

*Routine Proceedings*

place in the public sector. One of them was in the form of a plan of action prepared during 1992–1993 to increase the presence of visible minority performers and subjects in Canadian television and radio.

Twenty years after the multiculturalism policy was proclaimed the Canadian Broadcast Corporation finally made plans to be more inclusive of visible minorities. This the minister heralds as a great stride forward. Can we expect to wait another 20 years before this plan of the CBC is actually put into action?

This brings clearly into question the effectiveness of the official multiculturalism policy. Given the identification of the policy with the Liberals, it is particularly surprising that Liberal MPs from ethnic minorities have in the past been openly critical of the policy of multiculturalism. The Liberal MPs representing Toronto area ridings particularly were critical not only of the creation of a separate department but also of what they termed the ghettoizing nature of multiculturalism as a whole.

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Expressing sentiments he said were shared by several ethnic minority MPs in the party, the member for York South—Weston argued that while the policy of multiculturalism may have been valid in the past, it no longer plays a constructive role.

I believe strongly that the policy is no longer valid or appropriate today. In effect, the present policy of multiculturalism is divisive. It divides Canadians. It is unfair in that it treats Canadians in different fashions. It is regressive and at times discriminatory.

That statement was by the member for York South—Weston.

In an article entitled *Ethnic Pluralism Under Siege—Popular and Partisan Opposition to Multiculturalism from Canadian Public Policy*, December 1992, Spencer's commission argues for refocusing official multicultural policy as follows:

We believe that Federal Government funding for Multiculturalism activities other than those serving immigrant orientation, reduction of racial discrimination and promotion of equality should be eliminated, and the public funds saved be applied to these areas.

The Spencer report's criticism of multiculturalism and recommendations for narrowing the policy's scope were reinforced by suggestions that minority and immigrant groups were also critical of the policy.

For example, one writer of Japanese ancestry describes the reality of racism from her experience as a child and adult in Canada that is belied by the rhetoric of multiculturalism. She says:

Multiculturalism, a term everyone loves to use in defining Canada, is admirable in theory but it does not work in practice. Multiculturalism is the name given to the ethnic and cultural diversity of our country. It implies an attitude of tolerance and acceptance, of equality among all regardless of ethnic background. This idea does not stand the test of personal experience. And the experience of individuals provides real insight into

what defines our country. Though official policy would have it otherwise, it is hard to be different in this country. For me this is an irony that underlies the very fact of being Canadian.

Still others have gone further to argue that through strengthening the associations between being ethnic and being of inferior status, multiculturalism actually promotes or causes racism.

Similarly novelist Meil Bisoodath writes:

In stressing the differences between groups, in failing to emphasize that this is a country with its own ideals and attitudes which demand adherence, the policy has instead aided in hardening of hatreds.

This brings me to the position of the Reform Party on the current policy of multiculturalism. We call for the abolition of the official multiculturalism department. We call for the acceptance and integration of immigrants into the mainstream of Canadian life.

We have found that Canadians welcome, value and enjoy the wealth of backgrounds and cultures represented by its citizens. This great country was built by hard working and enterprising people who came here from all over the world. Many are proud to celebrate their heritage and ethnic societies have flourished in Canada for generations.

Whatever our ethnic and cultural backgrounds, what binds us together is our tremendous pride and privilege in being Canadians. It ought to be the role of the federal government to preserve and protect those things that we all have in common, and in ensuring equality for all regardless of things like race, language, culture and country of origin. Because of this I urge the minister to use her influence in cabinet to end the use of a definition of Canada as a meeting of two founding races, languages and cultures. This definition of Canada was introduced by the Liberals and is one which they cling to to this day even though it excludes more than 12 million Canadians whose culture and language of origin is neither French nor English.

In addition, those proud Canadians who fall outside the Liberals' two founding races definition are ready, able and willing to preserve those elements of their culture and heritage that are important to them, using their own money and their own resources.

● (1530)

They do not require these activities to be funded by other Canadians through the allocation of tax dollars. Keeping the heavy hand of government out of such activity would also allow ethnic societies to remain free of some of the unfortunate political obligations that have been perceived to arise in conjunction with the allocation of political largesse.