

Multiculturalism

It means that if we are going to tackle the problems of being competitive over the long term, we are going to have to go about it in a different way. Cutting back on transfers to education, to the provinces, cutting back and capping our R and D expenditures is not going to create for us a good economic future. The Government is wrong and I hope Canadians discover it before it is too late. We must oppose this Bill. We must oppose the way in which this Government is headed. When will this Government learn that to be competitive, they have to work at the fundamentals to make Canada strong, to make Canadian companies strong, to build the Canadian multinationals? When will they put Canada first?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the third time and passed.

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**DEPARTMENT OF MULTICULTURALISM AND
CITIZENSHIP ACT**

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence) (for Mr. Mulroney) moved that Bill C-18, an Act to establish the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship and to amend certain Acts in relation thereto be

now read a second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride that I rise to open today's debate on Bill C-18, an Act to establish the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. The central responsibility of this department is to strengthen the solidarity of the Canadian people by ensuring that all Canadians participate fully and without discrimination in defining and building Canada's future. This is a responsibility which reinforces commitments made in the Speech from the Throne to foster a caring nation, a confident society, a country proud of its unique national identity. [Translation]

It is a fact that Canada today ranks among the most dynamic, the most pacifist, and the most challenging nations of the world. It is a fact that Canadians, men and women alike, give the highest priority to the need for tolerance, compassion, and fairness. Yet it is also a fact that the new department will assume its mandate at a time when Canada is facing major challenges.

[English]

This is a time of change and transition in our nation, a time when the evolving cultural and racial diversity of contemporary Canada presents a new image of what we are as Canadians. It is a time when we are seeking to ensure that all Canadians receive fair and equal treatment, that all Canadians have the same chance to participate and to achieve their dreams.

A society which denies any of its citizens a sense of belonging and which fails to utilize the skills, the talents and the potential of all its citizens cannot grow in greatness and stature. A black teenager taunted by racial slurs on the way to school each day is diminished bit by bit into a lesser person. A man or woman denied legal protection or a fair trial under our justice system, for whatever reason, is robbed of fundamental human rights. An adult who lacks the ability to read and write lives with daily shame and frustration. Such incidents are not mere speculation. They are happening in small and large communities across this country. When they happen, they diminish us all. They undermine the best of what we are and what we can be as Canadians.

It will be the job of the new department to take a lead role in eliminating such incidents, to create and organize a ministry that will see on a day-to-day basis that the barriers of racism, of injustice and of illiteracy are broken down. It will be the job of the new department to re-affirm the inherent worth and value of every citizen so that we are all strong and secure in our sense of what