

Routine Proceedings

The committee has recommended some very significant changes including expanding the coverage of the legislation to include more employers such as the federal Public Service, the RCMP, the Canadian forces, the Parliament of Canada itself and federal political parties.

It has also recommended the expansion of the federal regulated employers from those who have 100 employees to those who have 75 or more employees. It is recommending continued obligation for the preparation of employment equity plans, consultation with employees, the compliance with employment equity plans and the reporting requirements. It is requiring or putting in place some sanctions to require that those things actually happen.

It is also recommending that Employment and Immigration Canada be the monitoring body for the act and the Canadian Human Rights Commission be the enforcement agency. Most important, it is also recommending the establishment of a national employment equity strategy which would include a public education program which I believe and the committee believes is a most important significant part of all this.

In summary, the committee has tried in its recommendations to strike a balance between the legitimate concerns of employers and the legitimate concerns of the designated groups under the act.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Liberal Party.

As Judge Rosalie Abella in her report *Equality in Employment, the Royal Commission Report* stated: "Few matters deserve the attention of law more than the right of every individual to have access to the opportunity of demonstrating full potential".

Over the course of the last six years, the government has failed to show commitment toward employment equity. In order for employment equity legislation to be effective, it must cover as many individuals and groups as possible. It must have significant sanctions in order to ensure employment equity. It also must provide that everyone who does business with the federal government ought to be covered.

We in the Liberal Party believe that if you do business with the federal government, if you are employed by the federal government or any board, agency or commission, that the Employment Equity Act ought to be complied with. We believe that any company that has 15 or more employees ought to be covered by the act. We believe that grant recipients ought to be covered by the act. We are pleased that the committee adopted our recommendation that political parties and Parliament be covered by the act. We believe that the Human Rights Commission ought to have the authority to prosecute on its own initiative.

While we participated in and support many of the recommendations in the majority report, we felt compelled to issue a minority report because we believe that although the majority report does move a long way in terms of improving the present Employment Equity Act, it does not go far enough, and the employment equity legislation will not be fair enough even if the recommendations of the committee are adopted.

So, Madam Speaker, we are tabling a minority report to the report tabled by my hon. friend.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. member for Comox—Alberni rising. I think he may want to read article 35 of our Standing Orders. He will see that when there is a minority report only one committee member from the Official Opposition may rise and give a succinct explanation.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I think you have explained what a Standing Order is, and we are all aware of that. Considering the importance of this issue before the House and all the work that the committee has done, I would like to seek unanimous consent from the House to allow the member for Comox—Alberni to make a short statement on his minority report as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Of course, if there is unanimous consent I am quite prepared to recognize the hon. member. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not have unanimous consent.