

Government Orders

would accord to ourselves, is coming from the ethnocultural and multicultural community.

I said that we need the symbols, we need the institutions that allow us to permeate these principles and these concepts throughout the whole gamut of society. Yet in a two hour program aired a week ago by CBC, a Crown corporation, discussing the question "Is Canada dividing itself?", a bare seven minutes made some reference to what the program identified as 40 per cent of Canadians being of origins non-Anglo, non-French. Not one representative from that 40 per cent of Canadians, who have a different view and a different vision, I dare say a very dynamic and energetic vision of Canada, was deemed worthy to be present in the debates. This in a two hour program by a Crown corporation that receives the bulk of its funds from the Canadian government.

Those are not complaints by the ethnocultural community. They are complaints of Canadians who want to see this country together, where people can live in harmony and in dignity, where no one suffers the humiliation of being scorned, being put aside or, even worse, discriminated against.

This foundation can take those first steps to help redress some of that. The onus is on the minister through his department and through the instruments of the Multiculturalism Act and the Department of Multiculturalism to be able to promote and initiate programs that are needed to have a change in the mindset that is tearing all Canadians apart. Never again should we be able to stand in this House and listen to errors and sins of commission and omission that the previous speaker indicated Canadians are guilty of having committed.

We have to generate a spirit of positiveness and security. Without that, we lapse into unease and unease translates into a heightened sense of nationalism and ethnicity, both of which breed xenophobia and bring with them racism and discrimination.

In Canada, we have the opportunity to meet a challenge and to forge a new direction that requires a change of policies, not only on multiculturalism, official languages, immigration and refugees, but we need instruments and leadership to convince all Canadians that multiculturalism is something to be proud of rather than to be feared.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments? The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member if he thinks there is a connection between the increasing racism in society, particularly in Canada in the last few years, and the economic policies and the economic situation that we have all been very concerned about.

If we look at what is happening in Canada, particularly in the last three or four years, we find a society that is increasingly insecure. For example, people were very worried about free trade. People are becoming increasingly concerned as various social programs are cut: family allowances, pensions, the Canada Assistance Plan, unemployment insurance, the type of safety net that people have expected.

There has been a tremendous housing problem in some of the largest urban communities, certainly in his community and mine, Toronto and Vancouver respectively. The jobs of people who are living close to immigrants in some of the downtown areas, the inner city areas, are not very secure. Their parents are worried about the future for their kids and being able to get them into education, and education costs are going up and assistance is going down.

Does the hon. member think, as I do, that the economic situation creates insecurity in people and is responsible, to quite a large degree, for the fear of immigration which in turn translates into increasing fear of coloured immigration perhaps and other acts of racism?

Mr. Volpe: Madam Speaker, it appears that the hon. member is in sync with the realities that we promote on this side of the House. In a very brief answer to her question, the word is yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Would the House be in agreement if we were to call it one o'clock and allow the hon. member to be recognized after Question Period, instead of having him start over again?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock this afternoon.