

Private Members' Business

servants, they already have the day off through negotiations. To take it out of the negotiating process is not adding a penny to the cost of Remembrance Day.

We are forgetting that no wars of any great magnitude have been fought in this country. It is our people who went to Europe and to Asia to fight these wars. It is the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge which was the battle as far as Canada is concerned. It was a watershed battle where we discovered our nationhood in many historians' views. We became of age in the Battle of Vimy Ridge 75 years ago.

As I said, I had the pleasure of visiting that grand memorial we have there. All around the Belgian plains and all around the French fields of Flanders you will see many monuments and many graveyards from the First and Second World Wars. The Europeans have had a long and bloody history that I guess our forefathers thought we were going to avoid when we came to North America to start a new life, that we would be no longer embroiled in the battles and the bloody wars of Europe. Such was not our fate.

In the fields of Flanders I think there are still five Frenchmen a year who are killed because of munitions that are coming up through the ground. Farmers who are harrowing and ploughing run over this still live ammunition and get blown up. There is on average still five French citizens a year who die because of the First World War.

You will see monuments there from South Africa and from the enemy which at that time was Germany. They have some fantastic monuments there remembering their dead. The thing about the Europeans is the respect, the admiration and the time they take to come to our memorials. The great respect that they had for the Canadian soldier is still there. They and their ancestors have gone through bloody wars. They have seen their country ravaged. They are very thankful for the efforts that the Canadians made to maintain their freedom, not just our freedom. It was the freedom of the Europeans, the freedom of France, the freedom of England and the freedom of all Europe. They still remember with great reverence the sacrifice that our Canadian soldiers made.

In conclusion, I ask this House to take this bill very seriously and to give a lot of thought to remembering our Legionnaires and our veterans when we are voting on this bill. I think if we do that we will be supporting this bill and we will be taking the first step into guaranteeing

that this Remembrance Day will always be remembered by the Canadian people.

• (1920)

Mr. William Scott (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, tonight I am very pleased to take part in the birth of this veterans bill, as we may call it. We have to recognize the veterans.

We can be very proud of the role that they have played after the wars also. Probably when they returned, they came into a new world, after seeing a lot of destruction and everything else on the battlefields. They came back with the many experiences they had during the wars over in Europe and in other wars that they had participated in.

They brought back a lot of insight. They were great builders and have been great builders of our country. We can honour the dead but we cannot bring them back. I think that probably this is something we should be doing, we should show through our legions and through our other organizations what the veterans have done. Probably to many people this would be a lost history if we do not do something about it. This is why I am supporting this bill.

I think our veterans over the years have made contributions in many, many ways that has made Canada the nation that it is today from sea to sea.

We cannot look at just any one part of our country. Our contribution in the world wars, my friends, has been great. There is no one individual, no one party, or anyone else who can say we did this and we did that. We did it collectively, my friends, and we can be proud of this. We are proud in the eyes of the world, proud of the contribution that Canadians have made.

We are proud in the eyes of the world of what our legions have done to promote many things in our society. Look at the contribution they make to the younger generations, what they have done for our senior citizens, what they have done for all segments of our community.

You can go into rural Ontario, you can go into metropolitan Toronto, or any other major city in our country that you may wish to speak of, and I have been in to a lot of them. I have been to the legions in western Canada, I have been to the legions in northwestern Ontario, I have been in to the legions in the maritimes. We are proud. I am proud, very proud to attend a legion rally or function, wherever it may be, for the spirit that is behind it. This spirit is not enhanced in any one area, it is