

*Canada Flag Day*

agreed to the resolution I moved yesterday regarding the display of the Canadian flag in the House.

In the history of the Canadian flag, the dates of February 14 and 15, 1973 will be remembered. I want to stress the measures taken in the past by the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) in order that the flag be displayed in a place of honour in the two houses of Parliament, and I thank him for having supported the motion I submitted yesterday.

Today we are studying Bill C-136 so that February 15 can be observed as "Canada Flag Day". I express my heart-felt congratulations to the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Nelson) who has introduced this bill which I hope will be referred today to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

The purpose of the bill is also to pay tribute to the Right Hon. Lester Bowles Pearson, the father of the Canadian flag, which is one of his many achievements.

On February 15, 1965, the first page of a new era in our nation's history was engraved in gold letters. This typically Canadian single leaf flag was first blessed by the chief chaplains to the Canadian armed forces and then raised at 12 o'clock noon on the main platform in front of the Peace Tower.

On that occasion, the Governor General His Excellency George Vanier called for unity, and I quote from his speech:

I urge all Canadians to give up any prejudice, narrow mindedness and intolerance that might exist and to develop a spirit of brotherly love and mutual confidence.

I hope that all Canadians will give an example of friendly co-existence and that our flag will symbolize for us and before the entire world unity in thought and determination to live up to the noble destiny to which we are called.

Mr. Speaker, the flag which has been waving for eight years in the Canadian sky, over our embassies, which identifies our ships that sail the seas of the world, which is carried by our athletes in Olympic stadiums, which is the flag of our armed forces, is an emblem of unity, of courage and strength for our nation. It inspires in our youth a deep feeling of patriotism and attachment to their native land.

This flag is displayed for the first time in the House of Commons. It proves that hon. members have forgotten the quarrels of the 1964 debate and that we are moving towards the unity of the various ethnic groups of the country.

Mr. Speaker, before leaving the floor to another member, I would like, if I may, quote a few lines of the speech delivered by the Right Hon. L. B. Pearson on the day the Canadian flag was inaugurated. I quote:

If, by God's grace, our nation should last a thousand years, this day, February 15, 1965, will always be commemorated as an important step in the realization of the national progress of Canada.

I find it impossible not to be deeply moved by such an occasion and to be indifferent to the honour and privilege of being a participant.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of the bill the hon. member has brought forward in the House today. May our youth and all Canadians be proud to observe Canada flag day.

[Mr. Cyr.]

[Translation]

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted to salute the flag on your right in these words:

[English]

To my flag and to the country it represents, I pledge respect and loyalty.

Wave with pride from sea to sea and within your folds, keep us ever united.

Be for all a symbol of love, freedom and justice.

God keep our flag.

God protect our Canada.

**Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the mover of the bill for his initiative in bringing forward this suggested piece of legislation. I commend him, too, on the alacrity with which his bill has risen to the coveted spot that it now occupies, inasmuch as many important private members' bills languish many, many weeks and we often find that sessions expire before we are given a chance to place our deliberations before our colleagues.

It is hardly to be gainsaid that all members of the House honour the flag of the country, respect its place in the world and love, serve and cherish the country which it symbolizes. It need hardly be said that all members of the House and the people they represent honour the achievements of the great statesman named in the bill, cherish his memory, salute his achievements and feel proud to acclaim him as a fellow Canadian.

I am not sure, however, that I would have used the same technique as the hon. member used to honour a great Canadian, namely, that of attaching his name to an honoured symbol of our nation, the flag. There are many achievements of the late Right Hon. L. B. Pearson which will retain for him a lustrous place in the hall of honour of our nation, indeed, of the world. His involvement in the process leading to the adoption of a distinctive Canadian flag is but one of his contributions to Canada and to the world. Yet, I would not like to think of the late Right Hon. Lester Pearson as merely a great Canadian. I think of him as a great Canadian certainly, one whom I was honoured to know and admire and for whom I had great affection. But he was, Sir, also a man of the world, a man whom Canada gave to the world, a man whose exertions on behalf of peace were humanitarian, whose actions and performance made us all a little better and who always, substantially, made us feel proud that he was one of us. Therefore, I would like to reflect a bit more on the suggestion that this great man's memorialization be confined only to one particular act in which he gave leadership within his own country.

• (1710)

It is a very important question that a nation faces as to what types of holidays it should set apart for national celebration. I believe our country should celebrate holidays and should allow for a symbolic expression of those things which make us a country and a nation. What are the great days in our historic past? Surely, the time when our political forefathers met together, beginning in Charlottetown and later in Quebec, to form a country out of regions and small communities was a great occasion. Therefore, I think that Dominion Day remains prime