

Canada Day Act

regard for the proposer of the original bill and for the man who is trying to get us back to that original bill today. I notice that the committee did not leave much of the original bill intact, except the number.

I hope this House will not adopt the suggestion but will cleave to something that is significant and unique to Canada and continue to celebrate something that was done in 1867 with more hope, confidence and unity than ever before. That is, the creation of a dominion proud, free and independent, one which we hope will remain united and strong. Let us not be afraid to use that word "dominion" which marks our independence, recalls our birth and gives all of us in all parts of this House and from all parts of this country the opportunity to work together in a free and independent nation created by those who were in this place before us.

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to join briefly in the discussion of Bill C-29 and to express to the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Gibson) who moved this amendment, my appreciation of his concern and my awareness of the sincerity of his efforts to bring to the attention of the Canadian people the significance of the celebration of our birthday. The original bill is deserving of equal treatment and consideration because it voices concern, and as long as there is this concern the well-being of Canada is protected.

In all fairness I must join my colleagues, the hon. member from Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) and the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Anderson), and indicate to the hon. member and to you, Mr. Speaker, that I think it is rather unnecessary that we are here this afternoon dealing with the name of the birthday of my country. I share the views and fears of some hon. members who have spoken this afternoon, as well as the views and fears indicated by some of my constituents in regard to the change of name.

In the last few weeks I have studied the meaning of the word "dominion". Not being a distinguished historian, I consulted the Concise Oxford Dictionary and with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to read the definition given there:

dominion, lordship, sovereignty, control; domains of feudal lord, territory of sovereign or government; Dominion of Canada, name given to Canadian colonies united 1867; Dominion of New Zealand, title given 1907; Dominion of Ceylon, 1948.

In law it means right of possession. The interpretation in law is that the possessor possesses what is in his possession. But this country is ours, mine, and nobody needs to remind me on July 1 that the name of the country whose birth I am celebrating is Canada. I do not need to be reminded by the amendments before us that on July 1 we are celebrating the anniversary of the confederation of the parts. I think we should recognize the danger of chipping away at those things which are meaningful to most of us.

The hon. member for Hillsborough is correct when he says that Canada is not any of its parts, but the Dominion of Canada is something more than the sum of all those parts. It is manifesting itself this week in the fear, rightly or wrongly, of whether we will have a country a week from today.

An hon. Member: Not a dry eye in the House!

Mr. Forrestall: However, it is not in the context of what is happening in one of the provinces that I want to make my remarks this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, though it does point out the necessity of maintaining our identity as a nation. It seems to me rather important that we not turn our backs on the few tangible symbols that have withstood the pressures of 100 years.

Regretfully, I must indicate to my hon. friend that I think his amendment is redundant. I think it is a frustrated desire to do something worth while. I only wish he had directed his efforts to matters a little more productive of national unity rather than to a symbol which portrays the very essence of my right to possess what is mine. I wish I had my notes available so that I could tell the hon. member from whence the word "dominion" came.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed with the discourse of the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie). As I listened, I was reminded of the warm June days about exam time in school when I sat and dreamed of things that might have been and should have been, and wondered at the greatness of it all. However, Mr. Speaker, Canada did not develop quite as simply as that. I was impressed with our history, but surely we must go onward. Without the doubtful benefit of having had a revolution in Canada, we do not have a Bastille Day nor an Independence Day. We did not develop that way.