

Employment Equity

Mr. Weiner: We are not keeping anything secret.

Mr. Cassidy: That is exactly what you are doing, keeping it secret.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please.

Mr. Weiner: We are not keeping anything secret. We are sending forth a message that all Canadians will be able to contribute to and participate in society. Canada is the most wonderful country in the world. Its immigration policy is the most open and accessible of any in the world, one that has gone out with heart—

Mr. Cassidy: Keep it secret, keep it secret.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please. The Chair is very much under the impression that the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) would like to make a comment—

Mr. Cassidy: Yes, if you would like me to, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): No, I am not inviting the Hon. Member to make a comment. He has already spoken, and I draw his attention to that fact. Obviously the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary has the same right.

Mr. Weiner: All those things we feel give us the confidence to know that we will have the support, encouragement and co-operation of all Canadians in our goal.

We have run a series of advertisements which talk about the world next door. I invite all Hon. Members and all Canadians to visit my world next door. They should come with me to the streets of St. Laurent where they will see that 50 per cent of the population has come to this country, 25 per cent in the last 15 years. All of them are about to or have already taken a very viable place in the community. A lot more has to be done; much has already gone on. I would be the first to say that that is exactly what we are highlighting by saying loud and clear that they all deserve an equal chance. We will see to it that they get that chance. All Members of the House agree with that.

Mr. Nystrom: In secret.

Mr. Weiner: The Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) said that all countries of the world post their plans.

Mr. Nystrom: I didn't say that.

Mr. Weiner: He will know that in the United States there is no posting of plans.

Mr. Cassidy: They bomb Libyans there too. We have to look at what we have to do in this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please.

Mr. Weiner: There is a purpose in listening. There is a purpose in communicating. There is a purpose in putting into effect a piece of legislation which will work. Philosophically we do not agree, but we on all sides of the House want to ensure that there is true equality. We want to ensure that we are not patronizing and that we have results.

Mr. McCurdy: What does that have to do with publishing a plan?

Mr. Nystrom: Why keep it secret?

Mr. Weiner: Employers are required to consult with their employees. There is no need to mention the word "brief" since the Bill already specifies that it will be three years. Employers will be encouraged in guidelines to make the plans available to employees.

Mr. Cassidy: But not required.

Mr. Weiner: The guidelines to employers will specify that a good employment strategy includes making the plans available to employees. The plans will not be available to the Canadian Human Rights Commission on request. However, the Canadian Human Rights Commission will have access to the plans when investigating complaints.

Gordon Fairweather, Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, indicated during the committee hearings that the reported data would be sufficient to initiate complaints under the Canadian Human Rights Act. The Commission can initiate complaints, examine data and plans and, if necessary, appoint tribunals which have the authority to impose sanctions where findings of discrimination are made.

Mr. Cassidy: What about freedom of information? Didn't you used to stand for that?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please.

Mr. Weiner: Since Members are so wonderful in quoting Mr. Fairweather, a great Canadian, a very concerned man and one of the foremost leaders of human rights in the world, I too would like to have a moment to quote him.

Mr. McCurdy: You are talking about everybody but the target groups.

An Hon. Member: Why don't you give him a chance to speak, you nerd?

Mr. Nystrom: Is that a parliamentary word?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please.

Mr. Weiner: I should like to refer to what Mr. Gordon Fairweather said at the fifty-fifth annual meeting of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce last September. He said: "I am convinced that the time for affirmative action is now, but let me make it very clear that I do not at this stage advocate mandatory affirmative action".