

*Suggested National Indian Day*

ethnic groups which make up our country. That is why the Centennial Commission looks very favourably on this motion moved by the hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria (Mr. Muir).

In March 1965, the Centennial Commission met in Ottawa with 18 Indian leaders from all parts of Canada to get their advice on the participation of the Indians to the centennial celebrations. One of the most important recommendations made by that group reads as follows:

That a National Indian Day be appointed; Considering that a National Indian Day would recognize the contribution made by the Indians to the Canadian civilization.

In November 1965, another national meeting was held in Winnipeg and the Indian leaders from eight provinces attended. Even if the main subject of discussion dealt with the Indian folklore, as reflected today in Indian festivals, reconstitutions and pow-wows, and their integration in the centennial celebrations, one of the resolutions passed at that time provided for the proclamation of a National Indian Day. The resolution was sent to the Indian National Advisory Council, whose members are appointed by the Indians throughout Canada, with the recommendation that the Indian Affairs Branch be invited to implement it. The Indian National Advisory Council met again at the beginning of January 1966 in Ottawa and strongly recommended to the Indian Affairs Branch to create a National Indian Day.

Quite recently, the Centennial Commission once again met in Ottawa, on April 18 and 19, 1966, with 22 Indian leaders from eight provinces to follow up the work undertaken at the conference of March 1965, in order to evaluate the progress made with regard to the projects devised by the Indians for the centennial.

At that meeting it was suggested that a National Indian Day be proclaimed. Everyone agreed that since the treaties with the Indians were signed during the reign of Queen Victoria, the most appropriate and most significant date would be May 24. It was therefore unanimously agreed to include in the minutes of the meeting a request to the Centennial Commission and the Indian Affairs Branch to support the recommendation to the effect that May 24 be recognized throughout Canada as National Indian Day.

That recommendation is now being studied by the Indian Affairs Branch as well as by the officials of the Centennial Commission.

[Mr. Béchard.]

• (5:50 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Parkdale.

**Mr. Howard:** Mr. Speaker, could I rise on a question of privilege? We have had representative spokesmen from each of the parties except the Ralliement Crédistes and two spokesmen from the Liberals. Could we not dispense with further comment—there are only five minutes left—in order that a matter both vital and important might be voted on and parliament given an opportunity to express its opinion?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I recognize the point made by the hon. member for Skeena but the Chair has no authority to curtail debate. The hon. member for Parkdale.

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, before the hon. member commences his remarks may I at this time appeal to the minister who is present in the house—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria):** —and to the government to allow this matter to come to a vote.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I should point out to the hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria that if he speaks now he will close the debate.

**Mr. Howard:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Stanley Haidasz (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to join with my colleagues in this house in expressing my tribute to the Indian people—

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria):** You can express it by voting.

**Mr. Haidasz:** —for their contribution to the development of this country. They have played a commendable role in the history of Canada and should therefore be recognized especially by their fellow Canadians at this time when we are on the eve of the centennial of the confederation of Canada and making preparations for our one hundredth birthday.

I want to join with hon. members who have spoken before me in the tributes which they have paid not only to the Indian people and their leaders but also to the present government and the Minister of Northern