

Canada Day Act

not the way things are done in the House of Commons. Let us show that when we want to we can put legislation through, especially when we believe in it. I, therefore, ask the co-operation of all hon. members in this regard, and I ask the House to pass the bill as quickly as possible.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, this bill proposed by the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Brown) is of great interest to me. I listened intently to his remarks and those of the preceding speakers. I have one point of argument with the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart). He insinuated that no private member's bill which appears before this House is really sensible. I certainly do not believe this is true. I think there are some pretty wonderful suggestions brought before this House which often make more sense than some of those coming from the government benches. I wish the House would pay a little more attention to some bills presented by members because this would encourage backbenchers to bring some positive ideas before the House which somehow seem to have difficulty in finding their way here in the form of legislation under government sponsorship.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, through you I should like to say to members of the House and the hon. member for Brant, I believe this to be a very timely bill. There has been a great deal of confusion about July 1 which actually is our founding day. For many years it has been called Dominion Day. This suited very well the situation which existed then. However, times have changed and our status constitutionally has changed. I think this bill is merely an effort to keep up with what has already taken place. It would seem to me that if we could remove the confusion which exists in the thinking of many of our people we would be performing a real service to our country. I believe this applies particularly to the young people of Canada. July 1 is our national day already and there is no better way to define that national day than by calling it Canada Day.

I find myself a little perplexed concerning whether or not this holiday should be celebrated rigidly on the first of July, regardless of the day on which it comes to pass, because I believe there is some merit in the suggestion of the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent). However, I recognize there is also merit in having this holiday on the first

Monday in July in order to provide a long weekend, which usually is the first major holiday after the closing of school. I believe this is something the committee could profitably consider. I would hope members on the government benches at this time would permit the bill to be referred to the committee where it might receive detailed study. I say this as an expression of support for the principle of the bill and commend the hon. member for Brant for bringing it before the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief, because I hope the bill introduced by the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Brown) will be agreed to and referred to the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

I just had to take the floor to congratulate the mover of the bill, who had the opportunity to introduce it in the House. As a matter of fact, I put a similar item on the order paper, on a few occasions, but the draw did not go my way, whereas the hon. member for Brant was a little bit more fortunate.

I am glad to note that the bill is apparently getting support from all hon. member, at least from all those who have expressed their opinion so far, and I hope it will pass.

It shows an improvement over other similar bills as it sets this legal holiday on the first Monday in July, allowing for a long week-end during the vacation period, whereas at the present time the holiday is on the first day of the month which often falls in the middle of the week.

I feel that this bill should be adopted. As mentioned by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), I believe it was passed by the House in 1946 but referred to the Senate at the end of the session too late for the upper house to render a decision on it. So it was left pending.

I feel that the word "Dominion" now in the act has a colonial connotation and is obsolete. It is now confusing because that holiday is often called "Dominion Day" or "Canada Day" or even "Confederation Day". I believe it would be well to make a real national holiday of it, called "Canada Day".

Specially since the adoption of the statute of Westminster I feel the word "Dominion" is no longer justified. Actually, we have become a completely free and independent nation, a self-governing community which freely and voluntarily joined the British Commonwealth.