

### Government Orders

One of the other problems with Bill C-28 is the lack of resolve on behalf of the government to allow committees to have more say in the type of regulations that will flow from this bill and ultimately will have a tremendous effect on it. In the committee part of this bill, our party proposed four amendments, three that specifically addressed regulation. Although my colleagues in the Bloc supported these amendments and we even had some Liberals speak in favour of them, ultimately they were defeated.

That is really unfortunate, considering especially that in the Liberal red book the government spoke very loudly during the election about the need to reform committees to give them more power. The Liberals were long on talk but short on action. They have all the power and in committee they could have allowed us to make those changes but they did not.

This is a tremendous shame because Canadians on the doorsteps during the election said they wanted MPs who were more accountable, who did not want to have all the power of Parliament concentrated in the hands of the cabinet and the Prime Minister's office. We have seen that happening over the last dozen years or so. The government had a chance to reverse all that. It certainly had a chance to do it while we were looking at Bill C-28. It did not and that is very unfortunate.

In Quebec, if my information is accurate, committees regularly review regulations along with the bill at committee stage. They are able to give the regulations a thorough vetting and ensure that they are in harmony with the spirit of the bill as opposed to having the regulations vetted by a completely different committee or worse yet, by bureaucrats. It is very important that the same committee that deals with the bill also has a hand in crafting the regulations. If it does, members can be assured the regulations will be in line and will be harmonious with the spirit of the bill.

• (2245)

I touched on some of the concerns I have about regulations that might affect how student loans are handed out based on the assets of parents. This is another area that could have been dealt with in the regulations as it came before the committee. Unfortunately it was not. We received a draft of some of the regulations that were coming forward from the bureaucracy, I believe dated April 8. In that draft they spoke of counting assets such as the family farm, RRSPs, fishing boats. Presumably if you had those types of assets it would be grounds to deny students a loan.

We speak against that. It is a terrible idea and is completely contrary to the spirit of giving people a chance to get an education. I cannot emphasize enough how little bearing it has on many middle income Canadians. In other words, middle income Canadians are going to be penalized because although they are classed as middle income, because they have assets they

may not have enough income to send their children to school. Unfortunately the government will not give those people a student loan.

I also want to talk about a clause in the bill that would give students in some cases the chance to get grants. They would get a grant in some cases if they are disabled. Our party speaks in favour of that. We think it is only fair. It also speaks of giving grants to people who are high need students. It also speaks of giving grants to women who are pursuing doctoral studies.

I want to speak out against that last regulation which flows from Bill C-28. If there are not very many women pursuing doctoral studies it is not because they do not have opportunities. This bill would give high need students a grant anyway. In other words, if you are a single mother and you had little or no income this bill would already look after you.

Why are we choosing women? Why are we saying they specifically will have grants for doctoral studies? If there are not enough women in doctoral studies for the government's liking, it has nothing to do with how many finish their BA. It has everything to do with how few women are choosing the sciences in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 and how few women are choosing to become proficient in math in those grades. It has everything to do with the education system at those levels. It is up to the secondary schools and the parents to do a better job of encouraging female students in those grades.

It cannot be decided arbitrarily that we are going to start to grant moneys and make special provisions for women for doctoral studies based on the judgment that somehow there is discrimination in the system. Let me say why.

It is true that many times individuals do discriminate against people on the basis of gender, age or perhaps skin colour. There are provisions in place to deal with that. There are provisions under the law that allows the government to deal with that. The government does not enforce them for whatever reason. Instead it has taken the approach that it is going to fix one wrong by opposing another wrong, a wrong of reverse discrimination, with the full authority of the government.

• (2250)

To me that is scary. We are not talking now about isolated cases of discrimination by individuals. We are talking about the government deciding that it is going to discriminate against some people based on their sex, skin colour, and the language they speak.

I point to the case of the RCMP. There are many people who would love to become members of the RCMP right now, but they are told they have no chance because they do not speak the right language, because they are the wrong gender or because they are the wrong skin colour. To me, that is abhorrent. I disagree with that. Most Canadians disagree with that.