

*Employment Equity*

The argument has been made that leadership has to be given by the public sector to encourage the private sector to open up employment opportunities for disabled Canadians. Yet this Bill, as I said, specifically excludes Government Departments and Parliament. Parliament would not be required to bring in affirmative action programs to employ the disabled. What does that say to the private sector employer? We require them to hire disabled people but we will not do it ourselves. That in essence is what we are saying to the private sector. It flies in the face of everything that has been said to Governments for at least the last six years. We do not practise what we preach.

I know that you will be interested to hear that the Coalition of Provincial Organizations for the Handicapped, COPOH, sent a questionnaire to the candidates during the last election campaign. They asked those candidates whether or not they supported the recommendations made in the *Obstacles* Report. One of the candidates, the then Leader of the Opposition, now the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney), responded to that questionnaire and said specifically that he agreed with the recommendations in the *Obstacles* Report concerning employment opportunities for the disabled and the influence the Government should have on that process. Since the election, COPOH issued two responses to the Government's lack of response. They were called report cards. The first one was issued on August 14, 1985, and the second on March 14, 1986. The reason this organization was forced to issue those report cards was the lack of movement by the federal Government on promises it had made nearly 18 months ago. In the key area of employment, the COPOH report card gave the Government an F grade. On the key issue of income security, the Government got a D. On the special parliamentary committee, we got a B, and there are specific reasons why we are so high there. Human rights and freedoms got a D minus. Disabled refugees got a C. Independent living got a C minus. Transportation got a C plus. The average grade was D, for a very poor performance. That is an absolutely horrible reflection on a Government that promised so much during the election campaign while it was looking for votes. I do not think it should be satisfied to respond to criticisms of the Bill by saying it does not have to do that because Treasury Board has its own affirmative action programs. Previous results from Treasury Board clearly indicate that the affirmative action program does not work.

It became very clear last month that some 76 per cent of disabled individuals hired in the federal Public Service were hired on term contracts. What that means, of course, is that when there is a shortage of work or a downsizing, when Government has made a decision to reduce the size of the federal Public Service, those term contract employees are the first ones to be let go. That is not my idea of affirmative action. For the disabled concerned, it is not simply a question of downsizing Government Departments and laying people off. For the disabled it means a threat to the security of their immediate and future income. A disabled person who has held a job for a period of time has tremendous problems earning an income after his release. Most disabled rely on a public

pension, which requires that they have an income at a certain level in order to qualify. When they are laid off it could be several months before they requalify.

It seems that we, the parliamentary committee that was party to this *Obstacles* Report, did not do our job right the first time around. We should have policed what the federal Government was doing when it was hiring disabled individuals. I was not aware, and I know other members of the committee were not aware because I have discussed this with the members of that previous committee, that that is what the previous Government was doing. It was showing a large increase in the number of disabled individuals being hired into the Public Service. What it did not show was that they were all temporary employees.

• (1600)

I see my time has expired, Mr. Speaker. I have many more points I wish to make. By the way, one of the key players on that issue, Jim Dirkson, is sitting in the public galleries, I believe, and he also may have some things to say about this subject over the next several weeks.

**Mr. Alan Redway (York East):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few brief words with respect to Motion No. 8 dealing with an amendment to this Bill, Bill C-62, the employment equity Bill. The effect of the amendment, as you know, would be to delete a particular part of the Bill, and that would in effect mean that the Bill would apply then to Government Departments. The Parliamentary Secretary has quite rightly pointed out the fact that there is already in place, and has been since, I believe, 1983, an affirmative action program in federal Departments put in place under a Treasury Board regulation which does in effect require affirmative action and includes certain targets for Departments.

The Parliamentary Secretary, I am sure, has in his possession information relating to the way in which, to date, that program has been implemented and how it has worked in the Public Service.

As a member of the Public Accounts Committee I have, in my possession, as do all members of the Public Accounts Committee, a report from Madam Huguette LaBelle, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, indicating what has happened with respect to the implementation of this program in the senior levels of the Public Service.

That report, to my mind, is rather shocking. This program has been in place since 1983. I must readily admit that there is some progress being made with respect to women. With respect to the disabled and visible minorities it appears that there has not really been much progress at all. I would like to direct my comments particularly to the visible minority category, because therein, as I understand it, lies a difficulty. In the past, all employment regulations, legislation, and all of the human rights legislation that we have had in place, have in fact said that you are not required to reveal the colour of your skin, your race or anything else. It has made it virtually