

*National Centennial Act*

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** The minister says he is not going to change the title but he is going to change the short title.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Exactly. They are two different things.

**Mr. Macdonald:** You should get a lawyer.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** The hon. member for Rosedale says he should get a lawyer.

**Mr. Macdonald:** No, I said you should.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** No, you have told the minister what to say. You are the lawyer.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** I have been heckled before by people of the same political persuasion as this crowd.

**Mr. Macdonald:** They threw you out of office too.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order. I am going to have to ask the committee to allow the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton to continue his speech.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, the argument I was going to advance was this. Regardless of what we say in this year of our Lord 1963, we should be influenced to quite an extent by what history says was the concept of the people who brought about this union in 1867, which in my opinion was the building of a great nation. What did they have in mind? The minister says he is not going to change the title of the act much. He is going to change the short one and leave the long one as it is—something of that nature, and something just as ridiculous as that, too.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Why did you have two titles?

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** The question about which people must make up their minds is, have we been a nation for 100 years or not? Moreover, I submit that when the government brings before this house a resolution which in effect is playing down Canada they are doing a disservice to the country. There is nothing wrong with the original title. It was explained that we were a nation before 1867, and no one is quarrelling with that; but the B.N.A. Act and the joining together of these four provinces came about in 1867. There is no argument that that is the event we propose to celebrate.

I want to read from a book dealing with the history of the most important province,

and hon. members can understand which one that is. I have in front of me the book: "New Brunswick: A History, 1784-1867", written by Professor MacNutt. Part of it concerns the events leading up to the union of 1867. At that time New Brunswick was a colony. It had a governor, and it might be of interest that the governor's name was Gordon, and he was not very popular. I do not say he was any less popular than the Minister of Finance, but he was not very popular.

At the time of confederation the province of New Brunswick and the province of Nova Scotia, together with Upper and Lower Canada joined together and were bound together through the medium of the British North America Act. This is what Professor MacNutt says about a nation. It seems to me that when a professor of history, someone who has looked into the past, writes about a nation it has some significance, more significance than opinions expressed by us gathered here 100 years later. He says that after the election at which the people of New Brunswick decided in favour of confederation the jubilation that followed was Protestant and British rather than a paean of praise for the new nation. He goes on:

On many an occasion in later years Smith declared that it was a racial and religious cry that had defeated him. Edward Barron Chandler had assured the people that in the new union the maritime provinces could hold a decisive balance of power between Upper and Lower Canada. Tilley had satisfied them that they would endure no increase in taxes. But of the rhetoric and prophecy that frequently accompany the birth of new nations—

And here again is the comment about a new nation—

—there was little in New Brunswick, especially during the excitement of elections.

Then on page 454 of the same book he continues:

Behind the adroit persuasions of Macdonald and his colleagues in Canada lay the authority of the British government, not forced but nevertheless strongly asserted, working for the composite solution British world interests required. The problem had not been of New Brunswick's making, but she was compelled to recognize its existence. Her elemental loyalties powerfully invoked, exposed to the appeal of building a new and great nation whose promise hung upon imponderables, pressed by the impact of immediate events, cajoled by rather flimsy assurances of commercial prosperity, and somewhat bribed, the province entered confederation with very little grace and no gratitude.

My reasons for these quotations from a great historian, who has gone back into the prevailing opinions expressed by various people 100 years ago when this nation came into being, is simply to show what was the concept at that time of Canada as a nation. Now, Mr. Chairman, do we take the opinion of an historian who is an expert in the field,