

Statutory Holidays

through my own fault, while the hon. member made his explanation with respect to the exact wording of those sections in the original bill he proposes to amend; but when one realizes that in some years July 7 could be the date when we would observe this holiday as the bill now stands, it would seem that a change would be advisable. I should think his desires would be carried out very much better if the section were amended to provide that the holiday should be celebrated on the nearest Monday to July 1 or May 24, as the case may be.

Mr. Knowles: That is what I suggested.

Mr. Graydon: You always get in ahead, but sometimes your suggestions are not very acceptable. This happens to be the exception to the rule. I have read the bill very carefully, and this is what it says:

Throughout Canada, in each and every year, the first Monday following the thirtieth day of June shall be a legal holiday and shall be kept and observed as such under the name of Dominion day.

That is the provision to which I object; I think it should be the Monday nearest the original date. I do not want to be casting obstacles in the way of this bill, but I would move that section 1, clause 2, of the said bill be amended in line 2 thereof by deleting the words "first Monday following the 30th day of June" and substituting therefor the words, "Monday nearest in point of time to the first day of July". I think it would be going a little far to have Dominion day celebrated as far on in July as the 7th, which, as I see it, would be possible under the present act. When the bill first came in I was rather surprised that it did not contain this phraseology. There may be reasons why that should not be done, but it does seem to me this would be an improvement on the language originally employed in the section.

Mr. Hees: I, for one, do not feel that holding these two holidays on the nearest Monday in any way detracts from their significance as important public holidays. I agree wholeheartedly with the member for Hamilton West that these two holidays should not be forgotten. I see no reason why, if they are held on the nearest Monday, our children or anyone else in the country should not recognize how important they are, and what they stand for. I believe, therefore, that the amendment proposed by the member for Peel is a sensible one. I believe that two extra long week ends in the year are extremely important to the working people because, as the sponsor of the bill has said, they do not get very many holidays. They are limited as to funds. On an ordinary week end it is rather difficult for them to get away with

[Mr. Graydon.]

their families. If it is a long week end, they can travel by train, car or bus to visit friends or relatives, and in that way leave their present surroundings and get a change, which we are told is just as good as a rest. I, for one, think that sort of thing is extremely important in the lives of working people, from the point of view of their morale and their physical well-being.

The second reason I have for thinking this is a good measure is that when you stop an industrial plant for one day in the middle of the week there is considerable time lost and money expended. If these two holidays are held on the week ends, there will be no loss of time or expense involved. Although this last is not an extremely important matter, it is of some significance.

Therefore, I believe that this measure is a good measure from every angle, and I intend to support it.

Mr. Cruickshank: May I ask a question? I should like to have this matter clarified before I vote. As I understand it, the purpose of this is to guarantee a long week end to the working people. So that I can vote intelligently, I should like to know whether this will interfere with the long week ends now enjoyed by the working people from two provinces, that is from Thursday to Tuesday of each week.

Mr. Hansell: Mr. Chairman, there seems to be in the house a general impression that there is not very much harm in this bill, and that it does not make very much difference what happens to it or upon which day we celebrate these two particular holidays known as Victoria day and Dominion day. I believe it goes further than that. I am inclined to agree with the member for Hamilton West that it does take away from us the spirit of loyalty and patriotism for king and country that has characterized our people over the ages. There are things happening today, and happening right under our noses, that we do not always observe. One of them is the thing I have been talking about, the destruction of our loyalty to our own country in favour of a loyalty to some wider thing that nobody knows anything at all about. As I see it, that is the seriousness of the bill.

Let me take up one or two of the arguments that have been advanced. The sponsor of the bill has laboured a little bit in suggesting that he is now championing the cause of the workingman by giving him a longer week end twice in the year. If that is all the hon. member can do for the workingman, I would suggest he go back home.

An hon. Member: What are you doing?