

*Canadian Flag*

peregrinations of a government which started out with a three maple leaf flag, said it was the only true Canadian design, that it was based on history, heraldry and structure, and then changed its mind. One hon. member said it was a flag design that was sanctified as well; he stated that it was full of historic meaning, symbolic validity and national appeal. It was, he said, the only flag that could be accepted.

I point out that we asked for a plebiscite as far back as May 20. When I asked for a plebiscite and it was suggested there should be a submission of the question to the people by way of referendum, the Prime Minister said that course would not be followed. All the way along we took the stand that, after all, it is the people who are going to live under this flag who should have a say as to the nature and design of that flag.

So that the record will be complete, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that on July 22, when speaking on the national television network, I said we wanted the people of Canada to have a say in the matter. I suggested that a plebiscite be granted to the Canadian people in order that we could determine their wishes. I said that such a plebiscite could take place at the next general election. Among the questions to be asked—and I set them out—I suggested: Are you in favour of the red ensign? Are you in favour of the red ensign with changes made thereon to show both heritages? Are you in favour of the three maple leaves joined together?

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Grégoire:** No.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Listen to the conscientious objectors.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, a few short weeks ago those who now prate and interrupt were in favour of that which today they condemn.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I also suggested the question: Are you in favour of one maple leaf? Since then I would also add: Are you in favour of that which was presented as an alternative and a compromise by the Conservative members of the flag committee?

**Mr. Grégoire:** No, no.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether it is just an echo I am hearing, but it certainly is not intelligible.

**Mr. Grégoire:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria):** It is a reflection on Quebec, I'll tell you that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I hold to the opinion that order and decorum in this House of Commons is extremely important. It is in the tradition of our two races, and it should be maintained. It is incorporated in our standing orders. I would refer to standing order 35:

No member shall speak disrespectfully of Her Majesty, nor of any of the royal family, nor of His Excellency or the person administering the government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either house, or against any member thereof.

May I appeal to hon. members that when an officer of the house in the person of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition is making a speech, which no doubt is quite a physical effort, he should be given due respect and attention.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I do not mind questions at all, but it is difficult to speak against a cacophony. It is like a symphony continuing while one speaks.

**Mr. Nowlan:** One of the broken ones.

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege—

**An hon. Member:** Sit down, little squirt.

**Mr. Grégoire:**—may I ask a question—

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I had come to the point where I said that included in the plebiscite should be the design submitted by Conservative members as an alternative in order to bring members together, namely the one to which I referred earlier. There are some who say if we had a plebiscite we would divide this nation. Plebiscites have been held in the past that did not have that effect. Plebiscites are held on matters which have an emotional effect. Plebiscites have been recommended by such prime ministers as Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Robert Borden—when he was in opposition—and Mr. Mackenzie King on matters that touch the heart and the sentiment of a people. No one can successfully argue that members of this parliament on either side have ever let the Canadian people know that, standing as they did for a distinctive flag—and I think each and every one did—what the Liberal party had in mind was a flag devoid of anything suggesting our British heritage or indeed our French heritage.