

Government Orders

feet that is not a good signal to send to the rest of the country.

On top of that, when the Minister for International Trade can get \$14 million for one section of the world, for Pacific Rim languages, I find that confusing.

I, too, have my doubts about the commitment to a full department. As I said before, if multiculturalism means being Canadian, then why does the department not get the full resources to look after protocol for the country? Why does the department not get to look after special events such as Canada Day, et cetera? When I see the department being stripped like this I think of it as a shell company and I get nervous.

This is a very sensitive issue. It concerns each and every one of us, especially the people in my own riding. My riding has constituents from all over the world. We must be responsible on this bill. But I, too, put up the flags of caution because the action—not the words—of the government over the last four months and its commitment to this bill have been lacking.

I want to go back once again to the amendment of the member for Vancouver East who wants to define the word “multiculturalism”. I must repeat that I like the definition that sets out diversity and equality. I say that because right now we are going through a period in our country when people are having doubts about whether there is equality at certain times and in certain regions. As we know, this promotes racial tension and everything else.

I think anything that can be put into a bill like this that reminds people not only of our diversity and our equality is good. After all, we have been saying for many years in this House that no culture is less than or greater than another.

I salute the hon. member for her definition. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for having the opportunity to speak on this bill.

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to consider the motion presented by the hon. member for Vancouver East, and addressed by the hon. members for Kamloops and Broadview—Greenwood.

The motion is to add to Clause 2 of Bill C-18 a definition of multiculturalism. I do not wish to take a great deal of the time of the House to review this motion at report stage, but I feel that it is very important that we not just vote on this motion but that we actually consider it here.

I understand the concerns of those who would wish to see Bill C-18, which is an act to establish the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, as in some way a repeat of the Multiculturalism Act which Parliament debated and passed in the spring and summer of 1988.

I want to make it very clear that Bill C-18 is an administrative piece of legislation designed only to formalize the establishment of the department of multiculturalism and citizenship. It is not a policy bill. It is not a regulatory bill. It is merely a simple and straightforward administrative bill.

I have reviewed carefully the work of the legislative committee which examined Bill C-18 and was astonished by the degree to which witnesses appearing before the committee, and some committee members, attempted to reopen substantive policy questions.

The motion before the House today by the hon. member for Vancouver East and introduced by the member for Kamloops falls into that category. It is a motion which is designed in essence to reopen the debate on multiculturalism. We are establishing a department of multiculturalism and citizenship, not debating policy issues.

Simply put, there is no need for a definition of multiculturalism in Bill C-18.

I would urge the hon. members for Vancouver East, Kamloops and Broadview—Greenwood to examine other departmental acts to see if they contain the sort of elaborate definition which this motion is proposing.

I also urge the hon. members for Vancouver East, Kamloops and Broadview—Greenwood to review carefully the preamble to Section 3 of the Multiculturalism Act. It contains clear, concise statements as to the nature of multiculturalism. I would remind hon. members that it was adopted unanimously by this House.

• (1550)

On an equally substantive basis, I am concerned that the hon. members for Vancouver East deemed it necessary to define multiculturalism, but did not at the same time deem it necessary to define citizenship. I would like