

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 9, 1987

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Section 7(2) of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, I have the honour to table in both official languages the annual report of the Canadian Wheat Board for the 1985-86 crop year.

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NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP WEEK

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise all Hon. Members that next week is Canada's first National Citizenship Week.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) today declared the week, so that we can reserve a special time to celebrate our citizenship and the beliefs and values it embodies.

[*English*]

An eloquent Father of Confederation, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, over 100 years ago urged us to do the following:

To lift ourselves to the level of our destinies, to rise above all low limitations and narrow circumscriptions, to cultivate that true catholicity of spirit which embraces all creeds, all classes and all races, in order to make of our boundless province—so rich in known and unknown resources—a great new Northern nation.

In the last 100 years, we have become that great northern nation.

[*Translation*]

And next week, in large cities and small communities; people are gathering for neighbourhood events and special ceremonies organized to celebrate the pride they take in their citizenship.

[*English*]

Canada has welcomed people from around the world and now they are a part of us. Communities across the country have gained an extra vitality as a consequence and an added richness as a result.

I was reminded this morning of a remark made by Davey Fulton, a distinguished lawyer and a former parliamentarian, who talked about the people who came to Canada. He said:

This nation will never be able to repay the debt that it owes to those who come from other shores . . . not only in a material sense, for the physical help they gave in building a nation . . . but also a debt in the spiritual and moral sense for their contribution to the enrichment of Canadian culture.

It is this sentiment that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) salutes in his declaration of National Citizenship Week.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister also expresses the belief that at the heart of Canadian citizenship lies the bilingual, multicultural character of Canada. I urge all Members of this House, and indeed all Canadians, to express their pride in citizenship through their participation in next week's events.

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the Minister's statement—

[*English*]

This is so particularly for this topic because I take pleasure in saying from time to time that I am a new Canadian. I was not born in this country. I was 13 years old when my people came to these shores. Indeed, although I was too young to vote at the time, many of my people had the pleasure not only of becoming Canadians but of actually voting for Canada, an honour not everyone has had.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rompkey: That achievement was won with great struggle. Only a little over 50 per cent voted for Canada in 1949, two years after this Act was brought into effect by a Liberal Government of the time. Today, the overwhelming majority of Newfoundlanders would vote fervently for this country.

● (1110)

The Minister quoted Davey Fulton, a distinguished lawyer, who said:

This nation will never be able to repay the debt that it owes to those who come from other shores . . . not only in a material sense, for the physical help they gave in building a nation—