

Canada Fair Employment Practices Act

lodges a complaint under this particular measure. Procedures are described, and penalties are provided for infringement.

It is generally agreed that this is a commendable piece of legislation to have on our federal statute books and also on the statute books of the provincial governments in so far as the jurisdiction of the provincial governments is concerned. We all know we cannot legislate so as to prevent discrimination entirely, but having such legislation as this on the statute book goes a long way toward promoting the cessation of any discriminatory feelings which people may have because of the factors which I mentioned earlier.

The bill which is before the house at the moment is very short. It merely seeks to make the present Canada Fair Employment Practices Act applicable to Her Majesty, her servants, and agents of Her Majesty, or, in effect, applicable to the civil service and to employees in the government service. This, of course, does not suggest that with regard to the employment of civil servants there exists at the present time any such discrimination because of the factors that I set out earlier. In fact, I think I can say without any contradiction or any qualification that no such discrimination enters into the employment of candidates for the civil service.

It may well be that there are prohibitions against such discrimination in some other statute or regulations, but the main point which I think we should consider is the desirability of making such provisions universally applicable not only to employers coming under the jurisdiction of this parliament but also to the crown itself and to employees of the government. This bill merely asks that those requirements which the parliament of Canada has demanded from private employers and trade unions in the nation and from crown corporations which have been established by this parliament should be applied to the government service itself. It asks that we should legislate for the employees in the public service in the same way as we legislate for private employees and the trade unions themselves.

That is all I should like to say as far as this particular bill is concerned. I do not think it requires a lengthy introduction, though I am aware that under the rules there is a provision which enables an hon. member who introduces a motion to make a final comment at the end of the debate on the matters raised. This, however, is a situation which may not develop because of the number of bills which are on the order paper and the practice which has grown up in the past of leaving them on the order paper at the end of the session.

Yesterday, if I may be allowed to say this, we began a practice with relation to this particular type of bill, which allows for complete freedom of expression regardless of party, looking toward a vote on that particular bill based on the thoughts of individual members. I think we should not allow that practice to die. I think parliament should look forward to a system which would allow public bills especially in the hands of private members to be discussed purely on their merits and not in relation to political considerations; it should look forward, also, to a system which would allow bills of this type to proceed to a vote. If it is necessary to add some extra days on at the end of the session to meet this, I think it would be a commendable thing for this house to consider doing.

If I anticipated Your Honour correctly you were about to draw to my attention the fact that this is apart from the principle of the bill. However, I appreciate having had the opportunity of bringing this to the attention of the house and I hope we will have a full discussion followed by a vote at some future time.

Mr. Aiken: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question. Has the hon. member considered whether this bill will tie in with the provisions of the Civil Service Act?

Mr. Howard: I do not think there is a more confused set of regulations existing in government service than those with respect to the civil service. They can be interpreted to mean almost anything. It may well be that by practice, regulation or by the Civil Service Act provision is made for such things as it was indirectly before the enactment of the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act by instructions or regulations under the unemployment insurance commission which says you cannot do this sort of thing. It may well be that this is so by practice, regulations or otherwise but I do not think it would be inconsistent to have the reference in this act so it is crystal clear that the provisions of this law apply also to employees of the crown as well as private employees and in discussing this question with the commission they told me they did not think it would be inconsistent either.

Mr. Spencer: Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the hon. member who introduced this bill and ask him if he has also considered the provision of the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act contained in section 5 and particularly subsection 8 thereof which gives the Minister of Labour the power to issue an order which, of course, would