

Multiculturalism

adequate, fair, equal and productive manner with the hundreds of different groups in Canada. I wish to remind the minister that the greatest strength of Canada lies in its people of various cultural heritages and backgrounds. The quality of the lives of all Canadians has been enriched by the number of cultures that have joined to form our society. It is important that we maintain this rich cultural heritage while adapting to changing conditions in Canada. I believe in Canadian unity, and will play any part I can to ensure that this unity is maintained in every sense of the word. First, however, we must persuade the government to do the same.

[Translation]

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this discussion and to find that we have before us a most interesting motion. It deals with various questions—particularly from an ethnic viewpoint—concerning the technicality of biculturalism and multiculturalism.

Mr. Speaker, this motion reads as follows:

That this House, re-affirming that generations of peoples of diverse races and many nationalities have joined in peace and war to build a free Canada and to mold a Canadian nationality, regrets the government's reluctant and token recognition of this reality.

Yet, during the war, for instance, we recognized all those nationalities and because of that war, we allowed all those ethnic groups to live more decently and to speak their languages. In spite of the war, they were also allowed to continue erecting their buildings, use their mother tongue and learn a lot of things.

War, Mr. Speaker, actually put an economic power in the hands of citizens. Even if several things were manufactured only for the purpose of war, citizens suffered many technical and physical hardships. Nevertheless, we were able to develop in a few years a hundred times more than during the ten depression years. During the depression nothing was possible, but with the war everything became possible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before talking of bilingualism, multiculturalism and languages, people must have the means to live. I know that in Canada we have some means but we must borrow from future generations in order to be able to live. To build what each nationality needs to develop and even live—schools, churches, well, everything—we have to use the formula of capitalism which says that you have to go into debt and borrow. We cannot do anything unless we go into debt and mortgage the future in order to develop our country. So it is quite difficult from that point of view to allow all ethnic groups in Canada to develop according to their aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, according to the study and a survey made by the Treasury Board, the number of French-speaking and bilingual public servants is not adequate. Bilingualism programs are ineffective and inadequate. High officials are always recruited among unilingual anglophones in preference to others.

This is what Mr. Spicer says in his report.

I am certain that the problem, Mr. Speaker, has to do with economics: all those who have economic power are free and self-governing. Money has no language, but it has power, and this is what Canadians need most.

[Mr. Jelinek.]

Then, Mr. Speaker, if a beneficial economic system were set up, if taxpayers were provided with the necessary funds, they would have their own power and they could use it as they please, and they could develop technically in all respects. They could also speak their own language and develop their nation according to their aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, in order to establish unity in our country, to reinstate unity, national unity must be strengthened by granting equal rights and opportunities to all Canadians. Whether they be French-speaking, English-speaking or other, all Canadians have the right to live. Every human being has the right to live and this right, Mr. Speaker, must be safeguarded and it is up to us, in this parliament to safeguard the rights of the citizens. At present, we safeguard the rights of the dollar bill, of finance, but the rights of the human being, we despise them. That is what we are doing now.

● (1650)

In fact, I claim that in this country, the problem is not so much one of language than of participation. Even though the whole federal administration were bilingual, the problems would not be solved, since French Canadians or people from other countries would not feel at home. Thus, it would not be possible to solve the problem only through bilingualism. It is very important, Mr. Speaker, that structures and administrators be fairly and equitably divided among the ethnic groups making up our country.

We have been living in hope for a long time. In 1969, when the Official Languages Act was passed, it gave rise to great hopes because we thought then that we would have a tangible contribution to make. What did the royal commission on biculturalism do to settle the problem of bilingualism? Though this inquiry cost more than \$9 million, we only learned that there were so many French Canadians, so many Ukrainians, so many English Canadians and so many German Canadians in Canada. That is all we got out of this inquiry. Then, the problem will not be solved through inquiries. To solve this problem, we must enable Canadians to take part in the administration of their country, give them the importance they deserve.

If, for instance, 27 per cent of the people are French Canadians and 10 or 12 per cent belong to other ethnic groups, each nationality, according to the population ratio it represents, must be accepted within the public service and each should be able to exercise powers and participate in the administration like all the other groups in Canada. That is how we will really create in Canada social unity and give Canadians their true rights.

All linguistic rights are recognized, but financial power is necessary in order to exercise them. Since that power is detrimental to all that, we find it difficult to exercise our true powers and allow each nationality to develop normally. If we have true respect for human beings and their linguistic and cultural rights, let us arrange to make available to them what they lack to acquire their rights. And such true rights citizens will enjoy if we supply the population with economic power, which dominates all others. The exercise of any other power is useless without economic power. So let us fight for and demand economic power. Having obtained it, we shall have political, linguistic and ethnic powers, in short all powers.