

*National Centennial Act*

**The Deputy Chairman:** The hon. member for Victoria-Carleton.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** Mr. Chairman, in making a few remarks on the resolution now before the committee I am reminded of the fact that I am a representative of one of the eastern provinces which together with the two central provinces about 100 years ago made of the union a great nation, and it is with that sort of thought in mind that I rise to make some observations on the resolution. In listening to the opening remarks of the President of the Privy Council yesterday I realized that the government may consider there are reasons for the resolution now before us. Without going into the reasons he gave for the resolution, I submit that when the government brings a resolution before the house for its consideration and states that it is expedient to amend a certain statute it should give the reasons for it in language and in argument which they can justify.

The resolution before us has the name of the Prime Minister attached to it. He is associated with it, of course, as its sponsor and it bears all the influence and prestige of his office. Presumably the government has given consideration to the subject matter of the resolution and is satisfied that these changes are good for Canada. Presumably the government is prepared to be held responsible for the proposition that there is need for the amendment of the original statute and that the amendment is good and will strengthen the original legislation. Obviously that is the situation.

I cannot agree with any such proposition. I find myself compelled to reject the substance of the resolution. I find myself compelled to reject the premise that there is any need for this amendment. The minister has stated that objections have been raised. I do not propose to go into those. I think the fact that the government has submitted the resolution to the house is what should be before us today.

The government seems to have got in the habit of withdrawing, and it would appear to me that they might properly be accused of a withdrawal in this particular case. Let us examine the proposed amendment and let us see what the contemplated changes are. They are going to change the title.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** No.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** They say the title must be the "Centennial of Confederation Act".

**Mr. Lamontagne:** We do not change the title of the act.

[Mr. Gregoire.]

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** Suppose I read the resolution.

That it is expedient to amend the National Centennial Act to change its short title—

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Not the title.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** I am reading from the resolution.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** The short title, but not the title.

**An hon. Member:** Make your own speech.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** If the resolution is wrong perhaps the minister would like to have it corrected. I am reading from the resolution.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** I said we do not change the title but only the short title.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** I read again.

That it is expedient to amend the National Centennial Act to change its short title from the National Centennial Act to the Centennial of Confederation Act—

**Mr. Lamontagne:** The short title.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** I continue:

—and to change the title of the national centennial administration to that of the centennial commission.

I do not know what the minister is quibbling about because he is certainly going to change the title. That is the suggestion in the resolution.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Mr. Chairman, I respectfully submit there is nothing in the resolution that will change the title of the act, which is at present "an act respecting the observance of the centennial of confederation in Canada". That is the title of the present act and the resolution does not change the title.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** I wonder what we are debating here today. Are we debating what the minister says we should be debating, or are we debating what the resolution says, which I have read?

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Perhaps the hon. gentleman might go back to the act which was passed by his own government and he would see that there is a title and a short title. We are not proposing to change the title in any way but only the short title.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** That is what I call splitting a hair right down the middle.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** No.