

Employment Equity

employment equity. The data will also be made available to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. For the first time the Canadian Human Rights Commission will have the data that it needs to initiate an investigation under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: That data has not been available to the Commission in the past. This is a key area in which we are moving. It is a major change. As for the Government's willingness to provide this data, and as for the Commission's willingness to act, let me just quote what Gordon Fairweather, the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, said recently to a group of senior executives in Ottawa. He said:

I hope it's well understood that we intend to use this power.

These reports will provide a profile of where target-group members stand in individual companies. Data from other sources, notably the census, will give us a clear picture of how many target-group members live in a particular area. Once we have this information, we will be able to see how well a company is doing in a particular labour market and we will be able to compare the reports of similar companies in the same geographic area as they implement employment equity. We will be able to hold a company's record in employment equity up against the availability of individuals in the local labour market to see whether or not the companies are drawing on the total human resources available to them. As I say, these reports will be made public. They will be open to the media and to public scrutiny.

• (1120)

The Government is committed to ensuring that employment equity becomes a reality. We intend to knock on the doors of employers who do not meet their responsibilities. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we will be knocking with a firm fist.

Bill C-62 is based on results, not on procedures or processes. It is based on results in the way Judge Abella admonished us to put the emphasis on results. It is results that count. For that reason, we rejected the notion of instituting an artificial system of quotas. We looked at the system in the United States in which quotas are used and concluded that quotas tend to easily become ceilings that employers find very comfortable. Once a ceiling is reached, they feel that they can stop and do not need to go any further.

The value and benefit of our system is its flexibilities. We are telling employers that that is not all they have to do, that they have to look further. We are saying that employment equity requires constant vigilance. Employers must think about employment equity in all their staffing actions.

We also rejected quotas for another reason. Bill C-62 is designed to work in a Canadian context. It recognizes the reality of this country which is that it is a country of regional diversity with widely varying resources and needs. By relying

on goals rather than on quotas, we provide a degree of flexibility that suits the Canadian economic picture. To quote Gordon Fairweather again, when he was speaking in committee on this Bill he said the following:

It is one of the strengths of the employment equity Act that it lets managers manage. Each corporation can take the steps that make sense in its own unique circumstances.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, employment equity is more than just a matter of social justice: it is a viable concept. Employment equity is a part of our present social and economic reality. Women and members of minority groups are entering the labour market in increasing numbers. These people need employment. They need an income.

[*English*]

We live in a world of very rapid and complex change, change that is driven by new technologies, by shifting trade arrangements and by increasing interdependence among nations. With this change comes increased competition and the need to draw on all of our human resources. In the words of the President of Xerox Canada, Mr. David McCamus:

If we discriminate against women, we are limiting our options, which is something we can't do in today's competitive environment. To compete, we have to draw on the best pool of people available.

Bill C-62 is designed to convince all employers of the wisdom of Mr. McCamus' words. It is designed to show them that it is in their own best interests as well as the interests of society to implement employment equity.

In closing, I would just like to reiterate the essence, the purpose and the goal of this Bill. Bill C-62 provides target groups with an opportunity they have never had before in this country. Bill C-62 is a springboard for public action, and for aggressive, vigilant, open-minded action by the groups themselves. It is an opportunity for employers as well to re-examine their business practices, to eliminate systemic discrimination where it exists and to begin drawing on the full range of talent that is available across Canada. It is an opportunity for Government to work with target groups and employers to achieve employment equity. In this endeavour, the Government is fully committed. We will use the vigilance and authority of the Canadian Human Rights Commission to ensure employment equity. We will back the commission with the full weight of Government.

As I said at the outset, the time for talk is over. It is now time to act. I urge all Members of the House to ensure speedy passage of this Bill so that we can begin the important work of ensuring fair opportunities for target-group members throughout the country in all aspects of the workforce. Canadians need this Bill. It is already long overdue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear hear!

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, despite the Minister's rhetoric, Bill C-62 will not enforce employment equity and it will not implement