

Flags of Canada

at international gatherings than to note the absence of their own flag?

Those of us who have visited foreign countries, who have stayed in our embassies, legations or consulates abroad have felt ashamed because of the absence of a Canadian flag.

Why should we proclaim to the whole world the importance and strength of Canada when we do not even have a flag waving on our public buildings or on the hood of our ambassadors' cars?

A flag means much for a free citizen. In its folds, he rediscovers his whole history. Looking at it, he can feel the spirit of the nation, whose heart beats in unison with his own. For its flag, a nation lives, fights and dies. And we have not even got a distinctive national flag. For years, the Canadian government has refused to shoulder its responsibilities, because it did not seem to think it had the necessary authority to choose a flag representative of our nation here and abroad.

Many of us are aware that national unity is now materializing under the wise stewardship of the present Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Diefenbaker). It would be superfluous to give a recital of the numerous statements made here by the Prime Minister in an effort to cement national unity. I can assure hon. members that the government is giving consideration to all suggestions bearing on this subject. I am sure that a possibility exists and that in the near future we will have a distinctive national flag in keeping with the aspirations of the nation which will give a feeling of pride to every Canadian.

A great man has said that the last shot for the defence of the British Empire would be fired by a French Canadian. Those of us who have witnessed the warm and imposing reception granted Her Majesty the Queen and all the members of the royal family know that French Canadians do not harbour any hostility against royalty. The question need not even be asked about the English Canadians. The two groups realize the importance of the British monarchy within the commonwealth. Thousands of designs have been proposed. A joint committee of the Senate and the house has seriously studied the problem, but it left us without a symbol. Among all the designs already submitted, I remember one which thrilled me and made me very proud. It was proposed by the college of Joliette, in my riding. It was a very beautiful flag which honoured both our

[Mr. Pigeon.]

English and French ancestors by describing in a single design the development of both our groups.

Mr. Boulanger: Who wrote that speech?

Mr. Pigeon: By the way, in reply to what the hon. member for Drummond-Arthabaska (Mr. Boulanger) just said, we have no Mr. Lamontagne to write our speeches for us.

Mr. Speaker, are there still people saying that we do not yet deserve a national distinctive flag or an official national anthem? I see members on the other side laughing while such a serious problem as the choice of a distinctive national flag is being discussed. I know why, Mr. Speaker. They have always shirked their responsibilities in the matter. The hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) is one of those who in 1945 showed their true face to the nation. Like the Leader of the Opposition he runs with the hare and hunts with the hounds; he is always running back and forth, afraid to take a stand, afraid to say what he thinks, since he cannot erase his past record as minister of the crown.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is high time the government of Canada examined the possibility of giving the country a distinctive national flag. I congratulate the hon. member for St. Boniface who introduced the resolution. It should bring him congratulations from all his colleagues. I am very much disappointed, Mr. Speaker, to see members like the hon. members for Cochrane (Mr. Habel), for St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville (Mr. Dupuis) and Drummond-Arthabaska (Mr. Boulanger) sitting there talking and laughing while such an important matter as the adoption of a distinctive national flag is being discussed. Seeing them, I cannot help thinking about the hon. member for Laurier who is Canada's number one joker.

(Text):

Mr. J. N. Ormiston (Melville): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of taking part in this discussion of the proposed resolution introduced by my friend the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Regnier) and wish to take this opportunity, too, of congratulating the hon. member upon sponsoring this debate.

Certainly there should be extended discussion on the topic of the national flag before any action can be taken. Even the mention of a referendum concerning the adoption of a Canadian flag will initiate some serious