

*Private Members' Business*

That is made very clear in the Act.

We believe it is important to have an Employment Equity Act because we know perfectly well that the labour market alone is not likely to provide this equality between various groups. My proof is our colleague for North Vancouver, who began his remarks by saying that legislation on employment equity was no longer necessary. Let us have a look at the comments of groups that have studied the legislation, specifically, the Canadian Human Rights Commission. It is almost dishonest to say that Whites are victims of reverse discrimination. This prejudice must be stopped, fought from the start.

I sit on the Standing Committee on Human Rights, and, since January, we have been trying to improve the Employment Equity Act, as we realize there are gaps in it. Let us remember what Commissioner Max Yalden, who is as critical as a person can be before the government, said. As you know, he is well versed in the workings of government, having been in government since 1956, even before I was born. He said that, in 1993, able bodied caucasian males accounted for approximately 55 per cent of all workers newly hired for permanent full time positions by employers covered under federal legislation on employment equity. This is significantly higher than the proportion of able bodied Whites on the labour market; the figure in this case is 45 per cent.

So, people who try to convince us that Whites without disabilities are discriminated against are not aware of the statistics or of the reality of the labour market.

The Employment Equity Act says that some people are systematically discriminated against. That means that, if corrective measures are not taken, some groups will continue to receive unequal treatment. What form does this inequality take? It works by forming the five following groups: groups with higher than average rates of unemployment; groups with lower than average incomes; groups which are over-represented in lower paying professions and groups with less opportunity for advancement.

• (1805)

This is particularly true, as we will see, for aboriginal people and handicapped people. Lastly, there are also groups which are under-represented in higher paying professions, with good job prospects and which are in expansion. That is the general picture of discrimination that the designated categories face, groups like handicapped people, aboriginal people, members of visible minorities and women.

Let us take a look to see whether discrimination against these groups has really ceased over the last few months, as the hon. member claims. Let us look at each category. Women make up 52 per cent of the population of Canada, but in 1993—that is not

very long ago—they accounted for only 45 per cent of the Canadian labour force. Last year, women continued to be paid about one third less than their male counterparts. This means that, in the labour market of 1993, a woman doing a job of equal value, for which she was equally qualified, earned two thirds of what a man earned to do the same job. If that is not discrimination, I wonder what the hon. member for North Vancouver calls it.

Second, 52 per cent of the time, women, who, as we know, make up 52 per cent of the population of Canada and 45 per cent of the Canadian labour force, end up in jobs in the lower service echelons, as office clerks or secretaries, jobs which are naturally lower paid.

It should also be pointed out about career women with a university degree that 18 per cent of White females who graduated in commerce, business administration or industrial management and were hired in the past few months were assigned positions below their professional qualifications. That is 18 per cent of women university graduates whose positions are below their professional qualifications, as compared to only 5 per cent of men, according to Statistics Canada.

I think it is to refuse to recognize the reality of the target groups, i.e. the female population, to think and to tell us that labour market equilibrium has been reached and that we no longer need an act like the Employment Equity Act.

Another situation is that of the aboriginal people. The Employment Equity Committee heard many witnesses on that issue. Our friend from the Reform Party certainly did not mention it, and I am sure you will be very surprised to learn about this, but the native people represent 3.8 per cent of the total population of Canada. Up until now however, they have succeeded in getting only 1.4 per cent of all the jobs available to the workforce. These are recent data and they show clearly that, not only do native people have a hard time entering the labour market, but their unemployment rate is exactly twice as high as the national average.

These data also show, Mr. Speaker, that the income of native people is \$10,000 below that of other Canadians. I will conclude by saying that these examples of discrimination are still very much current and that Parliament must pass a legislation as this one on employment equity to promote a better balance within the Canadian labour force.

[English]

**Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to address this House regarding Motion No. M-372 proposed by the hon. member for North Vancouver. This motion advocates that employment equity programs and the inclusion of employment equity requirements on employment or training forms be terminated.