

*Official Languages*

cultural development. The Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier), in speeches that he has made on these matters over the past few months, has referred to cultural deserts that exist in various parts of Canada. That is a phrase that is very heavily laden, of course, with value judgment. There has never been any indication of what parts of Canada are included in the minister's designation as cultural deserts. There is a strong feeling in western Canada that theirs is the area that has been described in such discriminatory terms by the Secretary of State. I think I can say that with some justification, following the events that took place just a week ago in the province of Manitoba. It was quite obvious that the good citizens of Manitoba, a province that enjoys a cultural diversity that is second to none in Canada, was not in agreement with the stance, the posture and the program of the government of Canada with respect to the recognition of the cultural rights of that part of this country, or for that matter in agreement with the more basic issue, of course, that of the economic rights of the province of Manitoba.

The city of Winnipeg is one of the larger urban centres of Canada. There, we have a bicultural and bilingual community that has existed on the banks of the Red River almost since the beginning of confederation. But in the midst of this bilingual and bicultural community we also have this new fact of Canadian confederation, the Canadian mosaic that is now recognized by almost everybody, except this government, as one of the most progressive and hopeful aspects of our continuing progress toward national unity. In the city of Winnipeg as well as in rural parts of Manitoba there are radio stations broadcasting in other languages, such as German and Ukrainian. This is in response to the demand of a large segment of the population of Manitoba for the preservation of their rights in this respect. The ethnic communities concerned have voluntarily paid the expenses incurred in preserving their cultural identity.

In Manitoba there is also a strong ethnic press that has been thriving to a growing extent as a result of the onward march of this mosaic concept. This ethnic press recently suffered a severe economic setback, one which extends across the board to weekly newspapers and other publications of this kind, inasmuch as the new postal rates for small publications of this sort were set so high that it will be difficult for the ethnic press to survive.

This is where the discrimination, of which the government does not even seem to be aware, arises. On the one hand, the government provides cultural assistance to English and French-speaking minority groups wherever they exist in Canada; on the other hand, the government completely ignores, and in fact discriminates against, the efforts of the other ethnic groups to preserve their own identity as a creative force in the great Canadian cultural and linguistic mosaic.

As I have already indicated, subsection (2) of clause 38 as proposed in this amendment accentuates the positive. It makes legislative provision for encouraging this development, rather than merely taking a status quo approach to the question. Not being a lawyer, I am not too sure of the meaning of the term "status quo" but I once heard a definition to the effect that status quo was Latin for the mess we are in. I am not sure whether that is the correct definition. Be that as it may this proposed subsection does not take a static approach but rather a dynamic approach. As I have said, if the government has been unaware of the cultural dynamism that exists in Manitoba and the other western provinces, I am sure that the message has come through loud and clear as a result of the events of last Wednesday. The Liberal Party in the province of Manitoba has been sunk almost without trace, as it deserved to be under the circumstances.

• (4:10 p.m.)

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** What about the other parties?

**Mr. Dinsdale:** I hear a comment from across the way, what about the other parties? I presume the Hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) is referring to the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I am just suggesting that the undertaker also got buried.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** I thought they did quite well under the circumstances. As a matter of fact, the New Democratic Party is doing exceedingly well these days. There have been further defections from the Liberal to the New Democratic Party of which the hon. minister might not be aware. One of the leading Liberals in that province—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I think he is far from the subject of the amendment before the house.