

Private Members' Business

characteristic of a nation is not race but culture. Whatever one's name or ethnic origin, one belongs to one of the two nations depending on whether one's roots, education, choices, lifestyle, and philosophy lead one to identify with one cultural community rather than another. And I am thinking", he said, "of all the new Canadians who chose to become a part of French Canadian culture and to contribute to its development and growth".

He goes on to say that "the French Canadian nation is trying with all its might and with every fibre of its being to realize its potential as a nation and that its aspirations are entirely normal and legitimate. Later on I will explain how and why French Canadians try to identify with the State of Quebec, the only one where they can claim to be masters of their own destiny and where they can develop the full potential of their community, while the English Canadian nation tends to make Ottawa the centre of its community life".

If Canada had recognized the French Canadian nation, we would not be where we are today. And we are there because after being denied equality, the French Canadian nation became the Quebec nation and now seeks its sovereignty, as Daniel Johnson explains here.

I have very little time, Mr. Speaker, but I will go on. However, in this vote on the position of the Bloc Quebecois, Canada and the Liberals could have shown a minimum of respect for this people, this nation with whom, in any case, they will have to find a *modus vivendi*, as neighbours or otherwise.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The hon. member for Mercier will have 15 minutes, next time.

It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to consideration of Private Members' Business as indicated on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should immediately end employment equity programs and the inclusion of employment equity requirements on employment or training forms because such requirements encourage candidate selection to be made on the basis of sex or ethnic origin rather than merit, and, as a result, foster a sense of resentment among applicants.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion has been deemed not votable. Because it covers such an important topic, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to make it votable.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is refused, but the hon. member has the floor.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, it is noted that the government members do not want to vote on this issue.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The member across the way has just impugned motive to government members because he says a committee of this House has unanimously decided that his motion was not votable. It is right in our standing orders. Members across the way know it is in our standing orders. Therefore, I submit that it is a valid point of order.

The matter is that this is simply a motion that was addressed by a committee of this House. To say that refusing this is somehow the fault of the government as opposed to the committee that unanimously did so is simply and factually incorrect.

The Deputy Speaker: With respect, I do not think that is a point of order.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, over the next hour this House will have the opportunity to discuss what some members will see as a politically incorrect motion.

I made the decision to prepare this motion after receiving complaints from constituents that they may have missed out on being selected for taxpayer-funded training or job creation programs solely because they did not fit into a designated target group on an application form.

It is appalling that the government of a democratic country has a policy condoning the selection of workers or trainees based on their gender or ethnic origins. It makes the government guilty of promoting sexism and racism, and it is particularly bad policy when there simply is no statistical evidence to support the claimed need for employment equity programs.

For example, figures from Statistics Canada indicate that the unemployment rate for young males ranges between 20 per cent and 23 per cent, while the unemployment rate for young females ranges from 14 per cent to 15 per cent. While both figures are far too high, clearly it is the young men who are the disadvantaged group. Their unemployment rate is consistently twice the national average, and it probably is contributing to their higher suicide rate and an increase in youth crime.

Some interesting material comes from a research paper by Dr. John T. Samuel of Carleton University, which cites statistics from the 1986 census, showing that 72.1 per cent of visible minorities over 15 years of age are in the workforce while only 66.5 per cent of the general population over 15 is in the workforce. The same census shows that the average personal income is \$17,500 for the general population and almost \$1,500 more for visible minorities. The REAL Women organization has also confirmed these figures in their own investigation of the representation of visible minorities and women in the Canadian workforce.

Well-meaning people are chasing ghosts, because there is no evidence that employment equity programs are needed. This is not to say that every employer out there is a saint. But the best way to handle individual cases where there is improper treatment of employees is for those cases to be dealt with in the courts and the employers properly punished.