

the member organizations of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council. From that effort, we learned that the establishment of a permanent Standing Committee on Multiculturalism was in fact approved by all three of the political Parties with their own nuances, and at that time the now governing Party indicated its support in principle and its promise to give it full consideration. That particular statement was clearly fulfilled by the end of June of this year.

As far as the establishment of a Department of Multiculturalism is concerned, however, there was some considerable difference of view among the three Parties. I may say immediately that only Members of the New Democratic Party were in full support of a Department at that point in time. Members of the Liberal Party were not favouring a full Department at that point although they promised to increase support to the Minister in his advocacy role. I look forward this afternoon to hearing whether or not there has been any development in that position. I do hope that there has been. As far as Members of the Conservative Party were concerned, they felt last summer that they did not favour a full Department at that time but promised to increase Ministerial support after consultation with ethnic groups. Since the process of consultation has been underway for some time and given some of the straws in the wind to which I have already alluded, I would like to conclude this afternoon by indicating that the Government of Canada is inclining toward the establishment of a full-fledged Department of Multiculturalism.

If I may, I will paraphrase a few lines from a speech given by the Leader of the New Democratic Party last June to the Council of National Ethnocultural Organizations. Of the Equality Now Report which had been produced by the Special Committee on the Participation of Visible minorities in Canadian society, he noted that the report called for the immediate creation of Ministry of Multiculturalism with its own Deputy Minister and he added that his Party was the first in Canada to call for that. The fact, of course, is reflected in the work done by the Canadian Ethnocultural Council. I may note that my predecessor in the multiculturalism spokesperson role for this Party, the former Hon. Member for Dauphin-Swan River, was credited by the Leader of the New Democratic Party for the efforts that he had made within the Parliamentary Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities, the report which led to that particular recommendation.

There was, then, out of a Parliamentary Committee of representatives of all three of the Parties, this particular Recommendation No. 25 which urged the federal Government to immediately introduce in Parliament a multiculturalism Act creating a Ministry of Multiculturalism. Given the importance of that recommendation in placing this matter on the public agenda, I would like to give some attention to what that Parliamentary Committee had to say about this report.

I may perhaps note that the last Government responded in the negative to this report when it issued its response in the spring. After describing various ways in which the multiculturalism directorate would be strengthened, the conclusion was

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that Multiculturalism Canada within the Department of the Secretary of State would have its visibility increased and be made more accessible to the community both at headquarters and regional levels. That, of course, only underscored the continuation of the directorate within the Department. What has happened, of course, under the present Government, is some further upscaling of the importance of this directorate within the Department by giving it its own Deputy Minister and that augurs well for the development to which I am addressing myself this afternoon.

In the context of institutional evolution, I want to say something about the importance of a Ministry of Multiculturalism in playing a lead role in a number of different areas. I have already referred to the Equality Now Report in which such a Department was called for and that obviously suggests that one important public role of the Ministry would be to play this lead role in ensuring that the participation of visible minorities is enhanced. I would further suggest that the Ministry could continue to play a strengthened lead role in the varied cultural, heritage, language and other concerns that so many of Canada's ethnocultural groups feel and for which they depend on the federal Government as well as provincial Governments across the country to ensure that there are resources to meet these particular cultural needs.

The report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities is very revealing in emphasizing the importance of having a full-fledged Department. I would suggest parenthetically that at a time when matters of employment equity for a number of groups including visible minorities are so largely on the public agenda, ensuring that a Department is able to play this lead role is of very great importance. Without taking the time to read these paragraphs, I would note particularly that in the paragraph on priority which appears on page 55 of Equality Now, there is a delineation of the difficulties of the directorate. A couple of paragraphs earlier, in a discussion under the heading "Limited" on page 54, it is pointed out the extent to which the existing structure, somewhat enhanced by the present Government, of having a directorate within a Department with limited power and limited authority in the structure of Government impedes the race relations work that is of such importance to the Canadian nation. I would suggest that the same thing could be said of the area of cultural concerns.

I would like to make an impassioned appeal both on the side of the participation of visible minorities and the enhancement and preservation of the multicultural reality of the country that it is of vital importance to have a Ministry that can play a lead role. It is of enormous importance to have such a Ministry with a scope large enough to ensure that all Canadians realize that the very history of our country and the very nature of society is multicultural and that multiculturalism is not a term used to describe only one third of Canadians. In fact, multiculturalism is the recognition of the fact that people of many backgrounds including natives of North America and migrants from other parts of the world than Europe, long before the end of the Second World War, played their own important roles in building this country. There should be recognition by the