

Multiculturalism

Why were they not included as a fundamental characteristic of Canada, Mr. Speaker? All 11 First Ministers in their haste to come together to decide on something excluded the aboriginal people and the 38 per cent of Canadians who have origins other than French or English.

I look now at the Multiculturalism Act and the words appear in the recital talking about the diversity of Canadians as regards racial, national or ethnic origin as a fundamental characteristic. If it is a fundamental characteristic, enough to put in a recital of a Bill of Parliament, why was it not enough to include it in a constitutional amendment that will be there forever and a day until further amended?

Let me give another example of the concern I have with respect to what multiculturalism has come to mean in Canada. A few years ago the Government of Canada had to address the question of Japanese-Canadian redress. The Japanese-Canadians were dealt with in an unjust fashion in the two World Wars. The Government of Canada decided that something should be done about it. We agreed. But the Government handed that responsibility over, not to the Minister of Justice, not to the Prime Minister's Office but to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Weiner). If that is not the ultimate insult, I do not know what is. Just because Japanese-Canadians are not considered francophones or anglophones on an issue involving them, it is "give the matter to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism". What in God's name does the trampling of the human rights of the Japanese in the Second World War have to do with multiculturalism?

The mind set here in Ottawa, in the legislatures across the country as well as in the minds of a lot of Canadians is that if you are not French or English you are multicultural. What would the reaction have been in Canada if the issue of war criminals were handed over to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism?

Mr. Milliken: It would never have happened.

Mr. Nunziata: Right. It would never have happened, my colleague says. It ought not to have happened with respect to the Japanese-Canadian redress question. That is an example of the problem with multiculturalism.

My time is almost up, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to continue my comments when the House reconvenes in consideration of this legislation.

I was born in this country. My parents are immigrants. I am not a francophone, I am not an anglophone—at least I do not consider myself a francophone or an anglophone. But what am I? A lot of people like to refer to me as an ethnic Member of Parliament or part of the multicultural community. In terms of the powers that be, one often refers to the linguistic duality. It is referred to in the Meech Lake Accord: French-speaking, English-speaking. At some point in time this Government—and I am speaking of this Parliament—has to come to realize that there is more to being a Canadian than being French or English. There is more to being a Canadian than being a francophone or an anglophone. I consider myself just as much a Canadian as any francophone or any anglophone in this House. As long as we keep talking about hyphenated Canadians, Italian-Canadians, Japanese-Canadians, francophones, anglophones, we will forever keep people on the periphery, on the outside. Rather than talk about differences, whether it is the distinct society or—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I call it six o'clock, the Hon. Member will have 10 minutes left for his speech plus a 10 minute question and comment period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being six o'clock, pursuant to Order made Tuesday, June 13, 1989, this House stands adjourned, pursuant to Order made Wednesday, May 3, 1989, until Monday next at eleven o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6 p.m.