

whole life suffering from insufficient respect and an inability to have access to work. Those people are looking for justice now. It is not fair for them to have to wait with eternal optimism, as does the Member of Parliament on the other side. That is not good enough. We need it now and we need something that will give them assurance that their needs will be respected, and that they are going to be looked after now, at long last.

This is the day we celebrate the charter being in effect for a year. It was passed four years ago. Let this be the day the Government re-examines what it is saying in this Bill, and put the teeth into it that this motion is suggesting, and what the previous motion, which will be voted on later on, is suggesting, that Clauses 4, 5 and 6 be included under those areas of penalties and requirements.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** I will be brief, Mr. Speaker, but still I want to make a few comments because this is a very special day: the anniversary of the proclamation of section 15 of our Canadian Constitution, section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Four years ago, as you may recall, the Government and Parliament, in their wisdom, passed subsection (2) of section 32 which reads as follows:

Notwithstanding subsection (1), section 15—

This is from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

—shall not have effect until three years after this section comes into force.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, today marks the first anniversary of the coming into force of section 15, so it is a special occasion for us, and it was quite fitting that it should have been highlighted at the opening of the sitting this morning when the Minister responsible made a statement to stress the significance of this kind of celebration to all Canadians.

To get back to the matter under consideration, Mr. Speaker, the amendment moved by my colleague and friend from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand), the motion would increase to \$500,000 the fine levied on an employer who failed to comply with the provisions of the law or contravened the law in one way or another. Amendment motions Nos. 31A and 32A are necessary because the Bill specifies a fine of \$50,000, and we all know that such an amount would be small change for certain employers. For instance, representations have been made to provide special facilities such as handrails for people confined to wheelchairs or elevators designed to be readily accessible to the handicapped, the blind and others who experience difficulties getting around. When special facilities are required in the workplace, I do not think it is preposterous to suggest that a company with at least 100 employees would consider \$50,000 the better of two evils and be prepared to pay the fine rather than spend \$75,000, \$100,000 or \$200,000 to comply with the law. It would certainly be cheaper. This is not unheard of.

God knows some employers are not overly concerned about employment safety. Perhaps it is a sad commentary on the

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building industry, but it happens to be one of Canada's most hazardous trades, and 9 per cent of construction workers are killed accidentally or otherwise, and often the responsibility can be traced back to the employer who failed to take the necessary safety measures.

The same thing applies to the handicapped. If we want to spur private sector employers and urge them to improve their hiring practices, let us have the four designated groups in mind, and again I single them out: women, aboriginal peoples—including all Metis and Inuit people—the physically disabled and visible minorities or, as we put it in French, those who are the object of a certain discrimination because of their colour or features. Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, this motion will give teeth to this Bill which we would describe as a toothless tiger, a tiger that does not threaten anybody, a cosmetic piece of legislation is the best way to label it, in my opinion.

It looks good, and it gives the impression that there is a desire to do something to remedy an unfair situation, but in fact, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, and we have said so over and over again, this legislation has no teeth, it is not forceful enough, and we believe it ought to include an important amendment, namely, that employers whose hiring practices are unsatisfactory will be fined \$500,000.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on what was said by a Government Member, and I am referring to the Conservative Member for York East (Mr. Redway), who said that it was a first for an initiative of this kind. The Hon. Member should have done his homework on the matters now before the House, instead of causing Opposition Members to remind him that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted by Parliament in 1982, and that since then a program was set up, and the Abella Commission and all the rest, and the result is Bill C-62.

But before that, Mr. Speaker, in the Federal Public Service, and that was since 1971, and I would like to send my hon. colleague from York East a copy of a list of steps that were taken by previous Liberal Governments to promote employment equity, for the disabled as well as for women, affirmative action programs for visible minorities and for the disabled, and as I said in the debate on previous amendments, today we can say, and we take great pride in this, that at the federal level, in all cases, our programs have had a remarkable effect on the hiring of these four target groups, and as I was saying last week, Mrs. Suzanne Azzi, whom you probably know, and who is known as the guardian angel of the Public Service where the physically disabled are concerned, Mrs. Azzi told me a few days ago that she had placed 400 physically disabled persons. Yes, 400! In Ottawa-Carleton this has been their practice for five or six, or maybe it was three years. These are people who would not have had a job if there had not been an employer who was able to meet their specific needs.

The federal Government has set an example, and now the Hon. Member for York East is trying to tell us here in the House that the Parliament of Canada had done nothing before Bill C-62 was tabled in the House.