

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 1, 1987

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

PRESENTATION OF TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT OF CANADIAN NATO
PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 101 I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the twenty-sixth report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association.

[Editor's Note: See Today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-93, an Act for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Hon. Minister shall have leave to introduce the said Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Crombie: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of pride that I rise to table an historic Bill in the House today, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. The Bill enshrines in statute the recognition of Canada's multicultural reality, sets forth the multicultural policy of Canada, and contains a firm government-wide commitment to implement it. It provides a legislative base for multicultural programs which will assist cultural preservation, combat racism, and promote institutional change.

[Translation]

This legislation will establish the freedom of Canadians of all origins to maintain, enhance and share their cultural heritage. The Bill recognizes all Canadian citizens as full members of the Canadian community.

[English]

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I thought the Secretary of State (Mr. Crombie) was making a statement when he started to speak on the introduction of his Bill on multiculturalism. I am told that it was not a statement, but it is not usual for Ministers to make statements of that nature when introducing Bills. Is it going to be the new practice that when Ministers introduce Bills they explain what is in the Bill?

Mr. Crombie: Mr. Speaker, I hope we are not going to get into a procedural problem. My advice was that if I wanted to rise to indicate what was in the Bill within 60 seconds, it would not be a statement. If, on the other hand, there is need for a statement to be made or someone else wishes to make a statement, I have no difficulty with that. However, that was my advice with respect to the procedure in the House.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with the Minister's 60-second statement. I know that the Minister's Department was probably working overnight to prepare the statement and the news release which will accompany his press conference. However, it would be appreciated if at least the critic for the proposed piece of legislation were given notice of at least an hour or an hour and a half as is the tradition of the House.

I received materials at about 10.15 or 10.20. It is difficult for the official critic to read and digest the legislation as well as to prepare our position in order to offer Canadians the position of the Official Opposition on the legislation on such notice. I think that 40 minutes is cutting it very close.

I have brought this to the attention of the Chair on previous occasions when Ministers with responsibility for immigration have been negligent. I have no problems with the Minister's statement. However, I would appreciate it if the Minister and the Government would keep the traditions that we offered them when they were in the Opposition.

● (1110)

Mr. Crombie: Mr. Speaker, in the last few years I believe I have introduced some four or five Bills in the House. I am well aware of those traditions. Indeed, if time permitted I usually walked over to the critics and handed them the material I was able to provide within the procedures of this House. I have done that on each and every occasion.