

We would like to thank the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance for receiving the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, CAPE.

We are a union representing federal government professionals. These are translators, interpreters and terminologists; economists, statisticians, public policy analysts, social sciences support staff; and, finally, analysts at the Library of Parliament.

We are not appearing this evening to challenge the increases laid down in the *Expenditure Restraint Act*. In fact, our members voted, doubtlessly under pressure, in favor of the Treasury Board's final offer.

Rather, we are here to denounce a gross injustice contained in the act in question. This act prevents CAPE from negotiating pay scales in view of the classification conversion of its EC group members on June 22. Indeed, the current classification standard is 28 years old.

The employer has spent lavishly to develop a new classification standard and has changed the way the value of work is determined. Thus, without returning to the negotiating table, we have no other means of knowing if the scales correspond to this new standard.

In all other cases, classification conversions led to a negotiation of pay scales. Adding insult to injury, the legislator exempted the Border Services group from the act because the negotiation of their conversion was over.

For its members, CAPE was prepared to negotiate the conversion as early as the end of last summer. Our pay proposal was very similar to the government's final offer but the Treasury Board negotiator did not have the mandate for the conversion. We therefore waited patiently through September, then October and November. Until the final offer.

Contrary to what Ms. H el ene Laurendeau stated before this committee, the Treasury Board did everything to prevent us from returning to the table. However, the conversion was essentially all that remained to negotiate and Ms. Laurendeau states that the door was open, which was not the case. If we had been able to negotiate, we would not be here this evening.

The unfortunate thing is that, if our members do not see the end of the conversion process, they will never know if the salary being paid to them corresponds to the new classification. The other unfortunate element is that a classification conversion occurs only once in a public service employee's career. The last one occurred in 1981, 28 years ago. The next one will undoubtedly occur in 2035 or 2040, too late for most of our members.

In the meantime, to correct the problems contained in the pay scales, government departments continue to respond to their needs by resorting to reclassifications.

We ask one simple thing of you: an act requiring CAPE and the Treasury Board to return to the table to negotiate pay scales that correspond to the new classification standard. Negotiation that would not be subject to a ban on restructuring pay scales. Of course, this overture would not apply to the annual adjustments, established in the act, that our members have already accepted. All this for the sake of justice and to prevent our members from believing that the legislator can use the law to escape its responsibilities.

Thank you for your attention. I will be pleased to respond to your questions.