

*Government Orders*

area—for at least two hours in the West Block one evening.

There is great concern among the heritage language schools. They do not know how they will continue to operate. They are very dependent upon the few dollars the federal government gives them.

As I mentioned in my comments, the whole basis of these schools is to allow them to enjoy and expand upon their culture and to allow their children to be knowledgeable about their different backgrounds.

At the same time it allows you and I, who are not of their particular culture, to be informed as to what their culture can bring to our community. We are very fortunate to have so many different cultures in our community from which we can draw and to participate in their programs and cultural activities.

Every single one of the leaders from the heritage language schools in the national capital region said that it would be very difficult for them to continue to operate, that it could be the fine edge that pushes them over the brink and that they would not be able to continue.

We are only talking about a very basic amount of money, considering the major funds spent by the Government of Canada. Reinstating these funds would mean the difference between folding and not folding for these heritage language schools. I urge the government to reinstate these funds.

**Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague a question dealing with this law as compared with the government's lack of hiring visible minorities. Perhaps the hon. member could give us her thoughts on that. It seems to be an obvious contradiction. When we want to show that we are a multicultural country and have a desire to employ, and show that we have employed people from different cultures, we seem to be far off the mark. Once again I hear my Conservative colleagues speaking with a sense of irony or sarcasm, but the question has to be put. I would like my hon. colleague to tell me how this bill compares to the actions of the government.

• (1710)

**Mrs. Gaffney:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. It is very much a contradiction to stand here and talk about establishing a Canadian race

relations foundation and then to look at the lack of initiative by the present government in bringing visible minorities up to the level of hiring or the level of visibility in the Public Service in particular. When we look at their six point, or whatever per cent it was of our population, we see that only 2 plus per cent are hired within the Public Service. I realize that there are many initiatives that can be taken to raise this average and I encourage the government to do so. Otherwise there is very definitely a blatant contradiction to what they are saying we must do and then on the other side of what they are actually doing.

**Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly):** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill to establish a Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Being an immigrant to this country and having lived in the United States during the heady days of the sixties where there was a great deal of work in this regard, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak. I worked in the field of race relations and was involved in working with groups trying to get blacks registered in the political process in the south. At the time they were called freedom riders. I have first-hand knowledge of how the question of race relations can be a volatile one, one which is very difficult for government to handle.

I may surprise members on the government side—I am looking directly at a couple of ministers right now who are in conversation—but I hope I am not surprising you too much by saying that this is legislation which does make some progress. It is progressive to a certain extent, although I have heard my Liberal colleague tell me how far short the government does fall as far as promoting race relations in Canada. This particular foundation is a good start.

If you look at what is a cause of racism, I am sure the two ministers would agree that one of the major causes is lack of knowledge and the lack of information as to the other side; that being the race that you have a tendency to perhaps joke about, the race that you are looking at in a sense of being somewhat inferior to whom you happen to be or a race which may seem to be responsible for your economic hard times. All of this comes about through a lack of information. I believe that this legislation would to a certain extent meet this problem of a lack of information.