

Government Orders

Grandparents are historians and story tellers. They weave tales of days gone by, providing gentle guidance as children learn about family and social values and morality. Kids learn from the stories about their parents that everyone, even those who seem infallible, can in fact make mistakes. They learn that everyone struggles when growing up and they learn that parents are human.

Children also learn about their heritage from their grandparents. Seniors are the keepers of all the treasures of our culture, our spiritual identities, and our social values. In this country, where we welcome people of all cultures, grandparents are often the custodians of a family's original language and heritage. The retention of these original cultures makes Canada rich with variety. Our children and their children gain from a multicultural society where each culture is appreciated for its uniqueness.

I have been talking mostly about younger children and the incredible benefits they enjoy by being close to their grandparents. From the point of view of older children, the relationship, while different, can be equally invaluable. Many of us can remember how we suffered through adolescence, having to balance our desire for independence from our parents with the need to seek counsel and be protected from the hard knocks life can often fling at us. Those of us who could turn to a grandparent enjoyed receiving adult advice without having to jeopardize that all-important independence we felt so ambivalent about.

Children today who do not have grandparents of their own are lucky to be able to adopt surrogates. Several provinces have programs where older people volunteer to take on a grandparenting role. Both the children and the older people win in these relationships.

Grandparents are a source of constant support to grandchildren of any age. They provide respite to tired parents by taking care of the children. They share their energy lovingly with their grandchildren, providing them with a fresh point of view. Grandparents are the connection between the past and the future. They allow us to learn from past mistakes and to plan for the life to come. They are the conduit between what is known and what is as yet unknown.

In families under stress, grandparents can provide the anchor that allows children to escape even briefly the tension at home. By alleviating the anxiety and being solid pillars of calm in a confused world, grandparents help their grandchildren to cope.

The children may not realize it until later in life, but grandparents can provide a stabilizing and powerful influence. They can help children develop their personal identities and a positive image of aging.

The idea of creating a national grandparent's day was first presented to this House a mere few weeks ago by the hon. member for Don Valley North. I know how hard he worked on

that initiative and that he is very pleased that this House has decided to reconsider his initiative through this bill. I urge the government and indeed all members of this House to help celebrate the role of grandparents in Canada by supporting this bill in creating a national grandparents day.

• (1840)

Mrs. Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank everyone who spoke today; I notice they were all in favour of it.

While I recognize this is not deemed a votable bill, I would like to seek the consent of this House to recognize the second Sunday in September as grandparent's day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There is not unanimous consent.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-72, an act to amend the Criminal Code (self-induced intoxication), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on Bill C-72 regarding self-induced intoxication.

Like all Canadians, I was shocked when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the Daviault case. To remind members present, the Daviault case involved an elderly woman who was sexually assaulted by an intoxicated man. In a six to three decision the court ruled that the man was so intoxicated that he was virtually insane at the time of the crime and was declared innocent of all charges because he did not know what he was doing, I presume.

This country was assured at the time and time and time again by the government that this defence was a rare exception to the rule. Yet in the following weeks at least three criminal charges were overturned, all using the Daviault defence.

Many Reform MPs stood in this House and demanded action on the issue. As the justice minister stood by trying to ease concerns over Daviault mania, individual MPs and the Senate were wrestling with the problem and trying to find solutions to it. Is that not a sad testimony when two private members' bills and a Senate proposal can deal with a justice crisis like this faster than the justice minister?