

The next group, Mr. Speaker, is the supply and service union of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. That group has also asked us to amend this legislation to make sure that the Bill applies to the Public Service of Canada.

The next organization is one called BOOST the Blind Organization of Ontario with Self-Help Tactics. I had the opportunity in Toronto, along with the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) and the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mrs. Collins), about two months ago to meet some blind Canadians who came to a rally at City Hall to talk to those of us interested in this Bill, and they asked us to make certain amendments. One amendment they asked us to make to the Bill is Motion No. 8 standing in my name today. I am sure some of their representatives will be on the Hill right now demonstrating in front of Parliament. What better piece of evidence that we are listening to Canadians could there be than the acceptance of this motion?

Another organization that has asked up to accept this idea of having the Bill apply is an organization called Committee for 94. It is a very prominent, well known and articulate women's organization. Another is the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and finally, the Assembly of First Nations, the assembly of the aboriginal peoples of Canada. They are one of the four target groups to which this Bill pertains. They have asked us, as one of the four target groups, to make sure that we apply Bill C-62 to the Public Service of Canada.

I make that argument. I make my first argument as one that we should listen to the people, that we should listen to the organizations affected. They are all telling us to do the same thing. I appeal to Members of the Conservative Party to put aside some of the political partisan debate we have heard from time to time and listen very carefully to what the people of Canada are saying to us. They are telling us that they want the federal Public Service to be included, and I think we should move in that direction.

As I said before, the Minister had said at committee that the Public Service guidelines are enough, that Treasury Board guidelines are enough. I do not think they are, and nor do these organizations. Treasury Board policies on equity are totally management controlled. It seems to me if there is any Party in this House that has been critical of the way the senior public servants have sometimes handled and conducted themselves, it is the Conservative Party whose members have criticized the bureaucrats and mandarins in Ottawa. This is one way of making sure that the will of Parliament takes precedence over the management of the senior levels of the Public Service of Canada. That is another reason we should be making sure that Motion 8 carries.

Treasury Board guidelines in the past years have made the promoting of women to senior positions in the Public Service a very high priority. My understanding from women's groups is that they have often ignored the vast majority of women in the Public Service who are not in senior management positions but

Employment Equity

in middle management positions in the Public Service of Canada.

There has been no serious effort or initiatives taken to identify or to eliminate systemic discrimination in all aspects of Public Service employment practices. That is a very important part of what we are trying to achieve today, and Treasury Board guidelines are just not adequate, according to all the organizations that have come before our committee. Treasury Board policies on equity lack the force and the commitment of law. To me, that is very important.

Let me say that we have a lot of disabled Canadians who have made the effort to come to Ottawa to have a demonstration in front of Parliament at noon hour. That demonstration should be starting about now, if it has not already begun. First, they are asking us to listen to them and to govern on their behalf. They are joined by seven or eight other organizations representing native Canadians, visible minorities, women and others who say that this motion is important, that it should carry and that the Public Service must be included. Second, they are saying that Treasury Board guidelines are not enough. They do not have the force of law. It is important, as Governments come and go, as Ministers come and go and as Treasury Board Ministers come and go, that the force of law have some continuity and that the force of law be there. Be it Liberal, New Democratic or Conservative, be it the present Minister of the Treasury Board or some new Minister, it is important that the force of law in statute tell the public servants, management, that we want employment equity in the Public Service along the same lines as we want it to apply in the private sector.

Finally, it is of particular importance for disabled Canadians. Seventy-five per cent of disabled Canadians now work on term contract in the Public Service of Canada, according to their spokespeople who were here four months ago. The Prime Minister said to them at that time that they could have a meeting with Geoff Norquay, a special policy advisor. They spent over half an hour in his office. He said to them that he would be letting them know what he could do by the time this Bill came back to the House. The Bill is now before the House, Mr. Speaker. What better day to say yes to disabled Canadians than today, because they are here with us, and saying it now in part by accepting Motion No. 8 now before the House.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, I want to express my support for this amendment which would knock from the Bill those sections which prevent the Bill from applying to the Public Service. I had a similar amendment to that of the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) but, because he tabled his first, mine was ruled out of order. In any case, I fully support his amendment. I want to put on the record our reasons for doing so.

The Government has said that such an amendment is not necessary, that it is not necessary for Bill C-62 to apply to the Public Service because there is already a program in place of employment equity applying to the Public Service under