

Multiculturalism

with 90 per cent of the country's estimated 1.2 million visible minorities concentrated in Canada's major urban centres. This puts a whole new perspective to policing work as police officers have to learn how to deal with Canadians of many races and with many new arrivals who have lived under authoritarian governments where the police are deeply feared and mistrusted. The multiculturalism factor is funding various projects across Canada where representatives from ethnocultural communities are working with their respective police forces, such as in Ottawa and Vancouver, to learn from each other and understand each other better. The Saint John meeting also saw the start of the newly established Police Multicultural Liaison Committee comprised of police chiefs from the nation's seven largest cities. The multiculturalism sector is also co-operating with the Canadian Federation of Municipalities to mount race relations programs in centres across Canada. The multiculturalism sector is assisting immigrant women to gain access to women's organizations and to sensitize these networks to their needs. Effective systems are also being established, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that qualified members of ethnocultural communities gain access to federal appointments to boards and commissions.

This is a necessarily superficial rundown of the accomplishments so far in the multiculturalism sector. In a few days time the Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Jelinek) will be meeting with Ministers responsible for Human Rights from the Provinces and Territories. At this meeting the Minister will be discussing ways to promote and co-ordinate action to combat racism and discrimination. Our objective is to bring one-third of Canada's population into the mainstream of Canadian life. In the process we must not in any way endanger the right of any group to maintain and expand its cultural traditions. Needless to say, this is a difficult and complex task. Creating a standing committee on multiculturalism was a positive first step. Establishing a full-fledged Ministry could be a positive second step. In the end we must make it perfectly clear by our actions that multiculturalism is synonymous with being Canadian. I am confident that this Government will accomplish exactly that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Landry (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with this opportunity to speak to the important motion tabled by the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon (Mr. Epp):

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of establishing a Department of Multiculturalism and a Standing Committee on Multiculturalism.

The creation, on June 28 of this year, of a Standing Committee of the House on Multiculturalism, clearly proves how important the issue of multiculturalism is to this Government. It was a decision that reflects the same concerns as the Hon. Member's motion and constitutes a major milestone in the development of government policy.

The policy on multiculturalism and its programs are the result of post-war developments. Canada has always been a

nation of immigrants, but the massive wave of immigrants and refugees after World War II brought new life to the ethnocultural communities already existing throughout North America. This new wave made it possible for many groups to renew their ties with the culture of their native land. Among the new arrivals, children of immigrants and their grandparents often spoke only their mother tongue, not having had an opportunity to learn English or French. Across Canada, especially in urban areas, it was possible to live in one's own culture.

Through the rising demand for social services, immigrants made their needs known directly to the various levels of government. At this time, around 1953, the first federal-provincial agreement on civic and language training came into being. It was then that established groups started to express to governments and other Canadians the needs of their community.

At the same time, French Canadians and native peoples started organizing and expressing their views more actively and effectively on Canada and their place in this country.

Before our centennial year and throughout the sixties, Canadians were asked to examine their views of the country and of themselves as Canadians. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism acted as a catalyst, making it possible to clarify many of these issues. It was an incentive to ethno-cultural groups of other than English or French origin to make Canadians aware of their contribution to this country, especially in the West.

Mr. Speaker, according to the 1981 Census eight million Canadians consider themselves to be of other than British or French origin, which means 31 per cent of the population. About six million live in our large cities. For instance, 27 per cent of the population of Montreal belongs to this group, with comparable figures for Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton and Vancouver showing percentages varying between 40 and 50 per cent.

The economic impact of this population is considerable. It is estimated that a large proportion of all small businesses in Canada are owned by persons of other than British or French ethnic origin. In Toronto, the ethnic market is estimated at about \$6 billion annually.

Each province has a population that is characteristic in terms of its ethnic origins. In this respect, we would like to stress the contribution of Quebec's cultural communities.

Although the proportion of Quebecers who consider themselves to be of other than French or British ethnic origin is small—11 per cent compared with 37 per cent in Ontario and nearly 50 per cent in Western Canada—their contribution to Quebec society is tremendous.

Montreal is a city with a flourishing mixture of various groups, cultures and races. For instance, there are 166,000 people of Italian origin, 93,000 of Jewish origin, 50,000 of