

*National Centennial Act*

Gregoire), to whom I am glad to pay this tribute, because his rejoinders were most appropriate at times.

I feel it would also be quite in order for me to congratulate the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Lamontagne) for his very clear and most objective statement.

Mr. Speaker, the main features of the measure we are discussing concern the changing of the short title of the act from "the National Centennial Act" to "the Centennial of Confederation Act".

The bill aims also at granting extended power to the centennial commission and increasing from 8 to 12 the number of directors, if it is passed, needless to say.

That proposal is meant obviously to promote administrative efficiency within the centennial commission, which will be able to make expenditures up to \$25,000 without getting beforehand the authorization of the governor in council. The commission will also be able to acquire property up to the said amount, without having to obtain the authorization of the governor in council, which is surely one more step towards administrative efficiency.

But the most important change, in my opinion, is the new name that is proposed. Instead of celebrating the centennial of the nation, we are going to celebrate the centennial of confederation. Of course that implies rather different circumstances, because we are ready to celebrate the Canadian nation at any time, but to celebrate the centennial of confederation, that is not exactly the same thing.

As a matter of fact, if we refer to the words of the former government member for Roberval, perhaps we can understand why those who drafted the present act preferred the name "centenary of the nation", because, if my memory is good, the former member for Roberval used to say that confederation was a dupe's bargain. Of course he was giving his personal opinion, and perhaps this explains why it would be preferred not to celebrate the centennial of confederation, but rather the centennial of the nation.

Mr. Speaker, if I may give a personal opinion, I would say that in order to celebrate the centennial of an event, that event must reflect something happy which was beneficial to the two great races of the country.

Well, if we want to celebrate confederation, it must be recognized that it brought about some benefits, otherwise there would be no reason for such a celebration. And here I would like to refer to the remarks made yesterday by the hon. member for Grey-Bruce (Mr. Winkler), who claimed that the statement I made two weeks ago at the young

Liberals' convention was prejudicial, because it was not likely to lead to unity.

Mr. Speaker, I am justified to say, I think, that I do not see how my remarks might be prejudicial to national unity.

I simply expressed the wish that by 1967 Canada would have her complete national sovereignty, because I am convinced—this also may be a very personal opinion—that at the present time the great majority of public opinion is ready to Canadianize Canada in all her aspects and symbols.

We want to be Canadians, Mr. Speaker, and I resent at times too many references to French and English Canadians. I am proud of being a Canadian and also a French-speaking Canadian, and I believe that the best way to unite the two great races which make up our country and to bring them closer together, is to create a truly Canadian ideal.

When a great parliamentarian stated in 1848: "We have government responsibility", there was cause to rejoice because it meant breaking with the bonds of colonialism.

When in 1931, the Statute of Westminster recognized Canada's independence, there was cause to rejoice, because it meant breaking with all bonds of colonialism.

In 1963, four years before the centennial celebrations, it is advisable, in my opinion, to see to it that every symbol of bondage and subservience is removed.

Canada is an economic power; it has the right to transact business freely with other countries. It declared war in 1939—which is a sign of total independence—and since 1945, it has its own representative at the United Nations. Why should it still be subject to bonds of colonialism?

Here is the nonsensical situation in which Canada finds itself in 1963: without a flag, without a national anthem, unable to amend its own constitution in some cases and a foreign sovereign is the symbol of its supreme authority.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I trust that for 1967, we shall have all the symbols of absolute sovereignty in Canada in order that we may be true Canadians in this our great country of which I am proud.

**Mr. Gerard Perron (Beauce):** Mr. Speaker, I wish, in the first place, to congratulate the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) who has recalled some fine feats of arms and certain past periods, from colonial days to a sovereign and responsible government.

In connection with this Bill C-107, I also wish to congratulate the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for the short amendment which he moved last evening. In my opinion, there is some truth in this brief amendment.