

*Canada Day Act*

have been about our heritage, in not praising sufficiently the great men who accomplished a remarkable achievement in nation-building.

We talk about Cavour, about Bismarck and about other great men, but our founding fathers, in a uniquely Canadian way—perhaps a plodding, unexplosive and unrevolutionary way, but in a uniquely Canadian way—achieved the birth of a new country over great difficulties, a country which has survived through many difficulties and on which there have been stresses and strains since July 1 when it was created.

Today we are always looking for something unique, something that is ours. We are fretting about losing our cultural heritage and our distinctive identity. It seems to me we strengthen our present by recalling and glorifying—I do not hesitate to use the word—the past. Sometimes I am told that we must have a new name for our national day because if we use the word “dominion” we are going back to the past. How in heaven’s name can you celebrate a birthday without going back to the date of birth? It has always struck me as preposterous.

The amendment today refers to the substitution of the name Canada Day for Confederation Day. I think that the use of Confederation Day was an interesting suggestion but it recalls the process of confederating, the getting together of the colonies or provinces. But the product of the process was dominion, a new nation brought into being, and I think it is more appropriate and fitting to recall the product which emerged, which has remained with us and which we all hope will continue as the heritage of our founding fathers.

● (3:00 p.m.)

I never believe that one is very thoughtful or productive if he digs in against every suggested change. The man who is eternally the champion of the status quo is not likely to do too much for his contemporary society. I remember reading a humorous report about an old, old man being interviewed by a newspaper reporter. On those occasions they always ask such an old man what is his secret of long life: if he is one kind of chap it is his quart a day, and if he is another kind of chap it is that he did not smoke and did not drink. The reporter said to this old man, “I suppose, sir, in all your long life you have seen many changes”. “Yes,” said the old man, “and I was agin every one of them.” But this is not my attitude. If change is improvement, if change is progress, if change is betterment of course

you opt for change; but not for change for the sake of change, not constantly looking for something a little different just because it is different.

To alter this symbol and to change that name, to remove that title and put something else in its place is not of itself productive. There is meaning in the expression “dominion”. The hon. member has referred to the biblical background. Since Maritimers are perhaps in the forefront of the righteous, it is not surprising it was a Maritimer who was reading the Good Book, and he came to Psalm 72.

We have it on our coat of arms; as we enter this building we can see engraved over the doorway, “The open sea is at her gates, Her gates both east and west.” Recently I was reading a speech Sir Wilfrid Laurier made many years ago on a Dominion Day, and he closed his magnificently eloquent speech by simply quoting those lines. This surely symbolizes Canada. I think it is appropriate that I from the east, where it all began, should follow a member from the west; this is symbolic of all the great expansion across this country. This is what “dominion” means; it is the extension of a united government.

I have a feeling that many people are a bit hung-up on semantics and they think it is domination we are talking about. It is not that at all. We went through the same thing, not personally but historically, during the First World War. The propaganda of the Allies was that “Deutschland Über alles” meant the Germans wanted to be the champions of the whole world. But what it meant in the national anthem in the more decent days of Bismarck was that the fatherland was more important than its components. This is what the expression “dominion” involves. The new entity was more than the sum of its parts, and certainly more than any of its parts. I think this is the kind of thing we want to evoke in our own hearts and the hearts of our countrymen as we celebrate our national day.

They say that people from small communities are more emotionally attached to them than people are attached to big communities. We are indeed sentimental about small communities. Lord Tweedsmuir told us in Charlottetown long ago that there was something about small countries that drew their people to them. He said that perhaps because a country is small it is easier to carry it in your heart. I would always hope that my emotional attachment to Prince Edward Island—and as