

*National Anthem*

great and growing and developing nation with a splendid history of achievement, to find the things which will unite our people rather than make experiments which may in the final analysis divide them on a purely sentimental basis.

I must confess—I suppose everybody has had the same experience—that when a member comes to parliament for the first time from his own little section of Canada he has preconceived ideas about his locality and what it wants. Members of parliament must never forget these important fundamentals; nevertheless as the years go by everyone becomes a little mellowed and just a little more inclined to see the other fellow's point of view in relation to the various problems of our national life. As I look back over my fourteen years in this house I can hardly conceive what my point of view was when I first came here, and before I had learned to appreciate the point of view of others, from their eloquence, logic and reasoned approach in debates on national problems. Perhaps that reflects itself in what we say and in the attitudes which members of parliament take on issues such as this and others which involve a measure of national sentiment.

This nation of course has made rapid advances, not only in the development of its nationhood but in its technique of finding a harmonious relationship between the various groups in our land. These problems have not always been easy. I think, though, they have become easier by virtue of the understanding which has always existed among private members of the house. Personally we do not find much difficulty in getting along in this House of Commons, except on issues which are more involved and which are not influenced by sentiment in the ordinary sense of the term. Members of parliament who meet from day to day must testify to this one thing. There is, shall I say, a great undercurrent of understanding which binds together all sections of Canada. It has been a most important factor in bringing this parliament and this nation up to high levels of achievement which otherwise might not have been possible.

I believe it may properly be said that at no time in the whole history of Canada has there been among our citizens greater evidence of a really constructive national unity than we see in Canada today. We ought to pay tribute to those who from time to time have changed their outlook and have thus gone a long way toward understanding the other fellow's point of view.

Let me say this, however—and everyone in Canada should know it—that in my fourteen years of public life I have never seen evidence

of a deeper or more abiding affection than obtains now among the various groups in Canada. This is affection of a genuine type. We see it right here today, in this stage of our national life. Let us not forget it, because it is something of great importance. We know that national unity is a vital factor in the success and the achievements of this young nation.

Let me say this concerning the resolution offered today by the hon. member. At the beginning of this week we witnessed in the House of Commons a demonstration of just how a free parliament and a free people can rise and, with a unanimous voice, take steps to preserve that free and Christian way of life which we treasure. I do not think that I was ever as proud of having a seat in the House of Commons as I was on Monday, when we had such clear evidence of national unity as was indicated by those who took part in the debate, and as was made clear by the vote which followed. These things can be counted as milestones in the steady development of Canada for Canadians—a country whose people are not separated into groups but constitute an entity with one national objective.

It seems to me therefore that when we are taking these steps to preserve our free way of life we ought to try, in our domestic affairs, to preserve the freedom of action of our people. I must confess that, coming from a rural constituency in Ontario, it has been made clear to me as I have watched proceedings in the house that in various sections of our land certain customs and practices have grown up which are local in their application, but the sum total of those customs represents an imposing and strong body of opinion.

Customs and practices vary in the different parts of Canada. That applies not only in respect of the resolution before the house but in respect of many other matters. I have always felt it unwise for parliament to attempt to project itself too far into the ordinary customs and practices of the people. It has been my view that our citizens ought to be allowed a wide measure of freedom, just as obtains in respect of religion and other matters. They should be given that freedom in the matter of their expressions of loyalty either in verbal or written statement or in song.

In view of these facts it seems to me we have before us a consideration which cannot be overlooked. There is no one in this chamber, I am sure, who wants to see the national hymn "God Save the King" in competition with "O Canada", or indeed in competition with any other anthem which