



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

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MULTICULTURALISM

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (11.48 p.m.): I wish to draw the attention of the House to a news item that appeared in the Courier-Mail last week on Tuesday, 10 November. However, before doing so, I wish to put on the record my appreciation and that of One Nation of the role that people of various cultures have played in the development of Australia. One Nation has never denied that—no, never. We are proud of our heritage. What does concern us, though, is the policy of multiculturalism, because this encourages the continuation of separate national identities within the framework of what should be one nation. A nation divided in this way is a nation with a dangerously split personality. United we are strong; divided we are weak and ready for a fall.

I can hear the usual jeering remarks about One Nation being racist. However, racial taunts are no stranger to me. I am a third generation descendant of a German pioneering family and I know how some of the German pioneers of the Fassifern suffered cruelly from hostility, suspicion and even internment during the two world wars, yet this did not prevent many members of those same families from volunteering to fight against Germany. The fact was that, although they were from German stock and retained some of the traditions and culture of their German ancestry, they had been assimilated and were first and foremost Australians. I do not believe that this sort of assimilation is possible under the program of multiculturalism because it encourages the maintenance of cultural attitudes that are alien to our society.

That brings me to the item on page 16 of last Tuesday's Courier-Mail. It was headlined "Cold comfort for Christmas" and read—

"An English provincial city has shocked church leaders by renaming Christmas to give the festive season more multicultural appeal. There will still be carols and fairy lights, but council officials in the City of Birmingham have renamed the 42 days of festivities around Christmas and New Year 'Winterval'."

Yes, not "Christmas" but "Winterval". The story in the Courier-Mail continues—

"Birmingham has a large Sikh, Muslim and Hindu population, and celebrates the festivals of Diwali and Eid."

I wonder how these people would feel if their festivals were renamed "Diwalival" or "Eidval". I can tell honourable members now that they would not cop it.

Every culture has celebrations and beliefs which are sacrosanct. Religion is one of them and it deserves respect, whatever that religion may be. Multiculturalism seems to encourage intolerance. In England the cooking of breakfast bacon was banned at a cafe because the smell was offensive to Muslim neighbours. Christmas carols and even Christmas concerts have reportedly been banned at some schools and kindergartens because they clash with other cultures. Even the nursery rhyme This Little Piggy Went to Market was banned because of its reference to pork.

At this stage, I apologise to any Muslims in the community if they feel that I am unfairly targeting them for criticism. I have no desire to do that. I believe freedom of religion is one of the greatest features of our democratic society and that we can all learn something from other people's cultures and other religions. But the liberty and tolerance that our democracy recognises should be a two-way street.

Closer to home, I was disturbed to hear another example of problems created by multiculturalism. It involved a kindergarten in an area close to Brisbane which decided to have a multicultural day celebration. All the children with ethnic backgrounds were encouraged to wear the national dress of their parents' countries. But when the children of Australian parents inquired what dress they should wear, they were told that there was no national Australian dress so they should just attend the concert and watch. What has happened to slouch hats and Driza-Bones? I am no racist but I have no doubt that, following this speech, the media will react by labelling it discriminatory, and One Nation will once again be accused of affecting international trade and tourism. What our critics conveniently ignore is that it is their reaction and their eagerness to throw racist mud that attracts all of the overseas headlines.

However, if my speech has offended people from other countries who have settled in Australia, I am sorry for that, but I do not apologise for what I have said. My intent is to not hurt other Australians, but simply to warn of the ramifications of espousing a policy that puts glorification of another culture and national identity ahead of assimilation into our culture and our national identity. Instead of multiculturalism, we should be encouraging Australianism, a process which takes people of different races, different cultures and different religions and binds them together.

Time expired.
