

*Employment Equity***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT**

## MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-62, an Act respecting employment equity, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and Motion No. 21A (Mr. Allmand).

**Mr. Speaker:** When the House broke at 1 p.m. the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) had the floor. Resuming debate.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, what we are debating is an amendment put forward by the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) which would make public the action plans of employers. When the Minister introduced the legislation she did not introduce any measures with respect to action plans at all. After a great many groups appeared before the committee the Minister introduced an amendment to the Bill to provide for action plans. However, these action plans are not to be made public. What is the purpose of having an action plan if it is not to be made public?

What we are calling on the Government to do is accept this particular amendment in order to make the action plan available to the workers in a plant or in industries which are affected by the Bill. We are also calling on the Government to make the action plans public to the Human Rights Commission. Gordon Fairweather, the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, has said that he would like to have access to these particular action plans. Under this legislation they will not be made available. I call upon the House to listen to Mr. Fairweather. He is a distinguished Canadian, a distinguished former parliamentarian and a member of the Conservative Party. He is a very progressive member of that Party. I think we should accede to his wishes.

I wish to refer the House once again to the speech made by Gordon Fairweather in which he stated that the action plans of employees under this Bill should be made available to the Human Rights Commission. They should be made public. I agree with Mr. Fairweather's words. I agree with Motion No. 21A. I think it is a reasonable amendment to the Bill which has been introduced by a member of the Liberal Party. It is supported by ourselves. I think all reasonable members of the Conservative Party would have to support it as well. After all, the Conservative Party is the Party which campaigned for freedom of information. Why not support this motion to ensure these action plans are made public?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to draw the attention of the House to the amendment to Clause 5 of the Act respecting employment equity. It concerns the plan of goals to be prepared by the companies

involved and the implementation of such plans to achieve a more equitable situation for the designated groups, the minority groups in our society, and people whose future is not very promising unless we take concrete measures.

Here is the amendment, and I quote Clause 5:

5. (1) An employer shall, in respect of each year, prepare a plan setting out (a) the goals that he employer intends to achieve in implementing employment equity in the year or years to which the plan relates; and (b) the timetable for the implementation of those goals.

And second, the reference to the retention of the plan.

(2) A copy of a plan prepared under subsection (1) shall be retained by employer at the employer's principal place of business in Canada for a period of at least three years after the last year in respect of which the plan is prepared.

Mr. Speaker, I find fascinating the suggestion that the plan be kept in a drawer or at the work place. But if we want real improvement, if we want the legislation to have more impact, if we expect more than pious wishes, if we do not want this to be a joke or the kind of academic exercise *à la* Harvard Business School, if instead we want it to become an open plan of action so that all people concerned will know what this is all about, then I think the amendments proposed by my colleague are very important. These amendments indicate what the employer must do. A copy of a plan prepared under subsection (1) shall be:

(b) communicated to the employer's employees and any existing bargaining agent; and

(c) made available to the Human Rights Commission, on request.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, at least that makes sense. Why go through that exercise if nobody is to know what it is all about? Why go through the motions if nothing comes out of it, if everything is done in great secrecy?

I simply fail to see why, at least during the three years after the last year of a plan, a plan should be prepared if nobody is going to see it. If it is to remain in a file or a safety vault, why waste the time of the major employers? In my judgment, it does not make sense at all.

[English]

The Bill, which did not originally promote action plans with targets and timetables, has been amended, at least in that sense. It is a substantive amendment. It is an amendment which only makes good sense. What on earth good is there in developing a plan to sit around a table in order to take a look at information from Statistics Canada and then file that information away in a drawer? No one will ever see it. For the life of me I cannot understand why the Government would not find this a logical follow-up on what seems to be the first of the two objectives under the plans in terms of goals to be prepared. It is the type of action which should follow on the heels of working on those plans.

Not only do plans need to be prepared, they must also be made available to the employees—the people involved in this whole process—and to the Human Rights Commission upon request. Unless employees and the target groups about which we are talking are aware of the new opportunities, then they