

benefit to me and certainly is not beneficial on a Canadian scale.

In conclusion, I think Canadians value cultural diversity. Canadians want this government to support all sorts of programs, including legislation which will ensure that this diversity continues.

**Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to rise to speak to these amendments which would define multiculturalism in the act to mean fundamental characteristics of Canadian society which recognizes the diversity and equality of all Canadians as regards to race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion, as initially proposed by the hon. member for Vancouver East and today proposed by the hon. member for Kamloops.

• (1630)

As indicated earlier, if we are to recognize and truly accept diversity as a Canadian value, and only then will multiculturalism assume meaning, we have to recognize immediately that there ought to be equality among the diverse cultures and people in Canada.

For the government side to argue, through the parliamentary secretary, that the amendment ought to be rejected because this bill is merely administrative, and not a policy document, is an exercise of a vacuum in logic. Why? Well, if the government were paying attention to its own bill, Bill C-18, it indicates in clause 4, under "Powers, duties and functions of the Minister" the following:

4. The powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, board or agency of the Government of Canada, relating to

- (a) multiculturalism; and
- (b) citizenship.

I underscore:

—not by law assigned to any other department.

Clause 5 states the specific duties, and I quote:

5. In exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions assigned to the Minister by section 4, the Minister shall

- (a) initiate, recommend, coordinate, implement and promote national policies and programs with respect to multiculturalism and citizenship;

For the government to argue that because the bill merely deals with the establishment of a department,

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that it is merely administrative, and that it is not a policy document, technically the minister may be right. However in substance, the department will initiate, formulate and implement policies. Therefore we cannot divorce policies from the very structure itself. I call the argument and the submission by the government, through the parliamentary secretary, an exercise of a vacuum in logic.

As the member for Winnipeg North, a constituency where 50 per cent are English, the vast majority, and Francophone, a very small minority; and the other 50 per cent represents Canadians of Ukrainian, Filipino, Jewish, German, Portuguese, Polish, East Indian and many other origins, it is natural that I support this amendment to define the meaning of multiculturalism in this bill.

Why will the government surrender clarity for confusion? No Canadian can accept that. Incidentally, citizenship is well known to Canadians since January 1947, when the Citizenship Act has told who and how we become Canadians, either by birth or by choice.

At this juncture, let me remind the government that the Canadian Ethnocultural Council is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of national ethnocultural organizations, dedicated to working together for the purpose of furthering the multicultural reality of Canada. I remind the government about this because the very essence of this organization is to ensure equality of all Canadians in one united country.

This organization represents the interests and aspirations of some nine million Canadians and the major objective is most laudable, because it is to ensure the equality of opportunity, rights and dignity among all Canadians. Why, then, do I quote and remind the government about the Canadian Ethnocultural Council? It is because this council that has been in the forefront in the establishment of this department. It is this council that recommends to this government that multiculturalism, defined as the fundamental characteristic of our country, be included in the bill.

This council is most knowledgeable and must be listened to. I support its recommendation. Incidentally, this council also has major concerns about the whole thrust of the government's policy and programs for multiculturalism.

On December 20, 1989, in a letter addressed to the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship