

Government Orders

issue than by anything that has happened in Canadian society for a long while.

I suggest that had we had a decision quickly we would not have had those pins and those calendars. Even having said what I said, and believing the minister and his expressions when he introduced the legislation, I certainly do support the idea of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. I just hope it lives up to its promise.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I have listened with great interest to the contributions to this debate made by members opposite, particularly in the last hour. I find that there is general support for this initiative and the government is very pleased to receive that general support.

I did, however, want to set the record straight on two issues, and they emerged in the exchange between the hon. member for Chambly and the hon. member for Saskatoon—Dundurn in the previous question and comment period.

First, a question was raised as to the government's financial commitment to this particular project. I would draw to the attention of both hon. members that what we are talking about here and what the bill establishes is a foundation. The money goes into a trust fund which generates interest and the interest fuels and supplies the foundation.

The other question that was raised was with respect to the quality of the appointees to the board of the foundation. A number of members have raised that question today. The suggestion was made in the exchange I alluded to that the government might, for some reason, choose appointees who were incompetent and who would mismanage the affairs of the foundation and then it would wither on the financial vine and perish. I am not sure that that was the exact wording but that suggestion was made. I want to reiterate to hon. members the commitment made by the minister, when he first announced the project and the bill, that the foundation will be managed by a board of directors. It would be in the interest of no government to be neglectful in that regard, both as to the quality of the appointees and the diligence of those appointees once they were in office.

I would also underline that the minister said that when he recommends board appointments to the Governor in

Council he will consult widely, taking into account Canada's multicultural character, to ensure that the board has the necessary skills and expertise. Knowing the minister as I do, I think we can expect him to recruit appointees of the highest calibre. Some of them might not even have any identifiable political stripe. It is possible when he consults widely that he may even carry his consultations into the environs of Saskatoon and Chambly.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Madam Speaker, I would just like to add to what my hon. colleague opposite said. As I understand it we are looking at \$24 million. I do not want to give the wrong impression. But I also do not want the Canadian public to have the wrong impression from what my hon. colleague from the Conservative side said when he said that the government has a tendency to get the best people.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I will have to interrupt the hon. member. He should be asking questions in reference to the speech of the hon. member from Saskatoon and not the comments made by the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest.

Mr. Edmonston: Madam Speaker, it was just a burst of over-exuberance, I am afraid.

Let me return then to my hon. colleague from the NDP. It was a pleasure to listen to my hon. colleague in terms of the passion with which he spoke as well as the way he put his argument. It was a pleasure to hear something that was not theoretical but which was quite practical.

I would like to ask my colleague a question. When he was talking about how people have a tendency to make quick judgements on the way other people are dressed, such as the turban issue and others, is he satisfied with the way the government, apart from this bill, has treated that issue and others much like it?

Mr. Fisher: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, the answer to that would have to be no. I am not satisfied. I guess to be a bit repetitive, with respect to the matter of the turbans, I and a good many other people are thoroughly convinced that had the decision been made post-haste we would not have had the tremendous backlash which I think we are experiencing now. We would not have had the calendars. We would not have had the issue of whether or not it is racist, whether or not