

Youth Appreciation Week

my imagination runs wild I think I, too, can make that claim. Then I realize the facts on my birth certificate and refrain from making the claim. However, I am not too far past the age of being trusted and I hope the hon. member will trust in some degree the points that I wish to make. I express some disappointment in the fact that the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds) did not go into greater detail. When a matter with such merit as the explanatory notes of this bill would suggest is presented to the House I think there must be good reason for it. I would have liked from him more examples of fine work of the type done by the Optimists Clubs of Canada. I am a little disappointed that the hon. member has received singular lack of support from his own benches. In all fairness, he has one advantage which is that 50 per cent of his Quebec caucus is present whereas we have only about 15 per cent of ours.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fleming: If the purpose of this bill is to try to bring together our young people and those especially amongst them who are alienated with society, then there is some point in discussing it. The explanatory notes of the bill set down a number of purposes of the measure. I should like to skim over a couple of these areas and suggest useful things that could be done. For instance, parents who are proud of their children often fail to express that pride. If we had the kind of week envisaged in this bill, parents could show their children that taking care of them and loving them has not just meant buying them cars and giving them an education, but real love and affection is there also.

Lions Clubs, Rotary and Kinsmen clubs and similar organizations could include sons and daughters in a program and teach them what these clubs are all about. The more mature people of our country also could do a great deal of work on behalf of Canadians generally. Take business and industry for instance: when we speak of youth we tend to mean those in university or those doing social work, but the greatest number is in industry doing their best to earn a living and pay their taxes. Sometimes these young people of 18, 19, 20 or 21 are supporting a wife and family. I think a very great effort must be made to reach this group of young people who are often overlooked. Then there is the role of religion. Many of us believe that even though some churches in our society have improved their relationship with the community, they still have a special opportunity to project their teachings and encourage their own young people to go into the community and to show that useful things are being done within the church.

What I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that although we are talking about a national youth appreciation week, really there is opportunity for all sorts of liaison among parents, youth, industry, business and service clubs as well as religion. Perhaps we should be working in the general area where there is a breakdown of communications as between all age groups and sectors. Perhaps this bill should not centre on one specific area.

My colleague, the hon. member for Sherbrooke, gave an excellent portrayal of the many programs for youth, but I should like to mention the LIP program which has offered

[Mr. Fleming.]

many jobs to young people who feel alienated. Many of these programs give young people an opportunity to test their mettle, to put their ideas into action and to experience what it means to earn a dollar, pay taxes, and to become involved members of society. They have been very successful in breaking down the alienation that some young people feel.

Politics, of course, is something close to all of us. When we look within the ranks of our own parties I think we will agree that some of the brightest organizational work is done by young people. They keep us fresh and alive, aware of new ideas and approaches. They do a lot of research not only within university communities but within the more traditional communities of our society. University lecturers, the ones that are Canadian, are very often young people, and that is most encouraging. I read an article the other day which pointed out that many business executives in Canada are in their thirties or early forties, so that is another area where younger people are playing an active role.

I hope, however, the bill before us does not imply that there is inequality in this area. I do not suggest that is what the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta had in mind, but there are problem areas and I have touched on some of them. The hon. member for Assiniboia wondered what would happen if we carried this idea to the extreme. I will not call it crap, as he did. I will not use that word because the intent of the bill is good. We ought to remember that a service group, the Optimists, which works in communities across Canada, is involved and we should treat them with respect.

• (1740)

I agree that it would not be productive if we were to carry this idea forward as an act of the Parliament of Canada because then we should become involved in projects such as senior citizens' week, which might be developed in conjunction with the New Horizons program, or national housewives' week, national working-men's week, national working women's week or middle-aged people's week. We might even have an hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) week, as he so often sits here through private members' hour, although he is not here now.

I think the cause is good, although I am not sure that by incorporating it in an act we would accomplish the spirit of this bill. I am afraid I cannot offer the excellence of poetry such as several of my colleagues offered earlier. However, perhaps I can offer these few lines, hastily but together, to make my point:

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Kids are great,
Other people, too.

[Translation]

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say a few words on the bill now under consideration. I should like in the first place to say to the hon. member how much I appreciate the fact that he introduced a bill for the establishment of a youth appreciation week.