

*Canadian Flag*

to acquire the symbols of nationhood, and we set forth three important symbols; (1) a distinctive national flag (2) a national anthem and (3) a Canadian constitution domiciled in Canada and capable of being amended by Canadians.

I think it is incongruous that after 97 years Canada has not yet adopted these symbols of our national independence. In the long process of evolving from a colony to a nation Canada has achieved the realities of national independence, but we have repeatedly delayed the adoption of the symbols that would give our independence meaning in the eyes of the world.

The reason for the long delay is rooted in our history. In 1867 the British North America Act brought together the English and French people in the partnership of confederation, and since that time people from many lands and speaking many tongues have come to Canada to make this country their home. That successive governments have evaded the issue of selecting national symbols is not due to any desire on the part of the government of Great Britain to retain any of the relics of our colonial status. The delay has been due to our own inability to agree on the form these symbols should take. We, the Canadian people, can acquire these earmarks of national independence any time we want them. The only obstacle that lies in the way is our inability to agree among ourselves as to what these symbols should be and how they should be adopted. In the words of Cassius in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves.

I believe the Prime Minister is to be commended for grasping this thorny nettle that his cautious predecessors have all evaded.

Whether one agrees with the Prime Minister or not, I am sure all hon. members who listened to his address last night must have been impressed with his profound sincerity and his deep sense of conviction. There can be no doubt about the need for Canada to face up to the problem of adopting symbols that will proclaim our national independence to the world. However, I want to devote my remarks to three particular aspects of this problem; first, the government's timing in introducing this matter; second, the methods it has employed; and third, the design which the government has submitted.

First of all let me say a word about the government's timing in this matter. Why is this resolution before us at this particular

[Mr. Douglas.]

time? On June 3 the Prime Minister gave the house a long list of legislation which he contended must be dealt with before the summer recess, and in making a statement on behalf of our party at that time I agreed with it. But now the Prime Minister has introduced this controversial and emotionally charged issue that will delay action on the very legislative program which he outlined as requiring immediate attention. I wonder why the government is obstructing the action of parliament in dealing with the government's own program. That is a question that needs an answer.

The Prime Minister's answer is that he made a commitment to the people of Canada in the last general election. But I submit, Mr. Speaker, that he made a lot of other commitments to the Canadian people on subjects that were even more important than the adoption of a national flag. He made commitments on questions having to do with the welfare and economic survival of the Canadian people. For instance, the Liberal party committed itself to a program to promote full employment and economic growth, but we have seen no measures calculated to deal effectively with the problem of unemployment or the lack of economic growth.

Last February we had over 600,000 unemployed in Canada. Even now in the summer months we have something over 300,000 unemployed. John E. Snyder, one of the great industrialists of the United States and head of the United States Corporation, said before a congressional committee last October that automation was eliminating 40,000 jobs a week in the United States, and a symposium held in Montreal recently made an estimate that in Canada there are somewhere between 4,000 and 4,500 jobs a week in which men are being displaced by technological equipment.

This problem of automation is a growing problem. It will be an increasing problem not only for this generation but for generations to come. Jobs for the young people who are annually entering the labour market are something about which the government and this parliament should be concerning themselves. Instead of that we are probably going to take several weeks arguing about a national flag.

The problem of poverty in this country is something which the government tends to sweep under the carpet. The other day Dr. O. J. Firestone, vice dean of social sciences at the University of Ottawa, said that one Canadian out of every five lives in a state of abject poverty. He went on to say that though