

*Government Orders*

art is worth considerably more now than the original purchase price. Art cannot be judged quickly or haphazardly.

• (1655)

Upon close examination and as a direct result of the department Canadian cultural industries have grown over 40 per cent from 1988 to 1992 when other industries saw their revenue and sales drop. In large part this is due to the benefits of programs like those for sound recordings, postal subsidies for book publishers, as well as film and video departments. As a matter of fact from 1987 to 1992 in Ontario alone the export of critically acclaimed books by Canadian writers increased about 70 per cent.

In addition, because the cultural industries rely so much on innovation and technology the jobs they create are of high skill, long duration and high value. Award winning books and movies, commercially successful theatre productions, million copy selling records and production facilities that attract international film producers are some of the areas in which Canada has become highly successful. All of these successes are signs of creative cultural industries that are increasing and growing each year. With those increases have come successful jobs and businesses for Canadians.

Canada's multiculturalism policy has the noble aim of promoting equal opportunity for all Canadians to participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life of our great nation. I would also like to encourage some members opposite to become aware and consult with those Canadians who are grateful for the multiculturalism policy and its benefits.

Our multiculturalism policy is an effort by responsible government to help Canadians understand one another and develop tolerance. Diversity does not divide us; it can only enrich our society. It is important to remember that if Canada wants to remain competitive in an ever shrinking world, we must pool our resources of diverse cultures and people.

I must commend the members opposite for their continued efforts to find something wrong with the department of heritage. It is apparent they cannot find anything. They cannot find anything new to say about the department until they read it in some newspaper. Perhaps they should concentrate on the fine effort put forth by the minister and his department as well as the policies and issues they manage. I believe if the members opposite focused on this instead of their theatrics, they would agree with me when I urge the passage of Bill C-53.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to address Bill C-53, an act to re-organize the Department of Canadian Heritage.

I must confess I learn fascinating things when I come to the House and listen to some of the comments made by the members

across the way. It was fortunate for the hon. member, and I have to be careful how I say this, that a couple of his colleagues came in to give him some support, otherwise it would have been worked pretty thin.

I found out that there are four founding cultures in Canada. That is very interesting. I wonder if they all happened to set foot on Canada's soil at the same time, or whether they came in from four corners and met in the middle. It sounds rather odd. I found out that if we did not have a massive Department of Canadian Heritage we would not have heritage locks in the member's riding. That was quite enlightening, I must admit.

What we really need to do is rethink the very reason for the existence of this ministry rather than talk about some tinkering or on some reorganization of the department and the ministry.

Earlier I believe my colleague from Edmonton—Strathcona referred to Neil Bissoondath and made some remarks on Mr. Bissoondath's position on multiculturalism. I cannot remember if he quoted from his book or not, but I came across an editorial dealing with Mr. Bissoondath's latest book.

The editorial was written in the *Vancouver Sun* published on November 14. I would like to bring this to the attention of the House. To my knowledge this was not written by a Reform Party member but it quite closely shadows the position taken by Reform on multiculturalism. If I have some time remaining I would also like to bring a few other issues to the attention of the House, but the editorial in the *Vancouver Sun* reads:

Neil Bissoondath's latest book, a non-fiction examination of the federal multiculturalism policy, is provoking timely discussion of both the merits and the cost of the policy.

Mr. Bissoondath, a Canadian who originated in Trinidad, argues that the policy does not promote understanding and acceptance but instead underscores differences and thereby divides Canadians. Is he right? Is the multiculturalism department of the Canadian heritage ministry doing more harm than good, and would the \$26 million spent annually on grants be better used to reduce the deficit?

• (1700)

It sounds a bit like a Reformer asking these questions but it is the *Vancouver Sun*. It would be foolish to chuck multiculturalism on the mistaken notion that it exists to finance folk-dancing jamborees. Some money may still find its way there but much of it provides substantial support to immigrants trying to fit into Canadian society.

There is support for ethnic communities struggling with intergenerational conflict for seminars to examine family violence and for cross-cultural training for institutions like the police.

While these aspects of the policy seem to attract support for many immigrants and other Canadians, the downside worries some of them. For Mr. Bissoondath, the downside is the weakening of the Canadian fabric as newcomers are stuck with hyphenated labels and end up neither simply Canadian nor whatever they were before they came here.