

Table Officers to call resuming debate on Bill C-93, the Multiculturalism Act.

**Mr. MacLellan:** I would like to thank the Deputy House Leader for his recommendation with respect to Your Honour's ruling. Certainly, our Party would find it preferable to have some time to study your ruling and then to comment. We welcome the Deputy House Leader's suggestion.

**Mr. Speaker:** I know Hon. Members would not object to me saying directly to the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan) that, having listened to his very vigorous argument on Friday, the decision is on a procedural basis and does not affect his strong views on other matters relating to the Bill.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to join with my colleagues in indicating that it is a more than appropriate way to proceed, and to lend my voice to that of the Deputy House Leader for the Government in terms of the content and the initiative of your decision. While we always accept your decisions as being appropriate, there are some that send a very clear signal. The primacy of this place encourages us all, and I wish to thank you for that decision.

● (1530)

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT

#### MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-93, an Act for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and Motions Nos. 4, 8 and 30 (Mr. Epp, Thunder Bay—Nipigon), and Motions Nos. 5, 7 and 31 (Mr. Marchi).

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Resuming debate. The Hon. Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Weiner).

**Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)):** Madam Speaker, I wish to give the support of the Government for this motion, Motion No. 4 by the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon (Mr. Epp).

When I appeared before the legislative committee examining Bill C-93, I pledged to work to improve this Bill, to take the necessary measures to ensure we would have the best possible Multiculturalism Act for Canada. Well, I kept my promise and I think we all can see that the Bill as amended by the committee is considerably stronger. Today we are finishing that process. The amendment presented by the Hon. Member states clearly that the cultural and racial diversity of Canada is a fundamental characteristic of this nation.

### Canadian Multiculturalism Act

Why have we chosen to support this motion? Why do we feel that the words "fundamental element" are not clear enough? Is it true that the Bill even from its first reading was clear in stating that multiculturalism was part and parcel of our identity, our realities and our heritage? I feel that it is important to underline this. It is not only part and parcel; it is one of the foundations of our identity and heritage. It is one of the foundations of Canada.

This Bill deals with relationships among Canadians, about a fundamental characteristic of Canada. It seeks to bring people together to build a stronger nation. We have worked closely with all those who came before the committee and in particular with the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, who, from the very outset of this exercise have had as their goal that multiculturalism finally would be recognized as a fundamental characteristic of Canada.

We are doing that today, and I call on all Members of the House to unanimously support this motion and the whole Bill. But while we support this motion today and a similar one which brings to the preamble of this historic Bill similar language, I wish to draw to the attention of the House a small limitation in this motion.

This motion translates the expression "fundamental characteristic" as *trait fondamentale*. This in my mind is weaker language than the use of the phrase *caractéristique fondamentale*. We had presented a strong amendment which embodied this language. But, the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) chose to block it on narrow procedural grounds. Although this is an important difference, I feel that it is one that we must set aside in order to proceed with this Bill today. We must set aside these petty tactics to bring forward a world first—a first-class Multiculturalism Act.

Therefore, it is with pleasure that we on this side of the aisle support this motion and will support a corresponding one made by the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon to the preamble.

**Mr. Marchi:** Point of order, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the words of the Minister, although I have differences with the Bill. I would like to withdraw my opposition to both Motions Nos. 6 and 32, in the name of the Hon. Member for Parkdale—High Park (Mr. Witer), and would consent with my other colleagues to have the Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Oostrom) present them at this time, as we are discussing the groupings of these amendments. It was not a procedural move. I have recognized as well that there is a difference in the French translation and a fundamental characteristic in both languages, I think, is supreme. Therefore, I would be prepared and pleased to allow the Hon. Member for Willowdale at the appropriate time to introduce and debate those amendments on the floor of the House of Commons.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** The Chair does thank the Hon. Member for York West. As we are debating