

should not only react, because then it would already be too late.

Madam Speaker, I want now to read to you the mandate of the foundation, for it is very wide in scope and we should watch very closely to make sure that things are really happening, and that the Foundation is not satisfied only with drafting expert reports which will end up on shelves and represent its greatest expenditure.

The purpose of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation is to undertake research to further understanding of the nature, causes and effects of racism; to assist the public and private sectors in eliminating racial discrimination; to act as an information centre about race relations resources and establishing links with a great many educational institutions including libraries; to facilitate the exchange of information relating to race relation policies and programs; to assist in the development of professional standards; to increase public awareness of the importance of eliminating racial discrimination; to support the development of effective policies and programs for the elimination of racism and racial discrimination.

When we look closely, we see how easy it is to make a lot of nice speeches without actually doing anything. We must practice what we preach—first within the government, then within the Foundation—by putting into key positions members of every minority who know the problem and can suggest short-, medium- and long-term solutions. It is too easy to say we understand a situation when we have not experienced it. The Minister would probably reply that it is not necessary to be sick to understand the disease, but it is then easier to understand what is happening and to propose solutions to day-to-day problems.

It is those who have experienced prejudice and discrimination who can best come up with corrective and preventive measures.

[English]

Intolerance is on the rise. I would like to cite an article from *The Toronto Star* of February 23 that states the following:

Many Canadians pay lip service to the ideals of tolerance to ethnic minorities while harbouring racist or discriminatory sentiment, a new poll suggests.

Government Orders

"Reading between the lines, there seems to be a lot of bigots out there; it may be that up to one-third of Canadians are bigots" pollster Angus Reid says of the survey of 1,505 adults conducted in February 7-15.

The Angus Reid-Southam News polls found that a majority of Canadians (54 per cent) believe intolerance toward ethnic minorities is on the rise and that recent incidents of discrimination are indicative of a darkening mood in race relations across the country.

Generally, 60 per cent of Canadians accept the proposition that "treating minority groups with generosity" is a special and desirable aspect of the country's character.

But when it comes to specifics an equal number, (59 per cent) say ethnic minorities should abandon their customs and language and become "more like most Canadians".

Up to now, the government has not done much to prove its commitment to racial harmony. It seems to regularly add fuel to the fire. The refugee backlog clearance program is but an example of their lack of commitment to those who wish to become part of our Canadian society.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, we are seriously wondering for whom the government wants to create the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. Does it want to award research contracts to certain people by taking budget funds previously given to support groups? Unless they have other funds available we have not heard about—

In this era of budget cuts, it is important that the money be allocated fairly and effectively, and not only to support researchers whose reports will be read then set aside for an indefinite period of time or will be used for speeches and conferences. The government must act now. It must bring the fire under control before it is too late.

The main purpose of this bill, Madam Speaker, is to establish the Canadian Race Relations Foundation with a view to facilitate the exchange, sharing and application of knowledge and expertise in order to contribute to the elimination of racism and all forms of racial discrimination in Canada.

I can only support such a bill while, at the same time, wondering when the government will take concrete action. When indeed will it prove to us that harmony within this country is a priority? When will the government consider important to invest in what is working well instead of making cutbacks? When will it understand that it is essential to work with the people in the field who are the real experts? It is certainly not through