

The Chairman: Would you think that the word "ethnic" in its general use in Canada today would be broad enough to include "language" and identification by reason of language or by reason of national origin—the Oxford Dictionary to the contrary?

Dean Cohen: This would be a hard question to answer.

The Chairman: It is a slang word, really.

Dean Cohen: I think we use many important words very loosely. They sometimes have very great significance for persons about whom they are used. For example, look at the way in which we talk about "ethnic groups" in Canada? That phrase now has a specific political meaning. Anyone who is a candidate will recognize that, when he goes to Western Canada, or to Toronto, that he has to be respectful of what are now called the "ethnic groups" which mean to him the great group of Canadians whose mother tongue may be German, Swedish or Finnish or Ukrainian, and they identify themselves as ethnic groups.

Less felicitous words such as "New Canadians" are sometimes used, but it is becoming a far less acceptable phrase.

The Chairman: This was brought into the language really as a euphemism for some of the other phrases that were not acceptable.

Dean Cohen: That is right. My personal opinion is that that word "ethnic" is not subtle enough, not variable enough, and has become too political really to cover things which the word "religion" would cover. Whether it would cover language and national origin—which is the second part of the question—I would like to think about it a little more carefully.

My initial reaction is that particular nuances we had in mind in the definition, and which made us use the words "language" and "national origin" as part of the definition, were not adequately covered by the word "ethnic", which may leave a number of meanings not covered.

Mr. Garber: I suggest that in fact people change language much faster, in talking about groups, than they change their religion. All minorities that come to this continent change language within two generations. I spoke Yiddish when I came here, and still do, but very

few of my classmates know a word of Yiddish or understand it. And that is true of most minorities.

Senator Roebuck: It seems to me perfectly obvious that the word "ethnic" does not cover Jewish. I can imagine myself defending in an action and asking a witness: "You are one of those people in this group, are you; where did you come from?" And he says, "I came from Germany." However, the next person in the box is asked where he came from and says "I came from an Arab country." I would say "You are semitic". It would soon be said, "What kind of group is this, anyway?"

Dean Cohen: Quite, quite.

Senator Roebuck: Then I could get a Finnish person. For instance a person who does not belong to any of these groups might be the next witness. I can upset your "groups" so completely, with about three or four witnesses.

Dean Cohen: It was just for that reason, Mr. Chairman, that in looking at the peculiar historical sociology of the Jews, you had to have individual words to cover the situation, that a sensible judge or sensible interpreter could say it covered. It was not covered adequately without "religion", but this word would help to cover it adequately.

Senator Roebuck: I agree with you.

The Chairman: Senator Bourque, have you any questions?

Senator Bourque: I listened very carefully.

The Chairman: I noticed that. That is why I wanted to know if you had some question, Senator Lang?

Senator Lang: Not really. I would like to have from the Dean some of his philosophical background that leads to this legislation. This legislation as a whole disturbs me on a philosophical basis. I am fearful, as it seems to me at first blush that it is not legislation that fits my idea of the Canadian idiom. It is legislation that tends to accentuate the mosaic as opposed to the form of Canadianism, and basically it is legislation that, in my opinion, we do not need.

Senator Carter: Hear, hear.

Senator Lang: When I say we do not need it, it is because I am eternally optimistic. I believe there is a spirit of Canadianism that precludes the fruition of the fears which are