

hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart), the government made the announcement right under his nose, so to speak. I should like to see the House, on this day when the private member is king for one hour, make a decision.

I am enthusiastic about this measure because in a certain non-Mafia sense I am one of the godfathers of this bill. It embraces the recognition of the founding father of confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald. I tried for many years to promote a holiday on his birthday. He was, unfortunately, born on the 11th day of January, and that was not a good time for a holiday, but believing with Edmund Burke that all good government is founded on compromise, I was pleased in the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to go along with the suggestion that we designate Macdonald, the national flag, and the native peoples, and as the years go by that we reach into our heritage and set aside aspects thereof to which we would turn the attention of the Canadian people.

I would be very sorry if in the discussion of a heritage day bill we got into the realm of merely computing a number of working days. The principal purpose of this bill and those asking for it is to try to foster in this representative body a greater feeling for the old fashioned word patriotism, a greater feeling among Canadians for the great men and events of their past and for the essential ingredients of what makes this country tick.

If I can get the chief whip of the government party and the mover of the bill to stop talking, I think other hon. members would hear me a little better.

It seems to me that while the economy of the country may be in a precarious state, and it is, I do not think we would really shore it up, and assure solidarity and prosperity merely by taking a stand against awarding another non-working day. I believe it is not a question of how many days people work but rather of what they accomplish. If we are smart enough in this country to increase our productivity—although it looks very bad now, comparatively—we may move into an era when the working week will not be longer but shorter.

● (1620)

I am happy that we are making some effort in this bill to honour Sir John A. Macdonald, master statesman, architect of confederation and, incidentally, the man under whose regime the legalization of trade unions was accomplished. I think it is appropriate that Sir John A. Macdonald should be linked with this proposed legislation.

I want to commend the legislation to my colleagues in the House as a useful gesture toward increasing our feeling of Canadianism. This country is more than lakes, mountains, and railways; it is the spirit of the people, the unity of the people that gives a sense of Canadianism.

For too long we have been afraid to let our Canadianism show—afraid we might be accused of being nationalist or romantic, or of getting excited. It took years to get Canadians on our stamps, for instance. We are afraid to display pictures or portraits of former prime ministers in our schools in case we be too partisan—even though they have been dead for three quarters of a century. Once in a while we come close to letting ourselves go, as we did during Expo. We do not injure our country, however, if we speak for an hour or two, as we have today, of symbols. Surely a

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civilized society is one that realizes that symbols are more important than mundane things. It is the spirit of the cathedral, not the bricks and mortar that put it together, that makes it a true place of worship.

I am in favour of asserting our belief in the great heritage of Canada, and if we direct our people to that for one day we will have achieved some useful purpose.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Madam Speaker, I too appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill C-208, respecting National Heritage Day, the private member's bill presented to this House by the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan).

Last night I had the opportunity of attending a Kinsmen's club meeting in Ottawa with the hon. member and heard him speak in regard to the bill. One thing we were all made very much aware of by the hon. member was that Kinsmen's clubs across Canada are participating to a very great degree in the celebrations of a heritage day. Because the Kinsmen are so closely associated with this bill I feel it appropriate to commend them not only in this area but in their many areas of involvement in serving the greatest needs of communities.

Kinsmen International is the only true all-Canadian service club we have. I consider it an honour and privilege to be a member of this outstanding group.

Bill C-208 provides:

—that the particular aspect of our heritage to be honoured on this day should be varied by proclamation from year to year and that the focal point of the celebration for the first year should be the Canadian flag.

On this note I should like to quote from a brochure put out by the Kinsmen's Club of Sherwood Park in my constituency. The brochure deals with Heritage Day and what we should all anticipate. If this bill is passed, in the first year the focus will be on our flag. I think it is worth while to take two sentences from the brochure issued by the Kinsmen's Club of Sherwood Park as follows:

The national flag is a symbol of Canada which identifies our country throughout the world. It is natural, therefore, that Canadians will wish to treat the flag with respect that such a symbol warrants and will expect others to do the same.

It also says:

This land means many things to many people. Our common bond is represented by the flag. Wherever it flies, we can be proud.

As I stated earlier, this is a quote from a brochure put out by the Kinsmen's Club of Sherwood Park. Since they are so closely associated with Heritage Day I think it appropriate that we put some of the accomplishments of the Kinsmen Club organization and its contribution to the community as a whole, on the record.

Kinsmen was started in Hamilton in October, 1920, by a dozen young men serving their community. Today there are over 500 Kinsmen Clubs in Canada with more than 15,000 members in the association.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I am afraid the bill does not stretch as far as to talk about Kinsmen Clubs.