

or for the sake of the debate this afternoon but the barrenness of his party's policy on multiculturalism is evident. So that there will be no confusion over the plans which this government has for multiculturalism, and so that at least we can retain the distinction of being clear on what we advocate as a party, I should like to highlight for the edification of hon. members opposite, the major direction and components of our multicultural policy.

I want to say that the best known of our programs, and certainly the one from which we have had the greatest public response, is that of multiculturalism grants. This program was implemented in January of 1972, and since then more than 300 ethno-cultural groups have received financial assistance to assist them in undertaking cultural and social projects. One of the basic criteria of any responsible government is to determine needs which can be legitimately made before deciding how much money to seek and then deciding how to spend it. This latter course appears to be the one which the hon. member for Athabasca favours, and it is quite possible the reason his party is not in power today.

Governments must base their decisions on a good deal more than talk, Mr. Speaker. They must decide on the legitimate aspirations and genuine needs of the ethno-cultural groups. The government is well satisfied that the multicultural grants program is meeting the needs of those whom it is intended to serve. On the basis of expressed interest in it, and also because we have regretfully had to refuse a number of deserving applications in the past year, \$1.1 million will be added to the existing budget for this program in this fiscal year.

● (1600)

Further on the subject of program expansion, Mr. Speaker, and the allegation of tokenism, let it be noted that under our program of grants for multicultural centres, we are increasing our expenditures there by well over 300 per cent in actual dollars; the amount involves an increase from \$154,000 to \$654,000.

As well as having increased the funds available for the establishment of multicultural centres, we have also modified the criteria originally established for this program so that we can provide greater support for these very desirable facilities. Indeed, it is our desire to see multicultural centres develop throughout Canada because they can be a very significant factor in developing cross-cultural understanding. I must say, however, that the basic initiative for establishing these centres rests with the people in the communities themselves and, as they demonstrate a desire for these facilities, I shall ensure that adequate resources are made available so that those requests which do come within the clear terms of established and public criteria need not be denied assistance. If this is tokenism, Mr. Speaker, I would be most grateful to hear how our position could be more liberal and still remain responsible which, of course, is a concept that the opposition party does not have to attach great significance to, since they have been unable to persuade the electorate to entrust them with the care of federal programs.

As I announced in the House of Commons on May 17, the government is establishing a Canadian identities program as a further, and important part of its multicultural

Multiculturalism

program. The purpose of this program is to increase an awareness and understanding by all Canadians of the cultural diversity and, within Canada, expenditures under the Canadian identities program will, in this fiscal year alone, exceed \$3.8 million.

Additionally, the government plans to continue its assistance to multicultural projects involving all media of communication, including films, radio and television, theatre, literature, crafts and cuisine, travelling exhibits under the sponsorship of the National Museum of Man, and the collection and exhibition programs of the Public Archives. Encouragement to conduct research in ethnic studies is an integral part of our multicultural policy, and the government proposes spending a further \$425,000 on its multicultural studies program in this fiscal year.

The very special role and problems of the ethnic press in Canada are well understood, and we shall be making greatly increased use of the ethnic press to supply all cultural groups with essential information on such matters as the availability and entitlement to pensions and other individual assistance programs which are of interest to many Canadians.

The government recognizes that many young Canadians experience difficulty in retaining their ancestral languages, and in consultation with the provinces and to give Canadians greater opportunity to learn more of their cultural origins, we have undertaken to provide language teaching aids to those provinces and ethno-cultural groups which have expressed concern because these aids are not presently available from Canadian sources. Research on the role of ancestral languages as an element in the retention of a culture is currently under way. We are extending this program to include a larger number of ethno-cultural groups and rural areas in Canada in addition to the large urban centres, previously the focus of this program, as recommended to us by many ethno-cultural groups and members of this House.

Our multicultural programs are relatively new, and I think it is only prudent that before seeking additional funds, or making additional commitments, we, as a responsible government, should be satisfied that there exists a legitimate reason for doing either of these. Neither do I profess to have ready all of the solutions to our multicultural needs, or, indeed, to foresee all of them. I am, therefore, always grateful for advice which is objective and factually given and which comes from members of this House and various ethno-cultural organizations. There is no doubt that the government's multicultural programs have been received with great success, and that is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the desire of the official opposition to identify themselves with support for the basic concept of a multicultural Canada. I thank them for that.

I have followed the public reaction to our multicultural programs very closely, and I think it is worth citing from an article in the *Montreal Star* of May 12 by a distinguished Ukrainian Canadian, Mr. Roman Rakhmanny. He wrote:

... neither the Progressive Conservative Party nor the New Democratic Party has included in its program any form of multicultural policy.