

REMARKS

BY

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AT THE Book launching CEREMONY

ON NOVEMBER THE 19TH, 2012

Mr. Senior Vice President of the TD Banking group, Hon. Michael Khan, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Hon. Margaret Best, Minister of Consumers Services, Hon. Andrea Horwath, Leader of the provincial NDP. Hon. Niki Ashton, Member of the House of Commons.

Hon. Members of the Federal and Provincial Parliaments, Hon. Members of the Diplomatic missions in Toronto. Members of the Police Services, Toronto and York Region. Members, of the TD Financial Group.

Distinguished guests, members of the academic community, distinguished honorees, dear colleagues, publishers, editors and journalists members of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada as well as individual members of the sector, ladies and gentlemen attending today's ceremony, please allow me to welcome you all and at the same time to thank you for the great honor of your presence.

For the political observer of the Canadian society it is clear that we are a nation of many nationalities, many races, many religions, bound together by a single unity, the unity of freedom and equality.

As one great statesman of our country said, "with the charter of rights in place, we can now say that Canada is a society where all people are equal and where they share some fundamental values based upon freedom."

Classical democratic theory always viewed democracy as a set of institutions which promoted and depended upon the full rational development of the individual, and today's event celebrates the accomplishments of individual citizens and organizations in every field of social, cultural and academic endeavor and is honoring those individuals who have shown real leadership in cementing the relationship of their community with our great Country, Canada.

It is therefore that today we salute their contributions and recognize their struggles for the respect of human rights and the dignity of every individual citizen, for equal opportunities, for social justice, for peace, cooperation and understanding among the members of the diverse Canadian cultural

communities and the world, and also for justice and respect for all humanity and the international community.

In our modern society, today, we have powerful agencies working in order to formulate the public opinion: the press, motion pictures, radio, television and the internet. Ours then is the duty to see that these agencies are respecting the highest ideals of truth, justice and fair play in a so volatile society by creating of a wholesome relationship among the various cultural, religious, racial and economic interest groups which are formulating the Canadian society.

Today's celebration is the recognition of their considerable contributions to our democracy and also to multicultural fabric of our society as a community of communities. It is therefore that today, we are celebrating the best of our cultures as well as the men and women dedicated themselves in the service and dignity of our fellow men.

This can be considered as the true spirit of citizenship in the high Athenian sense of democracy, which compels a man to live his life with the understanding that the rich in diverse cultures society of a truly civilized state, allows to its citizens to choose their own ways to achieve success in good spirit, without hurting their neighbors.

This is exactly the message of today's ceremony. Our honorees, and mostly the publishers and producers of newspapers and electronic media, with their outstanding efforts managed to bring change and progress in our society, in order to prevent any form of oppression, injustice or hatred, which can be considered as an evil designed to harm the harmonious co- operation and co-existent of our vibrant cultural communities and our democracy.

There is some criticism, these days, by elements of our society that the ethnic press and media are needless and therefore there is no reason for its existence. What a myth really. The citizens of a democratic state are entitled to the essential facts and the government of a democracy must continuously have, in times either critical or not, the benefit of enlightened public criticism as well as enlightened public understanding. And this principle becomes even more critical

in a democracy where the main-stream media is totally concentrated and controlled by only a small group of people, an oligarchy of political and financial interests. In such case it is the ethnic media the one which holds the principals of free and uncontrolled medium in the service of the public interests.

And from this respect, I would like on behalf of the members of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada, to thank and congratulate them for their leadership and vision for a great, unified, progressive and liberal Canada, where every citizen feels as being equal and easy. But in order to be successful this policy we should train these citizens to know exactly the laws and regulations of our government towards their civic significance, and also that the rich cultural diversity of our truly civilized state is created only of the wisdom to choose ways to achieve, without hurting our neighbors. It is a common knowledge to all of us that no body of citizens bears greatest responsibility for a successful functioning of a democracy than the members of the media.

It is the responsibility of the government then to carry out and help these people by organizing educational seminars to make sure that the people understand the policies and are well prepared to make intelligent choices, and avoid possible problems as they express their opinion.

It is also of great importance to the future of our society and our democracy to be a devise to engage the maximum number of citizens in a continuous, fearless and free discussion and study of our political system and public affairs.

This is exactly the significance of the study of “the socio-economic report of Canada’s Ethnic Press and Media”, it shows the importance and the challenges facing the members, publishers and producers, of the sector, as so well was placed by the author of the study professor Dr. Gabriel Huston: “is fostering dialogue, forging the engagement and integration of new Canadians, uniting our communities in Canada’s diversity...”

Recent statistics released by Canadian Statistics are telling us that more than 6.4 million Canadians are using at home their mother language to communicate

among them, a fact that is emphasizing the need of the existence of the ethnic press and media, and yet it is common knowledge to the members of the sector that the federal government besides the press releases for equality and multiculturalism, when the matter comes to dollars and cents from 54,401.024 dollars financial assistance for 2011-12 to Canadian magazines and periodicals, only 896,238.75 was given to members of the sector. As an example to 1,500.000 financial supports given to McLean's Magazine for this period, and the 1,500.00 to Canadian Living and Chatelaine, the Afghan Post received the equivalent of 3,459.00 dollars and the Eritrean Meftih 3,207.00 and so on, and from this amount they had to pay between 1,400.00 and 2,800.00 dollars for an audit of their circulation numbers. Yet, resent information reveilles that last year, the department of Immigration has spent 750,000 and another 450.000 dollars the PMO, in order to monitor the reporting of the ethnic press. At this point allow me to tell you that all together the 660 Ethnic Publications of Canada, the same period of time, did not received more than 800,000.00 in Federal Government ads for the year 2012.

Unfortunately, this is the kind of respect the Canadian Heritage and the federal government is showing towards the members of the ethnic Press. And yet, by closing my remarks, please allow me to refer to the statement of the President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the USA: "No democracy can long survive which does not accept as fundamental to its very existence the recognition of the rights of the minorities."

It is my humble opinion, Ladies and Gentlemen, that today it is more than ever important that the place of a minority group in our democracy not be obscured by ignorance and prejudice. *It is important that the members of every minority group consider together their problems in order that these problems may find expression for the benefit of all. It is even of greatest importance that the government considers with open and sympathetic mind the problems of the minority groups in order that the process of our democracy may work to bring about their solution. And this is exactly the main object of this organization.*

At this point please allow me to express our gratitude to all participants in today's ceremony, as they contributed the most in the success of this event, with their presence.

We earnestly hope that this organization will forge ahead to greatest accomplishments and achieve the most working together and using our collective influence. This organization is unique, one of its kind in the world, as representing 650 publications from 110 difference linguistic communities and also 150 Radio and Television producers.

Finally I want to express my gratitude and the one of our members for the help and support we are receiving from the TD Financial Group, to all members of the administration and also to Mr. Andre Lucas, for their help and understanding.

I want also to thank my daughter Maria Voutsinas, for her dedication and support and finally I want to thank also my adapted daughter Asha Rajak, who helping me the most during this difficult time of her mead term exams at the university. Thank you all.

Thank you all the participants in tonight's celebration and congratulations to all our honorees.