

*Multiculturalism*

Minister ought to review the whole question of the official commissioner position.

On the one hand there is an Official Languages Commissioner who reports to the House and, through the House, to Canadians. But that seems not to be good enough for multiculturalism. The Secretary of State (Mr. Weiner) is prepared and pleased to have an Official Languages Commissioner but is saying that multiculturalism is perhaps not good enough to deserve that same kind of commissioner status.

I ask him to rise and explain to Canadians why there is that double standard? If it is fine to have a Commissioner of Official Languages who does not report to a Minister or a government that will simply hide a skeleton in the closet, why should multiculturalism be different?

We have suggested and reiterate that an official commissioner is valuable because that commissioner would go through the federal civil service and report to Parliament, and through Parliament to Canadians, rather than leaving it to the Minister to tell Canadians what he wants to say and not tell Canadians what is obviously very embarrassing. The Minister is playing with a double deck by operating with an Official Languages Commissioner on the one hand while not admitting that the same concept would be valuable and reliable for the multiculturalism policy.

We have seen evidence this afternoon with respect to the treatment of the Canadian Sikh community. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) sent a letter a few months ago to the Premiers suggesting that they should not associate with certain organizations in Canada. The Secretary of State for External Affairs interjected into the refugee applications of certain Sikh applicants. The Secretary of State for External Affairs tried to block a chair of Canadian Sikh studies in Vancouver. I am suggesting that we cannot divorce ourselves from these types of issues because these issues are also embodied by that word we call multiculturalism.

It is not good enough to simply stand on a soap box at a picnic and extrapolate on the virtues and then come to Ottawa and have a very different and drastically reduced priority.

What about Meech Lake? Did the Minister talk about Meech Lake and try to explain that the opening paragraph of Meech Lake is supposed to define a country? I thought we had four fundamental variables to the equation we call Canada. One is the English, the second is the French fact, the third is the aboriginal and the fourth, if you will, is multicultural. When we put those four variables together we have the equation that defines who we are and what we are.

Why did the Government only stop on two of those variables, where it talks about the linguistic duality of English and French? What about the other two variables? The Government added them at the end of the Constitution.

People are asking, why move that to the back of the bus? If we accept the four variables as fundamental building blocks to our country, as I believe this Party does because we moved amendments to that effect but they were refused, why move them to the back of the bus?

The Government suggests that it does not matter where one sits on the bus because the entire bus is a constitutional bus. I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Minister, if they followed that to its logical conclusion were they prepared to put the English and French linguistic duality at the end of the Constitution and put the aboriginal and multicultural clause at the beginning of the Constitution? The answer was no. I suggest with all due respect that if it is not good enough and not respectful enough to put the English and French linguistic duality at the back of the bus, which I do not want to see, why is it so right to put the other two variables at the back of the bus? That is objectionable. That raises cynicism. It raises skepticism, but not in the people of Canada or the communities or groups, but in the Government. Those are the issues.

The whole question of anti-Semitism was raised. On Canada Day in Minden, Ontario, there will be a meeting organized by the neo-Nazi Party. In Minden, Ontario, in 1989, hundreds of people who subscribe to a neo-Nazi philosophy are expected to meet. Skinheads, only white people, will attend on Canada Day. The theme is: "Let us save Canada".

The Government has said nothing about that. It is a difficult situation, and sometimes one must decide whether to give more promotion and credibility to these