

Canadian Culture

Vancouver which many Chinese leaders found condescending, patronizing, inaccurate and portraying a false picture of the Chinese community. Typical of the over-simplification contained in the film was the suggestion that anyone of Chinese origin could telephone anyone across the continent having the same surname and be sure of receiving help. Another was that all new immigrants from Hong Kong were either professionals or from the merchant class. A third was that half of Vancouver harbour is covered with pleasure craft which are owned by the Chinese. The National Film Board should know better.

The battle is not over by any means, but I should tell this House of Commons that there is a renaissance, a growth today like never before in the Chinese Canadian community. The community is alive, active and participating as never before in Canadian life. They are not about to take discrimination or stereotyping any more. A large rally in Toronto, which was organized by my friend, Dr. Joseph Wong, and attended by my colleague, the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae), protested the "W-5" program. As a result, there was an apology.

In other places at other times the threat to the traditional cooking and serving of barbecued meats was met by petitions. The Chinese Benevolent Society was democratized. A beautiful Chinese cultural centre is being built in Vancouver. The community is blossoming in Toronto, Edmonton and Montreal.

In the riding adjacent to my riding, represented by the hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson), Canadians of Chinese origin have been farming some of the richest agricultural land in Canada. They have shown exceptional skills in the intensive truck farming of this valuable land. Our agricultural industry has learned a great deal about land management from these people, and these skills continue to be honed. My motion today is a recognition and encouragement of this progress by the Parliament of Canada.

The younger generation of Chinese have growing expectations, which is normal. They are increasingly turning to the larger society for fulfilment of personal and professional aspirations. There has been a worry that, in their quest for a better life, the young Chinese Canadians would be pulled into the mainstream of the dominant society. This has led to action to preserve and promote Chinese heritage and culture. Across the country Chinese cultural associations are being established. This, of course, is basic to the Canadian mosaic when a group tries to preserve its own culture within the larger context of the Canadian culture.

My friend, David Chong, who is a Vancouver lawyer, puts it rather well when he says, "The children of the immigrants of the 1950s are now graduating from universities in great numbers. They are going to do very well in the next decade in Canada, particularly in British Columbia." These young Canadians are not only entering the professions and businesses, but also the arts and sports activities. If David Chong has his usual good judgment, we will hear from these people. I think that this House of Commons should celebrate the energy and talent of these young Canadians.

It is true, Mr. Speaker, that there have been conflicts. The Chinese Benevolent Association matter in Vancouver which I spoke about is one. But I think that those days are gone by and that the culture and heritage appeal will be a cause to unify the community. I might say, since I have many Chinese Canadians in my own riding of Vancouver-Kingsway, that I feel the role of a member of Parliament is to aid his community by listening to its people, not by interfering in that community. That is why I am trying to bring the House up to date on developments in the Chinese community in Canada.

One of my constituents, a teenager named Barry Hong, who worked for me briefly last year and has now gone temporarily to Hong Kong to teach English and "to find his roots", has given me, an outsider, a bit of an inside look at the present and future of the Chinese community. He wrote this for me, and I would like to share it with hon. members of the House of Commons:

One of the problems Chinese Canadians face is the never-ending quest for identity. At least once in his lifetime, a Chinese Canadian born in Canada will have encountered this mind-crippling dilemma. Caught between two worlds, being neither Chinese nor completely Canadian, since neither group fully accepts him, the Chinese Canadian is in an awkward, if unique, position. In an attempt to deny his Chinese heritage, the Chinese Canadian, when faced with this identity problem, tends to view assimilation into white society as the solution. What Chinese Canadians should be aware of is that although the process of assimilation may be inevitable, they should at least know where they are coming from.

I think my young friend knows where he is coming from, and he is achieving what I hope the future holds for all Chinese Canadians—the full and equal rights, responsibilities and privileges of any other Canadian regardless of race, together with the value of the Chinese heritage. Or, as Dr. Li says:

Generally speaking, citizens of Chinese origin place great emphasis on respecting the law, respecting seniors, on peaceful co-existence with others, on the virtue of productive work, on the virtue of sound education and on the virtue of avoiding over-indulgence of alcoholism and drug use.

There is a Chinese saying that one step is the beginning of a journey of a thousand days. We in the House of Commons cannot change the past, but we can recognize the toil given to this country by people of Chinese background, and we can anticipate, optimistically, their future. We can, above all, associate ourselves with the struggle for equality by Chinese Canadians. In the words of Normie Kwong of Calgary, the chairman of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism, "Our settlement and progress as a nation have been a shared achievement". I urge the House to adopt this motion.

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to lend my support to this resolution. I will not take up too much time because it is my understanding that it will receive quick passage. All hon. members have Chinese constituents in their riding.

I do not intend to make a political speech as my friend, the armchair socialist, has done. I take exception to some of his remarks but I will not talk about those exceptions right now. The resolution itself is great. It reads as follows: