

not refer to a \$50,000 fine for non-compliance, but simply for failing to report. When employer ABC of the Hamilton East Widget Company sends his report to Ottawa advising that he hired one woman this year, one woman last year, and one woman the year before, for a total of three out of 3,000 employees, the report will be tabled and there will be no fine. The fact that there are only three women working in a company which employs 3,000 people is immaterial. It will continue to be irrelevant and immaterial unless and until the House accepts the amendment and the amendment to the amendment proposed by the Liberals and the New Democratic Party.

Clauses 4 and 5 deal with the issue of employment equity. Until we introduce a specific amendment, including Clauses 4 and 5, we will continue to have a toothless piece of legislation which is nothing more than a phoney and a sham, an attempt by the Government to pretend it is doing something with regard to employment equity when, in fact, it is doing nothing.

The first part of the amendment suggests that the fine be raised to \$.5 million. A major corporation with thousands of employees may consider \$50,000 to be the cost of doing business. Unless the Minister is given the power to bring forth a summary conviction and a fine for failure to implement a program of employment equity or affirmative action in a business, all of the Government Members who say that they believe in equality for women, for minorities and for the handicapped are fooling themselves, but are not fooling the Canadian people.

In the women's debate the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) promised all the women of Canada that the moment he was elected he would immediately begin to reclassify tens of thousands of jobs in the Public Service to ensure that women get their fair share of promotions within the Public Service. Through this Bill the Government is failing to move on the issue of enforcement with respect to employment equity and is also determining that no government agency will be covered by this legislation.

[Translation]

If they really believe in the principle of equity, Mr. Speaker, all Members will at least have to agree with the amendment that has just been moved. I know that about two dozen amendments have been presented by Opposition Members, and I realize the Government cannot accept all these amendments. I know that. I know how Parliament works. But I think it should be said that with the amendment moved by the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) and the new amendment to the amendment, moved by the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy), we now at least have the principal that equity should apply and not just for reporting purposes. We are not sitting here in the House just to make the headlines and to report on the lack of progress in providing equity for the disabled, the blind, women and the neediest in our society.

Employment Equity

If we really believe in equity, Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members of this House to at least accept this small amendment that could enhance the equity principle so eagerly sought after by the Members of this House, or so they say.

Mr. Speaker, are you trying to tell me that my time has expired?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tremblay) (Lotbinière): No.

Ms. Copps: Excuse me. I would like to go on for a while. Because the Speaker nodded, I thought my time had expired. I know the rules for playing basketball better than the rules of the House of Commons. I didn't see the "timeout".

● (1700)

[English]

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I realize we are all new to this business. If I have four minutes left, I have many, many important points.

Those points harken back to the demonstration we saw on the Hill yesterday. Unfortunately, the reality is that many disabled Canadians are frustrated. This is, on the one hand, because of the promises they get from the Government and directly from the Prime Minister, and, on the other hand, because of that same Prime Minister's failure to respond. We heard some promises made during the women's debate. We heard the mellifluous baritone telling the women of Canada that if they vote for the Conservative Party everything is going to be all right because Mr. Mulroney will look after things.

There was another promise made and it was exposed yesterday on the Hill for the sham and fraud it was. We saw a representative of the disabled community who had literally snagged the Prime Minister with her wheelchair a couple of weeks ago. I want to give her full credit for snagging the Prime Minister, which is no mean feat when he is racing away from a horde of media who were trying to get answers from him on a number of issues. She told him directly that they were not satisfied with this law. It has no teeth. It is a phoney Bill. They wanted him to have a look at it. He promised her that he would personally review the legislation and before it came back to the House he would personally ensure that enforcement mechanisms were applied and see that the Bill had some teeth. Unfortunately, as soon as he escaped from the clutches of this particular woman, who was prepared to confront him and force him to tell the truth, he not only refused to review the Bill or come before the committee, he not only refused to allow any amendments to be carried forward from the government side of the House, he totally ignored phone calls and other contacts from the woman who had originally approached him about this question. This woman was in the House yesterday. Only 10 persons in wheelchairs were allowed into the House, and she was one of them. She cried out from the seats on high: "What about the promise that was made by the Prime Minister?"