government of Canada that was looking for a stakeout to begin with. It is very unfortunate.

**Mr. John Cummins:** Madam Speaker, I agree with the concerns my friend has raised.

These freighters may look pretty sitting out there in English Bay riding high at anchor, but they are costing prairie farmers a lot of money when they are not moving. That is the problem. The government just does not get it.

A couple of years ago during the winter we had huge problems with the shipment of grain. The rail lines were not operating properly. The money was not there although taxes were high. The government is simply ignoring the very critical transportation problem on the west coast.

Sooner or later we will wake up one day and the grain will be going south of the border, in which case we will be short a huge

number of jobs in western Canada and a lot of money. A lot of people will be out of work. We simply do not need that. We need action from the government on this very critical issue.

**Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP):** Madam Speaker, what does my colleague in the Reform Party think of legislating workers who are not even on strike? This is what is happening. I have a serious problem with back to work legislation, to start with, but even more of a problem with legislating something that is not happening yet.

We are living in a democratic country. The prison guards are not on strike. Let us face it. They have been working and getting paycheques, but the government acts as if they have been on strike all this time. I guess it got a pretty good deal, if we look at it that way.

What is the member's feelings on legislating workers that are not on strike?

**Mr. John Cummins:** Madam Speaker, I think it is an outrage. Either we have a collective bargaining process and allow it to work, or we do not. It is as simple as that.

Everybody who has worked for a large corporation or in the government service understands and appreciates the fact that they have a union protecting them. They have union protection and unions bargaining for them. It is part of their democratic right and should be allowed to go through its natural course. That is what it is all about. To order people back to work when they have not gone on strike is an absolute outrage.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, how does my colleague from British Columbia feel about the farmers who found a market in 1993 for grain which was designated poisonous and unsaleable? Grain companies could not handle it. The wheat board could not handle it. When farmers found a market in the U.S. the government started prosecuting those farmers. Dan Sawatzky beat the case. The government lost the appeal and is still prosecuting 170 farmers for moving grain that nobody wanted to buy.

Is that human rights abuse or what is it? How can the government let something like that go ahead? I would like the member's impression on that.

**Mr. John Cummins:** Madam Speaker, I do not know a whole lot about that issue, but I know about another issue where the same happened. It had to do with fishing regulations put in place by the government on the west coast. It took fishermen to court because they defied the minister's regulation which the joint House of Commons and Senate Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations declared to be invalid. Yet the government has continued to arrest people and to take them to court over regulations that are invalid, regulations which a provincial court judge and the Supreme Court of British Columbia have declared invalid. The government

*Government Orders*

continues to harass fishermen, to take them to court and to put them in jail over an issue when it is the minister who is breaking the law.

• (3135)

I do not know as much about the issue as my friend, but I know the government is perfectly capable of putting farmers in jail for standing up for their rights.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, finally we have awakened what the government has been trying to put to sleep for the last couple of years. I want to address that issue further.

In 1993-94 farmers were stuck with millions of bushels of fusarium wheat that was declared toxic and unsaleable by the government. Farmers found a market for it. Farmers started exporting that worthless wheat and saved taxpayers millions of dollars. After they had developed a market the government interfered. It wanted to stop it so it charged David Sawatzky from my riding. Without any representation in the court the poor farmer beat the charge and proved to the government that it had no right to charge him.

The government appealed that. Then what happened? The government lost. It turned around and charged 175 farmers. They are being prosecuted on that same issue. Has the government dealt in good faith with anybody? Nobody. This is Cuban-style dictatorship. If it is allowed to continue, we might as well shut down the House or burn it down because it would be useless.

People are being mistreated. People are in jail. What can we do? Why did people send us here? It was certainly not for something like this. We could have that in a different country. We do not need Canada for that. Why are we sitting back and allowing it to happen?

There is a trial in Brandon, Manitoba, on the same issue. If members want to know if I am telling the truth, they should come to Brandon, Manitoba. Now there is a suspicion that even court documents have been doctored to prosecute the farmers. What next?

We have a prime example of what has happened over on that side. We have a prime example that we have a government that is worse than the Mulroney government. Why should people support it? In the next election they will show the government where to go, out the door.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

• (3140)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members have risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Call in the members.

• (3220)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 361)*

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alarie	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Bergeron
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Brisson
Blaikie	Canuel
Brien	Casey
Cadman	Chatters
Cardin	Crête
Casson	Dalphond-Guiral
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Dockrill
Cummins	Duceppe
Desjarlais	Epp
Doyle	Gagnon
Duncan	Gilmour
Forseth	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Gauthier	Grewal
Girard-Bujold	Guay
Godin (Châteauguay)	Hangar
Grey (Edmonton North)	Herron
Guimond	Hilstrom
Harvey	Jaffer
Hill (Macleod)	Keddy (South Shore)
Hoepfner	Konrad
Johnston	Laurin
Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)	Lowther
Lalonde	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Loubier	Manning
Lunn	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mancini	Mayfield
Marceau	McNally
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Meredith
McDonough	Morrison
Ménard	Nystrom
Mills (Red Deer)	Penson
Muisé	Plamondon
Pankiw	Price
Picard (Drummond)	Ramsay
Power	Rocheleau
Proctor	St-Hilaire
Ritz	Stoffer
Solberg	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
St-Jacques	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Strahl	Vellacott
Thompson (Wild Rose)	White (North Vancouver)—95
Vautour	
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	

*Government Orders*

**NAYS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Assad	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Clouthier
Coderre	Collenette
Copps	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Drouin	Duhamel
Easter	Eggleton
Finestone	Finlay
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Grose	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Ifody
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keys	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
Lavigne	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Massé
McCormick	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Minna
Mitchell	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Proud
Provenzano	Redman
Reed	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Serré	Shepherd
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
St-Julien	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibeault
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood —127	

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Anderson	Assadourian
Bulte	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Folco	Fournier
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Lefebvre	Longfield
Patry	Perron
Pratt	Sauvageau
Speller	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the amendment lost.

Is the House ready for the question on the main motion?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed the members are in?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (3230)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 362)*

**YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Alcock	Assad
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bailey	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown	Bryden
Byrne	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Casson
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Chatters	Clouthier
Coderre	Collenette
Copps	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Drouin	Duhamel
Easter	Eggleton
Epp	Finestone

*Government Orders*

Finlay	Fontana	Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Fry	Gagliano	Bigras	Blaikie
Galloway	Godfrey	Brien	Brisson
Goodale	Grey (Edmonton North)	Cadman	Canuel
Grose	Harb	Cardin	Casey
Harvard	Hill (Macleod)	Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Hilstrom	Hoepfner	Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Hubbard	Ianno	Desjarlais	Dockrill
Iftody	Jackson	Doyle	Duceppe
Jaffer	Jennings	Duncan	Forseth
Johnston	Jordan	Gagnon	Gauthier
Karetak-Lindell	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Keys	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Godin (Châteauguay)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson	Grewal	Guay
Konrad	Kraft Sloan	Guimond	Hanger
Lastewka	Lavigne	Harvey	Herron
Lee	Leung	Keddy (South Shore)	Lalonde
Lincoln	Lunn	Laurin Loubier	Lowther
MacAulay	Mahoney	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mancini
Malhi	Maloney	Marceau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Manley	Manning	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Mayfield
Marchi	Marleau	McDonough	McNally
Massé	McCormick	Ménard	Meredith
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)	Muise	Nystrom
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McTeague	Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
McWhinney	Mifflin	Power	Price
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna	Proctor	Rocheleau
Mitchell	Morrison	St-Hilaire	St-Jacques
Murray	Myers	Stoffer	Strahl
Nault	Normand	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly	Vautour	White (Langley—Abbotsford)—68
Pagtakhan	Pankiw		
Paradis	Parrish		
Penson	Peric		
Peterson	Pettigrew		
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri		
Proud	Provenzano		
Ramsay	Redman		
Reed	Ritz		
Robillard	Rock		
Saada	Scott (Fredericton)		
Sekora	Serré		
Shepherd	Solberg		
St. Denis	Steckle		
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)		
St-Julien	Szabo		
Telegdi	Thibeault		
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Torsney		
Ur	Valeri		
Vanclief	Vellacott		
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)		
Wilfert	Wood—154		

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Assadourian
Bulte	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Folco	Fournier
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Lefebvre	Longfield
Patry	Perron
Pratt	Sauvageau
Speller	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Venne

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I express my thanks to all hon. members for their patience and their co-operation.

It being after 8.30 a.m., the House will adjourn until later today at 2.00 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8.32 a.m.)

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott	Alarie
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—





# CONTENTS

Tuesday, March 23, 1999

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Government Services Act, 1999

Bill C-76. Second Reading .....	13365	Mr. Reynolds .....	13375
Mr. Massé .....	13365	Mr. Massé .....	13375
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13366	Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13375
Mr. Massé .....	13366	The Deputy Speaker .....	13375
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13366	Mr. Epp .....	13376
Mr. Massé .....	13366	Mr. Strahl .....	13376
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13366	Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13376
Mr. Massé .....	13366	Mr. Lunn .....	13376
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13366	Mr. Johnston .....	13376
Mr. Massé .....	13366	Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13376
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13367	Mr. Strahl .....	13376
Mr. Hilstrom .....	13367	Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13376
Mr. Johnston .....	13367	Mr. Johnston .....	13377
Mr. Laurin .....	13367	Mr. Boudria .....	13377
Mr. Laurin .....	13368	Mr. Johnston .....	13377
Mr. Johnston .....	13368	Mr. Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche) .....	13377
Mr. Boudria .....	13368	Mr. Johnston .....	13377
Mr. Johnston .....	13368	Mr. Hilstrom .....	13378
Mr. MacKay .....	13369	Mr. Johnston .....	13378
Mr. Johnston .....	13369	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13379
Mrs. Chamberlain .....	13369	Mr. Thompson (Wild Rose) .....	13379
Mr. Johnston .....	13369	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13379
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13369	Mr. Thompson (Wild Rose) .....	13379
Mr. Massé .....	13370	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13379
Mr. Bachand (Saint-Jean) .....	13370	Mr. Loubier .....	13380
Mr. Massé .....	13370	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13380
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13370	Mr. Loubier .....	13380
Mr. Massé .....	13370	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13380
Mr. Keddy .....	13371	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13381
Mr. Keddy .....	13371	Mr. Loubier .....	13381
Mr. Massé .....	13371	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13381
Mr. Hilstrom .....	13371	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13382
Mr. Massé .....	13371	Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13382
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13371	Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	13383
Mr. Massé .....	13371	Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13383
Mr. Strahl .....	13371	Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13384
Mr. Blaikie .....	13371	Mr. Brison .....	13385
Mr. Boudria .....	13372	Mr. Brison .....	13387
Mr. Rocheleau .....	13372	Motion agreed to .....	13388
Mr. Hilstrom .....	13372	(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Milliken in the chair) .....	13388
Mr. MacKay .....	13372	(On Clause 2) .....	13388
The Deputy Speaker .....	13372	Mr. Strahl .....	13388
Mr. Lunn .....	13372	Mr. Massé .....	13388
Mr. Ménard .....	13372	Mr. Strahl .....	13388
Mr. Massé .....	13373	Mr. Massé .....	13389
Mr. Power .....	13373	Mr. Robinson .....	13389
Mr. Ménard .....	13373	Mr. Massé .....	13389
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13373	Mr. Robinson .....	13389
Mr. Easter .....	13373	Mr. Massé .....	13389
Mr. Strahl .....	13373	Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13389
Mr. Massé .....	13374	Mr. Massé .....	13389
Mr. Stoffer .....	13374	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13389
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13374	Mr. Massé .....	13389
Mr. Lee .....	13374	Mr. Ménard .....	13389
Mr. Lunn .....	13374	Mr. Massé .....	13390
Mr. Reynolds .....	13374	Mr. MacKay .....	13390
Mr. Boudria .....	13374	Mr. Massé .....	13390
Mr. MacKay .....	13375	Mr. Johnston .....	13390

Mr. Massé .....	13390
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13390
Mr. Massé .....	13390
Mr. Crête .....	13390
Mr. Massé .....	13391
Mr. Manning .....	13391
Mr. Massé .....	13391
Mr. Manning .....	13391
Mr. Massé .....	13391
Mr. Lunn .....	13391
Mr. Massé .....	13391
Mr. Robinson .....	13392
Mr. Massé .....	13392
Mr. Robinson .....	13392
Mr. Massé .....	13392
Mr. Loubier .....	13392
Mr. Massé .....	13392
Mr. Loubier .....	13392
Mr. Massé .....	13392
Mr. Hilstrom .....	13392
Mr. Massé .....	13392
Mr. Hilstrom .....	13392
Mr. Massé .....	13392
Mr. Kenney .....	13392
Mr. Massé .....	13392
Mr. Kenney .....	13393
Mr. Massé .....	13393
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13393
Mr. Massé .....	13393
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13393
Mr. Massé .....	13393
Mr. Rocheleau .....	13393
Mr. Massé .....	13393
Mr. Crête .....	13393
Mr. Massé .....	13393
Mr. Power .....	13393
Mr. Massé .....	13394
Mr. Power .....	13394
Mr. Massé .....	13394
Mr. Grewal .....	13394
Mr. Massé .....	13394
Mr. Gouk .....	13394
Mr. Massé .....	13394
Mr. Robinson .....	13394
Mr. Massé .....	13394
Mr. Robinson .....	13394
Mr. Massé .....	13394
Mr. Gouk .....	13394
Mr. Abbott .....	13394
Mr. Massé .....	13395
Mr. Abbott .....	13395
Mr. Massé .....	13395
Mr. Gouk .....	13395
Mr. Massé .....	13395
Mr. Gouk .....	13395
Mr. Massé .....	13395
Mr. Gouk .....	13395
Mr. Massé .....	13396
Mr. Duncan .....	13396
Mr. Massé .....	13396
Mr. Duncan .....	13396
Mr. Massé .....	13396
Mr. Duncan .....	13396
Mr. Massé .....	13396
Mr. Blaikie .....	13396
Mr. Massé .....	13396
Mr. Blaikie .....	13396

Mr. Massé .....	13397
Mr. Crête .....	13397
Mr. Massé .....	13397
Mr. Power .....	13397
Mr. Massé .....	13397
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	13397
Mr. Massé .....	13397
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	13397
Mr. Massé .....	13397
Mr. Strahl .....	13397
Mr. Massé .....	13397
Mr. Strahl .....	13397
Mr. Massé .....	13398
Mr. Hoepfner .....	13398
Mr. Massé .....	13398
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	13398
Mr. Massé .....	13398
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	13398
Mr. Massé .....	13398
Mr. Mancini .....	13398
Mr. Massé .....	13398
Mr. Mancini .....	13399
Mr. Massé .....	13399
Mr. Morrison .....	13399
Mr. Massé .....	13399
Mr. Morrison .....	13399
Mr. Massé .....	13399
Mr. Konrad .....	13399
Mr. Massé .....	13399
Mr. Stoffer .....	13399
Mr. Massé .....	13399
Mr. Stoffer .....	13399
Mr. Massé .....	13400
Mr. Kenney .....	13400
Mr. Massé .....	13400
Mr. Kenney .....	13400
Mr. Massé .....	13400
Mr. Johnston .....	13400
Mr. Massé .....	13400
Mr. Johnston .....	13400
Mr. Massé .....	13400
Mr. Hilstrom .....	13401
Mr. Massé .....	13401
Mr. Hilstrom .....	13401
Mr. Massé .....	13401
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	13401
Mr. Massé .....	13401
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	13401
Mr. Massé .....	13401
Mr. Gouk .....	13401
Mr. Massé .....	13402
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13402
Mr. Massé .....	13402
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13402
Mr. Massé .....	13402
Mr. Massé .....	13402
Mr. Godin (Acadie—Bathurst) .....	13402
Mr. Massé .....	13402
Mr. Godin (Acadie—Bathurst) .....	13403
Mr. Massé .....	13403
(Clause 2 agreed to) .....	13403
(Clause 3 agreed to) .....	13403
(Clause 4 agreed to) .....	13403
(Clause agreed to) .....	13403
(On clause 6) .....	13403

Mr. Boudria .....	13403	Amendment .....	13407
Amendment .....	13403	Mr. Boudria .....	13407
(Amendment agreed to) .....	13403	(Amendment agreed to) .....	13407
(Clause 6, as amended, agreed to) .....	13403	(Clause 21, as amended, agreed to) .....	13407
On clause 7 .....	13403	(On clause 22) .....	13407
Mr. Boudria .....	13403	Mr. Crête .....	13407
Amendment .....	13403	Amendment .....	13407
(Amendment agreed to) .....	13403	(Amendment negatived) .....	13407
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13403	(Clause 22 agreed to) .....	13407
Amendment .....	13403	(Clause 23 agreed to) .....	13407
(Amendment negatived) .....	13403	(Clause 24 agreed to) .....	13407
Mr. Rocheleau .....	13403	(Clause 25 agreed to) .....	13407
Amendment .....	13403	(Clause 26 agreed to) .....	13407
(Amendment negatived) .....	13404	(Clause 27 agreed to) .....	13407
Mr. Rocheleau .....	13404	(Schedule 1 agreed to) .....	13408
Amendment .....	13404	(Schedule 2 agreed to) .....	13408
(Amendment negatived) .....	13404	(Clause 1 agreed to) .....	13408
(Clause 7, as amended, agreed to) .....	13404	(Title agreed to) .....	13408
(On clause 8) .....	13404	(Bill reported) .....	13408
Mr. Boudria .....	13404	Motion for concurrence .....	13408
Amendment .....	13404	Mr. Massé .....	13408
(Amendment agreed to) .....	13404	Motion agreed to .....	13409
(Clause 8, as amended, agreed to) .....	13404	Mr. Guimond .....	13409
(Clause 9 agreed to) .....	13404	Mr. Mercier .....	13409
(Clause 10 agreed to) .....	13405	Third Reading .....	13409
(Clause 11 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Massé .....	13409
(Clause 12 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Hilstrom .....	13409
(Clause 13 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13409
(Clause 14 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Hilstrom .....	13409
(Clause 15 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Boudria .....	13409
(Clause 16 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Hilstrom .....	13409
(Clause 17 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	13411
(Clause 18 agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Hilstrom .....	13411
(On clause 19) .....	13405	Mr. Johnston .....	13413
Mr. Boudria .....	13405	Amendment .....	13413
Amendment .....	13405	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13414
(Amendment agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Rocheleau .....	13415
Mr. Brison .....	13405	Mr. Ménard .....	13416
Amendment .....	13405	Mr. Boudria .....	13416
(Amendment negatived) .....	13405	Mr. Ménard .....	13416
(Clause 19, as amended, agreed to) .....	13405	Mr. Guimond .....	13417
(On Clause 20) .....	13405	Mr. Ménard .....	13417
Mr. Boudria .....	13405	Mr. Ménard .....	13418
Amendment .....	13405	Mrs. Dockrill .....	13419
(Amendment agreed to) .....	13406	Mr. Power .....	13420
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre) .....	13406	Mr. Bachand (Saint-Jean) .....	13422
Amendment .....	13406	Mr. Cummins .....	13424
(Amendment negatived), (Yeas, 66; Nays, 127) .....	13406	Mr. Keddy .....	13424
(On clause 20) .....	13406	Mr. Cummins .....	13425
Mr. Rocheleau .....	13406	Ms. Vautour .....	13425
Amendment .....	13406	Mr. Cummins .....	13425
(Amendment negatived) .....	13406	Mr. Hoepfner .....	13425
Mr. Loubier .....	13406	Mr. Cummins .....	13425
Amendment .....	13406	Mr. Hoepfner .....	13426
(Amendment negatived) .....	13407	Amendment negatived .....	13427
(Clause 20, as amended, agreed to) .....	13407	Motion agreed to .....	13428
(On Clause 21) .....	13407	(Bill read the third time and passed) .....	13428

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