

### *Employment Equity*

Further, let us give greater emphasis to what was said before; Clauses 4 and 5 constitute part of the same process. What we have in Clause 4 is the requirement that the employer develop a process for achieving employment equity. It certainly is clear to you, Mr. Speaker, from all of the arguments heard from all sides of the House that part and parcel of a process must be the goal of that process, and that is what is set out in Clause 5. If the opposition amendment should lose, it would throw into limbo any prospect for serious consideration of Clause 4, which is the subject of the subamendment. Therefore, it must be clear that we could end up with a silly situation were we to introduce an amendment to have Clause 4 referred to committee, when, in fact, Clauses 4, 5 and 7 are so intimately connected with one another.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I appreciate all of the Hon. Members helping me out in reaching a decision on this ruling. I would like to reserve my ruling for later on today. In the meantime we will carry on with debate.

**Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West):** Mr. Speaker, it was certainly quite an exercise in parliamentary debate on the amendment to the subamendment of the amendment to the subamendment. I think the essence of the debate this afternoon should perhaps not be on Clauses 4 or 7 of this particular Bill C-62, but, rather what this legislation will do, and perhaps, more importantly and more specifically, what this piece of legislation will not do.

I feel obligated to participate in this third reading of Bill C-62 because I had the opportunity of being involved in the second reading debate and in the work of the legislative committee. I listened and received representations from the four target groups that the legislation addresses. I was involved as well in the report stage.

I must say at the beginning of my remarks that the process has been a frustrating one. The process, in fact, has almost been a futile one simply because witness after witness from the four target groups—women, the disabled, the visible minorities and the natives—came before this House, and, more importantly, came before the committee, because that is where they have the appropriate time and forum to articulate their concerns, as it is their concerns that this legislation is supposed to address, but the Government Party and Government Members on that committee were not listening. Witness after witness came forward and suggested ways for this Parliament to strengthen this particular piece of legislation. Each of those target groups said that it is fine to talk about equality in the workplace, it is fine to say that this should be a goal of a modern society such as we have in Canada, but that it is not sufficient only to talk of equality, because this piece of legislation, while purporting to deliver equality, will not do so. That is why it was frustrating, and perhaps futile, because the message came back again and again, but the Members were not listening.

Not only did it come during this process, but we have had various reports such as that of the Abella Commission, which I

think articulated a progressive solution to what we speak of today. It was bold and courageous and the expectations that were created were very great. That is why we find today a great deal of disappointment among the Canadian community because this piece of legislation does not even come close to adopting some of the recommendations of the Abella Commission.

These witnesses and these community groups that came before us in this process also came before us during the preparation of the *Equality Now* Report, the *Equality For All* Report, and also the *Obstacles* Report in past Parliaments. These groups and these individuals are asking themselves, and are asking their representatives in this Chamber: How many times do we have to come to Ottawa to explain our case? How many times must we tell you what the problems are? How many times and how forceful can we be in terms of suggesting a solution to our problems in this country? They have come time and time again and at great expense. They have used their energies and the efforts of their organizations, which are not the more wealthy or well financed organizations in this country. They used the resources they had in a very genuine, straightforward and frank manner, and we let them down profoundly.

● (1640)

If we try to commission a further report or study, whether it be next year or in three years, those individuals in Toronto or in Vancouver have to ask themselves what was the use of going to Ottawa to say the same thing they have been saying at various stages during the last five to ten years. As opposition critic for multiculturalism, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, what they said. Two major organizations came before the committee. One organization was the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. It said that the focus of the legislation is on data collection rather than hiring and training in a workplace free of discrimination. The Canadian Ethnocultural Council said that it is difficult to envisage how a voluntary approach will substantially improve employment opportunities for the visible minorities. The Chairman of the Coalition of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities said last Monday, and I quote:

This Bill will do nothing more than provide the Government with employment information. It will in no way implement employment equity as there are no penalties for failing to comply with employment equity plans.

We have tried everything. We have consulted with CEIC staff, appeared as witnesses before the Parliamentary Committee on the Bill, made pleas to the Prime Minister directly and rallied on Parliament Hill.

We have demanded that the Bill be amended to include the Government's own Departments and agencies and to include a penalty for failing to comply with employment equity plans. The Government has not responded to any of our demands.

If we can't get them to put any teeth in the Bill, they should at least be honest and retile it "The Employment Information Bill". If the Bill is not renamed, the Coalition demands that it be withdrawn.

No one in this House can say it any better than that. We can imagine the frustration of sitting through that process and seeing absolutely no movement at all. We cannot blame these