

Employment Equity

speak on the subamendment. My understanding of the procedure is that there can be only one question before of the House at any one time, and that that question was the motion amending the main motion moved by the Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grace—Lachine East. I do not want to disagree with the Speaker, but perhaps he would like to hold that in abeyance and think about it. The Speaker's ruling grouped Motions Nos. 31A and 32A, but did not include the amendment, because it was moved after the decision of the Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I appreciate what the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier is saying, and that is why I am inclined to allow the Member for Eglinton—Lawrence to speak. Does the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier wish to speak on Motion No. 32A.

Mr. Gauthier: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will allow it. I will now recognize the Hon. Member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your decision on this matter. In his motion the Member suggests that the penalty should be increased from \$50,000 to \$500,000. Martin Luther King said that legislation, the law is a teacher. In other words, as well as punishing people, it teaches. We in this House must not think that companies should escape with impunity when they violate human rights. Many companies in the country would like to comply with human rights because they know it is good business to take advantage of the skills and abilities of the entire labour force. It is good business to have people of all sexes, colours, and creeds portrayed in advertising. Enlightened people know that that is good business. However, some people are not enlightened.

During the struggle for civil rights in the United States some companies hoped for legislation which would ensure that human rights were protected and impose penalties when they were not. They hoped for this because other companies were not complying and were able to escape with impunity for noncompliance with those rules. The enlightened people in the country thought it was good to have legislation which imposed penalties, and also that it was a teacher.

We should think not only of human rights, but also of human responsibilities. Through this legislation we are trying to make the employer responsible. It is important that this Bill makes employers understand their responsibility and that society will not tolerate such a lack of responsibility. Companies must conform to human rights. We are a tolerant country and know that the violation of human rights is ultimately our own loss, because it is a lack of use of our human resources, aside from the moral and compassionate grounds. Ultimately, it is wrong from every point of view. Therefore, we must not allow companies and organizations to defy the values for which the people of this country stand.

Today is the fourth anniversary of the signing and bringing into effect of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The

Secretary of State (Mr. Bouchard) is throwing a beautiful party for a thousand people to celebrate this occasion. It is hypocritical and cynical that on this very day we are debating in the House of Commons a Bill which has absolutely no teeth. There is a \$50,000 penalty for not reporting, but for not reporting what? It is silly to pretend that this Bill has any compliance requirements or penalties at all. The rest of the Bill asks people to do certain things, but there is no punishment or censure for noncompliance.

On the fourth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms we demand that the Government put some teeth into this Bill so that it will not be a travesty of rights and freedoms. It is a travesty that the Government has not delivered to the people who are seeking justice amendments which will give them the assurance that the Government, in the name of the people of Canada, means business with regard to equality.

The amount of the penalty is one more thing which suggests that the Bill is toothless, weak, and lacking in sincerity to bring about a change for the organizations and companies which will continue, unchallenged, on their present course. In fact, in its present form, this Bill invites them to be hypocritical and to be part of a system which only pays lip-service.

If the Abella Commission had reported otherwise, Mr. Speaker, I would have no leg to stand on. If the affected groups were not outraged and disappointed, I would have no leg to stand on. However, despite the objections of all the groups which are supposed to be protected by this legislation, the Government ignores their advice and presses forward with an inadequate Bill. Let the Government, on this day, of all days, withdraw this legislation and study it, taking to heart the suggestions and objections of members of the Opposition Parties, those concerned about human rights in the country, the groups affected, and other groups which have allied themselves with them.

Let this not be a paper tiger. Let it not be said that something was done for the minorities. We do not want people to think that politicians talk through their hats, pretending to mean something when they do not. We do not want people to be further disillusioned with politics in a democratic system. Let their voices be heard. When the Government which wants consultation and then discovers all the people with whom they consult are saying, "Put some teeth in this Bill", walks away and does nothing about it, it cannot think the people of this country are going to believe it. Certainly it is placing, once again, further pressure on faith in the democratic processes, the political system, and on the nature of politicians and their ability to deliver on their promises. All these things are at stake.

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Finally, and above all, what is at stake is justice for those people who have waited long enough. If the Member for Capilano can say that she is eternally optimistic, that is fine for her, but it is not for a handicapped person who has spent a