

Tilson's bill on war memorials advances from second reading in the Senate

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson has expressed satisfaction at the passage of his private member's bill at second reading in the Senate.

The bill is an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding mischief relating to war memorials.

"I'm pleased my bill has progressed another stage towards becoming the law of the land," Tilson said. "We owe it to our veterans and the fallen to protect our cenotaphs and war memorials."

The bill had to undergo second reading for a second time due to last fall's prorogation of Parliament. It had previously passed at second reading at the end of March, 2013, but had not been heard at Committee before Parliament rose for the summer recess.

The bill now moves to the Senate's Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, where senators will give it further study, call witnesses and hear testimony from interested parties.

"I look forward to testifying before the Senate's Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee," Tilson commented. "I hope senators will feel as MPs did, that stronger deterrents are needed to prevent senseless and disgusting acts of vandalism against our cenotaphs and war memorials."

The bill, which was passed by the House of Commons Oct. 31, 2012, amends the mischief section of the Criminal Code by making a specific offense for mischief involving a war memorial, cenotaph or other structures honouring or remembering those who have served in Canadian Forces and those who have died as a consequence of war. It seeks to impose minimum penalties of a fine not less than \$1,000 for a first offence, a prison term of not less than 14 days for a second offence and a prison term of not less than 30 days for all subsequent offences.

Tilson added the New Democratic Party voted against the bill at third reading in the House of Commons.