

*Private Members' Business*

I will read into the record clause 2 of Bill C-288 which deals with the whole question of the consequential amendments:

All that portion of the definition "holiday" in section 35 of the *Interpretation Act* preceding paragraph (a) thereof is repealed and the following substituted therefor:

"holiday" means any of the following days, namely, Sunday; New Year's Day; National Heritage Day; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Christmas Day; the birthday or the day fixed by proclamation for the celebration of the birthday of the reigning Sovereign; Victoria Day; Canada Day; the first Monday in September, designated Labour Day; Remembrance Day; any day appointed by proclamation to be observed as a day of general prayer or mourning, or day of public rejoicing or thanksgiving; and any of the following additional days, namely—

And it outlines a couple of the additional days. As we can see from my brief reading of this bill—if I had read a couple more sections I would have read the entire legislation into the record today—that very simply this Parliament could implement a measure to which, to be frank, we have given lip service over time. If Parliament were to act, I think we would be sending a clear message to all Canadians about how we view and see our cultural heritage. I am sure the offer of a general holiday in its basic sense would be well received by most Canadians.

What would be a better way to celebrate this country's cultural heritage? What would be a better way to celebrate in 1992 Canada's 125th birthday. I have received support from a number of organizations, such as the Canada Heritage Association, as well as a number of letters from people across the country, in Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and elsewhere who have written to offer their support for this bill. I am certainly gratified by their response and want them to know that we will be continuing the discussion and the debate. Perhaps we could start a petition campaign to ensure that Canadians from all across the country will urge this Parliament to develop as soon as possible a National Heritage Day.

In conclusion, I want to just call upon members for their support of this bill. I certainly hope for and urge the support of the government for this legislation. I would ask it to consider, if it does not see fit to support the bill at this time, that legislation be brought forward in a new session of Parliament, if that is what it is going to be, next year, and that it be a part of the celebrations in 1992 of Canada's 125th birthday. I think that way we have the opportunity obviously to do something good for Cana-

dians, to show our respect for our cultural heritage and as well to be a part of the celebrations that we see coming up.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity here today to present this bill and, as I mentioned earlier in my speech, to let you know, Mr. Speaker, that in subsequent sessions of Parliament we will be bringing forward this legislation and we hope it will receive positive support from all members.

**Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)):** Mr. Speaker, to speak on this bill before us provides a welcome opportunity to comment on the meaning and the celebration of our heritage.

I first want to record my appreciation to our hon. friend and colleague, the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley. The substance of Bill C-288, which he has introduced, is by no means new to the House of Commons, which he indicated in his remarks a few moments ago, but the concept reflects and helps to serve to represent an important and continuing effort to give Canadians the best kind of opportunity to celebrate our heritage.

It is more than 17 years since the idea was proposed by Heritage Canada. Since that time it has gained increasing recognition from parliamentarians, from agencies of the federal government, from provincial and local governments, voluntary societies and individuals in the community. Three years ago the then Secretary of State, the hon. David Crombie, called Heritage Day and I quote, "a uniquely Canadian occasion to celebrate both unity and diversity". In a 1987 booklet entitled "Proud to be Canadian" he observed and I quote again, "Canadians in fact have relatively few occasions when we can come together to celebrate our heritage. We certainly do so on Canada Day and with the recent proclamations of Environment Week and Citizenship Week by the federal government, there will be growing opportunities to understand the shared aspects of being Canadian".

We can acknowledge our heritage even without a holiday, much as we observe Mother's Day, and I keep encouraging my children to observe Mother's Day or Father's Day. My husband encourages Father's Day