

Employment Equity

including those covered by the legislation, those covered under the federal contractors program, and all others who want our advice.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Parliamentary Secretary. I am not sure about the rhetoric with regard to social conscience and justice, but perhaps it will be there.

I support the motion before the House, but I do not make a big issue of it because I think it will be in place anyway. Unless they have holes in their heads, representatives in the Department of Employment and Immigration centres across the country will obviously be involved in the consultative process with regard to employment equity or any other employment program in the country. The employment centres act as consultants on all employment programs in the country. I know in my own riding the manager of the employment centre, Mr. Self, is always very open. His staff is there to be consulted and worked with. They are always very open and very co-operative so I assume that is the case right across the country.

● (1230)

I do not feel strongly one way or the other about this motion. I suppose what the Hon. Member wants to do is give the Bill more protection, more power. I do not oppose, that so I would support the motion without making a big issue of it.

I just wanted to say that I have found in my own riding that the employment centre has been very, very useful for a lot of groups over the last few years. I know the manager, Mr. Self, and his staff must be commended for the help they have given on a lot of programs. I am thinking of the Canada Works Program last year, Challenge '85, and the student programs. I think of the efforts we are now undertaking in my riding to set up a local advisory committee. I know the staff has always been at the disposal of people who come into the centre. I am sure they will be doing the same thing with this legislation once it goes through. It is very important that they do so because the unemployed are often really frustrated. They go down to the employment centre as a last resort. They often feel that their problem is not dealt with as quickly as possible. After all, they are unemployed and not making any money. The young Indian person in my riding is the person who does not have the skills but needs a summer job. So it is very important that the staff function as efficiently and quickly as possible. I hope they do the same thing in this case.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's amendment would enshrine in law the obligations and responsibilities not only of the employer but of the Department of Employment and Immigration. Clause 4 outlines the employers' duties. If the target groups are going to be able to access the jobs they want and we want them to have so that they enrich our society to the degree we know they can, then we need to put in law the obligations that we undertake as a Government to enable them to do so.

I agree with the Hon. Member who just spoke, that we have excellent staff in the employment centres. However, that does not mean they have the obligation to undertake additional responsibilities. In my own riding we have a very high unemployment rate among a specific target group, the visible minorities and the handicapped. The local employment officers have all the responsibility of helping these people locate jobs. We also have a very high unemployment rate among youth. I pointed out to the Parliamentary Secretary that in the black community over 60 per cent of young people under 25 are looking for jobs. If the staff of the employment centres are doing their job in that respect, then they do not have the same kind of time or energy to go out and work with the major industries in the area, let us say. They do not have the time to visit the banks or the supermarkets. They do not fall under this Bill, unfortunately, although through contract compliance they are supposed to. The banks, the post office, the CBC, and Cable TV companies should all reflect the multicultural dimension of Canada. If we do not assure through the amendments put forward by my colleague the staffing and budget necessary, how can we expect this help to be forthcoming?

I am glad the Parliamentary Secretary agrees with the approach in principle. Principles are lovely, but if you cannot put them into practise then they are of no value. I heard the lovely phrase that we have put our stake in the future on our social conscience and we intend to apply social justice, or something of that nature. If you really want to apply social justice, then you have to get your act together and put your energy where it is required. That means an enforcement provision in this Bill which will make it a reality.

If we look at the series of amendments put forward by my very conscientious colleague, I suggest that the wish of the Government to assure that employment equity becomes a reality in our society would be greatly improved if they are accepted. The targeted groups would not have to come here with a great deal of personal difficulty, as the handicapped had to do, and say: "Hey, do something, you are hurting me".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we have talked about target groups, about the groups that are involved in this legislation, the groups that will be affected by this legislation, and the groups on which this legislation will have a negative social and economic impact because this legislation is just a lot of eloquent posturing and offers nothing in the way of concrete action. It is not compulsory. We do not have the option of Government support to help us help each other. Employers have a whole list of things they are supposed to do, a list that is not complete, but with all that, the legislation does not even provide for any action by the Government to help them help each other.

If we really want to put the onus on the employer and see this policy reflected on our television screens, on our aircraft, in our banks and in our post offices, we will have to have mechanisms that will make this possible, so that I, as a black