

National Centennial Act

Mr. Valade: Certainly.

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend has just suggested that the title of the act be changed to the "Canada centennial act". Does he not feel that in 1967 we shall be celebrating the 443rd anniversary of Canada?

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I did not understand the question of the hon. member.

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has suggested that the act be known as the "Canada centennial act". Does he not feel that in 1967 we shall actually be celebrating the 443rd anniversary of Canada?

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question affords me the opportunity to clear up a point.

When I speak of Canada's centennial, I want to emphasize that, in 1867, confederation enabled the two ethnic groups to unite. As a matter of fact, my friend knows quite well that there was no Canada as such in 1867, but that there was instead what they called "Lower Canada" and "Upper Canada"—

Mr. Caouette: "Haut-Canada" and "Bas-Canada".

Mr. Valade: I used the English expressions for the sake of bilingualism and to show clearly what the situation was then.

And thus with confederation, the wish of both French speaking and English speaking Canadians to unite and to respect each other came true. It is this respect for their essential rights that is laid down in the British North America Act, in sections 92 and 133, to be exact, and many others of which hon. members are aware.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Longueuil should not make me say what I did not say and, especially, that I believe Canada began in 1867. On the other hand, I know that our country began to head towards a certain unity of mind in 1867, and our goal now must be to try and create, for 1967, a unity of mind in mutual respect for the rights of each province which is the true spirit of confederation, and not a melting pot.

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put another question to the hon. member. Is he not of the opinion that there was a Canada before Upper and Lower Canada came into being?

Mr. Valade: I think there were also Indians even before my friend's time, here, in Canada.

[Text]

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to register my

[Mr. Côté (Longueuil).]

objections to this bill. It is another indication of fumbling and bumbling on the part of this government. I have had occasion during the last two or three days to run over in my mind the accomplishments of the government during this session, and I find that all they are doing is taking acts which are already on the statute books and changing names, enlarging the number of directors or the number of people mentioned in those acts, and things of that nature.

Here we have another example. The National Centennial Act was set up, people were appointed and the job was under way. This government has to now tinker with this operation. When the present government was in opposition was the time for them to suggest the changes that they are now trying to bring into effect, if they thought them worth while at that time—which they did not. We have heard hon. members suggest today—

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Speaker, I do not like to interrupt the hon. member, but I rise on a point of order. I believe it was understood that at 5.20 we would move to the private members' hour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The understanding of the Chair was that we would go to twenty minutes after five o'clock, and unless there is unanimous consent to continuing this debate, the Chair will have to call the private members' hour.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) is absolutely the last speaker, and if he could conclude his remarks in a couple of minutes—

Mr. Churchill: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pigeon: No.

Mr. Pickersgill: —perhaps the house would consent to that course being followed. But if we are going on with a debate on semantics—and the debate on this bill has already gone on for three days—I think we should follow the course that was agreed upon earlier.

Mr. Churchill: This is precisely the reason I intend to debate this measure, because of accusations like this. One of the other members said we were wasting the time of the house and the hon. member has referred to semantics, and so on. I have every intention of exerting my rights as a member of this house to be heard on this bill.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. member for Comox-Alberni also has rights.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I suggest that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre might want to adjourn the debate because I understand we are going into committee of supply at seven o'clock.