

Criminal Code

bill receives formal second reading today I will see to it that those amendments are moved at the committee stage.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton): Madam Speaker, I would certainly not agree that the items the hon. member has suggested be deleted. I think the manner in which his bill was framed was good, no matter what his constitutional experts or the Department of External Affairs may have told him.

There was an instance not too far from my own constituency in the summer of 1974, where an organization obtained moneys from the federal government and an incident took place when the Union Jack was desecrated and insulted. I think section 49.2 should remain, and I certainly would not consent to withdrawing it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Madam Speaker, it gives me pleasure to say a few words on this bill, and to congratulate in particular the hon. member who introduced it. Indeed it seems that if one considers what the Canadian flag represents one realizes immediately how important it is for Parliament to pass official legislation to protect it and particularly explain clearly to the people of this country what the flag truly represents.

Those who sat here a few years back during the very difficult debate which then certainly divided Canadians for a while must understand that step must now be taken to avoid another division of Canadians on the flag issue, a flag which now, quite on the contrary, unites Canadians from coast to coast. It seems important to me that the bill be enacted because I had myself opportunities to wish that it were so.

I come from the heart of Montreal, a part of our country which is particularly noisy and which is represented at the provincial level by a member who advocates breaking up Canada and who certainly managed to gain a few supporters. I already received representations from certain people in my riding asking to be protected because they wanted to fly the Canadian flag but felt threatened. I think it is absolute nonsense that a citizen of Canada—such a free country—should even feel threatened when he wants to fly the flag of his country, the national emblem. That is why I think the bill introduced by the hon. member is excellent, and I will support it.

I would also like to make the following remark: It seems to me that respect for law and order in a society such as ours can only be enhanced if there were respect for its symbol, probably the most important, at least the most known, in that society—its flag.

That is why I congratulate the hon. member and I will support his bill.

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Madam Speaker, I thought the two parties of the opposition were going to speak on this bill. First of all, let me congratulate its mover. To my mind, deleting the words provincial flag and foreign flag is an excellent idea, because we would otherwise be intervening somewhat in someone else's responsi-

[*Mr. Hopkins.*]

bility; what we are concerned with now is the national flag.

As the preceding speaker said a while ago, we have had enough discussions about the national flag. When we voted, I was a member of the joint committee on the flag. I still remember the terrible discussions we had for months. Some will doubtless say that this bill is not necessary. I feel that if we limited ourselves to the spirit of Canadian citizenship, we would, at first glance, be inclined to say: Offhand, we would say this bill is not needed because those who do not respect the national emblem have no love for their country. Whether they have reason is another story.

The national emblem is in my view somewhat in the nature of a family picture, for instance. Children have a love for family emblems because they were brought up to respect authority, to love their parents. Laws will never be needed to prevent them from tramping on their parents' picture. This is something inherent that cannot be imposed by statute. But since we have in Canada different tendencies, I believe a bill to that effect is really needed, unfortunately, to prevent unseemly acts across the country.

If someone has reason not to love his country and to make it known by tearing up or destroying the national emblem, we are entitled to ask ourselves why they tend to do so. It is certainly because they were not impressed by the behaviour of parliamentarians and the authorities in the country, or probably because they were disappointed by the administration of justice or witnessed shortcomings. These are questions that come to my mind when I think of the bill.

I suggested it should be a natural thing to respect one's national emblem, to the extent that all citizens love their country. Who is going to induce them to do so? People in authority. If citizens see only gangsterism in the government, in the Cabinet, and in every parliamentary organization, how can they love their country?

I believe primary responsibility rests with parliamentarians. We, as members of parliament, should learn to show dignity, and especially in the course of these debates, knowing we are here to represent the people of Canada and we alone can make citizens love their country. They will love it to the extent they feel free and happy to live here.

I am not ready to put immediately the blame on the groups who are going to rebel against the flag or any other emblem of this country. Instead, I wonder if this action was not provoked by people who should set a good example. This is why respect for the flag should not be forced by legislation, but should come from the pride that the citizens have of their country, from the confidence that they have in their administrations and from the security that they can enjoy in their country.

I support this bill somewhat reluctantly since I would have liked that this Parliament promulgate more humane laws so that all Canadian citizens could be happy to live in Canada. In this way, Madam Speaker, we would be sure never to have to legislate to insure respect for the Canadian emblem.