

I say to those quasi-judicial bodies and government institutions which have discarded the oath to the Crown that they cannot ignore and refute our historic past. In recognition of our history and the future before us, we must build upon our traditions, not to judge them but to honour them. True, the sovereign plays less and less of a role in our society today than ever before but it is also a notion which preserves in part our identity and our history. The oath members and ministers of the Canadian cabinet must presently swear before taking their seats and offices is this: "I, Stan Kazmierczak Keyes, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second."

By contrast, members in the mother of Parliaments, Westminster in Great Britain, swear the following oath: "I do swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, her heirs and successors, according to law, so help me God."

The Queen is still referred to as the Queen of Canada. It is only by looking back into history and not washing our hands of what has transpired, by not washing our hands of our common history, that we see the role of the monarchy more clearly. It is not something threatening, not something divisive; it is a treasured part of our history.

Therefore we must begin to be more assertive in who we are and what we represent as a country. If members of Parliament and perhaps an elected Senate—heaven knows, I do not wish to scare my colleagues down the hall—do not swear an oath to what is Canadian, what can we swear to?

My proposal, if passed through this House, would have members swear this oath:

I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, her heirs and successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws and the Constitution of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen and as a duly elected member of the House of Commons of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, while I have the floor I would ask for the unanimous consent of this House to adopt the motion

*Private Members' Business*

which I will table with you right now. In a nutshell, it asks that this bill be put to a legislative committee.

• (1120)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

[*Translation*]

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Negatived.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill before the House today is to amend our Constitution. According to the proposed text, each member will be obliged to take the following oath: "I will faithfully observe the laws and Constitution of Canada".

This is a most relevant reminder of the importance of the Constitution in protecting and enhancing the lives of Canadians. The Constitution Act, 1982, the fundamental law of our country, includes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Of course, our freedoms did not originate with the Constitution. The Constitution merely recognizes the four freedoms enjoyed by all Canadians: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms has a very special place in the hearts and minds of all Canadians. Those among us who are aware of the lack of freedom that exists in various parts of the world understand the value of the charter as a guarantee of our freedoms.

The equality rights recognized in the charter are particularly appreciated by anyone who has ever been discriminated against either socially, politically or legally.

Mr. Speaker, I imagine most members of this House have at some time met disabled persons, native people, members of visible minorities or members of linguistic minorities among their constituents. Such meetings make us realize how important it is to guarantee equality rights in this country. The government has submitted to Canadians 28 proposals on the future of this country. Their purpose is to strengthen the Charter of Rights and