

Private Members' Business

leave of the court to apply for a temporary, permanent or amending order regarding custody of or access to the children.

Divorce always leave a bitter aftertaste, and I see it as my duty to ensure that seniors continue to enjoy the place that is theirs in our society. Personally, I am very concerned about the old age pension reform announced by the government, which will come into force in 1997.

In 1994, the government announced that a document would be produced and tabled. Production was delayed, however, and the government preferred to wait until after the referendum in Quebec. In fact, seniors in Quebec had an opportunity to discuss their future at hearings held by the Commission des aînés sur l'avenir du Québec. In the course of these consultations, we found that seniors' concerns are similar across the country. They are concerned about their social and economic situation.

Practically everywhere, people argued in favour of letting senior citizens use their experience for the benefit of the society they will pass on to their grandchildren. Bill C-259 gives seniors a decisive role and reflects our recognition of the role of seniors in our society.

In concluding, I want to say that the official opposition supports Bill C-59 standing in the name of the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam. I want to thank the hon. member on behalf of all seniors' organizations and also on behalf of all grandparents, the young and not so young, in this country for drawing attention to their role in our society.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to be asked to speak in support of Bill C-259, an act respecting national grandparent's day.

I am sure that my colleague from Mission—Coquitlam asked me to speak on the bill because despite my youthful appearance she knows that I am a grandfather. So today, to my grandson, Marcel I say: "If you are watching the parliamentary channel on TV, Pop says hello". I am a grandparent and I am proud of it. All together my wife and I have four grandchildren. Marcel is five going on 16. We also have Alannah, Carson and Brock who are quite a bit younger.

• (1815)

We have a national mother's day and a national father's day. Grandparents are either mothers or fathers and I can see the logic in setting aside a day to recognize the importance of grandparents.

Parents are often so caught up in the task of earning a living, keeping the house organized and keeping the children on the straight and narrow they do not have the energy or the patience to enjoy their children in the same way grandparents do.

My wife Bernice says she has more fun with our grandchildren than she did with our own children. When she was a young mother getting the house tidy usually took priority over reading to our children and other things. Now she spends time with our grandchildren, in particular our grandson Marcel, and she says he claims he loves his grandmother more than pancakes. I can assure members pancakes are my grandson's favourite food.

Grandparents have a big influence on their grandchildren. They provide their grandchildren with deeper roots and a sense of connection with the past. They can teach them different things because they have a different perspective. They can be more tolerant because discipline is not their responsibility any more. They can enjoy their grandchildren for who they really are.

Our grandson Marcel has already learned a few things from watching me in the role of politician. The other day at the dinner table he told a story which his mother knew was a little white lie. She gave him one of her looks and without even skipping a beat our five-year-old grandson said to his mother: "Mom, I would like to rephrase that". He is watching television and he is smooth for a five-year-old.

In today's society grandparents can be of enormous help to their children. With so many families breaking up and with so many families stressed out from making ends meet, an extra pair of loving hands is always welcome.

If we were to have a national grandparents day it would be set aside to honour the role of grandparents and the role they can play. It would recognize the wisdom which grandparents can bring. It would give grandparents a sense of importance and worth. It would be a powerful reminder to those grandparents who are not as involved with their grandchildren as perhaps they could be that the more time they spend with their grandchildren, the longer the memory of their influence will survive.

The House should give serious consideration to the bill. It will be an important signal to the nation of our ongoing commitment to the family. It will strengthen the resolve of those involved in taking their roles more seriously and, most important, it will not cost a dime.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sometimes I think grandparents are wasted on the young because it is not until later in life when we can look back that we really appreciate what our grandparents have given to us.

I had the great pleasure of knowing three of my grandparents very well. One grandmother, who has been gone from us for almost 40 years, is still revered by her family as a strong, principled woman who worked hard to provide a life for her family in the new country.

My grandfather impressed on me the importance of my responsibility as a citizen, as a new Canadian, ensuring his