

*Government Orders*

me down, give me a cup of coffee and say: "Come on now". It is incredible. That is what this legislation would lead to.

• (1305)

Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do because you sit with the governing party and you were here in the last Parliament, when people were getting ready for nominations—remember the wrangle before the 1993 election—some women in this party, in the NDP and, bless it, the memory of the Conservative Party anyway, did not even have to go through a nomination process. Certain women said certain ridings were for them. They did not have to go through a nomination process because they were anointed or appointed to that. My friends know this. There is absolutely no way they can deny it.

A few women in the House got the nomination by acclamation. Is that right? Is that employment equity? Absolutely not.

I would like to think that I and the two women sitting in the Chamber right now won the election because we are competent. Is that agreed? Absolutely. They had some skills and they had some ability and they would be effective members of Parliament. It is not just because the leaders of the parties said they think we should have so many women. The NDP gives extra funding for people.

There were nomination meetings held at which some men were told they would not get the chance to run because certain seats, NDP, Liberal or whatever, were designated for women. Let us look at the numbers and see how effective that was. Many people were nominated. I do not know the number of women nominated in ridings who did not actually win their seat, but I do know my numbers of women elected.

For the Liberals, 36 out of 178. That represents 20 per cent of their caucus. We appreciate that and we celebrate it, up from 13 per cent. I suppose that is a great start. It is interesting that it was up from 13 per cent but they did not have employment equity to do it. Of the Bloc Quebecois, eight out of the 53 are women, 15 per cent. For the Reform Party, we are seven women out of 52, 14 per cent. The NDP elected one, 11 per cent of its nine members. As for the Conservatives, their numbers are quite interesting. Fifty per cent of their caucus is female and I certainly respect them for that.

A record was set in 1989 when 100 per cent of the Reform caucus was female, myself of course. Do members see what we can do with numbers? It is absolutely ridiculous.

The sad part was there were so many more women who were candidates in that election. They did not win their seats for the Liberal or the governing caucus. Why? So many of them were told they would be run in such and such a constituency. They knew they did not have a hope.

Somebody said they were spear carriers for that, not even dreaming they would ever get the seat. It is true. I know of a couple of situations in B.C. in which some NDP fellows wanted to run for the nomination and could not. I think they had a pretty good idea they would not win the seat. Reform took most of the seats across B.C. except in the lower mainland.

Nothing would be more pathetic than if my party leader or someone else came to me and said they were going to put me in here. They would like me to run in such and such a riding. They do not think I have a chance of winning but they want a woman in that seat. I would say no, forget it. I do not want any part of that. If I cannot run fair and square regardless of my being a woman, I will not participate in something like that and I hope these people would say the same thing.

One of my heroes of this place is Agnes Macphail. She was cool. I am sure all the women and men in the House would agree she was a wonderful woman. She was the first woman ever elected to this place.

I was nervous in 1989 as the only Reformer and some of the new members of Parliament may have been nervous because this place is inspiring. We were all awe struck when we came.

Agnes Macphail was elected in 1921 for the Progressive Party. She sat with the Progressives from 1921 to 1935 for the constituency of Grey South East. She then moved to the CCF and was the member for Grey—Bruce as it was called then from 1935 to 1940.

• (1310)

If Agnes Macphail were here today, I would love to hear what she would have to say about employment equity and that the government is trying to push through Bill C-64.

They did not have the blessing of microphones in the Chamber then so one had to speak loudly to be heard. The best line I can remember from Agnes Macphail, truly my hero, was when one male member of Parliament said: "Agnes, have you ever been mistaken for a man in the Chamber?" She said: "No, have you?"

That is a class act. I do not think employment equity would have helped her a whole lot. I think she would be absolutely scandalized by Bill C-64. Someone asked her if she had ever been mistaken for a man. What a ridiculous thing to ask. We have come a long way since then.

This morning I was at the Governor General's residence for the presentation of the awards to six women who did a wonderful job in the Persons case with the famous five from Alberta. It was a wonderful ceremony. I am not sure why my friend is laughing across the way. It is a pity she was not there because these are great women who were awarded the Governor General's medal today. It was excellent. They have all done work on the Persons case and they were all being rewarded for the work they are doing.