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Multiculturalism in Canada – unity not uniformity

Multiculturalism and international education was the theme of the 1974 annual conference of the Canadian Bureau for International Education which was held in Trois-Rivières, Quebec from October 20 to 23. To coincide with this theme, the Bureau's magazine, Échange-Canada-Exchange (Volume 2, Number 3), is devoted entirely to Canadian projects of a multicultural nature; an article by Joann Webb of the Department of the Secretary of State contained the following passages:

...Integration, not assimilation, has always been a policy of the Canadian Government. On October 8, 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau extended this concept of multiculturalism from tolerance to active support of diversity. He announced a special government policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. This policy was an acceptance by the Government of the findings published in Book IV of

widely differing groups of people live together in unity; it would also keep alive a variety of lifestyles.

In his announcement, the Prime Minister said that there are no "official" cultures in Canada and no ethno-cultural group has precedence over other groups. He said that the Government would actively encourage the retention of ancestral language and culture, although the two official langua-



the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, released in 1970. Entitled *Other Ethnic Groups*, Book IV stressed the contribution of groups of neither French nor English origin to the national fabric. The report also noted the difficulties encountered by those Canadians who wanted to maintain their cultural heritage. The new multiculturalism policy was designed to ease these difficulties. It was a policy of cultural freedom which would do more than help



ges would remain French and English.

To implement the multiculturalism policy, a new program was created and allocated a budget of \$3 million. In November 1972, the Government appointed a special Minister of State responsible for Multiculturalism.

Cultural grants

Best known, perhaps, is the program of multicultural grants for cultural projects proposed and carried out by the cultural and ethnic groups themselves.