

Canada Day Act

and as I look around this chamber at other hon. members, it occurs to me that I have never seen this House so united. It would seem that every member of this House wants Canada to move. If we go along with this amendment, we will be helping this country to develop constitutionally and we will be a part of the process of change in our Canadian history. Every one of us here today, in a small way, will play his part by simply wanting to pass this bill this afternoon.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, through you, I wish to assure the hon. member that I, at least, warmly support this motion. The hon. member may have noticed that a similar motion appears in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). Had I any doubt before about the propriety of this motion I would have lost it immediately upon learning that this motion, in effect, is co-sponsored by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

We are faced with a choice between the word "Confederation", which as has been well pointed out by the hon. member is inappropriate to our particular status, and the word "Canada". I hope my brand of nationalism is crossed with a sense of the importance of international developments. I am not by nature a chauvinistic person. It seems to me, however, when dealing with this historic day which represents the foundation of our country, particularly at a time like the present when we are rocked with a certain amount of difficulty and doubt, we should have no hesitation in choosing the term "Canada Day" rather than "Confederation Day".

Mr. David Anderson (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, despite the very nice things which have been said by the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Gibson), I regret that I must stand up and say it does not seem to be necessary or desirable to make this change. We constantly see our historic past being chipped away, not deliberately, but more or less by natural erosion. I think the people who suggested the term "Dominion of Canada" at the London conference and at the Charlottetown and other conferences when the nation Canada was formed did not make a mistake. The word "dominion" is a quotation from the bible—"dominion from sea to sea". It has honourable origins. The statement has been made that somehow or other the word "dominion" implies not complete and full sovereignty. It does not necessarily have

that connotation except to those who deliberately read such an interpretation into it. This subject was discussed at length before the committee. I recommend to hon. members proceedings Nos. 14 and 17 of the committee, in particular the testimony of Mr. Eugene Forsey. The matter was discussed at length and it was pointed out quite clearly that, while some people had the impression that the word dominion somehow meant that the nation was not fully sovereign, this is an incorrect view.

Should we go along with the suggestion by some people that we should abolish Dominion Day and thus endorse this incorrect view? That is the question before the House. I do not think it is necessary or wise to go along with or endorse this incorrect view. I think we should state flatly that there is no need for this country to constantly search for new ways to demonstrate we are united, or not united, or that we are a sovereign country or something else. We talk too much about something we should take more for granted. I think we should grow up and accept the fact that this particular term, which comes from our rich history, was brought in by no other people than by our excellent Fathers of Confederation whose faces stare grimly down at us from so many pictures in this House. I think we should recognize that this word, and this day, are connected with the historic event of Confederation when the first provinces joined together. It does not, to my mind, in any way imply that we are not united Canadians, as I gather others who have spoken before we believe.

The term "dominion from sea to sea" has a biblical connotation. The implication is that we are united right from the Pacific to the Atlantic. Although I quite agree that one should attempt at all times to encourage a healthy spirit of nationalism in Canada, I do not think in the expression "Dominion Day" there is anything that would take away from the spirit of unity. I think this has a rather attractive connection with the days of 1867 and indeed before 1867 when this question was discussed at length. I could of course carry on at much greater length on this point but I understand another member who represents an area where this particular decision was taken wishes to speak in this debate. I will shortly defer to him.

• (2:50 p.m.)

I simply wish to say that personally I do not approve of this change. I do not think that the substitution of the word "Confedera-