

would not be necessary. Obviously this has to fit into an over-all global pattern of budget responsibility. I know the hon. member has opposed the goods and services tax and other things of that sort. She does so normally, saying that we can tax not all people but others like corporations. She also says that we can cut out unnecessary expenditures. So far, at least, I have not heard from her or her colleagues about any viable, logical suggestions on how to get the deficit under control. I realize she believes that it has to be under control too. Unfortunately, everything has to be restrained, and this is one of the things, along with housing and everything else, that has to be restrained if we are going to stop spending 35 cents out of every dollar that we take in paying interest on the national debt.

• (1300)

Mr. Bevilacqua: Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. minister who I thank for defining, at least from my understanding of his speech, that he indeed believes that Canadian contemporary culture is multicultural. I believe he agrees with that. Based on that, I would like to see his reaction to the fact that in Parliament we have Parliamentary standing committees on communications, culture, citizenship and multiculturalism. I wonder why, if Canadian contemporary culture is indeed multicultural, we have departments of culture and multiculturalism.

Second, another question is in relation to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, specifically as it relates to human rights. In a speech made to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons, the hon. Minister for Multiculturalism stated that in addition to enshrining multiculturalism as a prized characteristic of our national identity, the Act has profound human rights implications. It recognizes the right of all citizens of every racial and cultural background to participate fully in Canadian society bringing to Canada their own style of being a Canadian.

I would like to ask the minister what human rights I, as a Canadian not born in this country, have as a result of the Multiculturalism Act that I did not have before under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Human Rights Act and the Citizenship Act.

Government Orders

Mr. Redway: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his questions. As I understood it, there were two questions, the first of which dealt with why there should be a separate Department of Multiculturalism when there is a Department of Culture. Am I misinterpreting the hon. member's question?

There are, as the hon. member knows, all sorts of different departments of government. They serve many, many functions. This particular one I see in the light of the hon. member's second question to me, that being the question of what other rights he has now that he did not have before the Multicultural Act.

I see the whole issue as one of clearing away barriers. Whether it be a special committee to deal with that issue or whether it be a department to deal with that issue, I see the whole concept here as clearing away any and all barriers that there are in the way of Canadians, from whatever background, to the full participation and involvement in the fullness of being a Canadian. If the hon. member does not think there are any barriers, I invite him to look around, but I suspect he does understand that and that is really what this whole thing is all about as I see it.

In my own community, as I said, there are over 60 different cultural groups from all over the world. I think of that community as one where a few years ago there were quite severe concerns from people of other backgrounds about people of yet other backgrounds. Now those concerns have not melted away entirely, but they had been reduced very substantially.

I think that this kind of a mechanism, whether it be the Multicultural Act, the multicultural committee or the multicultural department, is a way of clearing away those barriers, barriers that I know the hon. member realizes exists and would like to see eliminated just as much as I and the government want to see eliminated.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to speak on Bill C-18 to establish a department of multiculturalism and citizenship because I think there are some serious problems with it. It is possible that it could be corrected to be useful, but one of the troublesome things about it is its lack of definition of its job. I notice, for example, in clause 4, page 2, that it says that the minister has the powers, duties, and functions extending to him, including all matters, et cetera, relating to multiculturalism and citizenship and it does not really define it any further at all. It does not say one word about race.