

Private Members' Business

the area. In our case it could be English or, as in Quebec, it could be French.

In 1993-94, \$25.5 million was spent on the federal multicultural program, which is less than Brian Mulroney spent on his prime ministerial aircraft. The notion that \$25.5 million per year, which is less than a dollar per citizen, could ensure the isolation of Canadians into cultural-ethnic cliques is hardly believable. Moreover, one must keep in mind that an important component of the original policy was founded on the assumption that encouraging people to be confident in their own cultures would allow them to be accepting of the cultures of other groups. The official policy encourages Canadians of all ethnic origins to participate fully in the economic and social life of Canada, sharing their cultures and histories with each other.

It is unfortunate that members in the opposition benches are insinuating that multiculturalism and cultural diversity somehow preclude national unity and inhibit our ability to be part of the whole. This could not be further from the truth. Canadians of all origins do maintain a sense of their own cultural identity and at the same time adhere to the Canadian values of democracy and tolerance. There is no reason to believe that the two are mutually exclusive. That is a notion that has somehow been propagated by opponents of multiculturalism and it is extremely misleading and irresponsible. The proof for this is in the Canada of today. We are culturally diverse, and yet if we ask the majority of immigrants they will tell you that they are first and foremost Canadians.

I would like to conclude with a quote from a Toronto *Star* article dated June 21, 1991. It refers to the experience of an author. Her name is Myrna Kostash, grand-daughter of Ukrainian immigrants that settled in Alberta. She stated:

Multiculturalism policy and its institutions allowed me to take part in Canadian life. It allowed me to get out of the ghetto. During my own childhood, ethnic cultures were private, taking place in Ukrainian churches and in youth groups. I was aware that I was dropping out of my peer group in order to be Ukrainian. But with the advent of multiculturalism, I felt that when I spoke as a Canadian-Ukrainian writer, I was doing it within the mainstream institutions of Canadian literary life. I became a Canadian through this sense of entitlement. I didn't have to choose between public and private cells. Both came together through multiculturalism.

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to speak in favour of my colleague's motion, private member's motion No. 364. The motion provides for the transfer of the control of multiculturalism away from the federal government to individuals. Essentially, the motion put forward by my colleague from Calgary Southeast calls for the withdrawal of federal funding to multicultural groups.

I concur with that objective. However, just because I think the state should not be funding various cultural groups does not mean that I dislike these groups. Just because I disagree with

government imposed multicultural policies it should not be construed to suggest that I dislike other linguistic or ethnic groups. I am arguing against government policy, not against cultural groups.

• (1850)

After all my roots are different from the roots of many other people. Together those generations of various ancestral heritage came to this country to settle and build what became by far the best country in the world. This country was opened up, settled and built without a multicultural policy. In fact I doubt if the term multiculturalism was even coined when my parents came to this country back in the twenties.

My roots are a mixture, a real hodge-podge so to speak. My linguistic heritage is Prussian German but my ancestral affiliation and connection include not only central European heritage but east European heritage, Slavic heritage, including Ukrainian, Polish and Russian. My parents understood and spoke these languages, plus what they called Yiddish. I am led to believe that Yiddish is a kind of Germanic way of speaking Hebrew. If that makes any linguistic sense I really do not know. In a land, in a country, that encompasses much of the earth's land mass with over 150 cultural groups, who am I to question what makes sense in that part of the world. Come to think of it, perhaps there are lessons to be learned given the turmoil that existed for centuries in tsarist imperial Russia, then in the former Soviet Union and presently in the newly created state of Russia.

My parents left their homelands, along with hundreds of thousands of other people from that area, having lived in those lands for almost 200 years. They left to escape the tyranny that was to enslave the people for over 70 years. They came to Canada, where everything was new and very unfamiliar. They had nothing when they came halfway around the world.

However they had freedom. They had liberty. They had liberty and freedom that the people back in the land from whence my parents came could not even imagine or dream about. My parents embraced their newly adopted country with energy and a zeal that was typical of newcomers during that time. Like those who came from places other than Britain, they soon learned English like everyone else. Some youngsters did not learn English until they started school.

For years, for generations, like thousands of families not only from eastern Europe but from all over the world they held on to some aspects of the culture that they had lived with before they came to this country.

Mr. Speaker, do you want to know something? These people all came usually with little or no money and they received not one thin dime from government. Not only did they not ask for money, they did not expect any government money. They came to this country for freedom and for the tremendous opportunities