

Canadian Flag

If this flag is going to be imposed upon us there are large segments of the country that will not accept it with grace. There are millions of people who will resent it and to whom it will be an affront. Therefore if it is going to be imposed on them in this way, the least the government can do, this government which has discovered this theory of which it is so proud, the principle of opting out—and this may seem a bit ridiculous but the opting out principle can apply—is to allow the provinces that do not want this flag to opt out and not have it fly over those provinces.

I believe my time is up and I will continue my remarks on the main motion.

Mr. R. A. Webb (Hastings-Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, at the outset of my remarks I wish to refer to page 10701 of *Hansard* for November 30 last where the following remarks of the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Matheson) are recorded.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Webb: I quote:

With respect to the visit of the grade 10 children from the Peterborough school, it is true that at the request of certain members of the house, and I include among those the hon. member for Durham (Mr. Honey), the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Stenson), and the hon. member for Hastings-Frontenac (Mr. Webb)—

These remarks resulted from the chastising or taking to task of the hon. member for Leeds by the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Monteith) because of the action and conduct of the hon. member for Leeds when he was a member of the flag committee. I say to the house that this quotation is untrue. It is a downright lie.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Smallwood: Oh, sit down.

Mr. Webb: I say to you that I had no knowledge—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have done my best to follow the hon. member's argument but I cannot see the relation to the question of a plebiscite.

Mr. Churchill: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Furthermore, the use of the word "lie" is far too strong and I am sure the hon. member realizes that. Shall we say "misunderstanding" or some other equivalent word?

Mr. Webb: I was trying to put the matter in its true context but I will gladly withdraw
[Mr. MacLean (Queens).]

the word "lie". I did not know of this visit to the flag committee room until I was invited on the day that the group was here by Mr. Howard, the students' teacher. The hon. member for Peterborough has also denied this charge.

Since for many reasons the number of those members who are in a position to put forward their independent views is very limited and since I speak for people outside the House of Commons I have again taken advantage of my right to have my say in the hope that by raising certain points and problems the government will reconsider their announced course on the flag question.

Some hon. Members: No.

An hon. Member: Read on.

Mr. Grégoire: We want a vote.

Mr. Webb: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says "read on". I want to assure him that we in this party have no paid script writers. My speech was written by me last night and the night before after the house closed. I say to these hon. members that if they were less interested in their beauty sleep and more interested in putting forward the views of their constituents on the floor of the house, we would have a better parliament.

Some hon. Members: Order.

An hon. Member: Listen to the parrots over there.

Mr. Webb: I have lots of time.

Mr. Grégoire: Filibuster.

Mr. Webb: It is far from my purpose to indulge in destructive criticism alone. It is sufficient to say that the course of action upon which the government has decided would be disastrous to the unity of Canada. It is certainly better to consider now whether we are right or wrong, especially when we can do something about it. Such action as is contemplated by the government would be very serious for this Canada of ours.

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. We should note something unusual which is happening in this house. This is the third speech being pronounced by the hon. member for Hastings-Frontenac (Mr. Webb) on the flag issue.

In hockey when a player scores three goals, we say that he did the hat trick. I will be glad to send him a hat on the occasion, because three speeches in the house can well be compared to three goals in hockey. My