

Canadian Culture

cultural communities that they, too, are essential elements in Canada and deserve government assistance in order to contribute to regional and national life in ways that derive from their heritage yet are distinctively Canadian.

In implementing a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, the government will provide support in four ways.

First, resources permitting, the government will seek to assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, and a clear need for assistance, the small and weak groups no less than the strong and highly organized.

Second, the government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society.

Third, the government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity.

Fourth, the government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I stated at the outset that the government has accepted in principle all recommendations addressed to federal departments and agencies. We are also ready and willing to work co-operatively with the provincial governments towards implementing those recommendations that concern matters under provincial or shared responsibility.

Some of the programmes endorsed or recommended by the Commission have been administered for some time by various federal agencies. I might mention the Citizenship Branch, the CRTC and its predecessor the BBG, the National Film Board and the National Museum of Man. These programmes will be revised, broadened and reactivated and they will receive the additional funds that may be required.

Some of the recommendations that concern matters under provincial jurisdiction call for coordinated federal and provincial action. As a first step, I have written to the First Ministers of the provinces informing them of the response of the federal government and seeking their co-operation. Officials will be asked to carry this consultation further.

I wish to table details of the government's response to each of the several recommendations.

It should be noted that some of the programmes require pilot projects or further short-term research before more extensive action can be taken. As soon as these preliminary studies are available, further programmes will be announced and initiated. Additional financial and personnel resources will be provided.

Responsibility for implementing these recommendations has been assigned to the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, the agency now responsible for matters affecting the social integration of immigrants and the cultural activities of all ethnic groups. An Inter-Agency Committee of all those agencies involved will be established to co-ordinate the federal effort.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

[English]

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize the view of the government that a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework is basically the conscious support of individual freedom of choice. We are free to be ourselves. But this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively. If freedom of choice is in danger for some ethnic groups, it is in danger for all. It is the policy of this government to eliminate any such danger and to "safeguard" this freedom.

I am tabling this document, Mr. Speaker, but it might be the desire of the House to have it appended to *Hansard* in view of its importance and long-lasting effect.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: For document referred to above, see appendix.]

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, these are excellent words in the Prime Minister's statement. I am sure this declaration by the government of the principle of preserving and enhancing the many cultural traditions which exist within our country will be most welcome. I think it is about time this government finally admitted that the cultural identity of Canada is a pretty complex thing.

[Translation]

I wish to state immediately, Mr. Speaker, that the emphasis we have given to multiculturalism in no way constitutes an attack on the basic duality of our country. What we want is justice for all Canadians, and recognition of the cultural diversity of this country.

[English]

It is about time the government finally recognized the validity of what we were trying to say in June of 1969 at the time of the debate on the official languages bill in the amendment we put forward then proposing recognition of the right to speak other languages and the importance of assisting in the development and preservation of these other cultures. The amendment said that we can accept the official duality of the country without denying the rights of other cultural groups. Our amendment was put forward for that purpose. It is pleasing to note that the government this morning is recognizing the importance of the rights of other cultural groups, although at that time our amendment was rejected out of hand. I am pleased the government has seen the light. But I must also say that, although this is all to the good, I regret that this statement was not made much more promptly.

Apart from what members of our party, among others, have been saying, it is a fact that the fourth volume of the B and B report has been available since early 1970, and I say in all sincerity that the failure of the government to endorse these principles earlier has created some suspicion, some doubts, in the minds of the members of these other cultural groups about the importance the government of Canada has attached to them. I must say that if the effectiveness of the government's action in encouraging the cultural self-fulfilment of the native peoples of Canada can be taken as any kind of an indication of what the practice will be in this broader field, apart from the