

Supply

average wage coming out of university is equal if not slightly to the advantage of women.

Does she think women have the right to claim a choice if they do not want to work full time? Is that a right they have if they want to stay home with their families? Does she feel a woman should enter full time into the workforce and demand equal right for pay or can she choose to work less than that if she feels her priorities are elsewhere?

[Translation]

Mrs. Gagnon (Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I will answer my colleague's three questions. I would be interested in seeing the mini-survey of ethnic communities she says she conducted, because a survey is supposed to be scientific. I would also like to see from what perspective and in what order the questions were asked. We all know that survey results can vary greatly, depending on the way the question is asked and on the selection of participants.

Therefore, I am going to go back to the committee. We have heard a lot from ethnic communities, which all demand that the act be maintained, because they are one of the groups which has made the least progress. Therefore, I would like to see the mini-survey conducted by the hon. member, and we could perhaps analyze her constituents' answers scientifically. I would very much like to see it, but what I do know is that the ethnic communities which came before the committee said the opposite of what my colleague claims.

In reply to her second question, the percentages I quoted are from the Canadian public service which is already governed by the Employment Equity Act. I could bring to my colleague's attention that women are under-represented in management positions and that this was what drew my criticism. My colleague can cite other statistics, the widely accepted statistics still remain, and they lament the under-representation of women in management positions.

My colleague also raised the issue of a woman's choice to stay at home. I myself have nothing against a woman choosing to stay home and raise her children. I believe that it is not my place to dictate the daily lives of women. What I really want to see are balanced measures which promote the integration of various groups, which include women, and give them access to well-paid stable jobs and good working conditions. We all know that many women hold unstable jobs and that the expression "unstable job" means that they do not have access to their employer's benefit packages.

• (1530)

Thus, I could not agree more with women having the choice of staying home. However, should they decide to enter the work-

force, both women and disadvantaged designated groups should be given every possible chance and access to measures permitting them to hold well-paid jobs and to be trusted and treated with respect by their employers.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In consultation with the table officers I understand the rotation has been shifted a few times today. With the greatest respect to all members, I am looking for a speaker from the party whose allotted day it is. If someone from that party is seeking the floor, I will recognize them and then I will go to the government.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today to the Reform Party's opposition day motion on employment equity.

The motion states:

That this House deplore the government's employment equity policy as unnecessary, ineffective, costly, unpopular, intrusive, discriminatory and harmful to designated and non-designated groups; that this House recognize the equality of all Canadians by affirming that hiring and promotion be based solely on merit rather than on gender and race; and that discriminatory employment practices be more vigorously pursued on an individual, case by case basis.

The Reform Party approaches the issue of employment equity from this principle of the equality of all Canadians. We believe all Canadians are equal regardless of what personal characteristics they possess such as race, ethnicity, sex or what part of the country they live in.

We believe in the equality of opportunity in the marketplace but realize that equality will not necessarily result in equality of results. The concept of our government sponsored employment equity philosophy takes a much different approach.

It seeks to identify specific groups that ostensibly have been discriminated against and are therefore considered disadvantaged. Specifically, it has identified the four groups, women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

I have a number of concerns about the concept of employment equity and about its practical implementation. I want to demonstrate employment equity as such is based on a number of flawed assumptions.

Of great concern to me is that the government purports to support the concept of the equality of all Canadians. Yet this very principle, employment equity, and its underlying philosophy fly directly in the face of the principle of true equality.

How can the principle of equality be respected if some groups are given preferential treatment in hiring, recruitment and promotion in the public or the private sector through employment equity laws and regulation?