

*Motions*

sorship, has already been acted on. We favour the recommendation to include children adopted under the age of 13. On language instruction, I have to be more critical. The committee recommended that instruction in English or French be made available to all immigrants, regardless of sex, marital or family status. This is how it should be, but unfortunately the Government is content not to take action. It merely points out what is available and notes the complaints of immigrant women's services that there is discrimination in access. It is not just immigrant women's groups who have been complaining, it is all women's organizations who have been complaining about the Catch-22 situation. The immigrant woman goes in to get language training and she is told she is not the chief breadwinner so she cannot get it. She goes out and gets a job anyway, and she is told she does need language training because she managed to get a job. Yet it may be very poorly paying because she does not have English or French and is not able to compete for jobs which require one of our official languages. Unfortunately, the Government is unduly content with the *status quo*.

We have seen considerable improvement over-all. The Government has accepted a number of important recommendations. However, I want to refer to a few areas which various citizens' groups have been raising as concerns with us. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is concerned that the religious diversity we have is not being considered at all. The report is far too much oriented to individual rights and does not take into account the fact that individuals live in communities. They are not isolated, but their status and the contribution they make to our society is very much influenced through collective action by people with common beliefs, not just as isolated atoms in society.

Religious beliefs in institutions have not been taken seriously enough for the concerns of value groups. For example, it is not just that employers must make provision for employees' beliefs; there should be recognition that some employers themselves have religious beliefs collectively. They provide social services, missions, public interest groups, publishers, children's aid societies. They are concerned, for example that Jewish Family Services be able to continue to place children in Jewish families. They are worried about their legal status.

Bona fide occupational requirements sometimes miss the point that it is not that an exception should be made, but that it should be understood that a particular community is making a real contribution and it is a reasonable expectation that the people working in it share those views.

Citizens For Public Justice raises a number of similar concerns for collective community rights. It calls for religious agencies to be treated equally in their differences, that they have equal status with secular agencies, not just the right for individuals to be free of discrimination. They argue that freedom of association, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion should be guaranteed not just on an individual level but upheld and recognized at the collective level.

In cases such as funding for non-governmental organizations for economic development projects, art projects, refugee relief,

or social services, they should not be required to sacrifice their values or beliefs as a condition for funding. It should be seen as part of the contribution they make. I must say that as a social democrat and sociologist by background I have some sympathy with the fact that we do not pay enough attention to the needs of communities. We are sometimes too oriented to the individual in isolation. Yet we have communities which are part of the fabric of Canada and their needs must also be respected.

Before closing I want to turn to another question which is really not treated adequately in this report, that is economic equality. The thrust of the recommendations of the subcommittee is towards the removal of barriers. It is much more modest on positive measures to catch up.

● (1740)

Our society is still one with enormous differences between income and wealth. For example, there are enormous differences between the native woman who does not have a job and looks after her children—and many of these women live in absolute destitution—and the white male professional or business executive who has a very high income. The differences between these groups are actually increasing in our society today. There is no way that the children of such a native woman can compete on an equal basis with the children of the much more favoured white male.

These differences are reflected in measures which increase sales tax and deindex the family allowance and the child tax credit, while the capital gains exemption provides substantial additional privileges to those who do not need them.

There are significant sectors of our society still living in poverty and there are enormous economic barriers preventing those people from developing their talents and achieving a decent standard of living. We are faced with 10 per cent unemployment and low wages for the working poor. There is the welfare trap that keeps people on the welfare rolls even though they want to work.

Many people are homeless and must line up at food depots for their food. There is a serious shortage of affordable housing. The provisions in this report do not deal with these questions.

One misses the point by suggesting that a poor person who is sleeping at a shelter will not be discriminated against when looking for a job the next day. That person will not have the same strength to look for a job when living such a life.

We will not deal with the problems of those who suffer greatly in our society by simply removing these legal barriers and setting up programs for them.

The *Towards Equality* report attempts to present a bright future but we must realize that the sun does not shine on all of our citizens equally. There are a million poor children in Canada. There are poor elderly women and natives whose livelihood has been destroyed by pollution.

We must take the next and far more difficult step toward equality by attacking the economic barriers so that all children