

*Canadian Citizenship Act*

The purport of the bill is to provide that new Canadians, those who want to become citizens of our great country will henceforth, instead of swearing allegiance as they do now, to Her Majesty the Queen, her heirs and successors, swear allegiance to Canada and the Canadian constitution.

First of all, I shall say that I fully endorse the views of my colleague for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who feels that this new oath of allegiance for those who want to become Canadian citizens, joining us in our endeavours for the progress of our great country, will make the people of Canada as a whole more aware of the importance of this oath.

The Queen of Canada is the head of the Commonwealth, as we all know. But now, when swearing allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen we are, in my opinion, performing a highly symbolical gesture, difficult to explain particularly to all groups of Canadians. Living in a democratic system, we know how important it is to be close to the people, to make them understand the reasons for our gestures and the meaning of our symbols, which are very rich and meaningful for us. However it is sometimes difficult, particularly at the level of the media, to go into a full explanation of these things. They are highly symbolical. Symbols, it is true, are very important and very meaningful. Speech itself, the very words we use at every moment of our lives, are mere symbols. We do not quite realize this from day to day because this is so much part of our environment and our everyday life.

We are surrounded by all sorts of symbols which are both important and useful. However, the Queen of Canada, who serves also as head of the Commonwealth, is the symbol of a great accomplishment in this world. As Canadians, we are members of this great family which we call the "Commonwealth of Nations", formerly known as the British Commonwealth. We must be proud of the part we have played in the creation of the Commonwealth, which, as the saying goes, may be considered something as a feat of strength but which also testifies to a sense of diplomacy, to the understanding of the mankind and to this ideal of unity and peace which we wish to see established in our country and elsewhere in the world.

• (1720)

The Commonwealth countries formed a union, thus setting an example for many other countries which would extend their power throughout the world through means other than the democratic ways we approve, which are based on respect, freedom in peace and free enterprise.

I do not want to take up too much time; I want other colleagues to have a chance of expressing their views on the subject. Asking to take an oath of allegiance to Canada does not prevent the Crown, as the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) said a while ago, from being an integral part of the Canadian constitution. We must insist on that Canadian identity which we want to preserve and encourage. Without wanting to identify with our American friends who achieved what is commonly known as the American "melting-pot", we, in Canada, go on considering this ideal of a country that is a very remarkable mosaic of people. This way, if we insist on Canadian identity in the oath of allegiance of new Canadi-

ans, they will realize that Canada wants to maintain its identity within the Commonwealth.

And I conclude my remarks by pointing out that as to the Quebec group to which we belong and where we are proud to live in spite of the difficulties which a minority has been creating lately, we want to maintain our own identity, as do all the other groups of the Canadian mosaic and every hon. member and every Canadian. Despite the admiration and interest that I feel for a neighbour and friend, I want to preserve my identity, like everyone else.

The same thing goes in my opinion for groups, races and peoples. It is natural for the French-speaking group of Quebec to cling to its identity as it is for our English-speaking friends and for other groups in Canada. But all together, in this immense and beautiful mosaic, we are going to continue pursuing our Canadian ideal, insisting on our Canadian identity in the diversity that we want to preserve and develop.

[English]

**Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Windsor-Walkerville):** Mr. Speaker, I find myself in general support of Bill C-18, presented by my colleague for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), but perhaps my reasons for supporting it are slightly different from the ones he advanced for presenting the bill. I would put my reasons in terms of the principle of respect for the law, which I believe is not adequately taken care of by the present oath. I would extend my comments to include not just the oath of allegiance required for citizenship, but the oath of allegiance required in all the contexts with which I am familiar.

This issue was raised centuries ago by the great philosopher Aristotle, in chapter 15 of book III of "The Politics," in this question:

Is it more expedient to be ruled by the one best man, or by the best laws?

This question was not one that originated with Aristotle; the problem had been raised, and an answer given, by Plato, Plato coming out in favour of kingship rather than in favour of law. Aristotle tended to come to a conclusion rather in favour of the law, and I think it is worth looking at his argument for a moment. He said that personal rule may have the advantage of initiative but that the law has the advantage of impartiality; that in the human mind there must always be some element of passion, whereas the law is free from such possibility of perversion. Thus, the rule of law is better, and law must be supreme except where, because of its generality, it fails to deal adequately with the individual case. Even so, he went on, such individual matters are more properly decided by the whole people than by an individual man.

From the viewpoint of our present perspective, the issue is somewhat distorted by Aristotle's presentation. Perhaps he confuses the question as to who really is in control, whether it is a government, or a single person, or government by the whole people, with the question of justice according to law. At least today we would want to give a considerably more complex answer to the question than he gave at that time.

In our country today there is no question that, however we express the oath or our form of government, we are talking about constitutional monarchy, about a form of