

ington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Beatty) when he spoke about the desirability of the former home of the late Agnes Macphail being purchased so that it might become one of our historic sites.

When the hon. member was speaking, I was pleased to note that the Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) (Mrs. Campagnolo) indicated her approval. It is nice to have that approval here in the House, and I see she is nodding her head up and down now to confirm it. I hope that her approval will also be indicated in certain councils where she has both a voice and a presence.

All of us who know anything about Canadian history, and particularly those of us who remember Agnes Macphail, are deeply conscious of the great contribution she made to the life of this country. She was the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons. That was back in 1921, and she was here for 19 years. She later went on to become the first woman ever to be elected to the Legislature of the Province of Ontario. I am sure hon. members are aware of the fact that her bust, along with that of another former woman member of this House, the Hon. Ellen Fairclough, will be found in the corridor just to the north of this Chamber. In other words, the late Agnes Macphail has already been recognized as an important person in Canadian history.

Miss Bégin: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I am delighted now to have not only the support of the Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport), but also the support of a very important minister, the Minister of National Revenue (Miss Bégin). I suspect that if the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé) were here, she would make it unanimous.

Miss Bégin: We know how to recognize competence.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I seem to be winning my point. Perhaps I had better stop while I am ahead. I support wholeheartedly the suggestion made by the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo, and I hope the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Penner) will note these remarks and do what he can to make sure that this piece of property is purchased so that it can be made an historical site in memory of the late Agnes Macphail.

Mr. William Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand): Mr. Speaker, I will intervene very briefly in this debate tonight on Bill C-13, to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. I do so just to bring to the attention of the minister, through his parliamentary secretary, whom I see in the House tonight, an incident which has occurred not once but twice in my area.

I agree wholeheartedly with the purpose of this bill, which is to increase the membership of the board which recommends to the minister that certain actions be taken by his department. I certainly agree that the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory should be represented on that board, and that fact has been well argued by the hon. member for Battle River

Historic Sites

(Mr. Malone) as well as by the speaker for the New Democratic Party, the hon. member for the Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth).

My purpose is to draw attention to what I call a rather petty feud which is presently going on in my area between the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board and the local historical societies. It stems from the fact that original plaques marking sites of national historic significance in my area are now in the process of being replaced.

One of them is a monument erected to the memory of two Jesuit priests who wintered on the shores of Lake Erie at the time of LaSalle's exploration of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. There are several others which have been erected by the federal government. These plaques are being replaced by bilingual plaques which include, in many cases, more detailed information about the activity or national significance of the events they mark.

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One particular plaque, which was on the outside wall of the Eva Brook Donley Museum in the town of Simcoe, administered by the Norfolk County Historical Society, has been replaced by a bilingual plaque which has more information on it. The local historical society would like to keep the original one and put it in the museum with the exhibits relating to the event it marks. The plaque commemorates the birthplace and the contribution to the history of Ontario and Canada of Dr. Egerton Ryerson after whom the hamlet of Port Ryerse on Lake Erie was named. Dr. Ryerson is known as the father of education in Ontario.

The local historical society had no quarrel with the newer plaque but they wanted to keep the original one. The Historical Sites and Monuments Board, however, insisted that it must be turned in to be melted down for scrap or something. It was necessary for the local society to take possession of the original plaque and literally hide it so that it could not be melted down. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it is in my constituency office. The society has written the minister asking permission to keep the original plaque in the museum, a simple request which would not in any way detract from the plaque now in place. What bothers me is the insistence that the plaque must be scrapped, when it is really a part of the history of the area. A similar incident occurred in the municipality of Nanticoke when the local people made a request to keep an original plaque.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary to talk some sense into these people. In my view this is petty feuding. Why must they be so inflexible and demand that these plaques be returned to the government? They are of peculiar historical significance to the local area and, in my view, should remain there. If the RCMP want to come and take the plaque that is in my office they can, but I do not think the department will want to go that far. The local historical society is up in arms over the issue, however. This is just a minor thing in the whole scheme, but I would ask the parliamentary secretary to draw his minister's attention to the letter written by the local