

Private Members' Business

[English]

It being six o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should transfer the responsibility for cultural preservation to individuals by discontinuing federal multiculturalism programs, relinquishing control of multiculturalism thereby allowing multiculturalism to flourish by giving individuals the freedom to pursue their own cultural ideals.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move this motion this today. Canadians from all across this country have become involved in a debate that explores the merits of the federal government's policy on multiculturalism. The issue has its defenders and its detractors. But most significantly, people no longer are blindly accepting the status quo that multiculturalism funding should be beyond reproach or even be beyond questioning.

The position of the Reform Party is given expression in my motion as just read. By relinquishing control at the federal level for funding multicultural projects, we will also be giving to individuals the chance to choose for themselves what cultural endeavours they wish to support.

As a government we have diminishing resources and as individual taxpayers we too have less and less disposable income. It is in light of this that we as legislators should be making efforts to maximize the freedom of individuals to distribute their disposable income where they choose.

In contemporary Canada does it not seem a little arrogant when the government decides which programs, which groups and which individuals should be funded? Are these decisions not better left in the hands of Canadians and not government? Why is it that this Liberal government avoids all the difficult decisions that concern Canadians the most?

I have sponsored two motions, both of which have been deemed to be non-votable. Last June I sponsored a motion for debate that related to the CBC. I recommended that the CBC be partially privatized. In that debate I suggested that we make some substantial changes to the CBC and that would include funding reductions.

I received a very poor reception from the other side of the House. In fact there was laughter and derision as I recall. However, here we are in budget 1995 and surprise, surprise, some of my recommendations have been acknowledged, particularly the recommendations for reduced funding and potential restructuring.

Another Reform proposition which the Liberals have recently borrowed was the recommendation to amalgamate all of the women's organizations into Status of Women Canada. I have suggested that further to that we dismantle the organization altogether.

Further to the debate on this motion, let me share with the House some sentiments from an average Canadian. I recently spoke to a group in Kingston, Ontario about my vision for Canada. A woman who heard me that day sent me some of her thoughts which echo mine. I would like to share them with the House today. She wrote on something she called "Acceptable Behaviour in a Global Village". She wrote:

The world of human beings has grown smaller and populations all over the world have become so mixed that we have to learn to get along peacefully with each other. The global village is no longer somewhere else. It is here and all of us are mixed in with it. It does not matter whether someone of a different race or nation lives next door or down the street or in a different part of town or halfway around the world, we have to learn to live peacefully with all of those peoples whose racial or national origins are different from our own. To do otherwise is to bring about an end to our world. The intolerance, conflicts, fighting and wars between peoples will bring an end to our civilization and the earth as a planet much quicker than any pollution or natural disaster.

All peoples have some members who are great people, who have accomplished things which are beneficial for all humankind. All peoples have some members who are difficult people who make life miserable for those around them. No one is perfect. Most people of all races are a mixture of good and bad. It is necessary to recognize the best and the positive in others regardless of what they look like, what language they speak or where they come from. The positive values of honesty, integrity, the ability to do the job required of them, the ability to care for family and other people and the ability to live peacefully together with others; all provide the basis for a good and worthwhile society.

Every race and nation of people has those individuals whose performance is excellent in all of those values. Every race and nation has many who fail to uphold those positive values. We need to change our attitudes to become more objective and non-judgmental. We need to become more accepting of all people.

● (1805)

The woman concludes her letter with the thought that:

This is not an easy thing to do but if enough of us who feel this necessity start to put these attitudes into our own lives and encourage others to also do so, we will have a better world.

These are the sentiments of an ordinary Canadian. The writer has no Ph.D. in peace issues. She has no certificates proclaiming her to be an expert on eliminating racial discrimination. But she clearly is an expert on old-fashioned Canadian common sense. If we could only bottle these common sense attitudes and ship them throughout Canada and around the world what a better place this would be.