

Government Orders

These are the partnerships along with the volunteer sector that open more lines of communication to provide all Canadians, men and women and our youth, with a greater knowledge of the richness and benefits of our diverse population.

We are working to change government from the inside as well as to ensure interracial understanding. The same way we work with shop foremen to prepare that floor as the host community to the new arrivals, so we are doing within our own house. For example, we worked and are working with the Departments of National Defence, Customs and Excise, and the RCMP to help ensure they are sensitive in their response to Canada's reality.

[Translation]

Our programs related to interracial relations and cultural comprehension, and also to the integration of first generation Canadians, help all Canadians, through community support, to work together to build an economically sound and socially just country.

Multiculturalism is not based on compartmentalization, nor on division.

[English]

It is not based on being a hyphenated Canadian.

[Translation]

It seeks to build an integrated society where everyone has an equal chance to succeed, as well as an opportunity to understand and apply the principles governing citizenship.

• (1155)

[English]

It is also not as I said before about funding song and dance, and unicultural festivals, as important as they are.

[Translation]

When we see the tragedies which occur every day in the world, we have no choice but to cherish human life, and that includes all men and women—Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, be they black, yellow, brown, red or white—who adhere to the democratic values of the Canadian society.

[English]

With an investment of less than \$1 per year per Canadian, the federal government helps to promote a fairer society.

In a society with a government that spends less than \$1 per year but depends on additions to that dollar through the voluntary sector and through voluntary effort, the federal government helps to promote a fairer society in which all Canadians have a chance and a choice to participate equally and with respect.

This is an investment we cannot afford to ignore. The value of our multiculturalism programs to Canadian society must be confirmed by ensuring that they can work effectively within the Department of Canadian Heritage. All of us, whether in this House or not, must be ever vigilant in our defence of the values of a democratic, free and open society.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Madam Speaker, the bill before the House today, on third reading, is Bill C-53, an Act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other Acts.

The Bloc Québécois has five major reasons for voting against this bill. First, through this bill the Government of Canada denies the existence of Quebec as a nation and the existence of its culture.

Second, nothing in this bill points to any major changes in federal policy on defending the rights of francophones in Canada, although anyone who can read and use a pocket calculator will see that the federal government's policy on bilingualism has failed.

Third, this government has forgotten its commitment made to creators during the last election campaign with respect to patriating copyright legislation to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Fourth, at a time when there is a growing trend towards amalgamation in the communications sector, the government has decided to confirm the separate status of telecommunications and broadcasting by making the Department of Industry responsible for the former and the Department of Canadian Heritage responsible for broadcasting.

Fifth, nothing in this bill gives the Department of Canadian Heritage any real power to control foreign investment where cultural products and industries are concerned.

I will now comment on these points one by one, to demonstrate the major weaknesses of this bill. In his speech on second reading of the bill we are now considering at the third reading stage, the Minister of Canadian Heritage defined the word "heritage" as, and I quote: "the set of signs that enable us to recognize ourselves as individuals who belong to a group or even a country".

On the basis of that definition, it was reasonable to hope that the Canadian government would recognize in law what has been a fact since the beginnings of this country and what the Lauren-deau-Dunton Commission recognized, and I am talking about