

Private Members' Business

We adopted the Canadian Citizenship Act. It was only in the late 1940s that we had Canadian citizenship. Before that time we were British subjects and shared citizenship in some weird way with the United Kingdom.

It was only in 1964 that we adopted the Canadian flag. The Canadian anthem, *O Canada*, was only adopted in the early 1980s.

Even with this government I have seen some progress. A few years ago our mail was referred to as the Royal mail. Now it is Canada Post.

When I was a young person all our paper money had the picture of the monarch on them. Now there are Canadian figures and scenes on our bills but the picture of the monarch is still on a good many others.

I am saying that the practice of leaving one foot in the old country provides a good deal of ambiguity for Canadians who are concerned about patriotism and about national unity. They cannot accuse people in one province, Quebec, of not being totally loyal to Canada when they are not totally loyal to Canada in that they still support British symbols and institutions.

Right now I will deal with the whole question of Her Majesty, Queen of Canada. It is what we call a legal fiction. Everybody knows that the monarch was born in Britain. She is a British subject. She was brought up in British schools, she is English, she is British. She is not a Canadian. It is a legal fiction that she is the Queen of Canada. Why is it a legal fiction?

While I have been in Parliament the Queen in the right of Canada has voted against the Queen in the right of the United Kingdom in the United Nations. The most famous case was in the Suez crisis when there was a very serious difference of opinion between Her Majesty in the right of the United Kingdom and Her Majesty in the right of Canada.

While lawyers might understand the subtleties of these legal fictions the ordinary person does not.

An hon. member: They do so.

Mr. Allmand: Maybe they do in my friend's constituency but they certainly do not in my constituency.

A recent poll was conducted by Angus Reid and published last week in the Montreal and Toronto papers, and throughout Canada. The headline in the paper says: "51 per cent do not want monarchy, poll finds". I am not

dealing with that in my bill. However, let me say that this is what Canadians think. The article says: "Although 56 per cent said the monarchy would survive its current troubles a majority of 51 per cent said the time has come for Canada to sever its ties with the monarchy". That is not Quebec, that is Canada.

My bill simply deals with the oath of allegiance for new Canadians swearing allegiance to Canada when they become new citizens under the process set out in the Citizenship Act.

I suggest that they pledge true allegiance to Canada and the Constitution of Canada. I make no suggestion to change the Constitution of Canada.

For the moment the Queen is part of the Constitution of Canada. The Constitution of Canada is made up of the monarchy, the Senate, the House of Commons and all the institutions. Therefore in pledging allegiance to the Constitution of Canada, although it is not mentioned directly and I do not think it should be mentioned directly because I prefer Canadian symbols and Canadian institutions, people are pledging allegiance to the Queen. In no way does this bill abolish the monarchy. We might discuss that on another occasion, but this bill does not do it.

This bill is another step forward in putting in place meaningful Canadian symbols and institutions, just as we did with our flag, our anthem, the Governor General, appeals to the Privy Council, the Supreme Court of Canada and so on. From the Statute of Westminster in 1931 there has been a steady movement to give us in this country Canadian symbols and institutions.

I return again to the question I asked in the first place. We should all ask ourselves what the purpose of an oath of allegiance is. If I ask somebody to be loyal to me or my party I want that person to make it clear when he or she recites that oath of loyalty or allegiance that he or she is pledging loyalty or allegiance to me and not to somebody who might have been a relative of mine 200 years ago and is now dead or to somebody who is still alive in Ireland or some other country. If we want loyalty and people pledge loyalty and allegiance it should be crystal clear. That is the purpose of an oath of allegiance.

The oath of allegiance we have now is not crystal clear. It is ambiguous, misleading and confusing for the many people who come to this country from the many continents and lands throughout the world.