

Royal Assent

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that these supplementary questions are developing into a debate. The hon. member might ask the question directly.

Mr. Harkness: Once more may I ask in what position this leaves us in relation to the other members of NATO, in view of the risks which may be involved in an exchange of military information, technology and weaponry with France.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I do not think one could accept the premise of the hon. gentleman that France has suddenly become a security risk. In respect of all such agreements there are the usual considerations for the protection of national security in both the military and intelligence sense. This agreement makes such provision, and administrative arrangements have been made to take care of this.

Mr. D. V. Pugh (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, might I ask the minister whether the other NATO allies were consulted before this agreement was signed.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I think our other NATO allies were aware of the discussions leading up to this agreement.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

A message was delivered by Major C. R. Lamoureux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, it is the desire of the Honourable the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General that this honourable house attend in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the house went up to the Senate chamber.

• (4:30 p.m.)

And being returned:

Mr. Speaker informed the house that the Deputy Governor General had been pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

An act respecting the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

An act respecting the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

An act to amend the Canada Corporations Act.

An act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 1968.

Mr. Speaker: I also have the honour to inform the house that when the house did [Mr. Harkness.]

attend His Honour the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General, His Honour was pleased to make a speech to both houses of parliament. To prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy, which is as follows:

Honourable senators, honourable members of the House of Commons:

We are assembled here today on an historic occasion to participate in an act which is rooted in tradition.

On this day, one hundred years ago, the first Governor General of Canada, Viscount Monck, opened the first session of the first parliament of the newly formed confederation. The new national capital had witnessed on July 1, 1867, a ceremony which was the culmination of the discussions that had taken place in Charlottetown and Quebec. Deliberations could now begin on bills which, in due course, would become the first statutes of Canada.

Federal union had been accomplished and the members of that first parliament were called upon to address their attention to the complex problems of nation building. A century later and in the midst of the twenty-seventh parliament, we reflect with gratitude and with justifiable pride on what has been achieved.

With courage, imagination and brawn, Canadians have come to grips with the challenge of geography and economics. Incredible distances have been spanned and the vast and rich resources of the land have been extensively developed. The problems of environment have obliged us to be preoccupied during the greater part of the past 100 years with physical needs, but recent years have witnessed a cultural explosion in Canada, bringing with it a flowering of creative talent.

We have many things to celebrate in this centennial year. Not the least of these is the effectiveness of our form of government. It is our good fortune and our proud boast that we in Canada enjoy a long heritage of freedom. Our democratic process is at once a recognition and a safeguard of the dignity of man.

The origins of parliament lie far in the past, but the process of law-making as we know it today was not realized at a single stroke. Successive generations struggled to gain a commanding voice in their own affairs and to bring an end to the exercise of arbitrary power. Our forefathers had a lively awareness of that struggle and the determination to preserve what had been so dearly won.

We inherited the institution of parliament from Great Britain but we have made it in all respects Canadian. Laws are passed "by and with the consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada" and take effect when formally assented to by the Governor General in his exercise of the power of the Sovereign. In recent years the post of Governor General has been filled by the appointment of Canadians. Thus, everything done in this land in the name of the Queen is done by Canadians at the behest of Canadians. The giving of royal assent to bills is not merely an ancient custom but an integral part of our own legislative process.

With the passage of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, Canada took her full place in the arena of world affairs and became one of the founding