

National Centennial Act

hundredth anniversary should be. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre referred to the hope that we would have something more than fine speeches. I should like to see us have some of the new symbols for our one hundredth anniversary that the people of Malaysia are going to have for their first. The delegates to the commonwealth parliamentary association were invited to witness a display of mass bands before His Majesty the King of Malaysia in a stadium the like of which we have not anywhere in this country, so far as I know. I refer to the stadium Negara, their new national stadium. We, in Canada, put up some sort of a barn-like structure for a stadium, and we erect a horrible mess of structural steel for our floodlights. These people created a stadium in which the floodlight columns look like national monuments. They were beautiful stone columns, shapely in form and proportion. I must say that many times I wished all the members of this house could have the experience of touring Malaysia, just as the delegates to this conference did. I can think of nothing that would give us more zest or more inspiration for having a one hundredth anniversary celebration that is worthy of our nation than the experience those of us had who were there.

Certainly, I feel that we in Canada are not yet too old or decrepit to be able to revive that sort of youthful enthusiasm for nation building and for the development of parliamentary democracy that I found in the newest member of the commonwealth, Malaysia. I recalled that when I left this chamber to go on that trip, the house was involved in a rather long and sometimes heated discussion concerning where certain members were going to sit in this chamber. I must say that, with that in mind, I was a bit appalled when I found the veneration in which Canada, as the senior member of the commonwealth, was held by the people of Malaysia, as they voice their enthusiasm for parliamentary democracy and the rule of law.

Malaysia is a country of minorities with about 50 per cent Malays, some one third of the people with Chinese ancestry and the other largest minority coming from the sub-continent of India. This is a land where people speak many languages, a land where people have a great variety of cultures and yet—

The Chairman: Order; I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member but I am just wondering whether he is not straying quite a bit from the resolution now before the committee.

Mr. Barnett: I have listened rather attentively to the discussion of this resolution, and it seems to me that my remarks are pertinent

[Mr. Barnett.]

to my own desire, and I take it to the desire of those who wish the passage of this resolution, to do something to stimulate action in connection with our celebration plans and to get some real centennial building into the proposals for this celebration in 1967. It was with that in view, Mr. Chairman, that I thought I should like to say these few words in support of the resolution, relating them to my own recent experience in the development of nationhood in Malaysia.

I am not going to prolong these remarks. The point I am really trying to make is that the important thing to consider in connection with our centennial is the attitude of mind with which we approach it. If I may say so, I think one of the prerequisites is a change in the attitude of the members of this house collectively. I was saying that the contrast between the attitude towards the institution of parliament which was evident when I left here and the attitude which I found in Malaysia was something which did not make me proud to be a Canadian or to be a member of this house. I feel that if there is any virtue in some of us going abroad and seeing what others are doing, it is in getting a fresh approach by seeing ourselves through the eyes of others. We should talk about this when we do come back into the house.

I was mentioning that Malaysia is a nation of minorities, a people with many languages and many cultures. I was about to say that they are making a tremendous effort to create unity and harmony, yet retain the variety and colour of their various cultures. I have to say that even during this discussion, the sort of petty bickering in which we indulge in respect to some of the language and cultural features of our own confederation, does not sit very well in contrast to what they are attempting to do in Malaysia. I would hope that the passage of this resolution, if it has any value at all, will help us enter more fully into the spirit of confederation. That was really the point I wished to make when rising to discuss it.

In line with some of the suggestions made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre I could go on to point out what might be some of our centennial projects. In Malaysia, for example, 50 per cent of the total federal budget is being spent on education. It has one of the most beautiful universities to be found anywhere in the world, a university which was started from scratch in 1958.

Mr. Lamontagne: May I ask a question of the hon. member?

Mr. Barnett: Yes.

Mr. Lamontagne: In order to shorten the debate on this resolution, which has a very