

Employment Equity

promised during the election campaign, but it does not even apply to federal Government Departments unless the Government is prepared to accept the amendment which is now being proposed and which is currently under debate. I find that disillusioning and disappointing. Of course, what applies with respect to women, applies equally to the other minorities which are affected.

Experience has shown that we cannot achieve equality with respect to disadvantaged groups just by means of pious wishes, nor can we achieve it by pious counting, which is now the current Government's position. I would like to suggest that this question is going to come back and haunt the Progressive Conservative Party, as will many other things, in the course of the next federal election campaign. The Government made promises because of the commitment, which I think is genuine, of the wife of the Prime Minister, the wife of the Minister of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) and some other people in the Conservative Party. There was an impression that the Conservatives were serious about affirmative action. Now we know it is not. I say to the Minister of State for External Relations (Mrs. Vézina) as well as to other Conservatives, this is going to come back and haunt their Party.

[Translation]

This is going to haunt you in the province of Quebec, because people were under the impression during the last election campaign that the Conservative Party would not be satisfied only with making broad statements on the status of women, as private companies were doing, but would fully support affirmative action, would implement and enforce equality legislation for visible minorities which are discriminated against, such as women in the Public Service and the private sector.

I will tell the Minister directly and openly that this Bill is doing nothing in this respect. The fact that it does not apply to the federal Departments which are specifically excluded, as opposed to Crown Corporations, which are included, is a clear proof that the Government has forgotten its commitments of the last election campaign.

[English]

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that encouragement, incentives, good wishes and those kinds of things are simply not good enough. Today, at a time when we are suffering enormous cut-backs in the Public Service, it is the people who are in the disadvantaged groups who are most likely to be victimized by the cut-backs. They are the term employees who cannot get full-time employment. They are the people who, for various reasons, are judged to be lacking in merit and, therefore, are dumped because of the reverse order of merit system which is applied within the Public Service. I note that the Minister of State for External Relations is making some notes. I hope she will rise and try to defend the indefensible with respect to this particular Bill. I hope she will explain.

[Translation]

Why is the Government not making sure that this Bill applies to Public Service employees? Why continue to discriminate against people in the Public Service? Why is not the Government showing leadership to the private sector by making sure that this Bill, however weak it may be, applies both to the Public Service and the private sector?

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 8. Mr. Nystrom, seconded by Mr. Althouse, moves

That Bill C-62; be amended in Clause 3 by striking out lines 13 to 15 at page 2.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 114(11), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 11A.

Mr. Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East) moved:

That Bill C-62, be amended in Clause 3 by adding immediately after line 24 at page 2 the following:

"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 a qualified disabled person, through provision for physical accessibility, assistive devices, flexible job design and modification, and human support services.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is to add to the Bill a definition of "reasonable accommodation". The Bill already uses the term "reasonable accommodation" in line 37 of page 2 in the section which deals with the obligations of the employer with respect to employment equity. In summary, Clause 4 states that an employer shall implement employment equity by:

(b) instituting such positive policies and practices and making such reasonable accommodation as will ensure that persons in designated groups achieve a degree of representation—

In the Bill there is already an imposition on employers to implement reasonable accommodation. However, nowhere