

Government Orders

• (1610)

Therefore subsections 15(1) and (2) demonstrate the ingenuity of Canadians.

In his opening remarks the hon. member indicated that quota is a way of giving advantages. For the same reason, it is not. On a very close reading of the bill itself, quota is prohibited. How clear can we be? The law as proposed and tabled in the House states that no one may impose a quota, not even the enforcement officer. We have to forget about this being quotas.

Certainly the member in trying to sustain his argument about quotas indicated those people in this disadvantaged group are to be employed in the proportion they exist in the population in the community. That is wrong. That is not what the bill states. The bill states that it is in proportion to the available qualified people. Why not? Why would one argue against the qualification of others only because of colour, disability, origin or gender? The bill states that it is in proportion to the number of qualified people, again sustaining the principle of equality.

On the point of census on race, as I indicated to the media, we have nothing to be ashamed of when we are asked that we should say that we are Canadians. The census is one taken among Canadians. Therefore it is a given that this is a census of Canadians. If we are asked about our origins and our heritage, we should be proud. I am proud to be a Filipino Canadian. The Jews are proud to be Jewish Canadians. Ukrainians are proud because they are Canadians as well. We are proud of our heritage. That is what our nation has taught us. It has given us self-confidence, self-worth and dignity.

On the motion itself, I agree with the hon. member that this is an example of co-operation taking place in the House. It is also a clear example that the government, when it sees a good amendment, tries to improve on it and makes it even better. We deal in this amendment, which was reached by consensus by all parties in the House, with non-fulfilment of the employment equity plan as a consequence of a poor identification that is based on self-identification.

I call to the House's attention that with this improved amendment we have also sustained another principle, confidentiality. I see the member who originally proposed the motion is smiling. I think this is what reconciliation is all about. We should be able to have a new principle without killing another principle. We should have one principle strengthen the other. Here we are preserving the principle of confidentiality.

Why does the government agree to this amendment, which was also refined by the government? It is because we heard witnesses acknowledge the limitations of the self-identification system. However, witnesses have also told the committee that

we must retain the privacy and confidentiality of information. Obviously, we have to reconcile these two views.

We were not shown any other method by which to identify except by coercion. We agreed at the committee level that coercion would do more harm than good. Therefore, in the absence of an alternative tool, in the absence of limitation, the committee initiated that we should retain the self-identification approach. However, at the same time, the committee proposed that there be more openness on the part of employers to hold employer and employee meetings on a regular basis so that there would be a feeling of rapport between employees and employers. At the same time information sessions must be held by the employers to inform employees of the importance of identifying themselves so we can truly monitor the progress of employment equity in a given workplace.

• (1615)

As well, the committee recommended that managers in those businesses be given special training to enable them to be more persuasive of the need for self-identification.

On the issue of self-identification, in the spirit of this act it is very critical that the process be held in a climate or atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. It can only be accomplished if we truly convince employees that the purpose of self-identification is to ensure employment equity in the workplace. Nobody would disagree with that kind of approach.

On that note, I am pleased we have been able to arrive at the motion proposed by the member for Edmonton Southwest that has refined by the government. It is a classic example that the government always listens to good proposals whether they come from the opposition or from its own members.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 11A. I understand the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest has a question about whether the text of the motion is the same in the two official languages. Does he wish to rise on a point of order?

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The table officers are presently looking into it. There seems to be some concern that the French text is not the same as the English text. We need to have that clarified.

The Deputy Speaker: There seems to be a problem with the translation of the last part of the motion. Since the original motion was in English perhaps, if it is acceptable to the member and the rest of the members in the House, we could take it as the one that will apply. Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.