

freedoms". However, it should be recognized that the two are quite different.

Although part IV deals with one only of these so-called "twin freedoms", this is not to suggest that the other one is to be neglected. I forcefully endorse the concept of freedom of information and this government is presently involved in preparing a policy paper on the issue for presentation to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Statutory Instruments which will be brought forward by my colleague, the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts). This matter can then be studied with a view to developing the best legislation possible on the methods to improve public access to government information. I expect that this paper will soon be available and I hope that we will see early legislation on the subject.

I wish to make two important policy suggestions. While the provisions of part IV only apply at present to departments and agencies of the federal government, on the basis that we should legislate our own instrumentalities first, it is important that a scheme for the protection of privacy and the right of individuals to correct information in data banks be extended as rapidly as possible to services and industries in the federally-regulated private sector. Soon after the privacy commissioner is appointed I intend to direct that he undertake a study into the possibility of such action. We are seeing more and more, in the private sector, the development of bigger and bigger data bank systems. It is important that they be subject to some form of legislation and regulation. I also hope that through the enactment of Part IV and through discussions with the provinces, the provinces will be encouraged to take action to grant individuals the right of access to personal information and the right of correction.

Having mentioned both portions of the Human Rights Act, I would like to return to the grounds of prohibition provided for in part I. In committee a number of other grounds of discrimination were discussed, such as the possibility of including language, sexual orientation, political affiliation and physical handicap in the areas of services, facilities and accommodation. Obviously, under this legislation physical handicap is included as a ground only in employment matters. The reasons for not including those grounds were discussed and fully examined in the committee. I wish to mention only two.

Parliament, through its official languages regime, is actively involved in the protection and promotion of French and English language rights in this country. To include through our Official Languages Act, through resolutions of the parliament of Canada or through other means, official language rights in a general anti-discrimination scheme would not only add considerable confusion to the situation but would run the risk of actually diluting the rights already granted for our official languages. In my opinion, any action which is necessary to promote and protect French and English language rights in Canada should be dealt with in the specific context of the official languages scheme.

While agreeing that French and English rights are appropriately dealt with under the official languages policy, some have suggested that the language rights of those Canadians who

Canadian Human Rights

speaking languages other than French or English should be dealt with in Bill C-25. I agree that discrimination against persons because they are identified as speaking a particular language cannot be tolerated. However, I would like to point out that Bill C-25 does prohibit discrimination on such a basis under the ground of "national or ethnic origin".

To suggest that the multitude of languages freely spoken by many Canadians be a prohibited ground of discrimination under this act would result in services, employment and accommodation having to be made available in all of those languages. While we all agree that people should not be discriminated against because of the particular inflection of their voice, and that in a free society we should be free to speak whatever language we want, it is another matter to impose a legal obligation for the provision of services and accommodation in those other languages.

It was discussed in committee and in representations to me that the ground of physical handicap be extended to areas of services, facilities and accommodation. I am very sympathetic to the problems faced by the physically handicapped in these areas and feel that action must be taken to alleviate them. To this end, Bill C-25 provides a mechanism for doing so. Under clause 22(1)(h) a duty is placed on the commission to encourage the development and improvement of the arrangements for physically handicapped in the areas of services, facilities and accommodation. I feel that in the long run this method of dealing with the problems of the physically handicapped, taken together with the actions of other government departments and agencies, may prove to be more effective than including physical handicap as a prohibited ground on this expanded basis.

● (1230)

Throughout our history many in this country in politics, in the churches, in the trade unions and in voluntary organizations have fought against discrimination and for the equality of men and women. It is a story of which they can be proud, and much has been accomplished. Much, however, remains to be done. It is the essence of a free society that people are judged according to their own value and their own work. Where discrimination exists in Canada, it must be rooted out. When human rights are not conceded, when acts of discrimination take place in this country, we in Canada must take a stand against it, all the more so today with human rights under sustained attack throughout the world. Regardless of our various beliefs, we in this country all seek, I believe, the brotherhood of man. Today, in some small way by the passage of this bill we, as members of parliament of all parties, are taking an important step toward the establishment of that brotherhood in this country.

Mr. Woolliams: Before my good friend, the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) rises to address the House, would the minister answer a question? Does the minister interpret this measure as meaning that once it is passed into law, the reference to "the right to work" implies that when certain rules have been laid down by the union for the protection of the working man, a person should have the right