

Government Orders

enable those people who have the merit and the talent to integrate into a system that has not allowed them to do so. The doors have been closed and we need movement there. We need to open not only our hearts, but the doors to employment and training opportunities for those designated groups.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my colleague at the outset that I appreciate the fact that there were serious differences in the comment she made and she was, in fact, stretching it. Employment equity is not going to solve those problems. That is in *Hansard* forever more. I do appreciate the case of that family in the north.

This is an interesting debate. I find myself amazed as I look at the charter of rights and freedoms, section 15(1), which states: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and the equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability".

That seems fairly clear to me and probably clear to everybody else who is listening to this. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects us all, regardless of race, gender, language, ethnic background, et cetera.

I want to know how in the world we can get from that, where the charter protects us, to Bill C-64 on employment equity. Frankly, I have not heard an answer from the government side. I have heard stories, passionate story telling and all kinds of situations where people have talked about individuals. I could relate all kinds of them myself. However, when I hear my colleagues saying Bill C-64 is going to be the answer to all this, there is just no way on the earth that I am convinced and I suspect that most Canadians who are listening to the debate are simply not able to make that leap.

• (1255)

With the protections under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms I question why we are even debating this bill. There seems to be no reason. It is not going to resolve any situations. It is not going to make people's lives easier. The very institution that should be protecting the fundamental rights vis-à-vis the charter of rights and freedoms of all Canadians is being used to suppress one of those rights. It says: "We will look after this person but we will not look after that one. We will give one special treatment but not for the other, I am very sorry".

Bill C-64 will deny the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. Once we start travelling down that fork in the road I see nothing but flag warnings and signals ahead that we had better be careful. As was talked about in the Charlottetown accord, once people start saying to particular groups that they get distinct society status, they get

special attention because of this or there should be so many women in the Senate, that takes us down a dangerous path where we do not think we could ever get back to that fork in the road.

When I hear the stories being talked about this morning, the alarm bells go off. I have to ask myself where it leads us. It is exactly as we saw in Charlottetown. What road does that lead us down? Are we ever going to be able to get back to that tributary? I really do not think it will help us a lot.

This bill will officially sanction discrimination against non-designated groups. As soon as somebody is designated, then someone else becomes non-designated. As soon as an individual or a group is committed to something, suddenly other people are left out by the sin of omission. Why do we have this obsession in this Parliament to make sure some people are labelled? I am sure my friend the minister across the way does not think it is good or right to label people. Yet here is legislation that he supports where he is starting to label people, then by omission others are left off the table.

There has to be a hint of discrimination displayed against designated groups. If there is, that is when there are problems. Just let there be a hint against those designated groups and the equity control patrol will suddenly swoop in. They are hot on the trail to right those wrongs and impose stiff penalties on the offenders. It amazes me when I think about it.

For instance, why should we have equity police? Heaven forbid, we sit in a Chamber where there are 53 women, which I will talk about a little later. I have heard colleagues, especially in the last Parliament but certainly in this Parliament as well, saying that 51 per cent of the population are women so 51 per cent of members of Parliament should be female. That is ridiculous. Later I will talk about the fact that I am a female MP but I will do it on ability and competence rather than just on the fact that I am a female.

The equity police are to be people going around checking up to make sure that everybody is doing what they are supposed to be doing. Mr. Speaker, you can see that will lead down a road to trouble as well. Imagine if someone were on you all the time saying: "I do not think he is doing the right thing. I think his hiring practices in his House of Commons' office are questionable".

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine the fear, the nervousness, the sense of being watched that you would feel? I am sure you have read *1984* where George Orwell talks about how the thought police are going to be on us all the time. Although I do not want to sound like an alarmist it seems this legislation provides a possibility for that. It may be setting up these equity police. They will be going around making sure that everybody is hiring the right people and doing all this stuff in their offices.