

Government Orders

When I ran as a candidate I ran thinking that somebody somewhere might elect me on the basis that they thought maybe I could string two or three sentences together, that I love my country, and that I am committed to being a member of Parliament. I am glad to say that it happened not only once, in 1989, but again with a larger majority in 1993. I appreciate that, but never once would I be able to go around and say I am a woman, so elect me or re-elect me; or that I am getting special funding from my party; or if somebody wanted to challenge me for the nomination in the constituency of Beaver River that my party leader would say: "No, you are not able to challenge Deborah because she is the sitting MP and I want her there". That is ridiculous.

We need to encourage wide open nomination meetings for people who want the job. It makes for a good race and it is democratic. What could be worse for true democracy than a party leader saying no, sorry, you cannot run because I have so-and-so and she is going to run in this riding?

We have to put our energies into educating people. That is far and wide the most beneficial thing we can do. We are not going to legislate all the problems out of Canada. That is simply bizarre. We have seen any number of times that it simply does not work. It does not work when a government says we know best and we are going to do all of these wonderful things, especially when the whole idea of employment equity has just blown up in its face. The Ontario members know that. They just saw in their own province that it did not work.

• (1320)

How do we think we can legislate these things? We have to spend our time educating. That would involve such things as starting here in the House of Commons, where we would not see political hanky-panky going on and party leaders engineering and telling us who we will have as candidates and as MPs. Surely the House of Commons would be a good place for education to start.

Some Wednesday, because almost everyone is here for question period, I would love to see a show of hands from people who did not have anyone challenge them for their nomination. Would that not be a great educational tool to see how many people were anointed or appointed as candidates? I bet members would be too ashamed to put up their hands. I know I would.

If my party leader said: "Deb, we are going to put you in here and no one else can run against you", I would be ashamed. If a news reporter ever asked me how many people challenged me for the nomination, I would have to say there were going to be two or three, but I was anointed as the candidate so they were not allowed to run. Can you imagine how pathetic that would be? Imagine the signal that would send to the rest of the country. My friend knows about it. What kind of signal would that send to the country? It is pretty pathetic. Those are the kinds of educational things we need to get going.

I would like to correct something I said earlier about the fact that there would be employment equity or equity police for those of us who are hiring our staff. I was wrong on that and I admit it. But this bill does not even extend to the House of Commons. I ask some of the experts over there if I am correct on that. Does it extend to the House of Commons staff?

Could anyone, even in the gallery, explain to me how in the world the House of Commons becomes exempt from this? Well, it is good enough for everyone else in the public service, but this group is exempt. By the very fact that the people who are working here are exempt from it, we have the sin of omission again. As soon as there is a sin of commission because we commit names and groups to people, then there is the sin of omission and it does not even extend to the House of Commons. I think people watching us on television today should be well aware of that. It is absolutely incredible that the House of Commons is exempt. All of a sudden we are special again.

If anything takes us down the road of something that is dangerous and divisive, it is that it is good for everybody else across the country but we are exempt from it here. It sort of makes me smell the MP pension issue all over again, as a matter of fact. We are cutting out all the pensions for all these people and we are sorry that we have to lay off 45,000 public servants, but we MPs will keep our pension plan. Instead of \$6 to \$1 for employer to employee contributions, we are just cutting back, folks. We are just slicing the fat off this. Now our employers are only going to give \$4 to \$1. So MPs are exempt.

There is another group of people who all of a sudden become special. I am sure my friends are well read and I am sure they remember the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. I am sure they will remember the phrase in there that all animals are created equal but some are more equal than others. If anything smacks of that, it is Bill C-64. If anything smacks of that, it is the MP pension plan, which no other person in the country is able to get.

My friend the President of the Treasury Board knows it full well. I have spoken at public meetings and I know he has as well. If he had asked for a show of hands from any of those groups he spoke with asking if anyone qualified for this kind of a pension plan, there would not have been a hand up in the place. But it is okay to tell everyone else across the country they have to tighten their belts.

My friend over here just hollered out that I was going to get \$100,000 instead of \$1.4 million that I am eligible to collect. I do not know where he got that number. Let me put it on the record that I am getting back only the contributions I have made. The President of the Treasury Board told me: "You take all of your pension or you take zero". Those were my options. He would not even grant me a one to one contribution like anyone else would get. We were exempt from the federal civil service pension plan, that act where the employer would have to put in at least 50 per cent of the money. I am not getting that. I am getting back \$32,000 of my contributions at 4 per cent. No mutual fund would ever give that little money since 1989. I get \$32,000 back that I can roll over into my RRSP, and some \$16,000, much like