

Government Orders

window-dressing or is it something really concrete in the mind of the member?

Mr. Edmonston: Madam Speaker, I think that is a very appropriate question. It makes me go back to my days as a consumer advocate when we were coming to Ottawa on hands and knees asking for money in order to keep the consumer advocacy organizations going.

At that time a Liberal government was in power. We found that there were tricks that governments could use. On one hand they would talk about how much they were promoting a particular principle, they would create an agency and give money to it. Then the tricks would start because the government really did not intend to promote that particular principle or that particular idea in its entirety. It was just window-dressing.

What it would do initially, and I hope I am not giving the government any ideas—it has been done to us already by Liberals and I hope that the Conservatives would not attempt to do this with the race relations foundation—is put in place people to run the program who would be incompetent. They would be hired through patronage. They were taking their orders from the government, not from the people. Thus they were marching to a different drummer.

The first thing we found out in the consumer movement was that we at the grass roots who were manning the barricades, so to speak, were actually depending upon a government to follow through on what we were doing. The government, through the different agencies it had set up, had no intention of doing that.

We need good strong and independent people if this thing is going to work.

Next, there is the question of funding. Some \$12 million is going to be spent on this foundation. As soon as we get into harder times the government is going to find that it does not have a sufficient amount. Where is the money going to come from? What will stop the government from saying: "We do not have enough money for this foundation. It was a good idea but it is

gone"? We need a long-term commitment, one which is realistic, and then we can have a foundation.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to stand here today and speak in favour of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation for a number of reasons.

One of the main reasons has to do with the fact that we are not dealing directly with English–French. When I asked the member for Chambly whether or not he had experienced any discrimination, I was more or less referring to his being discriminated against on the basis that he was an American, not any kind of discrimination he may have experienced in the province of Quebec.

On that very issue I would like to add to what the member said in case there is any kind of misconception with respect to my question. It gives me the greatest pleasure in the world to stand here and say that since I first was in the province of Quebec in 1978, and I have been back there several times since, not once have I felt any twinge of discrimination. I have never been received with anything but kindness and accommodation. I do wish that more Canadians from elsewhere in the country who have never been there could visit *la belle province*. I am sorry I do not speak French, and I certainly feel a lack since I do not.

As far as the race relations foundation is concerned, I would like to try to broach the subject of why on earth there would be any kind of discrimination, person against person, race against race, at all. Although not all countries are homogeneous linguistic units and nations, it seems to be a universal truism that every religion has what we in the English-speaking world refer to as the golden rule.

To repeat myself, I think it is a universal truth that every one of those groups has the equivalent of the golden rule. The golden rule states: "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". If it is something that we all think and have as part of our culture, then why in the name of whatever deity one may choose do we find ourselves in this situation either in Canada or anywhere else in the world where there are such antagonisms and animosities?

It seems to me that we are simply going to have to expand our whole human consciousness on the subject.