

Private Bills

Mr. Mandziuk: Does the hon. member not believe that spirit alone is not enough, and that the words count for something as well?

Mr. Rinfret: Mr. Speaker, I take my hat off with admiration to Stanley Weir who translated or interpreted Adolphe Routhier's version.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, I shall only take a few minutes to make a few comments on this bill.

During this debate tonight I noticed that there seems to be complete agreement across the country with regard to the music of our national anthem "O Canada".

However, as to the words, there seems to be some confusion. I listened with interest to the various speeches made tonight and I fully agree with some remarks made by the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Mandziuk) concerning the words of the national anthem "O Canada".

We are fighting for a strong Canada. We are fighting for national unity. I think that the words of "O Canada" were not translated as they should have been by Judge Stanley Weir.

But I think that if we want a truly national anthem whose words will truly represent Canada, as the hon. member for Marquette stated, we should have, if not exactly the same words, at least the same idea.

As for passing a bill or legislation, if you want, to sing our national anthem "O Canada", I am one of those who think that if we are proud of Canada, our country, we do not need any legislation to sing our national anthem. Personally I have been singing it since I was old enough to speak, since I started going to school, and I am proud of it. I did not need any legislation to do that. For us, in the province of Quebec, our anthem has always been sung thus and I think that even if legislation is not adopted, we will keep on singing "O Canada" proudly as long as we love our country, Canada.

[Text]

Mr. Reg Cantelon (Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly that I am as much a Canadian as any man who sits in this house today. My ancestors have been living in this country since the early 1800's. I have been interested in this song ever since I started to teach school, which is a long time ago. It has always been sung in my school, and I think that those students who sang it did so with a true feeling of Canadianism, as I believe I did. However, this is not an

[Mr. Rinfret.]

ideal song, in spite of some of the observations that have been made about it. There are other patriotic songs such as the "Maple Leaf", which my students were able to learn with less difficulty and sang with just about as much emotion.

I am pleased to be able to accept the suggestion of the hon. member that we have one song for the whole of Canada and that that song should perhaps be "O Canada". Having said that, however, I must state that I agree very strongly with the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Mandziuk) who has brought out an incontrovertible fact which indicates that the two versions, French and English, are not at all analogous. If we are to have a song which will truly represent all Canadians it seems to me that we should have one song not only in tune but also in words.

I have been interested in this subject for some time and went to the trouble of contacting the translation bureau and requesting a translation of "O Canada". I have received the translation, although it is not the same as the one placed on the record by the hon. member for Marquette. I should like, therefore, to place on *Hansard* what might be called the parliamentary translation, in view of the fact that this was provided by our parliamentary translation bureau. It is as follows:

O Canada, land of our ancestors
 Glorious deeds circle your brow
 For your arm knows how to wield the sword
 Your arm knows how to carry the cross;
 Your history is an epic of brilliant deeds
 And your valour steeped in faith will protect
 our homes and our rights,
 Will protect our homes and our rights.

I do not quarrel with those sentiments at all, but how can we possibly consider that this is a similar translation to the English translation of "O Canada" that has been in use?

O Canada! Our home and native land!
 True patriot-love in all thy sons command.
 With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
 The true north, strong and free!
 And stand on guard, O Canada,
 We stand on guard for thee.
 O Canada, glorious and free!
 We stand on guard, we stand on guard for thee.
 O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

These are not similar words nor are the sentiments exactly the same. On this ground I feel this is not the time to accept the bill. I do hope that some steps will be taken by parliament to arrive at a set of English words that are a translation from the French or a set of French words that are a translation