

*Canada Flag Day*

[Translation]

**Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to let this historic moment pass without saying a few words to express my personal satisfaction about the bill now under consideration.

I have just heard my colleagues' comments and I agree with their suggestions.

It is obvious now that we have a Canadian flag that we must foster feelings of respect and pride for it, since it reminds Canadians of the memory of those who sacrificed their life in several ways to defend our rights.

When I refer to the defence of the Canadian people's rights I mean those who died on the battlefields and I also wish to think of those who, in others fields of public life, have devoted their energy and their efforts, either as parliamentarians or in another capacity, to make this country more tolerable, the government more easily controllable and the Canadian people happier.

If it is true, Mr. Speaker, that we respect and are proud of our flag, it is not because of what it is but rather of what it represents.

For us, our flag is a symbol. It is the symbol of Canadian unity. And I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that listening to the comments of my colleagues a while ago, I was a little sad. I wished those complimentary words intended for the flag could be renewed the year round in this country, and I was remembering some incidents showing that it was so easy for politicians, be it during election campaigns or in other instances, to forget that their duty was to ensure Canadian unity. I was also remembering, but with much sorrow, the unfounded charges that were uttered from right and left. I was also remembering some disparagement campaigns; I remembered how easily mud could be thrown at others during election campaigns or at other moments, and with what care division seemed to be nursed among the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, I was reflecting that no doubt it is nice to hear members of Parliament today pay homage to the flag, speak with reverence of those who contributed to providing us with that symbol, but that it would be much more desirable that altogether, with no exception, on the occasion of this debate on the subject of the Canada flag day, we resolved to transpose into facts and in our daily life those noble feelings being expressed today. In such circumstances, Mr. Speaker, perhaps would we less often witness on the political scene those sad examples that are offered us, those deplorable sights which, unfortunately, endure, while apparently, hon. members bend their efforts much more on dividing the Canadian people than on uniting them.

In the same line of thought, Mr. Speaker, I do remember some words that were uttered not so long ago and which, unfortunately, among the people of Canada, contribute not only to reducing the importance and the influence that the Members of Parliament can enjoy, but also giving an erroneous notion of what we mean by Canadian unity.

Therefore, on this occasion, may I make the wish that every day, every member will read the flattering remarks made by all in the greatest spirit of cordiality. May those words come back to our mind every day and guide our

[Mr. Schumacher.]

deeds because I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that we will be judged much more on our deeds than our words.

It would be fruitless and useless to quote, either from *Hansard* or elsewhere, speeches by hon. members praising the Canadian flag if on the same day or the same occasion one can read in the debates or the papers the speeches delivered by those same members which served to divide the Canadian people.

In making that wish, Mr. Speaker, I endorse the remarks made by my colleagues. However, I should like to point out a paradox which is quite evident. This bill was put on the order paper with great haste and I think it was only right to pay tribute to the great man the right hon. Mr. Pearson was, an authentic liberal—and I mean “authentic”—but although that tribute was called for we must also realize that there is on the same order paper a bill coming from my excellent colleague the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) which brings to the attention of the House the deeds and accomplishments of another statesman, Sir John A. Macdonald, and I think on this occasion if our colleagues are willing to talk about Canadian unity and show a concrete example of Canadian unity it would be desirable to have both bills examined at the same time, deferred to the committee at the same time, dealt with at the same time so as to really enshrine in reality this unity which we so often praise in our speeches.

[English]

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, as one who had the honour to second the motion for second reading of this bill, I might say just a word or two. I should like to congratulate my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Nelson), for presenting this bill before the House of Commons. I feel I must extend to him also another word of congratulation, because if as a new member he should get a private members' bill through during the first session he is here, what a future he has ahead of him. Indeed, some of my colleagues have been suggesting to me that if I stick around long enough I might have the same success.

● (1750)

Earlier today the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) rose and asked permission to withdraw a bill of his because its purpose had been accomplished, namely, the decision to display the Canadian flag in the House of Commons. At first, the thought occurred to me that perhaps I should withdraw half of a bill of mine that is on the order paper, but I have been reminded by the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher) that I had better not do that.

I do have a bill, Bill C-79, which calls for two holidays in addition to those that we already have, namely, a holiday in August and a holiday in February. Now that we will have a holiday in February when this bill passes, as I said, some hon. members may think I should withdraw my Bill C-79. But I would point out, prompted by the hon. member for Palliser, that the bill we are now discussing does not give workers the day off and does not provide all of the things that go with certain holidays. It just declares it to be a legal holiday.