

National Centennial Act

We are all Canadians of goodwill, and regardless of our racial origin, we hope that the confederation centennial will really be something to rejoice about for the various elements throughout the country.

I note that the amendment introduced provides that the number of directors of this centennial commission is to be increased from 8 to 12.

Considering the nature of the speeches which we have heard during these past few days, it is essential that we should bear in mind that our Canadian people is made up of French Canadians, English Canadians and new Canadians.

I trust—I hope that I am right in this—that these appointments will not be purely political appointments but will really take into account the real splendour and magnificence which should characterize the celebration of the confederation centennial. I suggest that the number of directors increased from 8 to 12, should effectively represent our various ethnic groups, that is four French-Canadian, four English-Canadian and also four new-Canadian representatives. I think that the beauty of flowers lies in the variety of colours and we should not forget that almost a third of our people—at least five million out of the 18 million inhabitants of Canada—brought us their own native culture, which we are sometimes glad to see in their patriotic celebrations within their own groups.

I think we might multiply the colourful diversity of those who will take part in celebrating the centennial of the Canadian confederation, and that is why I believe that it is time to try the experiment by introducing the other ethnical groups in that commission. Thus, everybody would take part in the celebration of the confederation centennial as a flourishing nation with great hopes for the future, which wants to progress in that direction.

I shall quote clause 17 of Bill C-107 which says:

There shall be a national conference on the centennial of confederation consisting of the minister and not more than sixty members, each of whom shall be appointed by the minister, including at least two members from each of the ten provinces who shall be appointed by the minister on the recommendation of the governments of each of the provinces.

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Perron) is a little bit confused, as was another hon. member a little while ago. The centennial conference, with 60 members, has already been formed; the names of those members were announced early in October. This bill does not in any way propose to increase the representation on that conference.

Mr. Perron: Mr. Speaker, I was not alluding to the increase of the membership, but I wanted simply to suggest that the ten provinces be also considered when proceeding with appointments to this national conference.

Mr. Speaker: I must tell the hon. member that he is getting away from the bill before us when he speaks of appointments, as he did just now.

Mr. Perron: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I apologize for having probably been absent when the house was informed of those appointments having been made.

Yet, at the same time as the increase in the number of commissioners from 8 to 12, I think we should not only prepare the adoption of a national flag but also of a national anthem. I think the idea should be considered so that the celebration of the centennial of the Canadian confederation would really be a great day for all Canadians.

[Text]

Mr. Joseph Macaluso (Hamilton West): I shall take only a few moments. I did not intend to enter into this debate. However, I was somewhat shocked at certain aspects of the discussion which has taken place in the last two days on such a simple amendment as is now proposed. I was certainly taken aback when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), ranging far and wide, opened this debate in such a critical vein and allowed it to take the course it has taken.

I have looked at some of the words used by the right hon. gentleman. He stated, among other things, as will be found reported at page 4916 of *Hansard* for November 19:

The word "dominion" has disappeared. During the days of Mr. St. Laurent it became an ugly word and was removed even from the telephone books. Now the word "national" is to be removed. I cannot understand the need for that change. This is a national undertaking. It is said it is objected to by the premier of Quebec.

Later on, he stated:

Why remove a word which refers to all of the people of this nation, not only the two founding races but all the races of our country?

Others of the right hon. gentleman's party spoke in the same vein, including the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Mandziuk), the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) and others. However, it is interesting to note that in the same debate the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Pigeon) stated as reported on page 4937 of *Hansard* for the same day:

I was also pleased to note that other amendments had been made, because without Quebec's contribution to the centennial celebrations it would have been impossible to take advantage of this bill and to vote the amounts of money in co-operation with the provinces. It is indeed the centennial of confederation and not of Canada which we are