

From the events which we have witnessed since last spring concerning the adoption of a distinctive Canadian flag emerges a fact which, in my opinion, should not go unrecorded.

In our country, a continual phenomenon has been recorded in the history of humanity. Since the beginning of time—to use a known expression—there have always been two schools of thought, those who ponder for a long time, and those who are always ready for action. More precisely, there are those who are devoted to the past, who feel bound to it, who remain prisoners of the things they have seen, known and experienced in their youth. There are also those, always the same ones, who could like to discard the past and look to the future and who reflect on the present, the events of the day, in view of the future and not in view of the past.

The past has seen the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns. Every civilized nation went through that—Greeks, Romans, Latins—and we are going through it nowadays.

Some people are conservative by nature, others are liberal. Some people cling to traditions, others favour progress and development. In all fairness, I must say that those two schools of thought are justified. One reflects experience, the other the risk.

Obviously, it is due to the existence of those two schools, from the beginning of time, that we have witnessed progress because, fortunately, the liberal school has always been stronger than the conservative school. If there were only one school, inertia would settle and, consequently, there would be no stimulus, therefore no progress. As a matter of fact, supporters of the liberal school would gladly live under anarchy while those of the conservative school, being traditionalists, would continue to live the way they were born. There would be no progress, no development, nothing would happen. Since the beginning of the debate on a Canadian flag, an exclusively Canadian flag, we have had two leaders, two masters who played a leading part. The traditional school was very ably represented by Senator O'Leary, and the Liberal school was represented very adequately by the honourable Leader of the Government, Senator Connolly.

The honourable Senator O'Leary spoke with a warmth and eloquence which led us to believe that he did not belong to his school, but

rather to ours. I have noted that every time a senator stood up to take the floor after him, he always had a word of appreciation and admiration about the approach of Senator O'Leary. I would add that I regret not being able to present my case as warmly, elegantly and eloquently as Senator O'Leary did.

Moreover, it was a great comfort for me to hear the speech of the honourable Leader of the Government, Senator Connolly. Perfectly at ease, he lived up to his reputation. Indeed, we saw that Senator Connolly can deal with an equal mastery with history as well as economy. There is especially a point that I am pleased to stress, namely, his tact in summing up this development of the Canadian policy, especially since Confederation. He also mentioned some important milestones in our history since the first world war.

I wish to pay tribute to each one of them, for their sincerity, their candour and their intellectual honesty. I must say that, if all those who have written or spoken about a Canadian flag had followed the example set by these two senators, who are a credit to the Canadian Senate, the discussion on the Canadian flag would have been of such a high standard, such a high quality, that instead of wearing our people and getting on their nerves, it would have impressed them and made clearer to them the complex problem raised by this question of a distinctive Canadian flag.

Honourable senators, the traditionalist school and the Liberal school are two expressions of relativity. However, for the Conservatives, this relativity applies to what has taken place, consequently, to the past; as far as the Liberals are concerned, it relates to what is going to happen, therefore, to the future. Now, we find ourselves in circumstances where we have to make a choice. Which shall it be? Are we to choose a Canadian flag with yesterday in mind or tomorrow? Should it bring back the past or stand for the future? Will it recall days gone by or represent what we have now and what is to come?

I hope honourable Senator O'Leary will pardon me if I quote him so often, but his speech had the effect of arousing in us thoughts and feelings which cannot be discarded and which encourage us to reason.

I, therefore, take the liberty of participating very modestly to the dialogue which Senator O'Leary opened so brilliantly.