

Employment Equity

systemic change, and this Bill is far from even considering that.

Surely it makes much better sense for any company which operates in the federal jurisdiction, or any company which is doing business with the Government, to sign some kind of employment equity contract which requires them to agree that they will adopt employment equity as a company policy, and that they will take practical steps to implement it in all parts of their operation with targets, goals, and timetables. In that way women and minorities will be assured access to jobs whenever there is an opening, and to promotions whenever they should be eligible for them. It is surely naive to expect that companies with long traditions and built-in attitudes, such as we all have, will change their hiring and promotion practices and their entrenched attitudes, many of which are patriarchal, without enforceable legislative requirements. There must be penalties for lack of compliance by companies such as banks, railways, telephone companies, airlines and all those companies that come under federal jurisdiction. Yet this Bill only requires that a report must be filed at the proposed time. Many changes are needed.

● (1620)

The Minister says that she will knock with a big fist on the doors of employers that show progress. I wish her good luck because she will have to do a lot of heavy door knocking two or three years from now, just at the time when she will be knocking on doors in her constituency.

I am not convinced that gentle persuasion will bring any results. The Liberals have proven that there will be absolutely no results because we saw under the Liberal administration that voluntary affirmative action does not work.

I believe that most managers in large and small companies would probably prefer to have mandatory employment equity so that they can have the necessary clout with their boards of directors and staff to insist that the law obliges them to hire more women, native people, disabled people and visible minorities whenever there is a vacancy.

My colleague, the Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) spoke eloquently about the appeals from target groups who unanimously agree that this Bill will not be effective in achieving employment equity. They put forward many recommendations to improve the Bill, yet many of the amendments were turned down by the Government. They spoke repeatedly about the need for more enforcement of employment equity.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations outlined five initiatives that are missing from the Bill. First, there should be one central enforcement standard setting agency for all four sectors—Departments, Crown corporations, contractors and federally regulated businesses—with powers to define program requirements, set standards for goals and timetables, analyse the workforce data, and initiate complaints or court actions.

Second, there should be mandatory programs for all four sectors rather than voluntary programs with mandatory reporting.

Third, the Bill should include contract compliance as a condition of tendering, not undefined commitments, as the Bill implies, for all Government contractors with over 50 employees and \$200,000 worth of Government contracts per year.

Fourth, equal pay for work of equal value should be a condition for contracting.

Fifth, affirmative action programs should be a condition of all loans, grants and receipt of cost-sharing moneys. This should be expanded to many more employers on which the federal Government has some influence.

Many labour groups, including the CLC, spoke very strongly about the need to negotiate employment equity as part of collective bargaining.

In my previous remarks I spoke about the strong recommendation of Judge Abella that women must have adequate day care and training programs if they are ever to achieve employment equity in the workplace. This has also been completely disregarded by the Government.

The Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry seemed to be a little hostile when I interjected during his remarks. However, I was quite sure that he neglected to explain convincingly why he and his Liberal Government did not introduce legislation to achieve employment equity in a real sense. When he was the Minister of Employment and Immigration he talked about mandatory affirmative action. However, after he went back to Cabinet and spoke to his boss, the Prime Minister, and probably received considerable pressure from the business sector, he changed his tune and opted for voluntary persuasion of companies. There was no contract compliance.

Furthermore, affirmative action was implemented in only three Departments of the federal Government. That does not make sense because there are many people in the target groups who wanted jobs in other Departments.

Why is employment equity taking so long? I have found it difficult to understand why it was possible for the Liberal Government to do such an effective job in achieving mandatory bilingual policies in the federal Public Service. They have been successfully implemented in all Departments of the federal Government. Yet it was unable to achieve employment equity for women, native people, visible minorities and the disabled.

Before I finish my remarks, I want to move the following amendment on behalf of my Party:

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

In the time I have left—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Papproski): Order, please. Once the Hon. Member proposes an amendment, she must stop her debate.