

Canadian Flag

are supporting a plebiscite, so the people are given a chance to speak outside.

Mr. Byrne: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Pascoe: After I am through, I think this brief quotation sums up the argument for a plebiscite. The reference to holding tongues reminds me that there is a great deal of tongue holding among hon. gentlemen opposite. We have a very emotional issue facing us, involving the possible scrapping of a flag steeped in history and which is symbolic of the foundation and character of our country. There should be no wall of silence anywhere in this house. Every hon. member should get up and explain to their constituents just how they stand on this matter.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) is determined no other government business will be given priority over the flag. He is the one who will decide whether we continue the flag debate or turn the attention of parliament to more pressing items, such as the labour code and the railway question. As a result of the stand which has been taken by the Prime Minister it appears there will be many more days, perhaps weeks, taken up on the flag debate, which means there will be plenty of time for government members to explain why they are determined to foist a new flag on Canadians and why they do not want to give the Canadian people the chance to express their views on a plebiscite. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that the people should have the opportunity to decide whether or not they want a flag stripped of all the symbols of our history and tradition. They should be able to vote on an issue brought on by pressure which is not exerted by all parts of Canada. As you yourself said, Mr. Speaker, in your ruling on Wednesday on the amendment, the flag issue has a great emotional impact on everyone.

If most of the government members mean to take no greater part in the debate than to jeer, then at least all members of the flag committee should speak. They should answer these three questions: Why was the Canadian red ensign rejected so flatly by all Liberal committee members? Why was there a unanimous vote in the committee that Canada should have only one flag, and then a sudden change of mind and a later amendment to have two flags? Why was the proposed compromise flag bearing the symbols of our past history turned down? These are the three essential questions that each member of the flag committee should answer during this debate.

Perhaps I am doing the Liberal flag committee members an injustice when I suggest that they intend to remain silent. Perhaps each one is going to speak. I am sure the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman) will find it difficult to refrain from baring his innermost thoughts. He finds it so easy to make revelations to the press. The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra—and I think I am in order in bringing this out—received 41.7 per cent of the total vote in his constituency.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. member must have some doubt whether this is relevant. At this stage of the debate, or I suggest at any time, he cannot refer in such a personal way to another member of the house.

Mr. Pascoe: I was just trying to bring out the point that none of the members of the flag committee were speaking for the majority of the people, which is why I think there should be a plebiscite.

In answer to my challenge to all members to speak and make a sort of report to their constituents, I want to make my own stand clear. I have already spoken in favour of the Canadian red ensign and I see no reason at all why it should be scrapped. It is a beautiful flag steeped in 100 years of tradition. However, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of national acceptance some modification of the red ensign is proposed, and I would agree with this. My stand is that some symbols of our past history must remain, because a country which does not honour its past has a very uncertain future. What is wrong with preserving our past history as an example for future generations? In a speech reported in *Hansard* at page 4651 of June 24, the Prime Minister said:

Attachment to tradition is an important element in a country that wishes to progress.

These words have a direct bearing on our effort to have a plebiscite on the flag issue.

The Newfoundland member for St. John's West (Mr. Cashin) is reported in *Hansard* of June 30, page 4912 as saying that we should "retain those things of our past for which we have so much genuine affection and loyalty". I certainly agree with that statement. If the flag debate continues perhaps he will stand up and repeat this laudable statement. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Favreau) speaking in French in the house last week called for British justice. This is a tradition of Canada and it is symbolized by the union jack