

*Employment Equity*

**Mr. Cassidy:** That is not what is being proposed here.

**Mr. Weiner:** That is what he stated, that he did not want mandatory affirmative action. Affirmative action does not have to be the same thing as quotas, if we get on with the job and start to show some real progress without them. We want to get on with the job. Let us pass the Bill, let us put employment equity into effect, and five years down the way when we review it together we will all praise the progress we have made.

**Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the Government—in this particular case the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Weiner)—is in fact repeating to the House, to the people of Canada and to those groups which want some kind of protection and equality the following old ditty:

“Mother, may I go out to swim?  
Yes my darling daughter,  
Hang your clothes on the hickory bush,  
But don't go near the water.”

● (1530)

That is the kind of thinking the Government is asking us to follow. I do not know whether the appropriate word to describe such an approach would be “hypocrisy”. However, it certainly is an attempt by the Government to act as if it were doing something, when it knows perfectly well that it is not. It is pretending really to care about a certain group, but it is not going to give them the protection it is pretending it will give them. That underlies the Government's response to this motion.

This motion relates to the need for action plans to be known. We heard the convoluted thinking of the last speaker. He said that the Canadian Human Rights Commission cannot have access to this information, but can request it when it wants to prosecute or act. How can the Canadian Human Rights Commission know whether it wants to act unless it can get the information? That is double-talk. To put it at its nicest, it is a catch-22.

The handicapped who came to the Hill yesterday to protest know this double-talk for what it is. They know that this Bill simply requires companies to make a report with some statistics which they can then hide in their drawers for three years. After kicking, screaming, and resisting, the Conservative Party finally agreed that there should be a plan, but no one can see the plan. It is tragic, or laughable. In any case, it is totally unacceptable to any reasonable, sincere person.

We are not talking only about human rights here. We are talking about human responsibilities. The Government does not seem able to accept human responsibilities. Through the way in which it has handled this equality Bill, it is obvious that the Government does not know what human rights are. It has no idea of how it is necessary for Parliament to be responsible for the protection of the interests of large numbers of citizens.

Women represent at least 51 per cent of our population. One in every eight Canadians, which amounts to millions of our citizens, is disabled. The native people represent a very large section of our community. Visible minority groups also form a very large percentage of our population. A responsible Government would provide legislation to act responsibly in the interests of those people. This Government is not doing so and is fighting, in a most hypocritical way, resolutions which give some meaning to this Bill which, at the present time, is nothing but a bunch of words.

The Government must take the responsibility of ensuring that corporations and companies are responsible to their employees, to the communities which they serve, and to the taxpayers which often support those corporations. We are asking that the taxpayers who fall within these groups be given the right of access to jobs. The Government is not showing responsibility, nor is it calling upon companies to be responsible with regard to the people of the country by making plans to ensure that proper and equal access is provided to all Canadians, and to ensure that their plans are made known so their records can be measured against those plans. That is precisely what this motion is all about.

It is absolutely incredible that the Government is taking evasive tactics by requiring companies to provide action plans, but keeping those plans secret. I call upon the Parliamentary Secretary to re-examine his thinking on this matter and to explain the purpose of having such a plan if the plan is not to be made available to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Why should a company go to the trouble of making a plan if it stays in the files? It is absurd to require such an exercise. We asked for an action plan because we wanted action. This is inaction.

One cannot conclude other than that the Government is not really sincere about employment equity. It has totally evaded Judge Abella's recommendation to ensure that the Bill has teeth. She said that the passage of a Bill without teeth would be to continue as we have before. We have really made no step forward other than jawboning. I have been speaking to a lot of human rights people. I have been talking to people in the churches concerned with human responsibility. They feel that in terms of this Bill the Government should go back to the drawing board and re-examine its purposes. If the Government passes this bill it will only hinder the cause. The Bill will have practically no effect in terms of bringing about immediate action for the people who have been waiting for the Government to fulfil its promises.

If the Canadian Human Rights Commission wants information, it will have to use sleuths. It will have to guess what companies are doing. It will not have ready access to reports on companies' plans. It can only guess what those plans are, and that means it can do nothing. It will have nothing more than figures with regard to the companies' intentions. We will throw an enormous task upon the back of the Canadian