

*Government Orders*

about immigrants, or first generation, or fifth generation, or native people. It talks about all Canadians.

The fundamental concept of multiculturalism in Canada is quite different than other countries, particularly the United States. They have emphasized the idea of the melting pot, where religious, ethnic, and cultural values are left behind for those of the new country. Canada has done the opposite. It has said: "Bring us your culture, your religious differences. We honour them. We treasure them. They enrich our community". One does not have to look far in any community in Canada to see how much this diversity enriches our own community.

In my own riding of Surrey North we are very fortunate to have a large Sikh population. Some of them are new Canadians who have been here only months or relatively few years. Others are in Canada for generations. They have enriched our community tremendously because they have maintained their cultural and religious identity.

The Sikh religion, of course, is the focal point of their lives. They are devout. There is total community involvement in their religion. One of the many tremendous aspects of their faith is the concept of equality among people. This is symbolized at their services, when everyone, regardless of their status, or social economic base, participate in meals in the temple. It is a symbol of equality.

Their religion is important to them. That is why the whole issue of wearing turbans within the RCMP was so significant to that community. I am sure they feel much better about Canada now, being accepted after a hard fight.

The Sikhs have brought us other aspects of their culture, including their music, dances, and food. All of these things we treasure. That is what enriches us. We can participate in cultural activities that are reflective of the diversity of Canada.

Sikhs have a very strong commitment to their family which is exemplary to the rest of Canadians. Their families are very close-knit, and they believe in the extended family. They help one another. They start businesses together, and often they are multigenerational. I think it has set an example for the rest of Canadian society. They are involved in their community which focuses on their temple. They are developing cultural

activities, seniors' activities, and are involved in assisting their total community.

The Sikh population has contributed immensely to the community in Surrey as a whole.

There have been many leadership people in all sorts of community activities from provision of resources to providing recreational facilities, in being instrumental in forming the unions, including the Farm Workers' Union, in developing educational services for the community not just for their own population but for the total community.

They have been social activists in dealing with issues of racism, social intolerance, poverty and housing, all the kinds of issues faced by Canadian families. This is why my community has been so enriched by the presence of the Sikh population.

They have contributed economically to this country. They are hard working people, innovative and involved in the business of creating jobs through the creation of small business. We all know it is the small business person who is the creator of jobs and because of that they have contributed to the economic vitality of this community. In Canada we owe ethnic communities like the Sikh community a great debt.

I am troubled about what is happening in Canada and the implications in what the government is doing. There is a growing sense of intolerance. We only have to look at the issue of wearing turbans in the RCMP. Members on the government side and, unfortunately, some Liberals strongly opposed the idea of a group being allowed to wear a different uniform because of their religion.

We had cuts to the heritage language program and other multicultural programs, including cuts to native cultural and language support services. This means we are saying to one very significant group in our society that we are not prepared to support the continued uniqueness and diversity that allows it to pass on its language, culture, customs and values to the next generation. Unless these are supported and passed on they will die. That is the melting pot. With their disappearance, not only do ethnic or native groups lose, all Canadian society loses.

How dull Canadians would be if their backgrounds were all similar to mine and there was no diversity. I am a person who unfortunately lost the cultural component and language skills of my father. That has not been of