

*Motions*

Let our principles, rather than the latest Decima polls, be our guide.

In the time I have remaining let me summarize my Party's stand on the recommendations of the *Equality for All* report. With respect to employment equity, we believe that one of the basic building blocks for someone to be well integrated into society is equal opportunity in the employment market. Therefore, we believe that as a constitutionally enshrined right, no person should be denied employment opportunity or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability. The only limits deemed acceptable to guaranteeing rights and freedoms under our Charter are those enunciated in Section 1 which calls for such acts to be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. In other words, rather than a magic age limit or an opinion, there must be cause and concrete judgment before making a determination that someone cannot have a job.

Bill C-62, the proposed Employment Equity Bill, does not meet the intended goal of equal opportunity for the handicapped, visible minorities, native people or women. A law that has no mandatory enforcement mechanism is a law with no teeth. It is a sham, and I am ashamed that any member of the Government would put a signature to a Bill that has no way of being effective. It is totally inadequate for the Minister to provide a ministerial citation for excellence rather than mandatory operation and enforcement mechanisms. It is a law with no effective force. It has no sanctions, outside of moral suasion. We have had many years of experience with moral suasion, with very little results. It is time to take steps that will bring about the needed results.

It is regrettable that the amendments so carefully considered and proposed by my colleagues fell on the deaf ears of Tory legislators. Time permitting, I will read the very succinct recommendations Nos. 62 and 63 which we put forward at page 51. I suggest that Government Members read them again.

The ground of reasonable accommodation should be added to the Canadian Human Rights Act. That is, such special provisions as would not cause undue hardship to the employer but is in response to the needs peculiar to classes of employees who are protected from discrimination by the terms of the Act. If I have time I would like to talk about Mr. Binder whose case was determined in the court. His brother has suffered from discrimination because of the same lack of application of the rule of reasonable accommodation and the right to work under our laws. The application of that rule was a specific request from the Chairman of the Canadian Human Rights Commission which has been ignored in this report.

Our Party endorses the report's recommendations with respect to the participation of women in all trades and occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is my Party's belief that sexual discrimination within the Armed Forces is intolerable. During our committee hearings we were told by the opponents of female participation that there was the potential for adverse social and sexual relationships. Such arguments are specious and highly reminiscent of the reasons used for-

merly to justify keeping women out of the paid workforce. They were not valid then and they are less valid now.

I find it astonishing that arguments for the limitation on the role of women in combat-ready roles are based on such notions that combat work is man's work. That is just the pattern of thinking that our Charter was intended to displace. If cultural acceptance is the litmus test for enforcement of a right, no one has any rights except at the discretion of the majority. Women are in combat-ready roles in other countries and have proven that they can do the job. To deny women who wish to serve their country the right to combat-ready roles is to deny them the right to valuable employment opportunities, training, education and promotion within the Canadian Armed Forces. Furthermore, it denies them their full rights as equal citizens of this land. My Party believes that such treatment is unjustifiable. As a mother, I am not anxious to have my children, sons or daughters, choose the Armed Forces for their career but if that is what they want, that is their right.

With respect to mandatory retirement, I remind the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) that the use of age as a factor of discrimination is now illegal. The Minister should fix his laws. The argument of normal age of retirement is no longer valid as a rule of thumb defence for everyone. This Act respects the ability of individuals to meet the requirements of the task as the yardstick of measure, not an arbitrary age. We must not substitute a retirement policy for a personnel policy. Rights are not an administrative convenience. Decisions must be made on bona fide occupational requirements, not on industry standards. The Canadian Human Rights Act should be so amended without delay.

We on this side of the House are ready to fight for the right of older people to contribute to our society and country for as long as they are able. Certainly, there will be some jobs in which retirement age is justifiable, as has been covered in Section 1. When a person is dismissed from his or her job simply because he or she has reached the age of 65, that person has suffered profound discrimination. It is a senseless judgment of a person's worth that is based on age alone. Such inequality no longer has a place in Canada's work ethic.

Although the Government has indicated that mandatory retirement will be banned, I am not convinced that the federal Government has given it thorough consideration. There were no proposed amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act which currently denies benefits to workers over the age 65.

The present rules restricting maternal benefits to the female parent are not adequate. Fathers also have an interest in being involved in the care of their newborn children, yet the present law does not give them the same opportunity afforded mothers to provide that care, as maternity benefits are available only to women. We gave a very good analysis in our report, and the Canadian Human Rights Commission recommended that the Unemployment Insurance Act be amended to ensure that the portion of maternity leave relating to social adjustment or infant care be available to either parent. I am pleased to say that my Party endorses this recommendation, unlike the Government that says this area requires further study.