

Historic Sites

I should like to mention, in addition to those monuments where certain things happen, a couple of things that I think should be brought to the attention of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board that could make their work a shade more fruitful in the next year or so. The first thing I should like to draw attention to is the Centennial Series. I know it will shock the House to learn that Canada has never had a series of history texts which recount our history and is written by Canadians. We were always forced to use British books, the Cambridge History Series. Volume 6 dealt with Canada. In 1957, after discussions with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, a target was set for centennial year for a history of Canada done by Canadians. It was to consist of 18 volumes, each written by a leading expert under the over-all management of Dr. Morton and Dr. Creighton. This was the decision of a group of people who turned the work over to these two people. I do not know whether the parliamentary secretary has seen any of these volumes, the most recent of which by Dr. Creighton was issued last fall.

I would like to suggest to the parliamentary secretary that he could serve Canada well by finding out why the missing volumes were not published. I know why: we calculated a certain amount for the grants, which came from a source other than the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, but we did not foresee the inflation of the last few years. It now costs nearly twice as much to produce these books which have a limited readership—hence the delay. The other reason, I suspect, is the question of the work, in one case, and I think the Historic Sites and Monuments Board should attempt to solve that problem.

I make no apology for bringing up this subject nearly 20 years after its inauguration. It annoyed me as a school teacher to realize the basic sort of information I had to use in teaching Canadians was that their own history was work by English writers. We tried to correct that situation in 1957, almost 20 years ago, by setting 1967 as the target date for the completion of the series, in time for the centennial celebrations. We could not meet that target because of cost and other factors. I say that we should complete that series in 1977. It should be made known to every school board and every school room in this country that there is a series of history text books concerning every part of Canada and every period of our history. This has never before been available. I have learned from talking to teachers that many of them have never heard of this series.

● (1540)

Since the government is spending millions of dollars publicizing many of its programs, why cannot they allow the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to publicize the existence of this history series? It was begun before many of our present teachers were teaching, even before some of them were born. I advise hon. members on the government side to read the last volume by Dr. Creighton, "The Forked Road", to learn where they went off the track. These books are an authentic history of our nation and have been written by Canadians. At least we should make them available to teachers. They are not the type of reading material you give junior grade students. The books

are based on authentic documents of which teachers of history and students should be aware. I know that not many volumes will be bought, and I regret that as a nation we are not literate; only a small percentage of our people are truly literate in the sense that they read serious material.

The second matter I shall mention briefly has to do with the activities of the geographical names committee. That committee selects the names of Canadians who have played a prominent part in this nation's life and applies them to certain physical features such as mountains. It has been the rule that only physical features in this country can be so named after the person's death. That rule is occasionally broken by the provinces because they, too, are empowered to name certain geographical features.

I ask the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to consider the questions I am raising. We wanted to honour, say 15 or 20 years ago, those who were then prominent on the Canadian scene. When they were active their profile was high. Unfortunately, after a person dies, for a long time after death his profile becomes low in the public view. We tend to forget what such people did 15 or 20 years ago, and tend to forget the tremendous contributions to this country they made during their lifetimes. In other words, I suggest that the parliamentary secretary or the minister should remind the Historic Sites and Monuments Board that it must consult with other groups, such as the geographical names committee, which comes under another department, in order that we may reassess periodically the names applied to certain physical features of this country.

I am well aware of what is happening in the Arctic Islands, and of the new names which have appeared in recent years. I think they are well deserved. I do not say this because the name "Hamilton" has appeared in the centre of Ellesmere Island. That name is there for a good reason—and it is not to honour me. It honours one who did substantial work in that area. I simply say that it is up to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, and committees like the geographical names committee, to keep alive and vibrant the memory and names of those who served this country. The rule, by and large, is that we are not to use the name of any person living. Unfortunately, people once prominent tend to adopt a lower profile in the last years of their lives, and they tend to be partly forgotten. We must remember to honour them by naming after them certain parts of our geographical country, to remind the people of the north or other parts of Canada of work done in resources development and other fields.

Perhaps I could mention a couple of other points usefully, since we are not often given the opportunity to discuss this subject. I think the House is anxious to pass the bill. As I say, the minister must make certain that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board knows that members of this House want it to do its job and to record in physical form the history of our nation, a history which is short but of which we can be proud.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to take a few moments to speak on this bill. Obviously, there is general support for it in the House, and rightly so. The present debate gives hon. members a parlia-