

Government Orders

Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to discuss the second reading of Bill C-53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage, which should be renamed the department of government waste and overlap. Hon. members across from me consider this bill nothing more than routine housekeeping yet to us in the Reform Party it is much much more.

Canadians want change. The Liberals are finally beginning to understand this and I commend them for it.

The Reform Party has been advocating decreases in immigration levels since the early 1990s and now the Liberals have adopted this idea. The Reform Party has been screaming loudly about the inadequacies in the criminal justice system and now the Liberals are reviewing the criminal justice system. The Reform Party has been pleading for serious amendments to the Young Offenders Act and the Liberals are also reviewing this issue.

The Reform Party has been talking about the critical levels of our debt and deficit. Our debt now stands at \$538,181,397,919.00. Just like magic, the Liberals are beginning to think there is a problem in this area as well.

Although we are not the government, we can still be extremely effective and proud to know that our policy directives are beginning to be implemented by this government. I must congratulate government members on their insight.

• (1620)

I mention these few examples of where the government has been listening to us on the Reform side of the House. I hope this trend will continue in the future. I hope this will continue regarding Bill C-53.

As I alluded to earlier, Bill C-53 should be defeated in this House and sent back to cabinet for a complete overhaul. This overhaul should deal specifically with the notion of overlap and duplication such as: overlap between the Department of Industry and heritage; overlap between the Department of the Environment and heritage; and we are now seeing the possibility of overlap between the Department of Justice and heritage. The list goes on.

We as a government are spending over \$40 billion annually or approximately \$110 million every day. We do not have a revenue problem in Canada but rather we have a spending problem. Last week when I was back in my riding of Edmonton—Strathcona holding town hall meetings on social reform, many people commented on how much money this government continues to waste on needless or extremely low priority programs. The main programs that were mentioned time after time were official languages and multiculturalism.

First I want to say unequivocally that we are not anti-French nor anti-Quebec in the Reform Party. However, we do feel that a tremendous amount of resources is being wasted in areas in which the numbers do not warrant service in both languages. We do believe in implementing the policy of territorial bilingualism which would see maintaining official languages in key federal institutions such as Parliament, the Supreme Court and other federal services where the demand is sufficient to warrant cost effective minority language services.

Second, we have multiculturalism. It is here that I will focus my attention today. It seems clear to me that anyone who is critical of Canada's multicultural program is immediately labelled a racist. That is far too easy a way to avoid an issue. How can anyone debate an issue that from the onset has been reduced from an intellectual discussion to name calling? It is for this reason that I stand before my colleagues and challenge them to discuss the issue not on an emotional but rather on a rational intellectual level.

Proponents of the multicultural program have also begun to view honest criticism as attacks, and critics as enemies. Multiculturalism is a vision that proceeds from differences, from that which separates, and disregards that which unites.

Furthermore, in a survey conducted in 1991 Canadians were asked whether they approved or disapproved of government cancellation of multiculturalism funding which would force projects to be self-financed by the multicultural organizations themselves. Over two-thirds of all respondents approved and 45 per cent of them strongly agreed that multiculturalism should be funded by the multicultural organizations themselves rather than the federal government.

Because of time constraints I will only point out one of the measures in this act which is to provide support to individuals, groups or organizations for the purpose of preserving, enhancing and promoting multiculturalism in Canada. It is important to read a passage from a recent book written by Neil Bissoondath, an individual who immigrated to Canada from Trinidad. This book is called *Selling Illusions*. As Mr. Bissoondath illustrates quite clearly, one of the problems with the objectives of the multiculturalism act is:

—so it is with the ethnic cultures offered at the pavilions of Caravan and other such festivals; all the colourful ethnics bowing and smiling in a mechanical greeting gesture to all the tourists. They look like the real thing, but their smell is synthetic. They have no bite. They are safe. Culture Disneyfied.

This is perhaps even more of a concern than the wastefulness of the \$30 million we are presently spending on multiculturalism. In the divisive nature of this policy there is a notion or idea that we are discussing the creation of different laws for Canadians based only on ethnicity or culture. It is for this reason that the concept of multiculturalism through political cowardice and bureaucratic ineptitude and ethnic pressure has distorted federal policy beyond recognition.