

*Employment Equity*

displaced. In other words, if there is a choice between making a position available to someone who is being displaced from a Department and an applicant who is handicapped but is not known and has not worked in the federal Government before, the federal Government will tend to take care of those who are already on board, as in any other institution or organization. Since handicapped people have traditionally been disadvantaged and have suffered from systemic discrimination, it becomes extremely difficult to overcome that situation.

● (1150)

The provisions of Bill C-62 will not of themselves assist that much. It is such a lousy Bill. However, at the very least the Government should indicate some good will by making applicable to its own Department the provisions which are being applied with respect to large employers in the private sector. I think it reflects hypocrisy that the Government not only has brought forward such a weak Bill, which is why this amendment is proposed, but in that it is not even prepared to make the Bill apply within its own employ, and I am not sure whether or not it applies to Crown corporations. That is one of the reasons the Bill is such a disgrace, particularly when we consider the solid promises made by the Conservatives when they were in opposition.

You may have read recently, Mr. Speaker, a number of remarks by journalists who are perhaps growing cynical beyond their years. They remark on the fact that when Conservatives are in opposition they make promises which they forget when they come to power. That is certainly the case in terms of the commitments made by the present Government to affirmative action when it was in opposition. The journalists also remark that when the Liberals were in opposition they made promises which they were not prepared to implement when they came to power. We can witness what is happening in the province of Quebec now that Premier Bourassa is in office. He is finding that suddenly all of that room for spending he claimed existed when he was fighting in the provincial election campaign magically disappeared the moment he got to look at the books.

I would like to suggest that the Liberal and the Progressive Conservative Parties are giving politics a bad reputation because of the way in which they so cynically break promises when they come to office. They have led journalists to the view that Canadians cannot trust promises made by political Parties when they are in opposition because these Parties are prepared to promise everything but not prepared to deliver once they confront the reality of power.

I represent a Party which has demonstrated in Manitoba, in Saskatchewan, at various times in British Columbia, and now in the Yukon, that when we make promises we do in fact implement those promises. I am getting a bit sick and tired of the Liberals and Conservatives, tweedle dum and tweedle dee, giving politics a bad name in this country because of the way they break their promises. That is why I am concerned about this Employment Equity Bill. We have made some solid

promises, yet when we make solid promises about such things as equal pay for work of equal value and affirmative action for the handicapped and disabled the journalists say all politicians are all the same, and, therefore, they do not rely on our Party to implement those promises when we come to power. As one politician, I would like to say that I am determined that we do, and that we continue to keep those promises. Certainly I have kept that commitment since becoming an Hon. Member of this House in terms of the promises I made to my constituents over the course of the election campaign of 1984.

I would comment to the Hon. Member for Brampton-Georgetown (Mr. McDermid), who seems to be making comments, that his Party promised to give political rights to public employees over the course of the last election campaign, which was 18 months ago. I had to spend all last week in court trying to get the courts to enforce that promise because the Conservatives were not prepared to deliver once they came to power.

**Mr. McDermid:** Grandstanding as usual.

**Mr. Cassidy:** What a bunch of cynical hypocrites those Hon. Members opposite are, Mr. Speaker. Whether it is the promise about affirmative action, political rights or the promise of "job, jobs, jobs", the Conservative Party, now the Government, is not prepared to deliver. I suggest that it is about time those Hon. Members went back to the book of promises made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) during the course of the election campaign. Rather than implement them they introduce measures in the way so cynical that we have to come up with these kinds of amendments to a Bill which essentially does nothing. The Government should come up with direct implementation of the promises made to the people of Canada.

**Mr. McDermid:** We will put our record up against yours any day.

**Mr. Cassidy:** In conclusion, I want to suggest that it is a sad day in this House when we are finally considering employment equity, that we have before us a Bill which is demonstrably so weak and ineffective that, rather than bringing forward the day when employment equity is a reality for minorities and the handicapped, it essentially delays that day by several years until the true weakness of the Bill is demonstrated. As it is now, it will not do a damn thing to ensure that equity arrives for the people it is meant to benefit.

**Mr. Felix Holtmann (Selkirk-Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, I came here to listen, but I was provoked by the last speaker, the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) to rise and say a few words in response to his and his Party's position, as he would seem to indicate. How self-righteous that group of individuals of the New Democratic Party are when it comes to some type of labour legislation. They purport basically to represent one group in our society, and that is labour.

**Mr. Cassidy:** Ordinary Canadians. We represent 20 million Canadians. Twenty-six per cent in Quebec.