

Private Members' Business

the role they played in my life and the values they tried to instil in me that became beneficial when I grew up and started a career.

Grandparents day would provide an excellent opportunity for all Canadians to recognize the very important role grandparents play in a family.

I move that the House respond in a fashion that would come from the heart and not from instructions received from a committee and that unanimous consent could be given today that Bill C-274 become a votable motion.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, is there unanimous consent for transforming the motion on Bill C-274 to make it a votable motion?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

• (1810)

[English]

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the House on the private member's motion to establish a special day in recognition of grandparents for their enormous contribution to families and society. Liberals recognize this.

There is a process whereby private members' business gets to the House. The procedure was followed by an all party committee with the member across the way being a member of that committee. Tonight I will address the private member's motion on the recognition of grandparents.

Creating a special day for grandparents will afford Canadians the opportunity to further demonstrate their continuing commitment to the family. As Liberals we believe this. It is not dollars and cents. It is a philosophy Liberals believe in and share with members across the way.

I fondly remember my own grandmother. She was a wise woman, though uneducated in a schooling sense. She affirmed me with words like: "Child, you can do it". It is women like my grandmother that most of us in this room do remember. Maybe most of us are here as a result of the affirmation we received from our grandparents.

In December 1991, Canada ratified the convention on the rights of the child, a landmark in Canadian social history. Countries agreed that children should grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding with the protection and assistance required for the full development of their personalities to better prepare them to become responsible adults. One of the central truths of the convention is based on the conviction

that the family is a fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all of its members, particularly children.

The role of a grandparent is vital to the child. Grandparents can be companions, becoming friends more than parents. The relationship can be a major source of satisfaction to both the grandparent and the grandchild. Other members have referred to the fact that in today's society with marriage breakdown and single parenting, some grandparents take on the role of surrogate parents.

According to a study conducted by the British Columbia council for the family, grandparenting provides the older adult with a feeling of self-worth, a source of love, respect and support. Being a grandparent is a potential source of giving and receiving affection.

Grandparenting is also a means of establishing a link between past and future generations. Continuity, together with unconditional love, forms the cornerstone in the development of a child's self esteem and sense of trust. Among the riches that are passed down are language, culture and the wisdom that comes from experience.

A recent television show characterized the role of grandparents as one of providing both the roots and the wings of a whole generation of people. This is an apt definition of grandparenting.

Seniors, the majority of whom are grandparents, are a vital part not only of their own families, but also of all aspects of community life. They are active members of their communities. Some continue to do paid work, as does the member across the way. Some are members of churches, seniors organizations and clubs. Fitness and sports groups and cultural organizations such as art galleries, drama and musical groups all have the talent of our seniors. Seniors are involved in social action. They are teachers. They are board members. They are volunteers and they are politicians.

• (1815)

As we consider a grandparents day we should also contemplate our collective Canadian family in which seniors play a critical role. The uniqueness that grandparents bring to the family is in my opinion and that of many others worthy of being celebrated with a national grandparents day in Canada.

Grandparents and seniors in general deserve a day to commemorate their extensive and important contributions. This is why I support the private member's motion that is before us.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on Bill C-274, an Act respecting a national grandparent's day, introduced on September 27 by the hon. member for Don Valley North.