

Canada Day Act

it would give to every Canadian a sense of pride, if you will, a sense of importance of our country as an entity in the world. So, Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation whatever in moving the second reading of this bill and submitting it for the favourable consideration of the House.

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): I should like to make a few brief observations on this bill, one with which I am largely in sympathy. It seems to me we must do one simple, clear-cut thing at this time in Canada's history in relation to our national day, and that is, remove the anachronistic term Dominion Day, appropriate in my judgment for many years when it was associated in the minds of so many Canadians with a particular and close relationship with Great Britain. In my judgment, both constitutionally and in the general attitude of the people, this issue of filial loyalty has passed. Thus, one evident virtue of the hon. member's bill, is the suggestion that we call the day what in fact it is for most Canadians—Canada Day—and drop the once appropriate but no longer appropriate term "Dominion".

What would the passage of this bill accomplish? Right now it would add a small, perhaps, but hopefully relevant impetus to a legitimate sense of national pride. I do not like to over-emphasize the virtues of nationalism because no one with a sense of history can forget that the virtues of nationalism tend very often to turn into the vices of something quite different. But it seems to me that in our country we have for far too long been quiet Canadians, if you like. For far too long have we sat back and looked with a particular kind of grudging admiration upon our more boisterous and aggressive neighbours to the south, contenting ourselves with a quiet, smug satisfaction at being different. It appears to me that this is more an expression of some form of masochism, or the lack of a proper sense of identity, than anything else. Perhaps more than at any other time in our history, this is the moment to assert ourselves as a national entity—particularly when we see our economic sovereignty being gobbled up almost on a daily basis, again by no deliberate malicious act on the part of our southern neighbours but as a result of aggressive action on their part and acquiescent behaviour on ours. It is time we as a nation stood up for what most other nations take for granted, namely, the full and unqualified control of our national resources and geographic boundaries.

It is time, too, we began to convey to those who are growing up in this country a sense of legitimate pride in what it means to be a Canadian. One of the first steps in this direction would be to call Canada Day Canada Day. One does not want to exaggerate the significance of such a step, and the hon. member who put forward this bill did not do so.

The traditions of this country are not those of the country to the south. Ours is a multi-racial tradition, one which has tried to preserve and not to obliterate certain racial distinctions. It has in the main been a peaceful tradition. It has often been thought that somehow Canada missed out by not participating in the glorious adventure—it was really a tragedy of the civil war. Many Canadians, including, unhappily, a number of historians, have lamented our peaceful tradition. But I am not one of those who think this is something of which we ought to be ashamed. Indeed, I believe it is something of which we should be proud.

● (5:10 p.m.)

I shall not go on extolling the virtues of what it means to be a Canadian. This could more properly be done on Canada Day. I should like to disagree with part of the proposal put forward in the bill by the hon. member. I have a private bill on the Order Paper, which hopefully will be reached later this session, the greater part of which is similar to the bill presently before the House. However, there is one difference, and I think a significant difference: the bill before the House proposes that Canada Day be celebrated on the first Monday in July.

On balance, I do not think that is a good idea. There are certain days for celebrating events which we never change because we feel they have a certain historical and symbolic significance. I suppose Christmas is the most outstanding example of this. No one, to my knowledge at least, has ever proposed that we begin the celebration of Christmas on the third Monday of December, for example. This is because, for Christian civilization, the birthday of Christ has a particular significance which we are not going to change just to coincide in some convenient way with our holiday plans.

I do not want to suggest that in terms of significance the proposed Canada Day has the same historical import as Christmas day, but I do suggest that it is analogous in importance. Canada Day should be a day for Canadians to