

*Government Orders*

We must build a country where each citizen can be rich in the heritage, customs and language of his ancestors but be no less Canadian because of it. This can only be achieved if this department of multiculturalism evolves into a department of heritage where all Canadians can participate and all cultures are treated equally, whether they be English, French or other.

• (1140)

In a unified and harmonious Canada no one can be called a hyphenated Canadian.

**Ms. Mitchell:** Madam Speaker, I was very interested in the remarks of the member and in particular the comment she was making in relation to her own cultural background and the heritage of the Italian-Canadian community. I wonder whether it is a common feeling in certain parts of central Canada and around the Toronto region in particular that maybe we do not need a separate multicultural program or policy. Maybe she will clarify her thoughts on that.

Also, I would like to express some concern. I do not get the same feeling at all coming from the west coast of Canada where many, many immigrants of different racial backgrounds—and there are many black Canadians who have been there for a number of generations—who still feel very definitely that some kind of special multicultural programs and affirmative action programs are needed to deal with questions of racism. I do not think she dealt with this. It is in my view a lot more than just heritage matters. There are very definitely issues concerned with equality and with racism that I feel should be a major priority in any kind of multicultural policy and concerns of a multicultural department. Would the hon. member like to comment on that?

**Ms. Guarnieri:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her commentary. Perhaps I can best illustrate the point I was trying to make by citing an example of a constituent who came to my office.

She was born in Australia and she had to reinstate herself. She was obliged to go to what is called the Department of Ethnic Affairs. She came to my office enraged that she, born in Australia and now seeking to reinstate herself, would be obliged to go to what she considered was a put down. The put down was the Department of Ethnic Affairs. My comment to her was: "Join the club".

The hon. member for York South—Weston who was born here in Canada is still considered a hyphenated Canadian. I can appreciate and understand his grief when he is subjected to being a hyphenated Canadian even though he was born here.

There is no quick fix solution. The policies may be well intentioned and well meaning, but they have to evolve within the political reality of Canada.

You have a minister of culture and a minister of multiculturalism for the ethnics. Either the English and French will be deemed multicultural or the ethnics should be shifted under the umbrella of culture. It seems that the concept of two ministries to deal with the various cultural groups is faulty thinking. It promotes the differences rather than the similarities.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to address this bill, not only to put forward some of my views but also to clarify some of the talk that is going on in the community as to what is our basic position on this bill as a party.

First, I want to go back to the origins of our party on this bill.

It was this month in 1971 that Pierre Trudeau rose and said: "For although there are two official languages there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly".

We in the Liberal party are constantly defining and redefining policy, and multiculturalism is of no exception. Recently, on Friday, there was an article in *The Globe and Mail* by Jeffrey Simpson with the headline: "Balking at Multiculturalism". It went on to say that myself and other colleagues were balking at multiculturalism.

We were not balking at multiculturalism. We were asking ourselves some of the very questions that my colleague from Mississauga just finished raising. We are asking ourselves questions such as: if our national culture now is one of multiculturalism, if we are now a multicultural land, why do we really need a new department? Why do we need a separate department? Why can we not have one super ministry of culture?