

*National Centennial Act*

celebration of the centennial of confederation in 1967 is a most happy occasion. I do not mean happy only in the sense that we should be able to go out and have fun socially at the events that will be going on, but that we should be happy with regard to the 100th anniversary of the founding of this nation which was brought about by the joining together of Lower Canada, Upper Canada and the maritime provinces at the conferences in Charlottetown and Quebec city resulting in confederation in 1867. I know that in 1967 all Canadians, no matter what their origin, will take part in the celebration feeling that they are Canadians and none of them, as the hon. member for Marquette seemed to imply, will enter into the celebrations as second class citizens just because the name of this act has been changed. I understand that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) also wants to speak so I will now conclude.

**Mr. Churchill:** Thanks for giving me two minutes.

**Mr. MacNaught:** Mr. Speaker, I believe it would meet with the approval of the house if the time devoted to private members' business this day were to extend only from 5.20 to six o'clock so that we may finish this bill, because it is urgent that it be disposed of today. The President of the Privy Council cannot be here next week, and I think it would meet with the approval of all hon. members if we continued a little longer and tried to dispose of the bill.

**Mr. Knowles:** We agree that we try.

**Mr. Churchill:** We agree that we try; but it is pretty shocking procedure that two members on the government side should occupy the time of the house in the last 40 minutes making speeches which were inflammatory, to say the least, and that we should then be asked to agree to a limitation of debate. Another 20 minutes might not suffice to answer these hon. gentlemen.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gregoire:** We agree, Mr. Speaker.

[*Text*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the house ready for the question? First of all, is it agreed that we will proceed as suggested by the minister?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Georges Valade (St. Mary):** Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to delay the passing of this measure. If the hon. member who has just resumed his seat had confined his remarks

to the principle of the bill now before us, I feel I might have had an extra 15 minutes, and that, without impeding the work of this house.

We are studying an amendment to legislation enacted by the former government. The purpose of this amendment is to change the title of a federal agency which is entrusted with a public celebration and with throwing into light, at the occasion of the centennial of confederation, those historical facts which have surrounded the birth and the expansion of this country of ours, Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we wasted a lot of time in finding a formula to change the title of that act. It would have been so much more simple to call the bill the "Canada centennial act", and in French "Loi du centenaire du Canada". That title would have been quite simple and would certainly have expressed the proposed objective. This makes us wonder whether the real aim of the bill is not to play at politics rather than to safeguard a principle, as the government would have us believe.

When we examine the main amendments concealed behind this change of title, we find various clauses which not only make us suspect the reasons given by the President of the Privy Council, but tend to depreciate the aim of the legislation introduced by the former government.

Indeed, there is not a single paragraph in the amendment of the former act which does not imply some sort of political patronage. The present legislation being so important, it is unfortunate that the government did not consider the grounds for introducing this legislation more seriously and should rather under the pretence of changing the title, have opened the door to a patronage which seems so much to its liking.

If we read paragraph 3 of Bill C-107, we find that, instead of maintaining the status of the general commissioner in charge, he has been given an associate commissioner, which results in a sharing of authority and the splitting of the administrative structure of that organization, a fact which might very well make it helpless or at least ineffective.

I wonder why the minister saw fit to appoint an associate commissioner to such an organization. If it was not for political reasons, I would like very much to know the real reasons which prompted him to make this change in the legislation.

If we examine the legislation a little further, we find in subsection 5 that the commission may undertake a program or distribute donations for any amount not exceeding \$25,000. Here again, this amendment is quite close to the new spirit that seems to