

dian Parliament passed an Immigration Act free from discrimination.

This diversity was recognized and enhanced once again with the introduction of the Bill of Rights in 1960, which provided rights and freedoms to *all* Canadians in law.

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the Official Languages Act of 1969 recognized Canada's bilingualism and proclaimed English and French as the two official languages.

In addition, the Royal Commission recommended "a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework." Thus, in 1971, Canada became officially multicultural. The multicultural policy introduced that year focused on four areas: assistance to cultural groups, help in overcoming barriers to full participation, promotion of cultural interchange in the interest of national unity, and assistance in official language training.

*Interestingly, individual Canadians accept and encourage the richness of Canada's multicultural existence. Polls conducted over the past 10 years indicate a steady growth in acceptance of this concept.*

In 1977, the Canadian Human Rights Act was passed by Parliament prohibiting discrimination based on "race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted." This Act represented an important step in the recognition of Canada's diversity and the growing sense of consciousness of human rights, as it provided equal

opportunity in all matters within the purview of the legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada.

In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was entrenched in the Constitution making basic rights and freedoms much less susceptible to alteration. The entrenchment allowed for the Charter to take precedence over all legislation. In addition to basic rights covered in the Bill of Rights, the Charter included issues such as mobility rights and minority language rights. It also asserted in Section 27 an interpretative "multicultural" clause that specifies how other sections of the Charter should be applied:

*This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.*

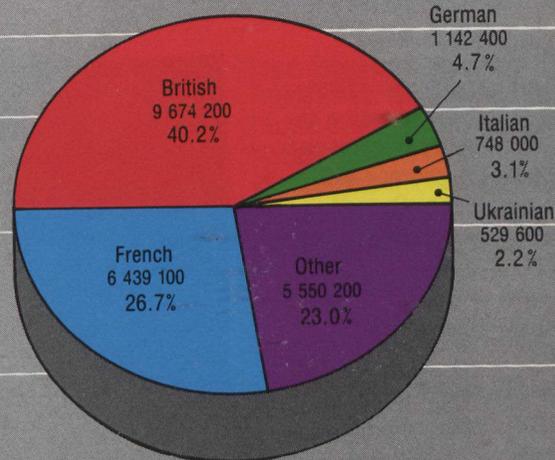
For Canada, part of the consciousness of human rights has been the acceptance of diversity. This is demonstrated in that the confluence of multiculturalism and bilingualism is becoming more and more evident. For example, a Portuguese child in Ottawa would likely learn both French and English, while retaining his or her own language and culture.

Interestingly, individual Canadians accept and encourage the richness of Canada's multicultural existence. Polls conducted over the past 10 years indicate a steady growth in acceptance of this concept.

Indeed, multicultural policies have evolved considerably over the years. And the evolution continues.

In fact, Canada's Minister of State for Multiculturalism, at a June 1987 conference, proposed legislation that would change current multicultural policies into laws. He stated that government legislation soon to be introduced would

## ETHNIC ORIGIN (1981)



Total population : 24 083 500

- give full legislative recognition to Canada's cultural and racial diversity;
- provide the basic elements of a race-relations strategy;
- stress public awareness and participation in overcoming prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination; and
- recognize the need for all institutions to ensure equality of opportunity for all Canadians regardless of race, colour, age, religion or sex.

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The legislation is designed to encourage cross-racial understanding and to take advantage of all facets of Canada's linguistic, cultural and racial diversity.

In Canada, multiculturalism has evolved into a way of life that encompasses and addresses all Canadians. Today, Canadian multicultural policies and programs recognize the various cultural

origins of the Canadian population in its entirety. In addition, they address the need to work towards equality of opportunity for all Canadians. In so doing, Canadian policies and programs continue to focus on enhancing cultural, social, economic and political equality, particularly among Canadians who are minorities on the basis of race, national or ethnocultural origin, colour or religion.

All Canadians benefit from the multiculturalism of their country, whether they come from the majority whose background is English or French, or from the minority with their various ethnic backgrounds. Those from majority communities are encouraged to learn and enjoy heritage languages, take part in multicultural events, and share their own cultures, desires and concerns with those from the minority groups. In Canada, it is recognized that all Canadians have a heritage that contributes to Canada's cultural diversity. This is the essence of multiculturalism.