

Supply

Ms. Meredith: Madam Speaker, nobody is suggesting to ignore some of the causes of crime. However to suggest that all poor people are potential criminals, to suggest that all single parent families are creating criminals is totally unfair. These groups are getting very tired of taking the blame for producing the criminals.

As I mentioned in my speech, crime crosses all socioeconomic boundaries. One man who killed his wife was an engineer. Many of the people in our jails have very well established professions and have crossed the bounds. Yes, drug and alcohol abuse is a cause of crime. We should be treating that not by locking people up in a prison but by treating the illness from which they suffer. Yes, poverty does put people in a vulnerable position but it is not the only cause of crime. To pretend that it is and to hide by saying: "Let us attack the root causes of crime and ignore the symptoms", is foolhardy. We need to do both and one cannot be done at the exclusion of the other. We can address the symptoms of crime now and we can deal with the more long term problem starting now. The results of crime prevention will not be seen in the next year or two. It will take five or ten years for the results of crime prevention to have any kind of impact.

• (1705)

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, unfortunately the way the Reform Party would handle the Constitution is the same way it would handle crime, rather simplistically.

A point needs to be made to the Bloc which has been making a great day of this. The Meech Lake accord did not receive popular support, but it did receive the support of three Canadian Prime Ministers from the province of Quebec: Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and certainly the present Prime Minister. That is important. The Charlottetown accord unified this country. It was unified in turning it down.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Madam Speaker, today I have the honour and privilege to speak in favour of the Reform motion which states:

That this House strongly affirm and support the desire of Canadians to remain federally united as one people, committed to strengthening our economy, balancing the budgets of our governments, sustaining our social services, conserving our environment, preserving our cultural heritage and diversity, protecting our lives and property, further democratizing our institutions and decision making processes, affirming the equality and uniqueness of all our citizens and provinces and building peaceful and productive relations with other peoples of the world.

What a wonderful vision of Canada. I am happy to join with my leader, the hon. member for Calgary Southwest, and my colleagues who have shown leadership and vision in beginning to define a new federalism that can create a revitalized or a new Canada to which 10 or more provinces can look with pride and accomplishment.

I am disappointed in the government's amendment. It calls for a cake with no recipe. It is a continuation of the irresponsible role played by this Liberal government where it insists on Canadian unity but has no blueprint to achieve the goods. It has

no way of accomplishing what it has set out to do and it is compromising federalism in the process.

In January the leader of my party described the 35th Parliament as one without precedent and it surely is. A few years ago not very many prognosticators would have predicted a House of Commons where the Official Opposition, the Bloc Quebecois, would sit in this House happily accepting the title of Official Opposition, would swear allegiance to the Queen and would collect a salary from the federal treasury all the while on a mission to break up Canada by taking Quebec out of Confederation.

Even fewer forecasters would have guessed that a federal Liberal government would sit idly by and pretend it was not so. Who could have guessed the Liberal government would sit on its hands and play politics as usual while separatists were chipping away at the very foundation of the country?

This sad state of affairs explains the need for Reformers to bridge the gap and start pouring a new brand of unity concrete to provide some cement to which Canadians with a commitment to federalism might attach themselves, including those who live in Quebec, perhaps especially those who live in Quebec.

I will take a few moments to speak to the motion and particularly the phrase "preserving our cultural heritage and diversity". There are many myths and misconceptions associated with culture and heritage. One tends to associate myths with the ancient Greeks, Egyptians and Babylonians, but we have fostered a few in Canada too. Some of the myths most commonly perpetuated include:

Myth No. 1: Canada is composed of two founding nations. Some have gone so far as to call the English and the French the founding races. While the myth may describe a contract between upper and lower Canada it is exposed when you consider the fact that aboriginal people have always been a factor in Canada and that for all of our 128 years as a nation, people have come from every corner of the globe to help build this country.

• (1710)

Myth No. 2: Canada will become more unified if we enact language legislation. The Official Languages Act has not made Canadians feel more unified. It has been a bone of contention in our land. It has put a black mark on bilingualism in Canada, rather than permitting it to be a prestigious step of accomplishment like knowledge of languages should be.

Myth No. 3: Canada will only be able to sustain its multicultural heritage if the government bundles up tax dollars and earmarks them for song and dance across our land to preserve our diverse cultural heritage.

Reformers have done an excellent job of debunking the myth that Canada can still be described as a nation of two founding cultures. Clearly we have moved far beyond this narrow view of our country. A few weeks ago Reformers spoke at length about the failure of official bilingualism in this House and put forth a