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accept responsibility for what they choose to do with their life, be it pursuing a life of crime or having a lower standard of living while they put themselves through university. When they get out of school they have a right to expect equal treatment when they look for work. Preferential treatment on the basis of your skin colour is just as racist as discrimination. Employment equity is by definition discrimination and therefore against the law.

Social change cannot be legislated. Previous Liberal attempts at social engineering have been disastrous and have created greater divisiveness in Canadian society. Past Liberal legislation gave us multiculturalism which promotes our differences instead of our similarities. It makes us hyphenated Canadians and asks us to define ourselves in terms of skin colour, country of our ancestors or, if all other categorizations fail, language. We are not allowed to be just Canadian. The government does not believe such a person exists.

Now that multiculturalism has made us focus on our differences the government wants to institutionalize inequality and preferential treatment. It wants to further divide the workforce with a quota system that will replicate an artificial division of the Canadian people based on arbitrary characteristics unrelated to their ability to do the job. Equity is not equality.

The hon. member for Western Arctic said earlier today special treatment is not a departure from equality. How can special treatment of entire designated groups lead to equality? Special treatment by its very nature is not equality.

The same member said same treatment does not create equality. I agree with that but not for the same reasons she said. Canadians should be guaranteed equal opportunities. These include education, equal employment opportunities and the right not to be discriminated against for reasons unrelated to their qualifications.

As the member must agree, given her own achievements, even when we all receive the same treatment we do not all follow the same paths in life. We do not end up running a corner bakery or a multinational corporation, at least not all of us. We are different and we do not all share the same goals. Siblings end up in entirely different lines of work and levels of employment despite the same treatment. Equal opportunity does not always lead to equal results.

Every time the government decides there is a problem it tries to solve it with more government regulations and inappropriate misguided legislation. We see the same philosophy of over regulation in the Liberal approach to crime control. Instead of specifically targeting gun smugglers and criminals who misuse firearms the government will force all gun owners to register. This shotgun approach to problems does not work. It creates more jobs for bean counters while the government desperately hopes a criminal will register a gun or in the case of employment

equity a prejudiced employer will incriminate themselves when filling out paper work.

I completely support the elimination of discrimination but we cannot legislate attitudes and we cannot create equality through legislation. Go after the law breakers. Do not make more rules and red tape that do not directly address the problem. Social engineering does not work.

Canadians want equality, not more groups with special rights and privileges. Canadians want to end discrimination, not extend it on a scale only the Liberal government could conceive. Canadians want to succeed based on their personal merit and achievements, not on the colour of their skin or some other arbitrary classification the government has decided on.

A policy of employment equity will lead to inequality. It will increase intolerance in our society and it will lead to greater misunderstandings between people. The elimination of intolerance and discrimination in society is a desirable objection.

I question the way the government is going about it. I see the end result as more intolerance. With employment equity how will anyone in a designated group ever be certain they got where they did because of their own efforts and hard work? Even if they know they earned every promotion and every raise, how do they convince jealous naysayers? When someone is bypassed for a promotion will they believe it is because the other person deserved it or will they blame employment equity? Will employers be forced to defend every decision they make?

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With employment equity every promotion will be viewed with suspicion, whether it is because the person was in a designated group and other employees challenged their qualifications or because the person was not in a designated group and the government wants to know why the company did not promote a designated person instead.

Private industry should have the right to hire whomever it wants. However, I fully support prosecution where there is evidence of systemic discrimination. No one should face discrimination in the workforce. People should be hired and promoted on the basis of personal merit. While it is true we have not completely stamped out prejudice, there are other ways of dealing with unfair hiring practices besides enforcing a quota system. We should enforce laws which specifically target people who engage in discriminatory hiring practices or employment conditions.

By promoting employment equity the Liberal government has admitted it has no faith these designated groups can make it on merit alone and so it will coerce companies using quotas and monetary penalties. Will such measures lead to even more intolerance as a few disgruntled workers wrongly seize on employment equity as the reason they were bypassed for a raise they thought they deserved?