

*Multiculturalism*

between all communities in order to foster and facilitate a better understanding of ourselves as Canadians.

As we proceed to the creation of this ministry, I cannot help but worry that it will be nothing more than window dressing set up as a fulfilment of an innocuous promise during the previous election which, incidentally, the Liberal Party advocated as well. If we look at the past record of this Government in the implementation of multicultural policies, it leaves much to be desired. It is nice that the Secretary of State (Mr. Weiner) is able to travel all across this country proclaiming that much work is needed. However, if he looked in his own backyard, he would see that much improvement is needed.

At Air Canada only 2.9 per cent of employees are members of visible minorities; at CN 2.7 per cent, at the NCC 1.4 per cent and, as I mentioned earlier, only 2.1 per cent make up visible minorities at CBC Radio Canada. It is obvious that the requirements of the Employment Equity and Multiculturalism Acts are a fair distance away from being implemented.

In December, the annual report to Parliament on employment equity stated that 34,970 members of visible minorities were employed under the Act.

In mid-May we were informed that the actual figure was 29,520, a full 5,550 less than what the Government claimed in December. These discrepancies occurred in the mess that this Government calls a post office. Instead of 11.6 per cent of the workforce at Canada Post being made up of visible minorities, only 4 per cent of the employees were actually members of this group. I hope we will see amendments to the Employment Equity Act that will ensure that the changing face of Canada be represented in areas of federal jurisdiction.

I hope the Secretary of State ensures through his duties in the new Department that the provisions of real equality are implemented and that a blunder of this magnitude never happens again.

Bill C-18 is going to establish the framework under which the Multiculturalism Act will be implemented. Unfortunately, the Act only confirmed the *status quo*. It put into law the goals and values which were born in the 1960s and 1970s. I hope that the Multiculturalism Act will be strengthened and improved through the introduction of meaningful amendments. It is only at this time

that the Department established by this Bill will gain important status.

I would like to remind the Minister that the House is anxiously awaiting new legislation on citizenship. The provisions of the present Act are outdated and need to be changed. Hopefully the provisions of the new Citizenship Act, in concert with amendments to the Multiculturalism Act, will make the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship a mainline ministry that will be able to achieve the highest degree of tolerance for all Canadians.

• (1640)

I applaud the Government for the introduction of this Bill. I hope we can see the amendments I have proposed accepted or worked out in committee. In order to promote a multicultural heritage, the establishment of such a ministry is indeed a positive step. I only hope that the Minister and the Government strengthen various pieces of legislation to ensure that the real mechanisms of equality remain intact.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress the importance of creating such a department. Twenty years ago, we did not have to consider the various armed conflicts in the world like the one in China. We must revise our immigration policy and our policy to integrate citizens of those countries. We are a people that is proud of its legendary hospitality and we must continue our efforts in that direction.

For the future, I see a multiculturalism department that is even more important than the one this Government is considering creating. That is why we support this initiative. Over time, the importance of such a department has been felt and I believe that we cannot delay establishing it.

I wish to point out, however, that we in the Liberal Party will try to improve this Bill in committee. It needs many corrections and I will be very vigilant in this regard.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to give Canadians following this debate this message: It is also up to you to help set up this department. After all, it is not just there for new arrivals—it is also there for you. With your help