

Youth Appreciation Week

[English]

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, since we are involving ourselves in a great-to-do about youth, I thought as a youth perhaps I should make a few remarks in respect of this suggestion concerning a national youth appreciation week. With due respect to the hon. member who has introduced this bill, may I say that I believe it is a lot of nonsense. It is pure unadulterated crap. We could have an appreciation of old people week, or we might have an appreciation week for this group or that group. There are many appreciation weeks, weeks about this and weeks about that. The mayors of towns proclaim such weeks as do the premiers and others. The result is that no one knows what he is appreciating. Now, we are faced with the prospect of establishing a national youth appreciation week to show that the kind of society and policies we develop are in tune with what is desired by the young people in our society, to take some action so that they are not walking the streets as many of them are between the ages of 20 and 30. In effect, we are to say, "We appreciate you, gang; you are a nice bunch; we raised you to concern yourselves about morals and so on".

There is a great deal of truth in the statement of the hon. member that the youth of this country are often misinterpreted in our society. I agree that often we are too critical of one group and tend to lump them altogether. In other words, if one person does something bad then all in that group are bad. However, we do this about other people also. But I do not believe the members of the Parliament of Canada should be involved in setting aside a week to appreciate youth or anything else. I believe this is a waste of our time. I wish to state very clearly that I am presenting the opinion of the hon. member for Assiniboia. I do not know what my colleagues think about this.

An hon. Member: Agreed.

Mr. Knight: I see there is one agreement.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That makes it unanimous.

Mr. Knight: I cannot possibly conceive of the logic of such a suggestion. I suppose if one were to send the speech home it would be well received. I suppose I could move a motion to have an appreciate farmers week. We should appreciate farmers.

• (1720)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Or appreciate members of parliament week.

Mr. Knight: Yes, for all the mail we are handling. We should have the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) move a motion to appreciate members of parliament for all the work they are doing on behalf of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Perhaps we could establish a national holiday and let members of parliament have that week off so they would not have to handle the cases for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. I can tell him that I am getting terribly sick of handling them.

An hon. Member: We could have a week for the whips.

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger).]

Mr. Knight: Yes. Members could move a motion like that after the whips had given them trouble over not showing up for certain votes.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Carried.

Mr. Knight: That shows the utter stupidity of such a motion. We can probably get four or five members to say they will talk it out. I say, quite frankly, that we should talk out this motion. If we are going to do something for youth in this country, this parliament must deal with real issues which affect young people, real issues which affect their future, such as whether this country become economically independent or whether this country will have a full employment economy. That is what affects young people, not setting up a week to appreciate them. Nonsense—that is all I have to say, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Isabelle (Hull): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure for me to take the floor, especially during the private members' hour. I must congratulate the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier) who requested permission from the Chair to recite a poem. I think he will realize, especially by listening to the speeches—what is worse is that they are written for future generations—that everything is allowed in the House. The reading of that poem was just like a whiff of oxygen in this majestic and austere assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. I should like to point to the hon. member for Hull that the hon. member for Sherbrooke did not read but recite a poem.

Mr. Isabelle: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I saw him bend his head from time to time, I did not think he was reciting, but it was so beautiful that I was under the impression that he was reading it with much feeling.

And as far as I, a former youth, am concerned, it is always a pleasure to talk about youth. The definition of youth in the dictionary is the following:

The period of life between childhood and maturity

I did not think that, by extension, for instance, one can always remain young, for to keep eternally young is to keep young in one's heart and one's life. This is why while many people are senile today, many others will keep eternally young.

As I said before, this august and austere assembly puts up with speeches of all kinds and patterns. I can even quote examples showing that pollution is not to be found in the air, nor in the fumes from the chimneys, nor in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver or Los Angeles, but rather in the speeches. I believe that more pollution is to be found in speeches from speakers whose brain cells seem confused and whose product is at best quite hazy. Of course, life is often dull and superficial for hon. members, especially nowadays.

I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds) for the generous thought he has expressed concerning young people. But young people need more than concern. The standards set for admission to some universities, particularly the medical art faculties, are much too rigid. Yet, medical doctors are