

Cultural Property

whole cultural affairs policy that Canada must have in order to preserve this identity which the previous speakers emphasized.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the fund which will be administered by the Secretary of State must receive the full support of Treasury Board and I would be opposed to surplus funds left over at the end of the fiscal year being returned to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

As you probably know, when a program has not spent all the money allocated to it at the end of the fiscal year, these funds are returned to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It would be absolutely terrible for the purchase of art works that unexpended funds be returned to this Fund, since the following year it might prove impossible to buy a work of art for which the purchase price might be more than what would be left in the fund.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Treasury Board regulations should be amended and I am quite sure that my colleagues on the other side of the House will agree with me on this point.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this bill now under study is one element of a comprehensive policy for the preservation of our heritage. It concerns an important aspect of this heritage, that of personal estate. I would like to mention that we must also preserve our real estate. Federal legislation in this area seems inadequate. The jurisdiction of the hon. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Buchanan) covers only national historic sites. The regulations or programs now administered by the hon. Minister of State responsible for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) do not provide funds for the restoration of private properties with historical value. I am aware that a work group has been assigned the task of defining the workings of a historic restoration program.

Mr. Speaker, if we mean to reach these objectives, we shall have to be a lot more aggressive than we have been in the past.

And I shall conclude with this statement from the hon. member who spoke before me, statement to the effect that the Progressive Conservative Party is very happy to have such legislation at this time to preserve our cultural property. Mr. Speaker, all those who are involved in the preservation of our cultural heritage are indeed the most enlightened people within our society.

When they take time to preserve a property which is part of an urban surrounding, be it a church, an institution, a private residence, an old plant or mill, they are contributing to the quality of urban living.

Our cities are affected not only by air and water pollution. They also suffer from pollution by poor landscaping, shabby construction and tasteless architecture.

Mr. Speaker, if we must, as a government, favour the preservation of our cultural environment, we must also get involved in this aspect of conservation which I feel is far from being reactionary and will prove all the more useful for improving the quality of urban living.

I am confident that my colleagues will agree this afternoon to refer this bill without delay to the standing committee.

[Mr. Joyal.]

[English]

Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak about this bill. I agree with most of the expressions of criticism put forward by members of the opposition so far, and in the few moments that I intend to speak I hope to point out some areas in which we need to exercise caution.

One of the first things we must agree on is that culture is not a fixed concept.

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Culture is fluid, always changing, and therefore there is a real danger that the government, in making its judgments, will look on culture as something rigid, as something fixed, as something around which one can put parameters, or try to establish something which is termed as Canadian culture.

I support the intentions of the bill but point out that it is dangerous to assume that there is a right or wrong culture. Culture is never right or wrong. Culture is—it exists. Cultures around the world vary.

Sometimes we think the behaviour of people in another country is funny. For example, when the Food and Agricultural Organization workers of the United Nations drilled wells in Egypt and protected them with concrete so that the local people could drink pure water, they discovered to their amazement that people would not drink this water. It was too clean. In their culture dirty water, strong smelling and sharp tasting water, was water which made you into a man. Clean water was no good. We may laugh at their ideas and speak of the strangeness of foreign culture.

The fact is that even in our own culture there are ideas which seem strange to others. For example, we tell children that if they eat carrots they will grow hair on their chests. Our culture has been "Playboyized"—if I may coin a word—in the way it considers females. People in some countries think an obese person is beautiful.

The point is that cultures vary, and the government should not assume a role under which it fixes culture, as it is not the government's job to control culture. Its job is simply to record and document for the sake of history.

We must be careful not to implant in our children the notion that their culture is the only one which matters, for fear of developing super nationalistic attitudes. If we imprint such notions too strongly attached to Canada that they will ignore the big perspective, ignore the big world outside. Today we can see events on our television screens instantaneously with when they are happening. Advanced electronic devices enable us to see events as they happen. We must be careful not to implant in our children a supernationalistic attitude which will hinder their perception of the total picture.

Television is a potent force. Some wonder why, during the Viet Nam war, young people of one of the nations fighting, resisted that war. The logical reason is that the Viet Nam war was the only war in history which was shown on television as it was happening. It was fought in the living rooms of the North American people. The lesson to be learned is this: it is tremendously important for us to acquire an international outlook.