

British authorities of the day in favour of an executive power accountable to the elected members of the legislative assembly.

• (1920)

It was the beginning of responsible government. As the member who spoke before me mentioned, Louis Joseph Papineau and his committee had presented 92 resolutions advocating the control of revenues by the legislative assembly, but executive responsibility, the election of a council and their action were part of a larger movement which was related to a fight being fought elsewhere by Joseph Howe, in Nova Scotia, for example, or by William Lyon Mackenzie in Upper Canada.

What we must point out when we talk about the history of Lower and Upper Canada, is that the provinces were created by the Constitutional Act of 1791 which drew a line west of the seigneury of Vaudreuil to create the new province of Upper Canada, a sort of distinct society for the English speakers of the time, a way to give them the common law and the right to own land under a system known as "free hold land tenure".

A distinct colony was established to protect these two principles. However, I should say that this new colony of Upper Canada was merely a narrow band of land just north of the St. Lawrence River, just like Lower Canada extended only along both shores of the river.

Nevertheless, if we were to take the motion as it appears in today's order paper and to translate its content in 1994 parlance, we would talk about the responsible democratic government of Quebec, the former Lower Canada, and of Ontario, the former Upper Canada, and we would exclude all the other provinces of this big country of ours. As I said earlier, the initiatives of Joseph Howe preceded those of William Lyon Mackenzie who, with a group of friends, rebelled and took arms—a few guns, forks, shovels, whatever they had then—to show their discontent.

Needless to say, they did not get very far. They were for the most part banished, jailed, etc. and they only surfaced years later. As for Lower Canada, we certainly all remember Louis Joseph Papineau and his friends, who were then called the Patriotes, and who played a role similar to that of William Lyon Mackenzie, the grandfather of another Liberal Prime Minister elected several years later, William Lyon Mackenzie King.

We are all aware of these facts and I am not one to forget or diminish in any way the role played by the Patriotes. In closing, I will repeat what I said at the beginning, that I totally dissociate myself from some comments made today. I declare that, if this motion was intended to recognize in Ontario and in Quebec, which are both provinces, the contribution of these groups, I would gladly support the motion, and I must say that if the member opposite was willing to request unanimous consent of

the House to change the word, I would immediately give my support.

I suspect, however, that there is another, different objective in that motion. At the end, it says "in Canada and in Québec", as if they were really two distinct and equal entities.

• (1925)

Of course, Ontario and Quebec are both provinces. Quebec is a province within this great country which is Canada, this great country which, I hope, will always remain strong and united.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this House to speak to the proposal put forth by my colleague, the hon. member for Verchères. The motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should officially recognize the historical contribution of the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada to the establishment of a system of responsible democratic government in Canada and in Quebec, as did the government of Quebec in 1982 by proclaiming by order a national Patriotes' day.

I want to point out right away that this proposal is in no way designed to add a statutory holiday to the calendar. The thought of adding such a holiday never crossed the mind of the sponsor of this motion.

The purpose of this motion is however to recognize the contribution of the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada by an order of this House to that effect.

The point was made that the violence of the 1837 and 1838 rebellions should not be condoned. Of course not, but let us not forget however that Patriotes and Reformers voiced their grievances and complaints in pamphlets, in newspapers articles, at rallies, through petitions and presentations at the House of Assembly they had in those days, before some of them finally decided to rise up in arms.

The sole purpose of the motion before us now is to pay tribute, regardless of these unfortunately violent events, to these men and women who believed in the need to have a responsible and truly democratic government. Among those who took part in that movement, some became well-respected public figures because of their convictions and their major contribution to our society.

I can think of people like Louis Joseph Papineau, Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine, Robert Baldwin or George Étienne Cartier. Of course, the Patriotes and the Reformers were not the only ones who contributed to the establishment of responsible government in this country. Others also made a historical contribution to the building of Canada. I imagine that some measure will eventually be proposed to also honour these people.

Certain Patriotes are better known than others, as well as some places. I am honoured by the fact that a meeting of Patriotes took place on July 16, 1837, in Deschambault, in my riding of Portneuf.