

*Government Orders*

in the process an old historical verity is repeated that those who suffer first are the ones who are widely perceived to be as 'other'".

If this foundation is to address anything, it is to address that particular notice or identification of a state of mind developing in Canada, most unfortunate in its occurrence. I say that it is unfortunate because we have come slowly to a realization that the character of this country is in a state of evolution, a state of development, and a state of change.

Canada is first and foremost a multicultural country, a country that identifies itself as one, wherein all races and cultures of origin have an equality of position that suggests to each and everyone that there be dignity and a sense of pride expressed by each of the individual participants in those communities with a reciprocal respect by all other individuals from similar communities.

When I said I would support this foundation with some regret, it is because that need underscores the fact that there has not yet been an acceptance throughout all our country that the nature or fabric of our society is fundamentally, unequivocally, irrefutably multicultural.

We need instruments, symbols, and institutions that drive home the point that each and every one of us lives as individuals in collectives, all on our own in support of one another but always as Canadians whose rights are never in question because of our racial origin, our country of origin, our culture of origin, or our language.

I wanted to take a second look at this legislation and how and in what context we were establishing this type of a foundation. I went to the Statistics Canada figures for Ontario and Quebec, being from central Canada, and noted that in Ontario in 1986 the percentage of the population that identified itself as something other than French or English in origin was 62 per cent, and 34 per cent indicated multiple ethnic origin. There is already an evolving society wherein members are intermarrying and producing children who are no longer as attached to the past tradition or culture of their parents but one that is evolving and shaping a new Canadian dynamic.

• (1240)

In Toronto, the city where I come from, those figures are at least as startling. I am sure it would surprise many members in this House to know that in the population of Toronto, which is somewhat over three million, 70 per cent identifies itself as being neither French nor English and 28 per cent indicated a multiple ethnic origin.

Those figures are important for those of us who indicate, as did the previous speaker, that we have to consider this not only in the context of a multicultural act but also in the context of all constitutional debates, wherein we are seeing a debate centred upon two poles: anglophone and francophone, English Canada and French Canada.

We have an image of a monolithic society that is homogeneous in the extreme, but those statistics would suggest the complete opposite. In fact an entity like Ontario with a population of nine million plus is no longer so easily identifiable as a bastion of anglophone-English Canada but really a paragon of multicultural, multiracial society that should be viewed in the context of evolution toward a higher goal.

If I was able to quote those kinds of figures for Ontario, we can also take a look at Quebec. In Quebec, according to Canada Statistics figures, 17 per cent of the population identifies itself as being neither French nor English in origin, and 7 per cent of that population identifies itself as having more than one ethnic origin other than English or French. In Montreal, 36 per cent of the population is neither English nor French in origin.

That draws to mind that what we need to do in our country is to come to firm grips with the realities that the demographics now present us. We have not had that opportunity. Unfortunately much of the debate has centred around rights provincially and transferred on to race, culture, and language. In a truly multicultural society there should be no such threat. All cultures and languages deserve and indeed have a right to have the security of being able to generate the dynamics that are required for that culture or that language to continue to grow, to continue to develop in the context of a Canada in evolution, an evolution that takes into consideration the very valid, valuable construction and participation that have taken place in the past and continue to take place today.