

*Canadian Human Rights*

I welcome the bill, also, for the reason mentioned by the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather). It could be atonement for that terrible, black time in Canadian history when the Japanese Canadians of British Columbia were herded from their homes and ridiculed, their property confiscated and their lives uprooted. The newspapers could, then,—and did—produce discriminatory stories calling them “yellow people” and sneering at their lifestyle and culture.

I welcome this legislation too, because racism, such as we saw then, is starting to bloom again in the West. Last week, a Vancouver newspaper of considerable stature, the Vancouver *Province* of the Southam chain, lifted a phrase from a police record to decorate a crime series. All the stories carried a fancy, circled design throughout with the words “Greek connection”. I presume the next time an Italian, Chinese, Jew, a Pakistani or Indian gets into high profile trouble there will be decorative art around large letters spelling out “Italian connection”, “Chinese connection”, “Pakistani connection”, “Indian connection” and so on. It may be that passage of this bill will cause the people responsible for this sort of racial slur to think twice before publishing in this manner.

● (1550)

This bill is also timely in view of the Parti Québécois plan to codify discrimination and a seemingly developing attack on all who are not French. Any time a government strives for ethnic purity, its direction is first to exclude from opportunity, joy and even freedom those who are not of that selected racial group. I believe that if René Lévesque continues along his present route with his vocally militant associates—more dangerous, I think, than he himself—we will have a similar situation to that created by Hitler when he sought Aryan purity, or to that in Lebanon where the Moslems are striving for religious purity. I am proud to support a government that introduced this legislation. It is only a pity it took so many years.

Yesterday the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Williams), a man I respect and admire very much as a learned member of the justice and legal affairs committee, criticized the government with much support from very senior members who were in this House when that party had its brief stint at government. Why, when they formed the government of this land, did they not introduce a law of this sort? Yes, they brought in the toothless Bill of Rights. At least, it seems toothless to a woman who has lived with discrimination. Before that bill and after that bill discrimination continued without abatement or conscience, as I am personally aware. I believed then it was acceptable for men to be in control and for women to be subjugated. I had to accept it, and that Bill of Rights was a door closed against the advancement of women such as myself, as well as against different races.

**Mr. O'Sullivan:** Nonsense.

**Mrs. Holt:** My many friends of many races and every woman I knew in the work force were impotent against rules made for men, by men and administered by men. All jobs were

[Mrs. Holt.]

administered by men and the Bill stood in its pretty frame on the wall—without meaning to them. Personally—hon. gentleman may disagree—I felt that it inscribed the denial of my equal opportunity.

**Mr. O'Sullivan:** You are dead wrong.

**Mrs. Holt:** It did many things to protect people, and it was there and was better than nothing. But hon. members could have brought in a complete human rights bill and saved many women and many races of my generation from hardship and pain of discrimination—could have given them an equal chance. Hon. members had the opportunity that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) had and which he has carried through. I just mention that in passing.

I am proud of this bill because it recognizes, in the language that it uses, that laws and opportunities exist for two sexes in this nation. I was interested to note that in every piece of legislation which has passed through committees the male pronoun has been used. Everyone self-righteously says that we have to look at the Interpretation Act. The Interpretation Act is the grossest form of subliminal discrimination which exists in Canadian statutes. But this bill is unique in that this type of sexist language has been expunged from it. Furthermore, the bill is written not just for lawyers but for people.

I do have some concerns about the bill. To my mind, it is not perfect. I wish the minister had deleted clause 14(b) which provides for exceptions. Any time a law allows for exceptions, the powerful and the rich can find a loophole. The minister, on the best advice of the lawyers of his department, added an amendment. I would have preferred it to be spelled out as recommended by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt), so there was no doubt that the onus is on the employer to prove the grounds for the exception. The minister claims that his amendment does this, but it is not strong enough for one who has seen the powerful employer in large companies discriminate in the cruellest ways against women and those of different races so far as employment opportunities are concerned.

The amendment that I would like to see is the one put forward in committee to provide that the onus shall be on the employer to prove that the occupational requirement is bona fide. This is subtly provided for in the bill, but not strongly enough. I am a person who does not care for subtlety.

I am sure Canada has the quality of justice minister who, upon finding there is abuse, will correct it. In the meantime I am thankful for this bill. Ms. Lyne Kaye, of the National Action Committee, testified before the justice and legal affairs committee that she had hoped there would be no exceptions made, but in order to see the bill through, she compromised. As a minimum, she wanted a narrowing of those exceptions. She said, as reported at page 9:39 of the committee reports for April 26 last:

We feel it is totally unacceptable as it presently stands—

And the minister has changed the bill to meet some of the wishes of the National Action Committee.