

Canada Day Act

enjoy, certainly; but it should also be a day during part of which there are appropriate opportunities for politicians and others in the community to reflect in a serious way on what it means to be a Canadian; to reflect upon what we would hope to do with this nation of ours in the years ahead. Therefore, I suggest we should heighten its significance in contrast or comparison with other holidays that fall on the first Monday of the week and which are appropriately enjoyed by us all. We should make a distinction in terms of our holidays, and Canada Day should be set apart so that it falls on July 1. We should celebrate the event on the day it occurred.

For some this is, perhaps, a minor point, but for me it has a significant, symbolic difference. If our July 1 celebration fell on the first Monday of July every year, then I think the tendency would be very great indeed for all of us simply to treat it as another long weekend. Indeed, as suggested to me by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), it is quite possible that in the very near future the first Monday in July would fall on July 4. In that event, we would have the grand possibility of having a joint celebration with our United States friends. As a Canadian with some sense of genuine pride in our past, I do not think that for sake of the convenience of a long weekend it is appropriate for us to have our holiday coincide with that of our U.S. neighbours. Let each of us celebrate our own traditions in our own way and on different days. I am sure that no American would suggest that the July 4 holiday be changed so that it would be celebrated on the first Monday in July.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, although I am in general agreement with the provisions of this bill—I think it is a sensible measure, the general intent of which should be speedily approved—I do not agree that we should switch our celebration from the first of the month to the first Monday of July. Incidentally, it is worth drawing the attention of the House to the fact that a similar bill was passed by this House of Commons some 20 years ago. It passed through all three readings. However, I am informed that when it reached the other place, that deep and musty other chamber, it was turned down, and in the intervening period the idea progressed no further.

It is my hope that before the end of this session, if not this bill then some similar bill will not only pass through the House of Com-

[Mr. Broadbent.]

mons but get through the other place as well. In that event, in the very new future Canadians will have not a Dominion Day, which reflects the old tradition, but a Canada Day which more accurately reflects the desires and modern traditions of the current generation of Canadians.

Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to hear the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Brown) introduce his bill to call our national day Canada day, and I consider it a privilege to be able to speak in favour of the bill. I am in favour of any measure which brings home to our young people in particular the love of country and sense of patriotism which I think in past years has been lacking.

I always like to refer to such things as our oath of allegiance, our flag and other symbols of Canadianism. However, I deplore the fact that when my little boys take their oath of allegiance in Cubs and Scouts no mention is made of our beloved country. It seems to me that things like that are important in the development of our young people and in their patriotic outlook toward their own country.

Certainly, the idea of a national day called Canada Day is the kind of thing that strikes a happy note with me. To some, Dominion Day represents certain things; it may denote other things to others. The same problem is encountered with our national anthem. Many people in years gone by really have not known exactly what our national anthem is. Many people today do not know what the first of July represents. Some refer to it as Confederation day; others call it Dominion Day, and many even call it Canada Day, though this bill has not been passed.

I think the time has come to clarify the situation in some positive way. As the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) pointed out, I think the word "Dominion" denotes something from the past, something that we do not need in Canada anymore. I believe there is even a note of subservience attaching to it. This would be eliminated by changing the name of our national day to Canada Day.

I ask the House to pass this bill on second reading, to send it immediately to committee, and not to talk it out. In this way we could get a private member's bill that is really sensible through the House and passed into legislation. We hear so much about the inadequacies of backbenchers. It is said that backbenchers cannot put measures forward, that if they do so they are cast aside. Let us show that this is