

*Government Orders*

With respect to the racial problems that exist we have a problem right here in the House of Commons. There are members in this House who are going about gathering petitions and speaking out against Sikhs using their turbans in the RCMP.

Now, if we are as open and as tolerant and as multicultural as we say we are, then why, pray tell, are members in this House doing something which would suggest otherwise? Where is the tolerance when it comes to as important an issue as allowing Sikh-Canadians, if I can use the hyphenated term, to be members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

I do not believe that multiculturalism or a policy of multiculturalism is the way to deal with that problem. Multiculturalism, if I can be blunt, is there as a vehicle to hand out patronage, to hand out government largess. That is what it has come to mean.

All the flowery rhetoric in the preamble to the Multiculturalism Act and now to Bill C-18, as I have indicated in the past, is divisive.

What we have is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If there is a problem with racism or discrimination we have laws in this country that protect every Canadian. We have the provincial human rights commissions. We have the federal law, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is the vehicle to deal with discrimination and racism in Canada.

My colleague from Broadview—Greenwood and I agree in principle with respect to where the policy of multiculturalism is evolving. At some point in the past it was a policy that was useful in that it allowed new immigrants to Canada to feel that they were part of main stream Canada. Today, those very people are asking themselves what is main stream Canada. Unfortunately, to some main stream Canada means French or English. In practice it is not a policy that is doing what it purports.

My simple question is this: Can my colleague explain what the functions of the Minister of State for Multiculturalism will be and how will that differ from the functions of the Minister of Culture? If this bill is passed and carried, we will have two ministers—a Minister of Culture, presumably of Canadian culture, and his exact title will be the Minister of Culture and Communications. Then we will have a minister of multiculturalism.

**Mr. Mills:** I think my colleague and I share the same concerns. Right now, the ministry of multiculturalism is basically an operation that hands out cheques for programs that in many cases have not been totally thought through and are not really productive in terms of meeting the objective of multiculturalism. Because of that priority on ministers running around handing out cheques, we seem to forget about priority issues like racism and employment equity. I think really—

**Mrs. Browes:** You guys are the only ones forgetting about it.

**Mr. Mills:** I said that I worked in the Ministry of State for Multiculturalism. I must tell you that I found parts of that operation very wanting. I do not think—

**Mrs. Browes:** We have had a new administration for five years.

**Mr. Mills:** Are you telling me right now that you are no longer going to do any of that, that you are just going to address priority issues like racism, employment equity and day care? If you are, then we are heading in the right direction.

The ultimate point that I would like to make is that this is a bridge. We should look at it as a bridge because we must make sure that our aboriginal peoples are looked after in a proper way.

This approach is not the long-term answer, but as a bridge we will be vigilant and constructive. I think the granting of funds for program development should come under the ministry of culture.

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today in the House to speak to the act to establish a department of multiculturalism and citizenship. I support the establishment of such a department whose mandate is to promote national policies and programs with respect to multiculturalism and citizenship, to provide services to aid in the acquisition of citizenship, and to grant funds for race relations programs.

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First, I would like to address the issue of support for multiculturalism programming. I have long been aware of the work performed by ethnocultural organizations in my own riding and across Canada. The Burnaby Multicultural Society has instituted many innovative programs. The Burnaby School Board now has multicultural workers to respond to the needs of Indo-Canadian, Chinese Canadian and Italian Canadian communities,