

Statutory Holidays

Mr. Hansell: It is good, Mr. Chairman, for a speaker to pause in order that he may gain the reaction to his remarks. Very often that reaction is manifested by the remarks that come from here and there in the house. It is an interesting thing.

I am all for the labouring man too, Mr. Chairman, but if my hon. friend's argument is logically sound, why single out just two holidays in the year? Why not make all holidays on Monday? The member for Temiscouata, who apparently for this evening at least has been relegated to the back benches, is in favour of the bill. Supposing we extended the bill to include some other holidays in the year? For instance, what about Good Friday? Supposing we celebrated Good Friday on the Monday, would that suit my hon. friend? I fancy it would not, yet there is more justification for changing some of these holidays to a Monday than those days which are the actual birthdays of a king, queen, prime minister or whoever it may be. Would the hon. member like to have Christmas day celebrated on the Monday after the twenty-fifth of December rather than on its historical date? You might just as well. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence whatever that our Lord was born on December 25. If my hon. friend's argument is sound, why not follow it for all holidays throughout the year?

As for being good and kind to those who have not got the wherewithal to take any extended holiday, they say they will be good to them and give them these two longer week ends. Let us be good to them in something worth-while, such as bringing economic conditions to the point where they can afford two or three weeks' holiday every year. That is the thing my friend should be furthering. In most labour circles today employees get holidays with pay.

There is one other matter, Mr. Chairman, which I should like to mention. The member for Fort William is in the same profession in private life as I am, and I usually like to come to his rescue. I am sure he did not mean what he said tonight when he said he believed the labouring man needed to go to his place of worship on Sunday, and take advantage of the holiday on Monday. If he knows human nature, as I believe he does and as we all do, the reason for the long week end is not to encourage that man to attend his place of worship on Sunday, but to encourage him to go fishing two days instead of one. Once again, Mr. Chairman, I am going to say that there is more danger in this bill than meets the eye. Personally, I am against this bill. Why keep juggling the holidays of the year around on the merest and tiniest pretext? I do not suppose people will ever celebrate my

birthday; but if they do, I want them to celebrate it on my birthday and not on some other day.

Mr. Graydon: May I ask my hon. friend a question?

Mr. Hansell: Yes.

Mr. Graydon: It is only a matter of clarifying the situation. I hope he has not forgotten the fact that the king does not celebrate his birthday, so far as Canada is concerned, on the day on which he was born. There is some six months between the two days.

Mr. Hansell: Yes, I realize that; but it does not outweigh the argument. Perhaps we do not celebrate his birthday on the day on which he was born, and maybe we should. Personally I would rather celebrate the king's birthday on his birthday than at some other time. That is my position. I am not satisfied that there is not just a little bit of intrigue behind the bill. I recommend that it be killed.

Mr. MacDougall: Mr. Chairman, I feel that I must rise and answer the suggestion made by the hon. member who has just spoken with regard to intrigue. There is no intrigue at all. To any hon. members who think that there is any semblance of disloyalty shown, may I say that they are talking to the wrong cookie pusher when they talk to me. Together with five of my brothers I happen to have upheld democracy for three and a half years in the first world war, and I take second place to no one in this chamber in that regard. More than that, as far as changing the other days that are holidays is concerned, I might add that if my hon. friends who are opposed to this bill would read up the Interpretation Act they would find that it sets out specifically when those days must be celebrated. You will notice, Mr. Chairman, that no Christian holidays are touched in this bill of mine, and they never will be. More than that, the Interpretation Act guards against any such measure being taken in connection with those other holidays that have been spoken of. Speaking personally and on behalf of a great many people throughout Canada and many who are in this chamber, I say: Let us forget about this bogey of democracy and patriotism because it is all bosh so far as the argument against this bill is concerned.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacDougall: Make no mistake about that. I am as patriotic as anybody. There is no question of trying to celebrate something in an aversive manner. I hope that the committee may give sufficiently serious consideration to passing this bill without the amendment.