

Canadian Human Rights

As for the paragraph where Mr. Goyer says that the union dropped my complaint for discrimination, it is not correct. I did not file an official grievance; all I did was ask what the union could do for me. My informal complaint concerned discrimination between English-speaking and French-speaking employees.

What was even more unfair, was that I managed to make Mr. Mereweather understand that the University of Quebec courses met the requirements and that, moreover, francophones are seriously discriminated against compared to anglophones. I was allowed to register provided my employers agreed. They denied me this opportunity that I had worked so hard to get under the pretext that the office would gain nothing by it. I emphasize that I was the only one able to take that course, as my French-speaking colleagues were too late to register.

The only alternative the union offered me, since a casual employee has no rights, was to inform the media of the facts concerning the unfair treatment I got. Mr. Yvon Billard made it clear to me that the union could not promise me this would work, but that my only chance was the pressure of public opinion. I preferred to let the whole matter drop because anglophone opinion cannot care less about the manner in which francophones are treated.

Mr. Goyer claims that my employers are all of the same origin as myself. In that case, why did they not obtain for French-speaking employees what English-speaking employees already had? How is it that a CR4 managed to get in one hour and 45 minutes what had never been done in 2½ years? How is it that Mr. Fernand Labelle told me that it was not his fault if I was educated in Quebec, that it was not his fault if I had registered with the Quebec CGA? These people may be francophiles, but they are not francophones and even less Quebecers. How is it that before November 15, 1976, the memos from those people were written only in English?

It is strange that Mr. Jean-Pierre Goyer does not dare to give the reasons why the CRTC no longer wanted me. I find it disgusting and immoral that they used facts which I could not disprove. I can give you the list of those reasons after having pressed H. Lane for a month to tell me.

Reasons:

1. My Quebec flag was not appreciated;
2. the employee with whom I shared an office did not want me to turn on the ceiling lights;
3. I am accused of wanting to rearrange the files that I was supposed to update.

Mr. Speaker, the letter goes on in the same vein, with a whole series of facts as reported by that Mr. Pelletier and which, I suggest, show clearly enough that discrimination does exist. Even if those allegations were disproved by claiming that the matter was investigated and that the facts were not so, Mr. Speaker, it would be quite paradoxical on our part to think that someone who seems intelligent would suddenly make up the whole story. Therefore, I believe the situation I am now denouncing has existed for years, and if no more employees have complained, it is not because they had nothing to complain about, but junior employees do not dare claim their rights because they are afraid of retaliation as a result.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as can be seen, this letter was written only a few months ago, and as I happened to find out many times as well the situation thus denounced, namely that individual case which I submit to my colleagues in this House, happens time and again. For instance, when two young men, one from Quebec and the other from Ontario, with about the same education level, apply for a job, since the whole federal administration system is divided for the benefit of the English-speaking majority, there is basically a discrimination against the French-speaking applicant. This is what happened in the case I have just referred to, where a man was told that he could not be a permanent employee and would be laid off simply because he had been educated in Quebec.

[Mr. Matte.]

● (1630)

Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable to see senior officials give answers like that in 1977, particularly when on top of that we now live in confusion about the future of this country from a constitutional standpoint. Those little things where one cannot display the Quebec flag because one works in a federal government office, on what grounds does that person not have the right to do that? So it is time that the law allowed those people who are caught in the tongs of prejudices and discrimination to be able to defend themselves adequately.

I do think that those were the intentions of the minister when he introduced his bill but I wanted to show that this bill must not just remain theory and that there should be no more cases like the one I just spoke about in detail where an individual can suffer serious personal injustices for the simple reason that the laws do not allow him to further defend himself and we have to refer precisely to those against whom grievances are laid. I mention that incident hoping it will enable us to set things right not only in this case but also in all cases of other individuals who in the public service or elsewhere are discriminated against in this way.

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member allow a question?

Mr. Matte: Of course.

Mr. Cyr: Mr. Speaker, can the hon. member say whether he would approach the government of the province of Quebec so the Canadian flag would be raised in the schools of the province of Quebec, as is done elsewhere, and to put an end to the current discrimination on the part of the government of the province?

Mr. Matte: Mr. Speaker, I do not see much discrimination there. I think there is no problem in that respect. The hon. member will note that I am wearing a badge that says: Proud to be a Quebecer, with the Canadian flag on top. I do not see any kind of incompatibility between the two, and I do not think there is any such thing since it always gives me great pleasure to send Canadian flags to schools in my riding which they display quite proudly beside the Quebec flag. I think the hon. member is missing the point here. There is no discrimination vis-à-vis the Canadian flag even if Quebec now has a government with a constitutional option for the future not only of Quebec but the whole country, and I do not think that is part of the debate.

Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, as all those who have spoken on this bill since the beginning of the debate, I think individual freedom and protection of privacy are essential matters. We should ask ourselves the following question: will the bill now before us, namely bill C-25, truly contribute to ensure individual freedom and independence for all people in spite of the overwhelming bureaucracy and more particularly, data collecting agencies which are responsible for gathering personal information on individuals? It is clear that this bill means well, just as the road to hell is paved with good