

language other than either of the two official languages, and the right of that language to enjoy natural development within this country. Furthermore, the language act could be improved in such a way as to bring about consultation and agreement between federal and provincial governments for the purpose of assisting and encouraging the natural development of any such minority language. It would also be useful to declare minority languages that have been in common usage in this country for many years to be Canadian languages.

I have a letter from the deputy language commissioner which refers to the takeover of a radio station in Winnipeg by CBC and the future right of non-official language groups to use this radio station for programming. At least six times in that letter, the assistant language commissioner refers to German, Italian, Ukrainian and other languages that have been programmed on this station as foreign language broadcasts and, at the same time, to English and French as Canadian languages. The fact of the matter is that English and French as well as German, Italian, Ukrainian and many other languages are all of European origin and therefore, by definition, are all foreign languages to Canadian soil. However, we accept English and French as the official languages of the country, and I do not think that anybody suggests there should be more than two official languages. But we must recognize that other languages commonly used are no more foreign to this soil than either of the two official languages.

Some hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Yewchuk: I can see no particular reason that other languages cannot be declared to be Canadian languages in order to avoid the application of the word "foreign" to Canadians who have been here for generations.

Mr. Alexander: That is right.

Mr. Yewchuk: Again, that would not cost any money and would not undermine in any way the two official languages. I want to point out that there are many countries of the world which have several languages which are their own but which have only one or two official languages.

Another legislative change which would go a long way towards creating equality amongst Canadians would be to amend the Canadian Bill of Rights, section I, which deals with the four traditional freedoms. Two more freedoms could be added. One would be the freedom of choice of language to be spoken by any individual—and again I do not suggest the addition of more official languages—and the other would be freedom of choice of culture or way of life. This simple move would put into statute the intent of this parliament and this government to ensure Canadians that the Canadian Bill of Rights explicitly sets out and guarantees Canadians the absolute right to speak any language they may wish, regardless of the universality of such language, and to guarantee them the absolute right to adopt as a style of life any culture or part thereof contributing to the Canadian mosaic.

These changes would reassure Canadians of their right to exist as a cultural group—and you may call that a group right if you like—and the right to be different if they so choose. These rights would guarantee that no politician,

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no political party or any other group of significant importance could trample on the mosaic and therefore disturb the fine balance between Canadians that has developed over the years.

In addition to amendments to the Bill of Rights itself, Canada should set up an independent national human rights commission to deal with the whole range of individual rights in every field be it labour, housing, status of women or any other field where there is jurisdictional involvement of the federal government. If properly set up and administered, such a commission could be of enormous value in reinforcing the practical every-day application of the Bill of Rights. In terms of moral force, in terms of publicity through periodic reports to the House of Commons, and in terms of administrative decisions, its influence could be considerable. Such a commission could deal with a number of matters which the federal government itself might refer to it. For example, they might refer matters like questions on the census forms, or place of birth information required on Canadian passports, or situations such as have been produced by the takeover of station CKSB by CBC in Manitoba. The commission could also be helpful to the government in the process of removing from the statutes all remaining distinctions between native and naturalized Canadians in order to lessen the opportunities for discrimination that may be presented by these distinctions.

● (1530)

I mentioned before that while Canada has always been a multicultural country, the concept was officially recognized only recently and there are some Canadians who do not fully understand multiculturalism, who feel that in some ways it may threaten them or detract from the official language groups of the country. In order to overcome these problems and to make the general public more aware of multiculturalism and of the contribution made by all Canadians, certain steps need to be taken as part of a public educational program. A two pronged approach would serve the purpose, namely, first, the use of the mass media, of national radio, of television, of newspapers, and of cablevision; and second, the educational system itself, which involves dealings with the provinces in their area of responsibility for education.

With regard to the mass media, the Broadcasting Act appears to present certain difficulties to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in that it specifically suggests that the language of broadcasts is to be English or French. While it does not say that other languages should not be used, it is interpreted by the CBC in such a way that other languages are not used. The president of the CBC, when questioned about this matter, indicated that amendments to the Broadcasting Act were not necessary in order to allow the use of third language programming and broadcasting, but that direction from the government and from parliament must come prior to any changes in their policy. At the same time other languages are used in broadcasting in the north, namely, the native languages, a move which I fully support but one which also confirms the fact that the Broadcasting Act does not stand in the way of the use of other languages than English and French on the national networks.