

Employment Equity

Ms. Mitchell: If you would agree, Mr. Speaker, I could leave the amendment until the end of my remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): You will leave it until the end of your speech?

Ms. Mitchell: I did not understand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is fine.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I want to pay particular attention to the question of equal pay for work of equal value. I am my Party's critic for the status of women. I believe very strongly that women will never achieve equality until they have the same pay as men who are in jobs of equal value. I think it is disgraceful that women still earn 60 cent dollars in Canada today and, as my colleague pointed out a few minutes ago, the situation is even getting worse.

The Minister responsible for the Status of Women, (Mr. McLean) has spoken out strongly for equal pay for work of equal value, saying that this is necessary and just. Only last week he said:

Equality and social justice require that all Canadians be given a fair chance to make their own way in society. My government is committed to eliminating the barriers that have confined women to unequal roles and opportunities, and to creating the conditions that will enable all Canadians, women and men, to pursue their ambitions and realize their potential in all spheres of society.

He is in favour of equal pay for work of equal value but has never advocated that this be part of the Bill. One can only assume that the Minister is one who stresses platitudes and states what he believes the women of Canada want to hear, but is not willing to go to the Cabinet and the Minister of Employment and Immigration to press for this to be an integral part of Bill C-62.

During committee hearings the Canadian Labour Congress said that affirmative action legislation and programs are important at the federal and provincial levels and must include the requirement for equal pay for work of equal value as well as contract compliance. They state that adequate resources must be allocated to ensure compliance.

The Abella Report stressed the same points and went on to advocate strongly that this should be part of employment equity programs. Yet the Minister repeatedly ignored these recommendations and refused to implement them.

It has been proven repeatedly that enforcing these provisions under the Canadian Human Rights Act is ineffective. That Act would not cover all employees that should be covered under this Bill.

We very much regret the lack of enforcement provided by this Bill. I have attempted to point out those items of particular concern from a woman's point of view. In closing, I move:

That the amendment be amended by inserting after number 3, the number 4.

● (1630)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I find a difficulty with the subamendment to the subamendment. I know that the

Hon. Members will try to convince me that what they are doing is the right thing. The Chair is always ready for arguments as to whether the amendment to the amendment is in order. Could I have arguments on this point?

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, what the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) is trying to do is to have Clause 4 looked at again by the House. The Liberal amendment originally had Clauses 3, 5 and 7 being reviewed by the committee. What the Member for Vancouver East is saying is to add Clause 4. I think there is a possibility that some people may advise you that this adds something different and something new to the amendment. There might be previous rulings to this effect. My argument would be that Clause 4 is not really new. It is very much a part of the package. You cannot review Clauses 3, 5 and 7 without reviewing Clause 4. It is part of the whole process. Clauses 4 and 5 are together in terms of this legislation. I think it was an oversight by the Liberal Party in the first place when it did not include Clause 4 as part of its review. I think it is all interrelated. The only thing that might be different is that there is Clause 4, and Clause 4 was not included, but it is only a numbers game, and substantially you are looking at the same kind of thing. All you are doing is making a rather imperfect amendment more perfect.

Mr. Baker: I would disagree with the Hon. Member who just spoke as far as the present amendment is concerned, the amendment to the amendment, in that you could deal with Clause 4 quite separately from the other clauses in the Bill, simply because Clause 4 actually sets out the formula by which the Bill is enacted through the intent of the legislation.

However, in saying that the New Democratic Party is incorrect on that point, let me say that I cannot see anything wrong with the amendment from the point of view that it does not negate in any way, shape or form the substance in the present amendment. It simply adds another clause to that particular amendment. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, for your consideration that perhaps the subamendment may be in order, but it would perhaps have come at a better time if it were put following a complete round of speakers on the first amendment.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to support as strongly as I can the arguments in support of accepting the subamendment from my colleague, and I differ as sharply as I can, from the intervention made by the Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker). He says that Clause 4 can stand alone. The subamendment has to be looked at in context. First of all, the motion of the Official Opposition would have Clause 7 re-examined. It is its intention to have Clauses 5 to 7 referred for re-examination to the committee. If the motion should lose and Clause 7 is not referred for further consideration, then you would end up with a situation in which the penalties that the Opposition would seek to have would not apply to Clause 4.