

Government Orders

[English]

Thousands of Canadians currently celebrate Heritage Day in February and Canada Day in July. They organize events that draw the attention of Canadians to the cultural diversity of this great country and to the patriots of our past. They celebrate its past, present and future.

I find the motion most peculiar in that it links responsible government directly to the actions of the reformers and les patriotes of 1837. It is a linkage that Papineau himself would not have accepted. If we recall our history lessons it was the Durham report, which followed responsible government, that was the direct result of the 1837 rebellions. The Durham report called for responsible government and the union of the Canadas. Papineau opposed both.

The Durham report indicated:

I entertain no doubt of the national character which must be given to Lower Canada. It must be that of the British Empire, that of the great race which must, in the lapse of no long period of time be predominant over the whole North American continent.

That was Durham's hope. His hope was assimilation but it was fortunately not to be. That it did not occur was the result of the moderate reformers. The Liberal Party was the original and true reform party, and it was the work of Lafontaine and Baldwin. Professor Careless has said:

The idea of responsible government was taken up in the 1830s in British North America by loyal admirers of the British model, who sought both to remedy discontent with unyielding local oligarchies and to keep the provinces securely, though freely, within the Empire. Radicals such as William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis-Joseph Papineau preferred American elective patterns, but Joseph Howe in Nova Scotia and Robert Baldwin in Upper Canada showed far better comprehension—better even than Lord Durham—since they realized that an organized party system was vital. Howe in Nova Scotia, and Baldwin and Louis Lafontaine in the Province of Canada, built up strong, moderate reform parties to gain responsible government, and by 1848 saw it fully operating, accepted by a Liberal, imperial Britain.

Indeed it was Howe of Nova Scotia who first achieved responsible government. Let us never forget that responsible government was not fully democratic. Should we not honour those other great Canadians such as Nellie McClung and Thérèse Casgrain who fought for the franchise for women in the first four decades of this century?

I do not disagree with my hon. colleague that we have national patriots. I accept that Papineau and Mackenzie were patriots. Mackenzie was the grandfather of the founder of one of the great prime ministers of this great party that I represent.

I agree that Baldwin and Lafontaine merit special recognition. They worked together to achieve responsible government in a remarkable demonstration of tolerance shown by Canadians of that day.

In 1841 Lafontaine lost his seat in an election of that year and Baldwin found one for him in the heart of Upper Canada, Canada West, in Newmarket, Ontario. Two years later Baldwin

lost his seat and Lafontaine had him elected in the constituency of Rimouski which was 99 per cent francophone. I suggest to my hon. colleague we may switch some day in the same fashion. That was the spirit of the times and the spirit of the toleration and co-operation that created this great country.

• (1200)

There have always been those who had doubts about this country and its future. Joseph Howe, it must be admitted, doubted that Confederation would work. He opposed it in 1867 and called it botheration not Confederation. Within a few years he became caught up in the vision of a great nation from sea to sea. So did Wilfrid Laurier, who had opposed Confederation in 1867, and so did W. S. Fielding of Nova Scotia who opposed Confederation in the 1880s in a campaign for premier that he led for the Liberal Party. Ten years later Fielding was in Ottawa as a part of Laurier's cabinet.

Is it not possible that 10 years hence the hon. member for Verchères and indeed the Leader of the Opposition himself, who has shown such a willingness to change his political views in the past, might together with all of us on this side celebrate Canada Day and Heritage Day in Ottawa?

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The period set aside for Private Members' Business has now ended. Under Standing Order 96(3), the item is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-30, an act to amend the Department of Labour Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Hon. David Michael Collenette (for the Minister of Human Resources Development) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Collenette (for the Minister of Human Resources Development) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to, Minister of Human Resources Development): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity address the House about