

Canadians learn to share their views and identities with each other. Personal contact is worth millions of words or dollars paid to an advertising agency. Education is, of course, the root of the problem and the solution. Too many school systems disregard the diverse ethnic contributions to the progress and history of Canada. Local and regional history is nearly totally ignored. Literature courses cover only Anglophone authors. Immediate assistance should be given by the government to fund provincial educational programs to allow a certain amount of teaching, not only in the two official languages, but also the other languages.

The school systems should be used to promote, rather than to discourage, the use of non-official languages in Canada. On a per pupil basis, this federal funding would be an investment in the future of this dominion. Assistance is needed, too, for school library programs, teacher training, provincial exchanges of information. With provincial co-operation, incentive grants should be made available to schools with outstanding multicultural programs. The resources of the government should be made available to develop history and social studies courses with a view to ensuring a more balanced picture and a broader perspective. The government should help to ensure that many languages are available for study, especially in the early learning years. These should be taught in relation to a cultural context, and not in a vacuum as if they were foreign to the Canadian experience. The previous speaker mentioned that perhaps education is a provincial matter, but I would point out that the education costs across Canada in 1971 were some \$7.4 billion and the federal contribution was 21.3 per cent. The estimates for 1972-73 are \$8.8 billion. Just the beginnings of the program I have mentioned would gobble up that \$10 million budget in one bite.

One of the most important steps the government should take is the increasing of support and funding of multicultural centres across Canada. Only if at the local and regional level understanding and history are promoted will community understanding and more national unity be fostered. I must state the appreciation of many of my constituents for the grant given to their multicultural centre for development studies at Stony Plain, and the apparent co-ordination by Opportunities For Youth officials. But much more will be needed and, I trust, afforded this project in particular and other similar efforts.

I am not unaware, Mr. Speaker, of the need to proceed circumspectly in this field. We do not want insensitive handling or misunderstandings to give rise to the type of disunity and ill-feeling which this government has sometimes successfully promoted in the past. We exist not to divide, but to unite; what the government should remember, too, is that we exist to serve the people, and not as an end in ourselves. If the multicultural program is allowed to wallow in bureaucracy and civil service inefficiency, it will do more harm than good.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be associated with policies to develop our heritage and with the motion that the hon. member for Athabasca has put forward today. I am proud of the rich variety of that heritage which we can see even in this House. Let us hold fast to this good thing and develop it with the care and attention it needs; not to serve partisan propaganda ends or enrich

Multiculturalism

the sociologists and advertising men, but to help build a better, stronger Canada in which the diverse backgrounds of all are welded into a firm common future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Economic Development): Mr. Speaker, I was struck by the motion of the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk). Immediately, Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I was very much disappointed with this motion, in which the hon. member says that he regrets the government's reluctant and token recognition of this reality. At least, that is how it reads in today's order paper.

Mr. Speaker, a matter as important as that of multiculturalism in Canada should in fact transcend any party politics and we should admit that this motion of the hon. member is highly unfortunate. Of course I do not want to voice any political considerations myself; I only regret the terms he used to draft his motion. He accuses the government—particularly the present government—of tokenism when it comes to the multicultural policy.

Mr. Speaker, is it tokenism for government members to have been first to admit that Canada was multicultural? The hon. member knows very well that we have come a long way, beginning with a concept of bilingualism and biculturalism, and ending with the recognition of the Canadian reality which for historical reasons, is that of bilingualism but which, for reasons of social order, prompts us to recognize that multiculturalism exists in Canada.

This was a giant step taken by the present government. And the hon. member should not try to say anything to the contrary. In fact, this was a historical gesture when we announced on October 8, 1971 that henceforth we would prefer to have in Canada a multicultural policy which would be expressed within an official bilingualism.

The hon. member knows very well—and if he does not know, I will tell him—that I have always defended, long before it became official, the policy concerning multiculturalism.

I will keep some of my arguments for the debate on the bilingualism resolution which will soon be introduced in the House, but right now, I wish to say something in both French and English—I am extremely proud of being a French Canadian. However, when I really discovered that I was proud of being a French Canadian, I realized an important thing, that is others must also be proud of their extraction. Whether we are from Ukrainian, Italian, British, Irish, Scottish or Welsh extraction, we always have to be proud of it.

In such circumstances, I find the multicultural policy excellent. Indeed, it recognizes to each of us the right to be proud of our extraction. And for historical reasons which we may reconsider next week during the debate on bilingualism, we can say that our pride in our ethnic extraction is expressed in Canada through two official languages.

This multicultural policy, far from being a piecemeal approach, as suggested by the hon. member for Athabasca, is an additional example which should strengthen tolerance that has always existed in this country. In that regard, I think that I will now draw closer to the view expressed by the hon. member for Athabasca.