

*Multiculturalism*

and this program will be eliminated by 1990. I do not think many people know about this. It is very difficult to get information about it. I think it is an extremely serious situation which contradicts the commitment and obligation of the Government to citizenship development. This is a major abrogation of the federal Government's responsibility under our Constitution. The federal Government has an obligation to assist immigrants to integrate into Canada and to promote citizenship generally, both with immigrants and with Canadians.

We must have funds for a very wide range of language classes for those who come to Canada speaking little English or French. Many of them are homemakers, and if they do not learn English or French, they will never become a part of Canadian society. Without such programs, new immigrants will not integrate readily and there will be increasing mistrust and resentment within the communities. We have seen too much of that in recent years.

A few minutes ago, the Minister said that every Canadian must have the same opportunity to participate. I hope he is listening to me, because I say to the Minister that if he is to eliminate the CILT program for language training, he will very definitely deny immigrants equal opportunities. They will not have equal opportunities, nor will their children if they cannot learn the languages that are so essential to function well in Canada, to find good employment, to progress and to support their families and adequately educate them. That is very important. I hope we will see some action in this area.

• (1650)

In the Bill, the Minister knows very well that the Act states that it is his obligation to promote an understanding of the value of Canadian citizenship and to encourage participation in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of Canada. How can the Minister achieve this goal if there are no funds for language training under this Act? It is absolutely appalling that this essential program is being cut for the broad masses of immigrants. I am not talking about the programs related to employment. Those are also inadequate, but we want language programs in this Department. I hope that the provinces will take a very strong stand and protest to the

federal Government that it is abdicating its constitutional responsibility in this regard.

When the Bill was tabled at first reading, I raised the question of the re-establishment of a separate Standing Committee on Multiculturalism. This was promised by two past Ministers responsible for multiculturalism. It was done in order to provide a mechanism within Parliament to monitor the implementation of the Multiculturalism Act, and the implementation in all government Departments, Crown corporations, and federal institutions.

As multiculturalism critic for the NDP I lobbied in committee, in the House, and individually with House Leaders to re-establish a separate committee. I am sorry to say that, in committee, Conservative members and one Liberal member disagreed. However, I am pleased to hear that the Government House Leader has now reconsidered. I would ask that the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Mr. Lewis) make an official announcement before the end of the session, in order that a separate Standing Committee on Multiculturalism and Citizenship will be established by next fall.

It is essential that the chairman and committee members of this committee, which is very closely tied in with the new Department, have a deep understanding of multiculturalism, if we are going to work together in an effective and non-partisan manner to carry out important responsibilities in the area of multiculturalism.

We, like the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, feel strongly that we still need a Commissioner of Multiculturalism. This position would be similar to the Commissioner of Official Languages. It should be a step removed from Government. Until this is accomplished, it will be very difficult to ensure that the Multiculturalism Act is being enforced.

In its usual efficient style, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council has made a number of comments about the Act that are very helpful, and hopefully we will hear from its representatives in Committee. It feels that the new Act does not specifically state that the Department will lead in implementing the Canadian Multiculturalism Act; that it is somewhat vague in its alignment with the Secretary of State which needs to be clarified because of