

Currency Act

was not until 1892 that the British Admiralty granted permission for the Canadian merchant ships to fly the Canadian merchant marine ensign. As Professor Stanley noted in his book, there was absolutely no authority given by the British Admiralty to fly it elsewhere than at sea. Therefore, if in fact it was flying anywhere other than at sea during the period we are talking about, then it was flying without official sanction or authority.

There is some evidence according to some historians that the red Canadian merchant marine ensign was flown from the central tower of the Parliament Buildings during the 1890s. Indeed, we are told that various versions of the Red Ensign were flown across Canada throughout this period. Once again, however, none of them carried any official sanction by the Parliament of Canada.

The historians in the House will recognize and recall that by the end of the 1890s there was a resurgence of British imperialist sentiment which resulted in the Red Ensign being removed from Canadian public buildings in favour of the Union Jack. After the First World War, the Red Ensign regained some of its lost prominence, and in 1924 the federal Government authorized its use at diplomatic posts outside Canada, as well as for the merchant marine. However, the Union Jack continued to wave over Parliament Hill. It was not until September, 1945, after the war, that the Union Jack was removed from Parliament Hill by Order in Council and replaced by the Red Ensign.

We are dealing with a period of time after 1945. The Order in Council read that the Red Ensign should fly until such time as action is taken by Parliament for the adoption of a national flag. As we all know, on February 15, 1965, the new Canadian Maple Leaf was proclaimed.

Mr. Boudria: By a Liberal Government.

Mr. Nunziata: As my hon. friend, the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) points out, the new flag was introduced by the Liberal Government of the time, headed by the late Mr. Pearson. Of course, at the time there was some controversy as to whether or not the new Canadian Maple Leaf should in fact be the official flag of Canada. There were those who argued at the time that the Red Ensign or some other version of it should be flown. In conclusion—

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Surely there is no relevance between the new Canadian flag, whatever its merits may be, and the issue which is being debated in the House today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): It is my understanding that the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata) is going to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Boudria: He is not convinced. You should say some more.

Mr. Nunziata: Obviously I have not convinced the Hon. Member. I was just illustrating, in terms of historical accuracy, that one should be careful.

There is likely a great majority of Canadians who would not be too concerned about the historical accuracy of our currency. I rose today to speak to Bill C-118, simply to point out that at times those who design our bills and our coinage have erred. With regard to the \$5 bill, there was an error in the design of the visual depiction of the flag on the \$5 bill.

In conclusion, I reiterate my support for Bill C-118 and encourage its early and speedy passage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments? Debate.

[*Translation*]

Questions and comments. Debate. The Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme).

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, on June 3, 1986, I had the honour of tabling the following notice of motion in the House, and I quote:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should consider the advisability of continuing to honour Canada's former Prime Ministers, through the minting of coins and the issuing of banknotes bearing their effigies, thus heightening the awareness of the Canadian people and particularly of young Canadians to Canada's history.

I also thought that a very distinctive way of honouring our former Prime Ministers was the suggestion I had made at the time to honour the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker by putting his head on the new \$1 coin.

Since then, I have received many representations, both from Government Members and my own colleagues, and surprisingly, a flood of mail. Some people do not agree, but the vast majority, and especially new Canadians and young Canadians, have told me it was an excellent idea and that they had a few suggestions.

One of the many suggestions I received was that if we want to pursue this idea of Canadianization and heightening our awareness of our Canadian institutions, perhaps I should review my initial proposal and ask the authorities to make some changes on our coins to bring them more in line with Canadian history, and to put the Right Hon. John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, on the \$1 coin and switch the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker to the new bill that is to replace our present \$10 bill. And it was suggested that we also continue the Canadianization process started in the seventies on our \$5, \$10, \$50 and \$100 bills by honouring, for instance, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson and the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent, and so forth. But it would have to be done gradually, without upsetting people who are very keen on this legislation, and without necessarily upsetting those who today are very emphatic about putting nothing on our coins or bills other than her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, who is also the Queen of Canada.