

Employment Equity

does it state what "reasonable accommodation" means. When witnesses appeared before the legislative committee, in particular those from associations for the disabled, they argued strongly for a definition of reasonable accommodation. They said that if there were not such a definition included then it is likely that the type of employment equity for which they are looking would not be achieved. The definition is almost verbatim to what was recommended to us by COPOH, and other organizations of the disabled in committee. It reads as follows:

"reasonable accommodation" includes, without restriction—

The words "without restriction" are very important because they mean that the definition is not limited to what we are suggesting. It continues:

—the reasonable adaptation of the workplace, hiring practices or the job description to accommodate the needs of designated groups, including the special needs of a qualified disabled person, through provision for physical accessibility, assistive devices, flexible job design and modification, and human support services.

It is my understanding that disabled groups have recommended to other parliamentary committees, in particular the Subcommittee on Equality Rights and the Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped, which sat in the previous Parliament, that this definition of "reasonable accommodation" be accepted in our legislation and that a policy with respect to it be adopted.

● (1630)

While this amendment is a rather technical one, it is extremely important for the target groups, in particular the disabled people who are supposed to be helped by this legislation. So when it is said in Clause 4 that an employer shall implement equity by "instituting such positive policies and practices and making such reasonable accommodation as will ensure that persons in designated groups achieve a degree of representation" we will then know what is meant and progress will be made.

There are others here, including members of my own Party, who are more *au courant* with the technicalities involved. I plead with the Government to accept this definition. I cannot understand why it will not accept it since it is so important. When the amendment was made in committee and the Conservatives voted against it, they said it was too limiting. The words "without restriction" have now been added. Thus members of the Conservative Party can no longer use that argument. It will not limit. It will give guidance to employers, to the Government and to the Canadian Human Rights Commission when it makes judgments as to whether or not progress is being made in terms of employment equity.

I hope that the Parliamentary Secretary will take this request seriously. I wish to repeat that many of these amendments are not amendments which we in the Opposition have drafted simply to embarrass the Government. Nearly every one of these amendments come from the target groups which are supposed to be helped by the legislation. They come either

from the disabled, the visible minorities, natives or women's associations. They are the ones who have told us time and time again in committee that they want amendments such as this. They are the ones who have told us that they will not be happy with the Bill unless such amendments are made to it. When I put forward amendments such as this I am not doing so in a partisan way. I am doing so in order to achieve something that is required and needed by the target groups.

I ask that the Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister, who was here earlier but who is no longer here, take this into consideration and not respond in a defensive or partisan way to our amendments. The amendments have been made with great feeling, sincerity and intelligence by the very people who are suffering from discrimination. We are their instruments in putting them forward. I hope that they will be listened to by members of the Government.

[Translation]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words to support the motion moved by my colleague the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand). It is a very important motion for handicapped people in this country.

Motion 11A provides a definition of "reasonable accommodation", Mr. Speaker.

[English]

This is very important for disabled Canadians. As the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) has already pointed out, under the definition of employment equity there is a reference to "reasonable accommodation". What the motion before us calls for is a definition of "reasonable accommodation". I wish to read to the House and to members of the Conservative Party the definition of "reasonable accommodation" which is so important to disabled Canadians. I plead with them to include it in the Bill. It states:

"reasonable accommodation includes, without restriction, the reasonable adaptation of the workplace, hiring practices or the job description to accommodate the needs of designated groups, including the special needs of designated groups, including the special needs of a qualified disabled person, through provision for physical accessibility, assistive devices, flexible job design and modification, and human support services.

This is what disabled Canadians want. This is what they have said to us as parliamentarians. This is what they have said to members of the Conservative Party. It seems to me that members of the Conservative Party said in September of 1984 that if they were elected they would listen to the people of Canada.

Bill C-62 was designed with four different target groups in mind. Why does the Government not listen to disabled Canadians? I am sure that a long-time Member of this House such as the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) must be getting pretty restless with his own Cabinet and Government when he sees disabled Canadians come to Parliament Hill asking for things such as this and the Minister says no. He must get pretty frustrated when he sees, as we saw today, 100-