

*Government Orders*

I recall the very famous goal, probably the most famous goal scored in hockey, the Paul Henderson goal; Henderson scoring from a French Canadian named Cournoyer and from an Italian Canadian named Esposito.

They are three Canadians who very proudly helped to defeat the Russians and to show Canadian excellence in hockey. That is the kind of teamwork we need in this country, all cultures working together, our multiculturalism seen as an asset, not as some kind of liability. Some groups get very hung up on the fact that we may be encouraging these cultures to hang on to what is important to them.

I am a father of three children and many of my colleagues here are parents. It is possible for me to be what I am, a Canadian of Irish extraction. I am very proud of it. I was raised to celebrate that fact. Also I am very proud of the fact that I am a Canadian.

• (1640)

It is equally possible to be proud of two things at the same time. They are not mutually exclusive and I do not understand the very narrow minded approach that I hear from members opposite that somehow one cannot be proud of those two facts at the same time. It is to be pitied.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-53, whose purpose is to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

I would like to take a few minutes to comment on the mandate of the future Department of Canadian Heritage, especially its wording reveals something very disturbing about the future of Canada. It says: the mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage, and I will read the entire text. My source is a document released by the Liberal government, which means that we can hardly question its authority. It says: the mandate of the future department is to create and promote among Canadians a profound sense of identity and belonging, based on bilingualism and biculturalism. It also says a little further on that the department's objective is to develop and implement programs that support a very clear sense of identity among Canadians.

The first two words of this mandate raise some questions about the purpose of, or even the need for this department, since "susciter" implies there is no sense of identity or belonging, according to the text.

Before my speech, I checked the *Petit Robert*, a dictionary whose authority one would also hesitate to question, and its definition of the verb *susciter* is to give rise to a feeling or idea. This is exactly the mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage. To give rise to something implies that it does not exist.

It is rather odd that after 125 years, we have a government that creates a department of Canadian Heritage and admits in the department's mandate that a sense of identity or belonging does not exist. They are right, because what does exist in Canada is two identities. We have the existence of a very special and very obvious identity in Quebec, the francophone identity, which is open to all communities and provides that everyone who so wishes has an opportunity to develop his potential and live in harmony with everyone else.

There is also the anglophone identity, which is found mostly outside Quebec and which also is open to people of all nationalities, respecting their own cultural identity, while giving them an opportunity to grow in this country called Canada.

So it is entirely correct that this mandate should say and admit that a Canadian culture as such, of which all Canadians would be a part, including Quebecers, does not exist.

• (1645)

During this debate, I would like to see the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us which values are shared throughout Canada, that is in Quebec as in the rest of the country. This is my first comment.

On the face of it, I say that the mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage is in fact to promote the values of this government, as opposed to the values of Canadians and Quebecers. In my view, that makes it a department of propaganda. We have known for decades that the federal government views culture in Canada, and particularly in Quebec, only in terms of bilingualism and multiculturalism.

Yet, there are dozens of countries where people are bilingual but still preserve their own identity. If you ask French people who can speak several languages such as English and Spanish what is their primary culture, they will spontaneously say that it is the French one. As well, I have yet to meet an American who would question his identity. It is a clear and simple reality which helps respect those who do not think like us and who do not share the same cultural background.

I also want to say that, traditionally, the federal government and other institutions such as the Supreme Court have always reduced, if not eliminated, Quebec's power over its own culture. Let me just mention communications, which is a vital sector for culture. Over the years, three decisions have been made by the Supreme Court which, as everyone knows and as former Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis used to say, "always leans on the same side". The first decision, in the late thirties, confirmed that broadcasting fell under federal jurisdiction. The second one, in 1974, had to do with cable television, while the most recent one, in 1994, concerned telephony. The end result is that Quebec is excluded from the communications sector, which is an essential and strategic tool for Quebecers' future.