

*Private Members' Business*

to multiculturalism results from the indiscriminate application of the term to a wide range of situations, practices, expectations and goals as well as its institutionalization as state policy, an expensive one at that.

Public support for multiculturalism has been difficult to ascertain. In the early 1970s when the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommended the government introduce some ethnocultural policy, public support for multiculturalism was at around 76 per cent.

An Angus Reid poll in 1991 showed that figure has not changed much. It remains at 78 per cent. But what can we make of this level of support? Little to nothing, I suggest. At the same time that poll was being done, the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future reported some uneasiness about the Canadian public's attitude toward multiculturalism policies. It stated:

Overwhelmingly, participants told us that reminding us of our different origins is less useful in binding a unified country than emphasizing the things we have in common. While Canadians accept and value Canada's cultural diversity, they do not value many of the activities of the multicultural program of the federal government. These are seen as expensive and divisive in that they remind Canadians of their different origins rather than their shared symbols, society and future.

Further to this, a Decima survey was commissioned by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews and was carried out in October 1993. The survey found that three out of four Canadians expressed a preference for an American style melting pot approach to immigration over the multicultural mosaic that has been officially promoted in Canada since the 1970s.

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The survey also disclosed that Canadians generally are increasingly intolerant of interest group demands and that there is a relatively strong view that particularly ethnic, racial or religious minorities must make more efforts to adapt to Canada rather than insisting upon a maintenance of difference, especially at federal expense. Roughly similar proportions of visible minorities expressed the same sentiments.

This poll would suggest that it is the prevalent opinion amongst the groups targeted to receive multiculturalism grants that such grants are divisive. These are not my words; they come from others.

As I mentioned, criticism of the status quo has been increasing from the policy's supposed beneficiaries. For example, a fellow by the name of Jimmy who emigrated from Vietnam in 1980 and is now a technician at a photo processing lab commented: "The government spends too much money on something that's not necessary. Canada has freedom and work for

anyone who wants it, and that is all newcomers need". In Richmond, a magazine editor by the name of Anthony agreed that government-sanctioned segregation is no good for Canada.

What seems to be clear is that there is an erosion of support for multiculturalism by the citizens of Canada. This erosion of support for the multicultural approach, particularly given that minorities themselves concur, does nothing to promote harmony and unity in Canada because it does not recognize that all Canadians are equal.

Our vision of Canada should be committed to the goal of social and personal well-being that values individuality while emphasizing themes like family and community assumption of responsibility, problem-solving and communicating these value-sets as a means to better group life. However, at no time should the rights of a group supersede the rights of individuals, unless the group happens to consist of a majority within Canada.

I have tried to show why the federal government's interpretations of multicultural support must come to an end. We can no longer spend money we do not have on financing such a notion. The Angus Reid study from 1991 clearly shows that not only has the multicultural program failed, but Canadians oppose it. One of the main reasons that Canadians oppose this policy is that it is divisive.

I would like to refer to Arthur Slessinger, Jr. Mr. Slessinger is not a conservative thinker whom I trot out to support my position. He is a well-known liberal, an American Democrat. He is the quintessential Liberal's liberal. Slessinger believes that by its very nature multiculturalism is dangerously divisive. It encourages government to segregate citizens along racial, ethnic and linguistic fault-lines. Then it compels them to dole out rights and money according to the labels people wear. Far better to focus on unifying forces, he advises, emphasising the characteristics, desires and beliefs that citizens hold in common. Otherwise, tribal hostilities will drive them apart.

Preservation of diverse cultural heritages can be left to individuals, families and private self-financing organizations.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge that my own personal circumstances are those that encompass a multicultural family. I have a daughter who has dual citizenship with Australia and Canada. I have another daughter who is married to a young man from Mexico; his name is Fernando Rodríguez. I have European roots myself, Croatian and Norwegian. My husband also has a European background. Our family is multicultural. It reflects very much the diversity and richness of those various cultures.