

Employment Equity

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 114(11), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Pending the Speaker's decision on Motions Nos. 2 to 6, we will now proceed with Motion No. 8.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville) moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-62, be amended in Clause 3 by striking out lines 13 to 15 at page 2.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appeal to the House to support this amendment. It is an amendment that would include the federal Government itself under the provisions of the employment equity Bill, Bill C-62. I think it is a very reasonable amendment.

If we are passing legislation that is to apply to private companies operating under federal law or to federal Crown corporations, then why should the same law not apply to the Public Service of Canada? I appeal to Hon. Members of the Conservative Party to accept this motion which would make this Bill applicable to Canadian public servants. For example, when this law is passed, it will not apply to the employees of the Ministry of Employment and Immigration. I do not think that is right and proper.

In committee, the answer of Conservative Members to this question was that we do have Treasury Board guidelines. However, Treasury Board guidelines are guidelines and guidelines change as Ministers and Governments change. We have seen that all too often throughout the history of our country. This motion says that we should give those guidelines the force of law. We should put them into statute form and make it the law of Canada that employment equity is to be applicable to the federal Public Service, just as it is applicable to Crown corporations and the parts of the private sector that do business with the federal Government or fall under federal law like federal banks.

I would like Hon. Members of the Conservative Party to listen very carefully to the list of groups which have asked Parliament to support this motion, to make sure that Bill C-62 applies to public servants. These groups have said that they want federal Departments to fall under the jurisdiction of Bill C-62. The first such group is the Canadian Ethnic Cultural Council of Canada, an organization representing the many

multicultural organizations. In my riding, many such organizations exist, particularly Ukrainian-Canadian organizations. These people are saying that the Department should be under the umbrella of Bill C-62. The second group is the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, a very important organization. The third very important organization is the Coalition on Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities. I appeal to my Conservative friends to think very seriously about that.

At noon hour today there will be a demonstration outside the Parliament Buildings involving about 100 or more disabled Canadians. This may be the first time in the history of Canada that disabled Canadians have come to Ottawa to speak collectively to Members of Parliament. They will be asking us to strengthen Bill C-62, to make sure that a number of things occur to help disabled Canadians. For example, they have indicated that 70 per cent of disabled Canadians who work for the federal Government work on a term or contract basis.

I know that the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) has a lot of experience in Government. He was the Minister of Highways under the Social Credit Government of Alberta for years. He knows that in Government, regardless of political stripe, when there are cut-backs or freezes it is often the term contractors who are the first to be laid off.

Four weeks ago when disabled Canadians came to Ottawa to meet with the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), I was personally very shocked to find that 75 per cent of disabled Canadians who work for the federal Government are on term contracts. That alone is reason enough to accept this amendment and to make sure that federal Government employees come under the purview of Bill C-62. Treasury Board guidelines are obviously not good enough. They are not good enough for disabled Canadians.

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I appeal to this House now to listen to disabled Canadians who are in Ottawa today. I appeal to the House to try to accommodate what they are saying to us. They are saying, bring the Public Service under the purview of this Bill. They are saying, have a better definition, or a definition of reasonable accommodation and that there must be an enforcement agency. They are saying two or three other important things about which I will talk later this day.

The third group which says bring the Public Service under the Bill is the Organization of Persons with Disabilities. The fourth group is equally important, The Urban Alliance on Race Relations. Again, the visible minority is one of the four target groups for this Bill. They are saying to us, make sure this Bill applies to the Public Service of Canada.

Fifth, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, a very important union and organization for employees of the Government itself, is saying that the Treasury Board guidelines are not enough and that we must have the force of law in terms of promoting employment equity in Canada.