

al diversity and respect for the traditions and contributions of our aboriginal peoples.

Today countries throughout the world are trying to discover the formula that will enable them to create a real sense of national identity among groups of different ethnic, cultural, linguistic and racial backgrounds. Many of these countries are now taking a serious interest in the 100 per cent Canadian model we have created which exemplifies respect for each other no matter what our backgrounds.

In the bill creating this department, the government undertakes to advance the equality of all Canadians in their country's social, economic and cultural life. It recognizes the need to eliminate the barriers that divide Canadians and to provide opportunity to establish bonds built on confidence and mutual respect.

We know that social cohesion and a strong national identity can only be accomplished where there is understanding, awareness and respect among all the people who make up our country.

As the Right Hon. Lester Pearson put it: "In a diverse federal state such as Canada it is important that all citizens should have a fair and equal opportunity to participate in the national administration and to identify themselves with and feel at home in our national capital".

I am proud to be a member of this Liberal government that believes in tolerance among its citizens and which strives to ensure that people of all origins who come to Canada have an equal opportunity to contribute to its growth, development and an evolving sense of identity.

Our diversity is one of the things that makes us stronger and more competitive in the global economy. The range of languages we speak, the cultures we know and understand provide us as Canadians with a distinct advantage from an international trade perspective. This has been recognized by the president of the Royal Bank who indicated that our future success as a nation depends on our harnessing the richness of diversity within the country so that we can become truly competitive in the global marketplace.

Dr. Barbara Ward, the British economist and writer, described us as the world's first international nation. We are admired abroad for the society we have built together and we can take real national pride in this accomplishment.

This bill provides the government with an opportunity to forge ahead in an area which has proven to be of real importance to Canadians time and time again. They want a government that will lead them forward in building a society that encourages all

Government Orders

its citizens to contribute economically, politically, socially and culturally to all aspects of life in this great country of ours.

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-53 certainly has given rise to a lot of criticism for a bill that was supposed to be a simple housekeeping measure.

It must have become quite obvious by now that the Official Opposition is dead against this bill. And our reasons for opposing it are far from cosmetic. They have to do mainly with the very essence of our cultural identity as Quebecers as well as the necessity of ensuring the survival of our culture through a sensible handling of the copyright issue.

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First of all, after education and postsecondary education, the federal government has now extended its involvement to mass communication, even though this is clearly an area of provincial jurisdiction. In fact, the federal government is centralizing more and more, and this bill is but one example. That is why we denounce the deceit in calling the department to be established the "Department of Canadian Heritage", when this is just a disguised way of establishing a department of culture and to invade a provincial jurisdiction. The people of Quebec wonder why they should contribute financially to a scheme to deny that Quebec is different, unique, as a nation, when even the staunchest federalists in Quebec recognize this fact.

My hon. colleagues will be reminded that, equipped with international agreements, English Canada is now in a position to counter cultural invasion from the U.S. This is a totally legitimate concern, seeing how important it is to differentiate oneself from such a powerful neighbour and to manage one's cultural resources. But why can Quebec not have similar concerns? Why would the government not feel the need to also do something to protect the rights of creative artists on its territory?

Following government reorganization, copyright, which used to be with the Department of Communications and the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, would now come under the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Department of Industry. Instead of using this restructuring as an opportunity to concentrate copyright responsibilities at the heritage department, which is the only one mandated to protect the work and its creators, the government persists in its paralysing indecision with regard to copyright.

Such dichotomy only leads to divergent political priorities, especially when the officials of the two departments involved see the issue in totally different lights.