

tipleX Incorporated, and Metropolitan Area Growth Investments Ltd. in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. Whether this type of instrument will be appropriate in northern Ontario is a question which will require extensive discussion, and I want the hon. member to understand clearly that it has not been ruled out. It is now being strongly considered. The members from northern Ontario will want to consider its merits as well.

MULTICULTURALISM—AUTHORITY OF MINISTER OVER PUBLIC SERVANTS INVOLVED IN PROGRAM

**Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, may I begin by expressing my appreciation to the Chair and to the table for their courtesy in giving priority to the matter which I am raising tonight. I also have a starred question on the order paper with respect to this matter. I appreciate that the minister has not yet had a chance to reply to it. I raise this question because of the very great urgency surrounding the affair, which I think can probably be called the Ostrey affair, involving the Minister of State responsible for multiculturalism (Mr. Haidasz), which arose in this House last week regarding a situation in which the minister was being ordered about by the assistant deputy minister of citizenship.

This is important for two reasons. The first reason is the importance of multiculturalism and the symbol that the actions of last week display of the very slight regard the government in fact has for the multicultural program. The second, and perhaps the even more important reason, is the question of the responsibility of the minister in parliament and the right of the Parliament of Canada to be able to go to a minister and hold him accountable for the actions for which he presumably speaks. We in this party have protested previously that the multicultural program as put forward by the government is a false front, a public relations gesture.

We raised this question in 1969 when the Official Languages Act was before the House. At that time amendments were introduced by my colleague from Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk) and were rejected out of hand by the government. Now, that concept of multiculturalism which the government rejected in 1969 has been embraced in a way that is weak, that is late and that is lamentably partisan.

We believe that a multicultural policy is highly important because multiculturalism is a highly important part of this country and has to be encouraged. But tonight I want to speak particularly about responsibility to parliament. When I addressed my question to the minister, I addressed him as the minister who seemed to be a little bit responsible for multiculturalism, but I think I was exaggerating. We have not asked ourselves, what does responsible mean in terms of this minister? He clearly cannot be regarded as responsible in literal or practical terms for the activities of a department that comes under another minister. He is clearly a second-class minister who has less power than an assistant secretary of state.

We have had this once before. The Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) was once attached in a similar way to the department of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development when the government of that day desired to put forward a false front of wanting

*Adjournment Debate*

to hold consultations with the Indian and native peoples. The device was clearly designed to mislead.

In the statute, two types of ministers of state are set out. The essential difference is that one has power and the other does not. This is spelled out in the Government Organization Act, 1971. The government at that time made the minister of state responsible for urban affairs a meaningful figure, but refused to do that with the minister of state responsible for multiculturalism. This shows that the latter is a phony department, interested in public relations and not in a program.

I suggest that this matter is far more serious than the simple abuse involved in spending money on advertisements or insubordination by an assistant secretary of state. When we get into this practice of institutionalizing phony ministers who are unable to act, who are unable to report, we are setting a dangerous precedent for parliament. I think this would be terribly embarrassing for the minister, embarrassing enough that he would want to resign rather than hold on to a façade. But if it satisfies the minister, I want to make it clear that it does not satisfy us. That kind of arrangement simply does not satisfy us because we believe that recognition of the multicultural nature of this country is highly important. To a segment of the public it is a highly important part of our past, and should be an important part of our future. It should not be played around with, Mr. Speaker.

● (2220)

There will be some reply tonight. I have great respect for the parliamentary secretary who has the responsibility of replying. However, I think that real respect for and recognition of the importance of multiculturalism will have to come with a change in the status of the Minister of State responsible for multiculturalism. This will involve a change from the situation where he has no power into one where we have a minister of state who has enough power to deal with an aspect of our society which is recognized as being unique to Canada, and which is being played around with in a second-rate way by the government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Marceau (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, I think that the question raised by my honourable friend has very interesting aspects and although I do not share his views I must admit nevertheless that the question he has raised deserves very serious consideration.

It is not my responsibility as Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State to give a complete answer, although I recognize that the matter should be considered for it entails extremely important principles, but my answer will merely deal directly with the matter.

[*English*]

The minister fully directs those officers of the Department of the Secretary of State who are exclusively assigned to the multicultural program and shares with the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) the direction of those officers who are only partially engaged in multicultural work.

[*Translation*]

In my opinion, this is a direct answer to the question, but I shall hasten to convey to the Minister responsible for multiculturalism the interesting points raised by my hon. friend on this important subject.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.