

Oral Questions

Race Relations Committee of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism.

Incredibly Ludwig urged that Christmas, Good Friday, and other religious holidays be abolished in order to combat racism. He urged the government to monitor the news media, and demanded that the CRTC have the power to revoke licences of radio or television stations that give prominence, where prominence is not justified, to racist groups. He urged a similar body to monitor the press. He alleged that the press gives coverage to racist groups in order to sell their newspapers. An admission of unacceptable government interference in the freedom of the press emerged from his remarks. I would ask the minister if he plans to remove Mr. Ludwig from the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism because of his statements.

Hon. Jim Fleming (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Madam Speaker, no, I do not intend to remove someone for expressing his views. I believe that this country believes in the freedom of expression.

Mr. Huntington: What about metric?

Mr. Crosbie: What about Fraser?

Mr. Fleming: I think that if the hon. member would read the full text of the speech he would have a better understanding of the suggestions of Mr. Ludwig. For instance, he did not suggest for a moment the abolishing of Christmas; he suggested that some consideration might be given to honouring the high or holy holidays of non-Christians who are as Canadian as the Christian population of this country.

The hon. member should also be aware, if he reads his newspapers, that I said following Mr. Ludwig's speech that I differ considerably with some of the points which he put forward but I certainly do not argue with his right to express his views.

Mr. Paproski: I guess you mean that Neil Fraser is an example for freedom of speech after being fired.

Madam Speaker: Order. May I point out that that has nothing to do with the question that was just asked?

Mr. Paproski: I do feel it is a worth-while comment.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Paproski: Madam Speaker, I do feel I have the freedom of speech to make a comment—

Madam Speaker: Order. That is precisely what I was saying. I do not think it is time to make comments. It is time for question period. I will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton North for that purpose.

MINISTER'S UNDERSTANDING OF MULTICULTURALISM

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton North): Madam Speaker, I have a brief supplementary. Mr. Ludwig seems to think that multiculturalism means ruthless suppression of the traditions of freedom of the majority. I hope that this is not the way the minister understands multiculturalism.

Hon. Jim Fleming (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member is putting too many peppers in his pirogis.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh! Racist!

• (1450)

Mr. Fleming: Madam Speaker, I would love to arrange, if I could, a meeting with Mr. Ludwig and the hon. member because I think he would find him an interesting Canadian with some interesting ideas. I agree with some of the proposals in that speech. Some of them I do not agree with.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Spadina.

Mr. Epp: That's the way to keep Canada together.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): It's right down the line.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Wonderful Wednesday again!

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INDUSTRY

FOOTWEAR—IMPORTATION OF CANVAS SHOES

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. It concerns his recent statement that a decision will soon be made concerning the problems facing the footwear manufacturing industry since he lifted the quota on leather footwear at the end of November. Does the minister agree with the statement of the Anti-Dumping Tribunal that any system of restraint less than comprehensive would offer no protection at all? Does he therefore agree that the surveillance system of counting imports did not work as a method of controlling the quantity of canvas footwear imported at the time when the canvas footwear loophole was found to be injuring our domestic footwear industry?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, the existence of the canvas footwear loophole was taken into account by the government when it made the decision which was announced last fall to include canvas footwear in the quota. I think we have certainly responded to that concern.

Mr. Heap: The minister knows his action was too late.