• (1250)

That is the end of Glenn's story in *The Dilemma of Multiculturalism*. We will notice in all the text there is no mention of dollars spent but one man's effort to become more familiar with his own identity, his own cultural roots, and to try to find a way in which he could fit into a culture in Quebec and still remain associated with the rest of Canada.

I leave the story with the House without further analysis. I think it is worthy as a reflection on what it means to be a Canadian living in this country of ours today.

I am going to move now to an experience I had as a member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage when we had one of our witnesses come to speak to us about the issue of multiculturalism. His name is Dr. Rais Khan and he addressed the issue, stating that both the act and the department were evidently intended to facilitate integration of the different cultural groups into the Canadian society. But the policy of multiculturalism has become subverted in this noble intent. It has encouraged ethnic and cultural groups to perpetuate their distinctiveness and has thus prevented them, even though inadvertently, from integrating into the mainstream of society. Official bilingualism has erected cultural barriers and gender discrimination and encouraged social ghettoization.

Let me give an example of how multiculturalism goes wrong, an example with which my Liberal colleagues will most certainly agree, as did the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Multiculturalism gets twisted to such an extent that groups of individuals believe that by virtue of being a member of some identifiable group they deserve special funding and privileges. This is clear as was the case with the Writing Thru Race conference which was hosted in Vancouver by the Writers Union of Canada. This conference refused to allow anyone of non–colour to attend, that is to say whites were barred from attending a conference which received funding from the Canada Council. Thankfully the minister heeded my advice and took away part of their funding.

Dr. Khan, as he continued in his presentation to our committee, explained:

> The exotic multicultural concept of the everlasting immigrant has come to function as an institutional system for the marginalization of the individual. While this is not hopefully the intent of official multiculturalism, it certainly is its consequence. Culture is not only a selective demonstration of exotic events; it is how people live and interact with one another in their daily lives. Canada in the next century will not even have a dominant plurality. What is especially puzzling is why the advocates of multiculturalism, many of whom are so–called leaders of ethnic communities, have embraced such a discriminatory label. The misdirected and shortsighted actions and propositions in the name of official multiculturalism have generated mounting criticism of both its intent and direction. The voices of criticism come from both old Canadians and new ones, from intellectuals and ivory tower academics, from writers of colour and those who lack colour, from respondents to several recent public opinion polls and from government appointed commissions.

Dr. Khan also drew our attention to the Keith Spicer citizens' forum which, in recognition of the inherent deficiencies and drawbacks of official multiculturalism, called upon the Government of Canada to eliminate funding for multicultural activities except those serving immigration orientation, reduction of racial discrimination and promotion of equality.

I believe this is the crux of the problem. Even the proponents of multiculturalism support the policy because in their view it contributes to immigration orientation, reduction of racial discrimination and promotion of equality.

It is a curious situation of people from opposing spectrums—those who oppose multiculturalism as well as those who support it—agreeing to a common set of objectives.

• (1255)

It is not just the Reform Party that has expressed what so many other voices are saying. The objectives that multiculturalism seek to promote are immigration, orientation, reduction of racial discrimination, enhanced participation and promotion of equality.

These can be just as effectively achieved through the implementation of the provision of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms supporting the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the acknowledgement of the opportunities offered through the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

Special treatment to some at the expense of others is discriminatory in and of itself. No one is saying that ethnic groups should be suppressed in the Canadian context. Rather, our vision of Canada should be committed to the goal of social and personal well–being that values individuality while emphasizing themes like family, community assumption of responsibility, problem solving and communicating these value sets to a means of better group life. However at no time should the rights of a group supersede the rights of individuals unless the group happens to consist of a majority within Canada.

As I said earlier, I have concentrated most of this presentation on multiculturalism because it is something about which all of us in the House feel deeply. I also have to say that I am looking forward to 1995. We definitely have challenges lying before us in the new year. My wish for all of us, as we enter the new year, is that we use our collective wisdom in the decision days of 1995 that lie ahead of us.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Oakville—Milton.

On behalf of the Minister of Canadian Heritage I am pleased to have the occasion to speak on the third reading of Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Our debate has underscored the importance that the legislation be swiftly passed to establish in law the Department of Canadian Heritage. We are marrying programs that have been living together for more than a year. The departmental programs