

*Employment Equity*

compliance. I believe this is exactly what the people of Canada want.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I am sorry. I regret that the Hon. Member's time has expired. However, he does have a period for questions and comments. I am sure, being such a very popular Hon. Member, he will have a question or comment.

**Mr. Keeper:** Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to my colleague's speech. I wonder if he could elaborate a little further on the last point he made with regard to the inadequacies of the legislation before the House. I wanted to hear more fully what he had to say on that point.

**Mr. Nystrom:** A very wise question from a very thoughtful Hon. Member. It reminds me of some of the questions Members of the Conservative Party ask during Question Period from time to time. In any event, I want to make one last point. It was a point made by disabled Canadians and several other groups. What they ask is that we include federal Government Departments in this legislation because federal Government Departments are not included. I ask why not? We should practice what we preach. If we are making a law for the private sector which deals with the federal Government, a law which is going to pertain to federal Crown corporations, then why should we not include federal Government Departments within the purview and scope of this particular Bill?

I make one argument as to why it is important. Beryl Potter on behalf of disabled Canadians came here last week and told us that some 75 per cent of disabled Canadians who work for our federal Government work on contract. They are term employees. I am sure the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Hees) would agree that when we have restrictions of funds and cut-backs in Government Departments it is often the people on term contracts who are the first to be laid off. It is the 75 per cent of disabled Canadians who work for the federal Government on contract who are laid off. So I think it is very important to include federal Government Departments in this legislation.

The Minister can say that the Government has its own affirmative action program, but that is accepting the old Liberal argument which this Government often does. The policies of the federal Public Service are totally management controlled. I think the Conservative Party should be interested in making sure there is some participation by the Public Service itself. Second, many basics of an equity program are not subject to a bargaining process under the Public Service Staff Relations Act. I think they should be. Third, in the past, priorities have been placed on promoting women to higher management levels while ignoring the vast majority of women workers in the Public Service and we received that information from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and others. Fourth, there have been no initiatives taken to identify and eliminate systemic discrimination in all aspects of Public Service employment practices. Fifth, and most important, in my opinion, these policies which are called "Treasury

Board Guidelines" lack the force and commitment of law. In other words, we may have Treasury Board guidelines that we should have more women, more visible minorities or more disabled people in the Public Service, but these are Treasury Board guidelines. Treasury Boards and their Ministers come and go and the guidelines can change from one Government to the next. Our Party is urging that this be made law now. We should have the force of law behind employment equity.

In conclusion, I want to say that this Bill is not good enough. It was drafted for four target groups. All four target groups are saying to the Conservative Government that the Bill is not good enough. All this Bill will do is call for employment equity in a voluntary sense. That is not good enough.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in a democratic society it is very important to have a democratic process. And in this case, the women of Canada, who are in the majority in this country, are opposed to this Bill. The other groups are opposed as well: native people, visible minorities and the disabled, all are against this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, these four groups are disappointed, because the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) made a political commitment during the last election campaign eighteen months ago, and it is now time to act on that commitment.

• (1230)

[*English*]

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister has described Bill C-62 as a springboard—a springboard for minorities across the country. I prefer to liken it to a gangplank, a gangplank which will allow all of the minorities cited, by both the spokesman for the Liberal Party, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand), as well as by the spokesman for the New Democratic Party, the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom), to sink again into the abyss of despair instead of the hope which was rendered by the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald).

It is fair to say that a great many people felt that when the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands was appointed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) to the position of Minister of Employment and Immigration we would see action on this important issue. Such action was promised by the Prime Minister in his speech during the women's debate and throughout the course of his campaign. Unfortunately, instead of seeing the Minister pull forward the Conservative caucus, dragging them kicking and screaming into the 20th century, we see that the Minister has been pulled back. She has replaced action with rhetoric. She has replaced promises made by the Prime Minister, as well as by the Conservative Party, with mere words. As we have seen in this Bill, words have fallen on deaf ears and I refer to the words of women's groups which have decried the Bill as a sham and a phoney. I refer to the minorities who feel that this legislation does not respond to