

What we are talking about with an employment equity policy is not special treatment for certain groups but special measures to make sure they get equal treatment. This is a policy we publicly stated for many years and yet we still find that all these groups mentioned are not receiving equal treatment within the Public Service in hiring to work for the people of Canada.

When I first raised this issue in the House, it was on the basis of the hiring of visible minorities. Yes, we are making some progress and, yes, we are hiring more people. The figures are still quite appalling and show a very distinctive bias against hiring people from visible minority backgrounds.

In 1988, the latest year for which figures are available, nearly 12 per cent of applicants to the Public Service were from visible minorities. With that large number of applications, it is very difficult to understand any other reason except inborn, perhaps unconscious bias for the hiring of only 3.3 per cent of the hiring being for visible minorities.

• (1810)

It is very difficult to understand why someone with a different coloured skin has only one-quarter the chance of the general applicant population of being hired. The same thing is happening to women. It is getting worse and not better. In 1987, women earned 75 cents for every dollar a man earned in the Public Service. Last year, it dropped to 74 cents. Women are still clustered at the lowest income groups.

Native Canadians are still, within the Public Service, below their representation in the population at large. If in fact we take out those who are employed by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, their representation drops to well below 1 per cent.

These are not statistics. This is not a record of which we as a Parliament or we as a people can be proud.

The Government of Canada is the largest employer in this country. The time has passed for us to look to other companies, to demand reports without really enforcing performance, and to look at ourselves, how we perform, what kind of leadership we are giving and what kind of example we are setting in employment equity.

It is not enough to say that visible minorities, the disabled, native people and women will forever be disadvantaged in their opportunities to work for their country and to work for their Government. We have finally to say that we are serious about it and put in place programs with real teeth in them, and hold our public servants accountable if they do not meet the objectives

Adjournment Debate

of justice, equality, fairness and true consideration of merit, and merit only, in hiring for the Public Service.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by assuring the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mrs. Catterall) that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) is committed to fair treatment of all Canadians in relation to the Public Service and recognizes, as do all Members on this side of the House, that that involves really special treatment for those who have been deprived in the past.

Let me begin by explaining the Employment Equity Program of the Government of Canada especially related to aboriginal peoples and visible minorities. I should add, women and disabled people are also assisted by this program.

Our Government recognizes that certain groups face unfair employment practices and are disadvantaged in the job market. Employment equity measures are designed to correct this imbalance. The ultimate goal is to ensure that no one is denied an opportunity to compete fairly for employment opportunities.

This goal has led to the development of comprehensive employment equity action plans for all federal Departments and federal Crown corporations. These plans highlight measures to remove barriers to the equal participation of aboriginal peoples and members of visible minority groups. We have specific numerical targets to ensure that more applicants from these designated groups are appointed to positions in the Public Service.

To implement our commitment to employment equity, numerical targets must be submitted by Departments for review by Treasury Board. This process involves extensive analysis by staff and careful review by Ministers of the Treasury Board.

In 1988, \$19 million in funding and more than 2,000 person-years will bolster employment equity programs within the federal Public Service. More than \$44 million and 1,100 person-years were devoted specifically to increase the hiring, training, and promotion of aboriginal peoples and members of visible minority groups.

The Northern Careers Program, the National Indigenous Development Program, and the Visible Minority Employment Program were extended to 1993. These programs provide tangible evidence of the Government's support.

Target setting and special programs of this kind demonstrate that employment equity is best achieved by a comprehensive, results oriented approach. The number of visible minorities employed in the federal Govern-