

Private Members' Business

Mr. Allmand: Never.

Mr. Reimer: Well, you see he says: "Never". He does not want to make the oath of allegiance meaningful and that is what I am trying to get at. I think we should try and make it as meaningful as we can.

There is a good textbook which I recommend to the member, Dawson's *The Government of Canada*, 6th edition. Maybe he should look at the chapter entitled "The Monarchy and the Governor General". If he were to look at that chapter he would find something very interesting in the second paragraph so he would not have to read very far.

In that second paragraph the Acting Prime Minister of the day, Mr. John L. Iisley, said the following: "The authority of the government is not delegated to the House of Commons. The authority of the government is received from the Crown. His Majesty's advisors are sworn in as advisors to the Crown. The government is responsible to the Parliament but that is a different thing from the doctrine that the government is a committee of the House of Commons or that it exercises authority delegated by the House of Commons. That is not so. What is the case is the authority of the government is received from the Crown".

That is the key point of a parliamentary system and a constitutional monarchy. The authority of this House is from the Crown. The authority is vested in the Crown and that is why an oath of allegiance is to the Crown, the Queen of Canada.

I think the member would do well to go back to a good book that is used in many of our first year political science classes and learn what Canada is really all about. Then I think he would say that maybe we have to educate new immigrants a little more rather than lowering our standards to a level of ignorance.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to support this. If I had been lukewarm about supporting this bill I certainly would be very fired up after hearing the previous member speak.

I have never heard anybody get up and insult immigrants, the backbone of this country, as much as the previous speaker. He was talking about going backward to make sure they cannot get citizenship for five years, trying to put impediments in their way to full participa-

tion in our democracy by saying that they have to have a working knowledge of English or French, making it more and more difficult for them to participate as full citizens in our democracy.

• (1530)

This is a bill about symbols. Canada is in the process of growing up and maturing. It is deciding that it wants its own symbols, its own institutions. It is learning that it wants to take some of those symbols and institutions not just from Great Britain or France, but from our enriched community and blend them, making them our own.

My father, like the previous speaker's parents, was born in Russia. He came here during the time of tsarist Russia. He was always a little surprised that Canada still reverted to allegiance to a Crown in another country. While he had tremendous respect for the British monarchy he was always a little confused as to why we did not simply say: "We are Canada" and have symbols that were clearly Canadian.

I increasingly take part in citizenship courts. At the last one I attended there were people from 39 different countries. It was held in a high school. The Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, Mr. Lam, attended. It was a very moving experience. There were 500 high school students there. Everyone repeatedly said that it was quite amazing that 39 different countries were represented.

Many of the people taking the oath wondered why 100 years later Canada was still asking them to swear an oath of allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her heirs and successors, rather than swearing allegiance to Canada and its Constitution and laws.

It is difficult to explain that to them. It is not because, as the previous speaker seemed to indicate, that they are a little slow, that they have not been here long enough, that they have not been indoctrinated well enough, that their English or French is not good enough to understand our culture.

Some of these people already have degrees at the doctoral level. They speak better and more precise English than I do and some people would say that is not too difficult. They are not people who do not understand constitutions. Some of them have been involved in independence movements in countries where to under-