

HANSARD 1 JULY 2008

INTERNATIONAL TARTAN DAY

[6.40 p.m.]

Mrs BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I wish to draw members' attention to the good news that today is International Tartan Day. 1 July sees the anniversary of the repealing of the act of the British Parliament that made it punishable with seven years of transportation for wearing a tartan. That act was established after the Battle of the Culloden.

The act prescription states:

'That from and after the First Day of August 1747, no man or boy within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, other than such as shall be employed as Officers and Soldiers of His Majesty's Forces, shall on any pretext whatsoever, wear or put on the clothes, commonly called Highland clothes (that is to say) the Plaid, Philabeg, or little kilt, Trowes, Shoulder-Belts, or any part whatever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland Garb; and that no tartan or partly-coloured plaid or stuff shall be used for Great coats or upper coats, and if any such person shall presume after the first said day of August, to wear or put on the aforesaid garments or any part of them, every person so offending ... shall be liable to be transported to any of His Majesty's plantations beyond the seas, there to remain for the space of seven years.'

Mr Llewellyn - Where's your tartan?

Mrs BUTLER - I only have my handkerchief unfortunately today. I have been away for two weeks so I did not bring my tartan.

Two generations passed and the tartan and the pipes sank back as a normal part of life in Scotland until the act of abolition was repealed by the Government containing the King's ascension on 1 July 1782 and this proclamation was issued in Gaelic and English which announced as follows:

'Listen Men. This is bringing before all the Sons of the Gael, the King and Parliament of Britain have forever abolished the act against the Highland Dress; which came down to the Clans from the beginning of the world to the year 1746. This must bring great joy to every Highland Heart. You are no longer bound down to the unmanly dress of the Lowlander. This is declaring to every Man, young and old, simple and gentle, that they may after this put on and wear the Truis, the Little Kilt, the Coat, and the Striped Hose, and also the Belted Plaid, without fear of the Law of the Realm or the spite of the enemies.'

By celebrating Tartan Day on 1 July we also acknowledge that the restoration of the Scottish Parliament took place on 1 July 1999. It is estimated that there are over 50 million people of Scottish descent in the world so for lots of us this is very important.

Celebrations in Adelaide and Brisbane this weekend include Scottish country dancing, mass pipe bands, Scottish genealogy, Highland cattle, whisky tastings and basket suppers. In Melbourne on Sunday next, 6 July, the annual Kirkin of the Tartans will be held in Scots Church. The Reverend Dr Douglas Robertson will preside over the presentation of the tartans of all the clans represented in the population of Victoria, and certainly the Scots had a strong part in settling that State. In fact a new tartan for Victoria has been approved by the Lord Lyon's office and is worn and supported by Premier Brumby.

In Tasmania, we already have our own tartan. I would like to encourage all Tasmanians of Scottish descent to celebrate this day in their own special way and to be proud of the fine traditions that the clans and the Scottish way of life have handed on. I know I will be.