

National Centennial Act

I would advise him to look at the correspondence exchanged between the former prime minister of Canada and the present premier of Quebec, which was tabled in the house on the 27th of June, and he will understand the situation.

Mr. Kindt: I gave you the opportunity to correct me if my words were wrong, but you did not do so.

Mr. Lamontagne: Yes, I did.

Mr. Kindt: You brought an extraneous matter into the picture by referring to the former government. I am referring specifically to what you said in the house tonight.

The Chairman: Order. May I suggest to the hon. member that he should address himself to the Chair.

Mr. Kindt: Right. I shall be delighted to do so. I turn now to the increase from 8 to 12 in the number of directors. We have never had any explanation why the government intends to add four additional directors.

Mr. Lamontagne: In order to give sufficient provincial representation.

Mr. Kindt: All one has to do is to use his imagination, and it does not take the imagination of anyone with any great degree of intelligence to know that the government is simply padding the board of directors. They are creating more places for political appointments. I say that we want a centennial celebration in 1967 that will be representative of all Canada, and if the government front-benchers are going to continue to act in the manner they have since this bill was brought before the house today, I say to them that they are acting wrongly, if they hope for a united Canada in 1967.

Mr. Lamontagne: May I ask the hon. member a question? Is he against the intention in the resolution, that there should be representation from all the provinces? Is he against that?

Mr. Kindt: I will put it this way. There are 10 provinces in Canada, and the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. If the government were to act in a non-political way and put a representative on the board from each of the provinces—they might even go so far as to give Quebec and Ontario two each, because of their greater population—if the government were to bring in people from all parts of Canada to serve on the board—

Mr. Lamontagne: That is exactly what we want to do.

Mr. Kindt: —then it would not be so distasteful. But the President of the Privy
[Mr. Lamontagne.]

Council has never indicated to the house that he intends to carry out any such suggestion.

Mr. Mather: Mr. Chairman, with the customary brevity of my party, there are only four or five things I should like to say on the resolution now before us. First, I think it must be fairly obvious to most members of the house, as I am sure it is to most people in the country, that so much time has already been wasted by the former and the present administrations in regard to organizing our centennial birthday party that those in charge will have to move very quickly unless they want to go down in history as party poopers. Second, I want to point out that there are only about 40 months left to get the centennial party on the rails. Third, I should like to emphasize what I think is in many members' minds, that not enough attention is being paid in the organization of the party to permanent public projects that will last. I feel that we should want to come out of the celebration with something more than the dishes in the sink, after the party is over.

This afternoon my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, suggested that we in the New Democratic party are at least as eager to have a national consciousness instilled into Canadians as any other party in the house. However, we are ready to forego the wording which the resolution seeks to take out, the use of the word "national" in the title of the act and elsewhere in the centennial phraseology, if it will help to bring together the people of all the different regions of Canada as Canadians, so we can celebrate our centennial party as one people. We favour, instead of the word national, the word "Canadian". The language of this title should be the celebration of the Canadian confederation centennial.

As one who had something to do with the organization of the British Columbia centennial, Mr. Chairman, celebrated in 1958, and who observed the Alberta and Saskatchewan celebrations in the same period, I should like to draw to the attention of the centennial people generally the value of paying more attention to the practical achievement of these provincial centennial organizations. I am not one who supports the provincial government of British Columbia, Mr. Chairman. However, I must say in fairness to them that the organization they inspired and set up did a good non-political job, and that the province of British Columbia has come out of that centennial celebration a much richer province culturally than it went into it. I think the same thing could be said about the Alberta and Saskatchewan celebrations.