

*Canadian Citizenship Act*

In this respect, we should adopt symbols which can be accepted by most Canadians. According to our last census, only 23 per cent of Canadians are of English origin while the balance of the population is made up of native peoples and people from many other countries. I admit that there are many other matters which are more important than this.

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

**Mr. Allmand:** I have spoken on these other matters. As a matter of fact, I have many private bills dealing with them. However, I think that this subject is important enough for me to put forward my ideas, and to do something about it. As I say, this is not a high priority item with me but it is something which has vexed many of my constituents, it is something which vexes me; we have to take a stand on these things and this is what I am doing. I repeat, this is not a move directed against the monarchy or against British institutions. It is, emphatically, a measure for Canada, and I am proud to present this bill.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, may I offer you a new pair of glasses because I must tell you that between the member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and myself, there is a difference not only in appearance but also in respect of politics.

[*English*]

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Just 100 pounds.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Oh, no!

I fully recognize the hon. member's right to put this bill forward, but I disagree violently with the content thereof. The very form of the bill is an anachronism. I call attention to the words:

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows—

And then Canada's citizens entirely disregard the Crown. What the hon. member has forgotten is that the Parliament of Canada consists of three elements—the Crown, the Senate and the House of Commons.

**Mr. Allmand:** I said that.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** The hon. member may have said so. But if, in his view, this is the oath that a new citizen should take, then he is saying that the oath a Member of the House of Commons should take should be changed into the form he now proposes.

**Mr. Allmand:** Yes.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Then I say to him, such an oath would be an entire denial of our form of constitution, of our form of government. The hon. member cannot have it both ways. I do not know how often he may have assisted at citizenship ceremonies, but at least ten times a year at the invitation of the judge I go to Edmonton citizenship court at which new citizens of Canada take the oath, having first renounced their citizenship of some other country. At this point, may I say that the oath

[Mr. Allmand.]

proposed by the hon. member is deficient in that it fails to denounce the country of citizenship of the person about to become a Canadian citizen. To that extent, I say the form is deficient.

**Mr. Allmand:** Nor does the present oath.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** It does.

On the basis of years of experience at citizenship courts I will say this: I do not know why new Canadians in the Montreal area should be any different from those in Edmonton. I have seen great pride among the people taking their oaths of allegiance to the Queen of Canada. And it is the Queen of Canada who figures in the oath of allegiance taken by Canadian citizens—the Queen, not the constitution. Why bring such a bill forward? There is nothing that it improves.

I remember many years ago as a young man taking my oath as a member of Her Majesty's Canadian Forces. I swore an oath of faithful service to my Queen and to my country. There are millions in Canada who did so. It may be that some were not old enough at the time, and did not have that experience. But without denying other members an opportunity of speaking, I would say that the acceptance of the principle of this type of oath of allegiance at this time or in my lifetime would be a most retrograde step. It amounts to a salami-type of republicanism, hacking away here and nibbling away there. The hon. member may smile, but I ask him to go into my part of the country and try to justify this measure. Oh, there would be some people who would not find it repugnant. I do not deny it. But those who say they respect the constitution would not agree with them.

The constitution says the Queen is the head of state in this country and that she is the Queen of Canada. She is not the Queen of Britain, as the hon. member said, as far as Canada is concerned. The hon. member talked about the possibility of exacerbating difficulties which exist between Canada and Britain. My goodness, there have been difficulties all along. Ever since the British landed in North America there have been difficulties between the authorities of that country and the people of this country. Yet this did not lead to any diminution of the recognition of the Queen's position as head of state in this country. And to recognize Her Majesty on one hand as head of state, and then to swear an oath of allegiance to something quite separate is, to my mind, nonsense. Incidentally, half of this proposed oath of allegiance appears in the present oath. Take the phrase about faithfully observing the laws of the country. What is so great about that? The question is: to whom is the oath of allegiance sworn? Is it to the constitution, to something which can be amended, something which is not sacrosanct? This sort of thing would be quite unacceptable to me.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy LeBlanc (Rimouski):** Mr. Speaker, I heartily welcome the opportunity to express my views on the bill brought forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, not only as a Canadian, but also as the representative of the district of Rimouski, in Quebec, which is situated in one of Canada's most French areas. I am as proud of that title as I am to be a Canadian.