

Canada Day Act

tion" or "Canada" for the word "Dominion" would do anything but change something which has served us well. As I said earlier, there are people who misunderstand this particular word. I think our job should be to go out and point out to them that they are wrong in their understanding. As I see it, our job should not be to endorse their view and to change this interesting semantic connection with the earliest days of our country. What we should get back to is the spirit of a century ago. I say this, thinking ahead to the Quebec election where, for the first time, an organized and fighting separatist party has emerged with a fair chance of getting a good number of votes and of seats. What we should do is get back to those days when people realized that this country would not be perfect and that it would have difficulties, yet nevertheless decided to unite and cast their lot in together.

I think that changes such as this one do not encourage us to look back to those days when this country was born. It is all too easy to say that Canada is not really a viable nation. This is wrong. We should look back to the tremendous strains which were put on this country over the last century, the tremendous obstacles and difficulties that were overcome in 1864 and 1867, and realize, by looking backward, that the present difficulties are perhaps minor compared with those faced by our people a century ago.

I regret that I cannot agree with this suggestion of my hon. friend from Hamilton whose enthusiasm I admire greatly, or the suggestion of the hardworking member for Brant (Mr. Brown). I do not believe that the day on which we celebrate Confederation, namely Dominion Day should have its name changed.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, for a while I thought we were getting into something like a love-feast. I was much flattered by the generous remarks of the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Gibson), but I must say that while I was charmed and delighted by his compliments I was actually more impressed by the arguments of the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Anderson). For a moment I thought, when the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth was referring to me, that he was suggesting that in some way I have become a museum piece. It made me feel terribly important because I understand that yesterday when I was on my way back from my constituency and a few minutes late in

[Mr. Anderson.]

arriving in the House, a minister noted that the country was momentarily bereft of my services. In this place, such things could go to the head of a normally modest person!

I have been interested in this matter for a long time. I think it is well that we look at these things because the mark of a civilized society is the interest of its members in intangibles. In fact, I remember a very learned anthropologist coming to the conclusion that the only difference between a civilized group of people and an uncivilized one was that the civilized people believed in symbols or baubles and that they found something beyond the purely intrinsic to which they gave social value. So it is fitting that we discuss our national birthday, its significance, and it is fitting that we discuss ways whereby we can improve and enrich the celebration of our national birthday.

The fact that I thoroughly agree with the hon. member who has just spoken does not mean that I think there is no value in our canvassing other suggestions, and I too have the highest regard for the person who in this session brought to our consideration and deliberation the question of a change of name for our natal day. Birthdays are important to individuals. It is the one day in families where birthdays are celebrated on which a little extra attention is given to the person who is recalling that important event, his day.

We have reasons for celebrating July 1, and they have been touched upon. Something was consummated on that day, something that is very unique and very important. I appreciate the reference that was made to the city of Charlottetown which I have the honour of representing and which proudly and properly calls itself the cradle of Confederation, because it was in that city in 1864 that men of goodwill from the various colonies of what was then called British North America came together, with reasonableness, common sense and a regard for the problems, interests and preferences one of another, and began the process of confederating those colonies.

As Sir John A. Madonald said more than once, practically everything that was finally agreed upon in a formal way had in fact been informally agreed upon at Charlottetown in 1864. That it took three years to give formality to this indicates, as the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich pointed-out, that it was not by any means an easy process, indeed that it was an extremely difficult one. I think we have been remiss, as we Canadians so often