

Human Rights

been only two full time ministers for multiculturalism, and both of these appointments were made when an election appeared imminent. That alone should indicate the lack of priority that this government gives to multiculturalism in Canada.

The recent announcement of an increase in the multiculturalism budget is undoubtedly another attempt on the part of the government to endear itself to the ethnocultural communities just prior to an election. The government has announced that the multiculturalism budget will amount to \$50 million over the next five years. This sum sounds like a lot of money until it is broken down by year. The government is telling us that the multiculturalism budget will now be \$10 million per year, an actual increase of slightly less than \$2 million per year over the present budget.

It was something like four years ago that this government first promised to increase the multiculturalism budget to \$10 million annually. It has taken the government four years, and the possibility of another election, to reiterate this promise, and from the experiences of four years ago we know there is no guarantee the government will keep this promise.

In view of the present spending practices of the multiculturalism directorate, we can expect at least 40 per cent, or \$4 million, to be used on advertising and administrative expenses. A further \$3 million will be spent by the cultural agencies such as the National Film Board and the Museum of Man. That leaves roughly \$3 million to be used directly by the ethno-cultural communities for language and culture retention, not a very large sum when you consider that the government plans to spend \$4.5 million alone in one week of Canada Day celebrations. When you consider that our ethno-cultural communities—and I am referring to those who have neither French nor English as their background—represent more than one third of the population of Canada, a budget of \$10 million annually is an effrontery of the first magnitude.

Last summer the government had an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the development of the multicultural ideal in Canada, an opportunity which it failed to take advantage of. At that time a motion was introduced to amend the Immigration Act so that it could take into consideration not only the bilingual character of Canadian society but also its multicultural nature. We on this side of the House supported the motion which gave recognition to the fact that Canada is composed of many different ethnocultural groups which want to cherish their different cultures without penalty, and which want to feel they are co-equals in the building and development of Canadian society. The motion, however, was defeated by government members in the House, raising serious doubts about the sincerity of the government's intentions with respect to multiculturalism.

In view of the government's noncommittal attitude, it is not surprising that many Canadians are still unfamiliar with the goals of multiculturalism policy. A recently published majority

attitudes study revealed that most Canadians were really unaware of a multiculturalism policy in Canada, and those who were aware of such a policy perceived it only in the context of allowing immigrants to maintain their customs and folk traditions. It is apparent that a great deal more effort must be made before a policy of multiculturalism moves beyond indifferent acceptance to understanding and use by all Canadians regardless of their ethnic origin.

It is the belief of our party that the key to a more dynamic multiculturalism policy lies in placing more decision making responsibility with the ethnocultural communities in Canada. A first step in this direction could be achieved by changing the method of selection of the representatives to the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism. At present the members of the council are political appointments of the government. In our opinion, this is wrong. These people should be elected from the ethno-cultural communities they represent.

It is also our belief that more of an effort has to be made to try to follow through on the recommendations of the Consultative Council on Multiculturalism. Up until now the recommendations of the council have frequently been ignored, probably gathering dust in some obscure corner of the directorate. For instance, the council has repeatedly stressed the pivotal relationship of language to culture retention, recommending on several occasions that the government initiate federal-provincial agreements to introduce third language instruction in the public schools system. Needless to say, these recommendations have been largely ignored by the government.

From its inception, the council has also recommended that the mandate of the CBC be revised so as to allow for the introduction of multilingual broadcasting, but so far the results have not been very encouraging. The council further recommended that all federal cultural agencies include qualified persons of various ethno-cultural backgrounds on their governing boards.

A multiculturalism policy, to be successful, must take into consideration a broad spectrum of society, including education, the broadcasting media, newspapers and literature, the performing arts, museum programs, community cultural centres, government services, youth programs, and relations with other countries. Above all, if we are concerned with changing attitudes in Canada, then multiculturalism must be a predominant theme in the education system. From the beginning of Confederation, Mr. Speaker, cultural and linguistic questions have always been central to Canada's existence as a unified and civilized nation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. It being six o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 58(11), proceedings on the motion have expired. I do now leave the chair and this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 2(1).

At six o'clock the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.