

That action was probably planned. It looks as if it was. A trick was played and the House of Commons put the thing through. Now it seems that you propose to continue the trickery by putting it through the Senate—dragooning your own side in order to put it through the Senate.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I rise on a point of order. Let me say at once that I am looking forward to hearing Senator Walker's intervention in the debate on this bill, but the matter concerning us now is a motion to adjourn until Tuesday next at 8 o'clock in the evening.

I certainly do not want Senator Walker to feel that we are not all anxiously awaiting the elaboration of what he has already said concerning his position on Bill C-201. However, at the moment I believe he is entering into debate on that bill rather than talking on the adjournment motion.

Senator Walker: I do not intend to do that, but I do intend to make it quite clear that we have between now and the end of the week to go into and decide this question of Bill C-201. So why not do that today? Why not do it now? Why wait until we are not here? Why wait until you will have an opportunity to pull another trick on us?

An. Hon. Senator: No one is pulling any tricks.

Senator Walker: As far as my friend with the whiskers is concerned, my friend on the other side, nobody needs to pay any attention to him.

● (1425)

Senator Frith: I would be interested in the reaction of honourable senators to Senator Walker's suggestion.

An Hon. Senator: Let us have a vote on it.

Senator Frith: I can withdraw my motion and we shall sit tomorrow at 2 o'clock. Then, if everyone has had a chance to debate it, we shall come back again on Monday, Tuesday, or whenever.

Senator Flynn: You cannot withdraw your motion.

Senator Frith: Unless I get leave—

Senator Flynn: You have not been given leave.

Senator Frith: Senator Flynn will have noticed that I prefaced this intervention by saying that I would be interested in hearing senators' views on this subject—which, of course, is asking for leave. If leave is not granted, my motion stands and we shall vote on it.

Senator Olson: If we defeat the motion, then we shall come back tomorrow.

Senator Everett: The deputy leader has stated that he wishes to have the fullest possible debate on Bill C-201. Would he agree that we could possibly debate it next week and vote on it the following week?

Senator Frith: I think that and many other possibilities exist. It would be acceptable to vote on it next week, providing every senator who wants to speak on it has an opportunity to do so. I hope we will have more than one speaker per day on the bill so that we can give everyone a full opportunity to

participate. As I have already said, it would be desirable that as many senators as possible have an opportunity to speak on it.

Senator Everett: The deputy leader has said that he hopes it will be voted on next week. I am asking him if it is his feeling that it could be debated next week and voted upon the following week. Is that a possibility within his schedule?

Senator Frith: Yes, that is a possibility.

Hon. George van Roggen: I ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate if the government leadership is agreed that this bill will be referred to committee for proper consideration and the taking of evidence.

In answer to some correspondence I told people interested in this matter that I was sure that, when the bill came to the Senate, it would be properly dealt with in committee, where representations could be made both pro and con. I hope I have not been incorrect in stating that in my correspondence.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I would not attempt to anticipate the actions or the will of the Senate. We should await the second reading debate and then determine, in discussions with the Leader of the Opposition, whether it is appropriate to refer the bill to committee.

Senator Roblin: It will certainly go to committee; there is no doubt about that.

Motion agreed to.

HOLIDAYS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Florence B. Bird moved the second reading of Bill C-201, to amend the Holidays Act.

She said: Honourable senators, Bill C-201 proposes to change the official title of the July 1 holiday from "Dominion Day" to "Canada Day".

● (1430)

At the outset, let us understand clearly what this bill does not purport to do. It proposes no changes in our form of government. It proposes no change in the name of our country.

I am sure many of you have read a recent letter to the *Globe and Mail* by our former colleague, the Honourable Eugene Forsey. He is a recognized authority on the Constitution, and he is distressed about this bill. He says that in the Constitution Act, 1982, "Dominion" is clearly set forth as the official title of our country. He goes on to say that it would be impossible to change it without a constitutional amendment. As usual, he is quite right.

Furthermore, Canada is, of course, a constitutional monarchy, and that fact is also entrenched in our Constitution.

What we are talking about today is our national day, and whether it should be officially designated as "Canada Day". This change would not, of course, require an amendment to the Constitution. It is something that Parliament has the

power to do and should do as a public symbol of our evolution from colony to nation.

Honourable senators, history is not a stagnant pool. Canada's history is like the St. Lawrence River, which is fed by the Great Lakes, by the Gatineau, by the Rideau, by the Saguenay, and by many other lakes and streams. It keeps on moving along, ever changing, ever growing in depth and power. Over the years, many changes have taken place in Canada's political history.

All of us know that in 1867, a former French colony, La Nouvelle France, had become part of a British colony that joined two other British colonies in a union of four provinces called the Dominion of Canada. The name was chosen, at the insistence of the British Foreign Office, in preference to the word "Kingdom" that our Fathers of Confederation had used in their draft of the bill. The Dominion of Canada was a British dominion, authorized by the British North America Act, an act of the Parliament of Britain.

In those days, Canada was still in what might be called an adolescent stage of nationhood. Its final Court of Appeal was at Westminster; it could not change its Constitution without the permission of the British Parliament; its foreign policy was designed by the British Foreign Office; and Britain was responsible for its defence. Later the title "Dominion" was adopted by other federations of British colonies—by Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. As history flowed on, Canada and the others came of age.

Hon. Martial Asselin: What about Newfoundland?

Senator Bird: Yes, of course, as well as the other provinces.

In 1931, the Statute of Westminster, another act of the Parliament of Britain, made Britain and the Dominions equal in status as members of the Commonwealth.

Up until this year, however, Canada was the only one of the Dominions which still, by its own choice, had to go to Westminster in order to change its Constitution. In 1982 an act of the Parliament of Britain made Canada a completely independent country.

There have also been changes in names and titles in order to conform with the changes in Canada's political status.

When George V assumed the Throne he was styled: "George the Fifth, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India." No royal style and title mentions "the British Dominions Beyond the Seas" prior to the Royal Proclamation of November 4, 1901. What it did was to sanction a convention that had been accepted after 1867 as the description of not only Canada but the other Dominions also.

The present title of the monarch owes its wording to the Commonwealth Conference of 1952 where, among other things, the Commonwealth's heads of state "recognized that the present titles are not in accord with current constitutional relations within the Commonwealth". The form they proposed in 1952 allowed each country in the Commonwealth to use a form suited to its own particular circumstances, for its own

[Senator Bird.]

purposes and which included an appropriate territorial designation, but which, in addition, kept as its common element a description of the sovereign as "Queen of Her other Realms and Territories and Head of the Commonwealth".

The form proposed for Canada was "Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith". It was adopted by the Parliament of Canada in 1953 when Bill 102, respecting the Royal Style and Titles, was assented to.

• (1435)

Bill C-201 is, therefore, following a precedent with regard to changes in titles that was established 29 years ago, when Parliament changed the title of the sovereign.

Honourable senators, changing the name of our national day cannot, in any way, deprive us of the great heritage that has come to us from Britain. It is one of the great rivers that flows into the stream of our history. It is like the blood in our veins.

Canada's form of parliamentary government was inspired by the mother of parliaments. The common law used in nine of the provinces and in both territories is based on the common law of England. The rights of *habeas corpus*, of trial by jury, of freedom of speech, have come to us from Britain. We are still a monarchy and the monarchy is entrenched in our Constitution.

All this bill does is recognizing the fact that on July 1 we will be celebrating the national day of Canada as a completely independent country.

In his letter, the Honourable Eugene Forsey says that the official French translation of "dominion" is "puissance," which means "power".

[Translation]

For a long time now the people of Quebec have been celebrating Canada Day, not Dominion Day. I believe they are quite right.

[English]

Who on earth would want to wave a flag and cheer on "puissance" or "power" day? I remind honourable senators that the title of our national anthem is "O Canada," not "O Dominion"—and not "O Puissance," and that the oath that most of us took in this house was an oath of allegiance to the Queen of Canada, not to the Queen of the British Dominion beyond the Seas. I would also remind honourable senators that the statute passed by the Parliament at Westminster, which gave validity to the Constitution Act, 1982, is entitled: "The Canada Act."

I ask you, honourable senators: Do you think that the men who fought in two world wars were fighting for dominion—

Hon. Jack Marshall: Yes.

Senator Bird: —or for puissance, or do you think they were fighting for Canada? Those men wore proudly the word "Canada" on their shoulder patches.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Bird: I think, honourable senators, that those who died had the word "Canada" engraved on their hearts.

Honourable senators, our sister dominion, Australia, calls its national day "Australia Day." Perhaps the people of the antipodes had less of an inferiority complex than we had because they severed their last legal tie to Britain—though not, of course, to the Commonwealth—earlier than we did. Now, at last, in the year 1982, we have achieved full nationhood. The days of our so-called inferiority complex are over. We know our own identity.

Honourable senators, Canada is a great country, a beautiful country. People have come from every corner of the earth to build and to defend this country. We are proud of our achievement. We are proud of Canada, and on July 1 we should know our gratitude to this great country, and the love that we have for it, by celebrating Canada Day.

Hon. George J. McIlraith: Honourable senators, I wish to speak on this bill, and I am prepared either to do so now or to adjourn the debate, whichever honourable senators wish.

Some Hon. Senators: Proceed.

Senator McIlraith: Honourable senators, I am very interested in this bill. Its sponsor in the Senate is really sponsoring a private member's bill that has come to us from the other place. It is a private member's bill proposing to amend a public bill—namely, the Holidays Act. The purport of the amendment is what the honourable senator dealt with in an able, eloquent, literary style which, with great deference, is completely irrelevant to the points I wish to raise in the debate by way of objection to the bill.

In other words, honourable senators, "Dominion Day" has been the correctly identified designation of the holiday we have celebrated as our national holiday since Confederation. I want to deal with that at some length a little later on in my remarks, but what is proposed in this bill is the change of that designation to "Canada Day". It may well be that we have developed to that point in our history where "Canada Day" would be a better designation for that date. At the very outset of my remarks, I want to make it clear that I have no objection whatever to the designation of the July 1 national holiday as "Canada Day".

● (1440)

I am grateful to the sponsor of the bill who spoke with much greater eloquence than I can on it, and I thank her for her references to our constitutional development through the years. I hope that, as a lively and energetic country, we will continue to develop for many years to come, but the very point I wish to make arises out of that. I think we should do it in a way that will make us an even greater country in the decades ahead than we have been in the more than a century that has passed since 1867. We did not achieve the status, or the progressive improvements in our status, that the sponsor mentioned, by conducting ourselves in the way we are seeking to conduct ourselves with regard to this proposed change by means of this private member's bill. Canadians can be rightfully proud of the manner in which we achieved that status.

If the honourable senator will take the time to recall the Imperial Conferences of 1926 through 1930, culminating in

the Statute of Westminster, which was the final confirmation of our full and complete independence, and to read the debates of both houses of Parliament on the Statute of Westminster, she will come to realize the importance of proceeding correctly in such matters.

In the recent debate on the Constitution assertions were made on that subject that are not historically correct, and we started out with a procedure on the Constitution address that was not in keeping with the best traditions of this country. We started out with a procedure that was found by the courts—

Senator Asselin: You voted in favour of it.

Senator McIlraith: The honourable senator is quite wrong. We started out in a way that was not in keeping with the tradition of conduct of the Parliament of this country in either house. By virtue of debate and pointing out the errors in that method of proceeding, we were able to get the matter referred to the Supreme Court of Canada and our procedures set on a *correct course with the provinces being consulted*. The litigation launched by the provinces was allowed to be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada. After the Supreme Court had delivered its judgments, whether one like them or not, the government consulted with the provinces before legislating in the area having to do with the sovereignty of the provinces, and amendments were made to the Constitution Bill. The importance of that was that, in the final analysis, we did proceed correctly, although there are many views on the procedure we initially adopted before ultimately adopting the one that allowed us to achieve that final result. I am one of those who believe that that is why our Constitution will be respected.

I want to make my position clear as to what is wrong with this bill. Frankly, I think it is a horrible little bill. Technically, there are many things wrong with it, but, theoretically, those could be corrected in committee.

There are many people in this country, whose ancestors were here in 1830s, and who took part in a rebellion to achieve self-government. There was very real feeling abroad. There are Canadians whose ancestors were in that struggle, and who, through that struggle, achieved a lot of reform.

I could describe what happened following the 1837 episode and the British Commission that came to investigate the trouble in the colony and the changes resulting in the Act of Union between Upper and Lower Canada, and so on. I could describe the history of the Rebellion Losses Bill of 1849 resulting from the rebellion in Montreal when the Parliament Buildings were burned, and what that meant by way of achievement of responsible government in Lord Elgin's day. The people had more say in governing themselves by making their government, which was still a colonial government, more answerable to them than it had been to that time.

These developments culminated in the four provinces—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Upper Canada and Lower Canada—coming together. After three years or so of eloquent debate and discussion, these intelligent, far-sighted gentlemen succeeded in arriving at a set of resolutions to form a country. What was it they succeeded in doing? By the statute called the

British North America Act, they succeeded in having the imperial authority relinquish its control and government of the colonies. What did they do with that power when they relinquished it? They did not just throw it into the air and abdicate. Through the B.N.A. Act they provided that those colonists should henceforth govern themselves and have dominion over themselves through their federal Parliament, as set out in section 17 of that act, and through their provincial legislatures.

That was what the Dominion was all about. To celebrate that great day of achieving the right of self-government—something that surely all people in Parliament today value and respect—they called the national day, July 1, which was the day the measure came into effect, Dominion Day. Those far-sighted people who had fought to bring us to that point in the struggle for self-government, and their successors, have, through all those decades, celebrated as Dominion Day the day upon which they achieved the right to govern themselves. Certainly, our great national holiday, brought about in that way, is worthy of better handling than it is sought to give it here today.

If each one of you will take the trouble to recall how you have celebrated July 1 in the past, I think you will agree with me that on that day there were three obvious things. First, no matter what form the celebration took, or whether you were in a town, a village or a city, it was a happy holiday. The people celebrating it were a happy people, with dignity and pride in themselves. Secondly, there was quite a bit of emotional feeling about the day. You did not have to be very bright to discern that. Thirdly, they were proud of their country. That is the history of Dominion Day.

● (1450)

A long time has passed since 1867. Canada has welcomed many tens of thousands of immigrants who have come here to become citizens of Canada and share their lives with us. It may well be that we ought to change the name of this holiday to Canada Day, and I have no objection whatever to that.

Let us just see, however, what we are being asked to do. Before July 9 there were two bills on this subject before the other house. What were those two bills? One of them was Bill C-37, introduced in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State of Canada for first reading in this session some two years ago. Why it was not proceeded with I do not know. As a matter of fact, it is none of my business. Neither do I know why the session has lasted so long since then.

Bill C-37 seeks to change the name of the July 1 holiday from Dominion Day to Canada Day. It has that much in common with the private member's bill that is before us today. In addition to the mere change of name there are some consequential amendments that provide for certain things that are required to be done in order to make the change in name effective, and to obviate the litigation that may follow if such changes are not carried out in, for instance, the Bills of Exchange Act. If any of you have been confronted with the more technical aspects of that legislation, dealing with notes and drafts, you will at once see the significance of such provisions. There are other provisions of lesser consequence dealing with changes to the Labour Code, the Interpretation

[Senator McIlraith.]

Act, and so on. In other words, Bill C-37 was a bill that was properly drafted for the purpose of dealing with the subject matter contained therein.

Now we come to the present inadequate bill, and although I do not have the date of the first reading, there is no doubt that it was presented only very recently as a private member's bill in the other place. Whether it is proper to introduce a private member's bill when there is a public bill on the order paper at the same time, dealing with the same subject, is a point that I do not propose to argue now, although I have done so, and I believe successfully, in the past.

However that may be, as a part of the Parliament of Canada we have a responsibility. We are being asked to deal with legislation here that is of great emotional interest to all of our population. The matter is quite important and is of national significance. With this in mind, it would be just as well to look at the record of proceedings in the other place, and that we are entitled to do. *House of Commons Debates* for Friday, July 9, 1982, at page 19201, deals with private members' hour. It is entitled, "Private Members' Public Bills." Just above that title, you will see the figure "(1600)". That refers to the time of day. Remember that this is the official report of the proceedings of the House of Commons, so we must take cognizance of that fact. The Deputy Speaker dealt first with the other orders on the order paper. Then this bill was brought forward, and Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil) moved that Bill C-201, to amend the Holidays Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

The Deputy Speaker then asked if it was the pleasure of the house to adopt the motion. There was a discussion on a point of order as to whether or not they wished to deal with the bill in Committee of the Whole, which is exclusively their business. The bill was then called, was given second reading—

Senator Benidickson: The Deputy Speaker put the question?

Senator McIlraith: Yes. The motion was agreed to and he put the question. Then it went into Committee of the Whole. In Committee of the Whole, the clauses and the preamble were called in the usual order and were agreed to. Then the bill was read the third time and passed.

After this there followed a discussion as to whether or not they could say that the clock read 5 o'clock, that being the hour for adjournment. That discussion was very brief, but I just want to get the exact language here. There was some discussion about giving up the right to do other business in the next fifty-five minutes of the private members' hour. Then the discussion as to time, and so on, took place. They then agreed that the house would adjourn. After agreement that the house would adjourn, the house did so in fact and the official report says:

At 4.05 p.m. the House adjourned without question put, pursuant to standing order.

I ask each one of you if you seriously think that a proposition of as much significance to the people of Canada as this one should be rushed through by us in the dying days of a

session, which most of us thought would end some two weeks ago, without anybody who may have ideas on this subject being heard either here or in the other place? I even wonder if we should deal with this inadequate bill at all. I suggest, however, and I suggest this most firmly to the government, that they consider proceeding in a different way. I suggest that they proceed in what I would regard as a more—I hardly know what adjective to use—dignified way—and I am trying to be gentle in using only that word, I suggest that they have a minister of the Crown present to the House of Commons or to the Senate the government bill which deals with this subject properly. I would hope that it would be to the Senate, because that is where I think it should originate, since either money nor expenditures are involved. Then, once it is given second reading, a committee of the Senate should hear any associations or individuals who may wish to be heard on the matter, after which the bill could be reported out of committee and, if desired, passed.

I spoke a moment ago about our expectations with regard to the adjournment of this session, and I have mentioned in my remarks how long it has already gone on. I think any objective person would agree that it has been much too long. In any event, we are at the point where we are seeking adjournment of this much-too-long session, in the reasonable expectation that a new session will commence—I cannot say when, but probably, early in October. Then, not this bill but a properly drafted bill should be presented to the Senate. I am sure it could be dealt with expeditiously. It could be sent to committee, and the committee could hear such bodies as may wish to be heard. There may be none, but I have learned that it is important that public bodies be heard if they wish to make representations to Parliament, and that the committee procedure is the way to do it. The bill could then be reported back to the Senate, passed and sent to the other place, where they have already indicated by their vote on this bill that they would adopt such a bill without any loss of time.

● (1500)

I respectfully suggest that our best procedure now is not necessarily to defeat the bill—although I will not accept it in its present form because I do not think it is worthy of the occasion. To me, it just does not dignify the occasion sufficiently when dealing with our great national holiday. Rather, we should not call it again for debate, but should let it die on the Order Paper. Then, in the new session, the government should bring forward the correct bill and let us deal with it quickly.

I may not have made myself clear, in connection with some earlier questions today on procedure, when I tried to get from the Deputy Leader of the Government an answer as to whether or not there had been real consideration of the matter by the government. I suspect not, and that it merely considered the question of having the name changed.

As I have already indicated, we have eleven and one-third months in which to deal with such a bill with decency and dignity, and I ask the minister of the Crown now present in the Senate, and the three who have just left the chamber, to take

up with the government the question of proceeding in the way I have indicated, or in some other way that would do justice to the occasion.

Honourable senators, I wish to thank you for hearing me so patiently on this subject, but I feel strongly that it is one that deserves our careful attention.

Hon. Robert Muir: Would the distinguished senator permit a question for clarification and my edification? I listened carefully to what he said.

I should point out that according to *House of Commons Debates* for Friday, July 9, 1982:

MR. HAL HERBERT (VAUDREUIL) moved that Bill C-201, to amend the Holidays Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

That motion was agreed to—that is, that the bill should be referred to that committee.

Would the honourable senator explain to me why the bill is now before the Senate and is not before the committee that is referred to in the Commons motion? Is that not what they voted on, that it be referred to a committee?

Senator McIlraith: In answer to the honourable senator's question, I am not sure that I can be helpful. I do not wish to get into a discussion of the internal procedure in the other place—I do not consider it proper to do so here—but may I draw the honourable senator's attention to part of the debate in the other place? It is reported as follows:

MR. SMITH: I rise on a point of order. Perhaps we could seek the unanimous consent of the House to see if this matter could be dealt with in Committee of the Whole so that we could deal with all stages of this bill today, as it seems to be meeting with the approval of the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I started to declare that the motion was carried. The hon. member's point of order is a little premature, the Chair will now entertain the Parliamentary Secretary to the Privy Council (Mr. Smith) on his point of order.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, perhaps we could see whether the House would be disposed to give unanimous consent to this bill being dealt with in Committee of the Whole today.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent that the bill be considered in Committee of the Whole?

Is the hon. member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. Rose) rising?

MR. ROSE: I am not rising, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon—Mr. Francis in the chair.

I believe that is the answer to the honourable senator's question. I believe it is clear.

Senator Muir: I know what the answer was, but I thought it was a good try.

Hon. Ernest C. Manning: Honourable senators, having regard to the seriousness of the conditions that prevail in our country today, I find it hard to believe that Parliament is being asked to deal with a bill of this kind at this time. A little over a year and a half ago, when Canada was slipping into the depression conditions that we now face, the public affairs of the country almost came to a standstill for months because of the government's obsession to proceed with its constitutional proposal. I am not minimizing the importance of that subject one iota, but, as I have said in this house before, it was an issue about which there was no significant public interest or demand, and yet the country was divided as it was never been divided before by the interjection of the constitutional issue at a time when the government's attention should have been directed to far more serious conditions that were developing and with which Canadians as a whole were deeply concerned.

After going through that exercise, with the hard feelings and alienation created by it, now that we are in the crisis situation which arose out of what was developing in the country at that time, we find that Parliament has to deal with an issue which has relationship to that former matter, which is highly emotional, and which, again, is the type of thing that creates serious divisions and alienation among Canadians. To me, it is almost unbelievable that the government would ask Parliament to proceed with this matter at this time.

Again, I am not minimizing the importance of this subject. As Senator McIlraith has rightly pointed out, this is a matter of statute and importance, but it is in a different realm altogether from the day-to-day economic worries of millions of Canadians. I am quite certain that the last thing that is on the minds of the 1,300,000 Canadians who are out of jobs, wondering how they are going to make the next mortgage payment, how they are going to provide for the education of their children and preserve their businesses, is whether July 1 should be called Canada Day, Dominion Day or anything else.

Honourable senators, I honestly feel—and I hope that you share this feeling—that the situation in this country today is so serious that under no circumstances should we be interjecting, in this house or the other place, issues which will again divide and alienate hundreds of thousands of our people, when it is so totally unnecessary.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Manning: In times like these the public have the right to expect their government to set aside irrelevant matters and to concentrate on steps to deal with the great concerns that are in the minds of almost every Canadian today. As a symbolic gesture in that direction the government could at least let this bill die on the Order Paper. It is unfortunate that it ever appeared on the Order Paper, but the least the government can now do is indicate its intention to concentrate on matters that are more urgent and important in the minds of

[Senator McIlraith.]

the public, by letting the bill die on the Order Paper to be dealt with at a later time, in the manner which has been so clearly and ably outlined by Senator McIlraith.

● (1510)

If the government is unwilling to do that, then I appeal to honourable senators to defeat this bill for two reasons. The first one, dealt with so very ably by the Honourable Senator McIlraith, is that an issue of this kind should be dealt with in a dignified and appropriate manner. The form and manner in which this bill came to this house is objectionable, to say the least, and certainly should be beneath the dignity of Parliament when dealing with an issue of this kind. On previous occasions the government has proposed government bills to do this very thing. I think the record will show that they were not proceeded with in the other place because opposition to them was such that the government wisely did not want to make an issue out of the legislation. In this case, as has been outlined, the matter was sneaked through the other house without debate, with less than a quorum in the house, and it now turns up on the Order Paper of this chamber for sober second thought.

Anything of this importance coming to us in this manner should be rejected out of hand as being beneath the dignity of this assembly.

If this matter of changing the name of Dominion Day is of such tremendous importance and is something the public of Canada is clamouring for, there would have been no problem for the government to introduce a bill and have it passed through the house with overwhelming support. They knew that could not be done, which in itself is proof that this is not the kind of issue on which the public is either united or, under present conditions, is even deeply interested in. So, for that reason, the form of the bill and particularly the manner in which it came to this house, I suggest that it should be rejected. I agree completely with what was said by the speaker who preceded me, that if the bill is to be dealt with at all it should be dealt with in an appropriate and proper manner.

There is a second important reason why this bill should not be proceeded with. That is, while it serves no constructive purpose or meets no urgent national need, it wipes out one more part of Canada's heritage by abolishing, Dominion Day and all that name implies to millions of Canadians, and replaces it with a name that has absolutely no historic significance. I do not know of another country on earth—and this has been pointed out by others—that names its national birthday after itself. Has anybody ever heard of "France Day", "England Day", "Scotland Day"—

Hon. Maurice Lamontagne: What about "Australia Day"?

Senator Manning: —or "United States Day"? These names do not convey anything like what is conveyed in the historic name "Dominion Day," which was not forced on this country or even suggested to it by Great Britain, but was a suggestion that originated in Canada and met with immediate approval by the Fathers of Confederation—and very appropriately so.

—One may ask, “What real difference does it make anyway?” We have to recognize that to many Canadians it would make a lot of difference. There are those who still cherish the heritage of the past in this country. Many, perhaps the majority who feel that way, are persons who were pioneers or are sons and daughters of those identified with the opening up of this country and whose memories go back to the early days of Canada’s history. Heritage means a lot to those people, and why shouldn’t it?

Those people will deeply resent what they will perceive, rightly or wrongly, as one more step by this government in a long series of deliberate steps to chip away at all those things which pertain to the rich heritage of this country’s past. You may say that is not what they are doing, but I say to you, honourable senators, that you can travel across this country and everywhere you go, particularly in western Canada, you will find a very firm belief that this government has followed a persistent course of whittling away at almost everything that pertains to the rich heritage that we knew in this country in earlier days.

I say especially to the government: You have nothing worthwhile to gain by this action, but you have much to lose. If you are really concerned for the unity and future solidarity of this country, then do not go on doing these things which alienate and antagonize so many people. You can use your overwhelming majority to steamroller this ill-conceived bill into law, but what will you accomplish by doing so? You will have achieved nothing constructive and worthwhile. You will have angered and alienated another large group of Canadians who already deeply resent the government’s sordid record in actions of this kind. I can tell you, whether you believe it or not, that in my part of western Canada, at least, the fires of separatism are burning over wide areas of the region, and ill-advised and unnecessary actions of this kind are the very thing that will further fan those flames in a conflagration that can do irreparable damage to this country. I am not so sure that some of those flames are not already almost out of control.

Honourable senators, at a time when the government itself is appealing to Canadians to unite to face our economic crisis—as has been done in this house, in the other place and publicly—why take such a foolish step that will further impair the national unity we so much need if we are going to

successfully come to grips with the serious problems confronting us as a people today? If the government must have a Canada Day—and I do not think anybody will quarrel too much with that—let it pick any day it likes, identify it with the new Constitution if it feels that is what should be done, call it “Canada Day,” “Trudeau Day,” “Liberal Day” or anything it likes, but do not destroy the rich heritage that attaches in the minds of millions of Canadians to Dominion Day, which has been the official birthday of this country since it was born.

I appeal to the government, for these reasons, not to take this foolish step and, therefore, let the bill die on the Order Paper—or else let us defeat it.

Hon Charles McElman: May I ask a question of the honourable senator?

Senator Manning: Yes.

Senator McElman: Throughout his discourse, the honourable senator kept wondering why the government did not do this and did not do that, as though he were talking about a government bill. Is he not aware that this is a private member’s bill, and would he stop the process of Parliament on a private member’s bill?

Senator Manning: I am quite aware that we are dealing with a private member’s bill, but I agree with Senator McElraith, that this kind of bill should be introduced by a minister of the Crown, as the first one was two years ago. I think that is a far more appropriate way.

• (1520)

Senator McElman: My question is related to the fact that the senator seemed to be blaming the government for this bill at this stage of events; that it should not be before Parliament; that the government should not have it placed before Parliament. Is he not aware that the government had nothing to do with the introduction of this bill?

Senator Manning: Honourable senators, I am quite sure my honourable friend knows as well as I do that, if the government had not been behind it, this bill would never have been passed through the House of Commons by any private member.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

On motion of Senator Macquarrie, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, July 27, 1982, at 8 p.m.