

*Government Orders*

[English]

My intention therefore is to concentrate on the multicultural aspects of Canadian life and why there is a need for a program that focuses on building understanding and respect and on fighting racism, bigotry and prejudice.

For my government this program is more than building a monument. It is far more lasting in terms of daily living for Canadians, whatever their language, culture, milieu, newly arrived or long time resident. Multiculturalism is about the very fabric of our society.

Canada has been built by wave after wave of immigrants. All Canadians other than the First Nations have their roots reaching to the four corners of the earth. They have kept coming and they have come at different stages.

I was at a very moving and beautiful ceremony yesterday held at Rideau Hall with the Governor General of Canada. At that ceremony Dr. Dmytroa Cipywnyk, a very distinguished Canadian of Ukrainian descent and who is president of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, received in the name of the 37 groups that represent ethnocultural communities across Canada a coat of arms.

It was a very moving day as I saw Ukrainians, Germans, Italians, Greeks, Jewish people, East Indians, people from the Czech Republic, Poland, Argentina, people of Irish descent and people from countries all around the world who all belong to this Canadian Ethnocultural Council. They had decided that they wanted to have a heraldic emblem that would represent who they are and what it means to be part of Canada.

I was very touched and moved by the words of the Governor General. Mr. Hnatyshyn made a comment on the choice of the heraldry, the red and white crest with the winged seeds. He said maple trees are different. Maple seeds have a design that allows them to spiral to the ground far from the trees. They take root in new places, adapt to new conditions and thrive. That is the kind of spirit that has drawn millions of people to this land for hundreds of years. It is that spirit that draws people here today.

I thought that was very demonstrative of the role and the place that Canadians have played from all parts of this world, from the Irish who came here fleeing hunger and famine to the Chinese who came to help build the railways, to the blacks who came through the underground railway. All kinds of people have come to this shore and each wave has brought prosperity, growth and development. Each wave has had to live difficult experiences and each wave has been enabled by the concepts that are founded in our democratic process to grow and to prosper, but not without difficulty.

We have addressed those difficulties at many different times in different ways because we have been a growing and emerging democracy.

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In that spirit that moved thousands upon thousands of volunteers to respond, to reach out and to work for social harmony and social peace as their communities arrived here, it was the small groups that lent a hand to the business people, to the families in need, the Baron de Hirsch, for food, for coal, for heat; it was the organizations that came together to give food and lodging, shoes and clothing for the cold weather. Whether it was my community or the Christian community or the other communities, they gave a helping hand and enabled us to feel a sense of comfort and welcome and then we made the choice to stay, to move on, to integrate, to associate, to make our way of life here in Canada.

That spirit, that generosity is found in the charitable social and cultural organizations of today. They all need respect, understanding and they need and come for some form of support as they work to face a very changed dynamic in society. Society is a great big global village whose people have still not learned how to live respectfully in many of the lands from which they come.

We have an important job that is different than before because technology has changed. The world we now see is in conflict and those conflicts are now coming here and we must stop those conflicts. It is a different kind of situation.

It is important that these volunteer organizations help us work toward social peace and social harmony. If we reach out our hand in friendship and we welcome the newly arrived as the host society, we will have received them at our table with grace and dignity and we will help others integrate into our society under the value system that we have built into our society.

It is fairly new. When we talk about what we have put in here it is the spirit of multiculturalism that moved much of the change that we saw as we brought in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as we brought in the Canadian Constitution, as we signed international documents to eliminate all forms of discrimination, all forms of racism, as we put into place acts of employment equity.

I have said it before and I will say it again. It is time for us to get up to date, to understand and to explain to constituents just what multiculturalism means for Canada, just how important it is to the fabric of life here.

We have never been a static society. Canadian federalism is a growing and evolving modern society. It is governance that looks at and adapts to change. It is not frozen in any particular mode or model. It has guiding principles today that form the very core of this nation and it moves based on fundamental principles. It means that Canada has been and is now and will continue to be a host country and a home country for people from around the world, from a multitude of other cultures that all share the same goal of making a good life for themselves and their families within the framework of our laws and our prin-