

Motions for Papers

The parliamentary secretary suggested that it would be a cumbersome and difficult procedure to produce all these originals. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) also finds himself in a rather cumbersome position today in regard to his stand and because of the fact that his design was, very properly and technically, leaked at the right time. Perhaps now we could have a little leakage in regard to these 3,013 designs that are now on record. I say this because of the way the whole issue is taking shape in the country. Of course, the government side would have us believe public opinion is all their way. Perhaps we, too, believe that the whole country is seeing it our way. But for goodness sake, surely the country has the right to see all these designs, as well as the Prime Minister's design. Is the Prime Minister above the rest of the citizens of Canada in producing a design? I suggest that with the production of this number of designs—they could be displayed in the railway committee room, room 200, or some other suitable place—something of aesthetic value would result that would be more pleasing even to those on the government side of the chamber. Although the government is a little blinded right now by their own imposition of this design, I think they would see the light of day and would have a change of heart in regard to this question. As a matter of fact, I think they are having a change of heart right now. However, Mr. Speaker, I think the entire matter could be settled to the satisfaction of the house and the country if these designs were placed at our disposal, so we might look at what Canadians have seen fit to produce.

The hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough went to great lengths in dealing with this matter. He mentioned the zeal and the great effort that was put into the production of these designs. This is all the more reason why we should see them. Canadians are very, very jealous of their position as citizens of this country, and therefore I do not think any of their suggestions should be cast aside for something that the Prime Minister in particular wants to present, together with a few of his cabinet colleagues. It is a difficult thing for a member of the opposition to rise and make a very pointed, critical argument about something we might have forced upon us because that might eventually become our national symbol.

I will tell you that the production of these designs is equally important to this country in that, within them, may lie the solution to problems that exist between the two founding nations, solutions of which the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) has never thought. This argument applies to many other items of legislation that have been introduced into the house. The Prime Minister brings in his own ideas and then defers to somebody else. I will tell you that I believe somewhere in this group of 3,000 designs we may find something that may lend itself to the solution of the problems that are before us. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that all of these people who submitted designs did so as a result of great feeling within their hearts. I do not suggest the Prime Minister did not have the same sort of feeling; but these people did not hire designers to do the job, although some of them may be designers, nor did they have consultants to say that this will suit this situation or that will suit that situation. They did it themselves.

I believe that this is all the more reason for the government considering the passage of this motion and producing the designs in their original form. We are not asking for anything that would be illegal. It has been made very clear that simply because these designs are copyrighted, they are not secret. I think the government should avail themselves of the opportunity of producing these designs and allowing the members of the house, the members of the press gallery and the people of this country to have an opportunity of seeing them, and thus perhaps solving the problem that faces us today.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, this motion is of great importance to the house and to the nation. It is quite obvious the government had something to hide or conceal or they would have immediately agreed to the passage of this motion when it was presented two or three weeks ago. What is wrong with having a public display of the designs for a national flag which are in the possession of the government? There is nothing wrong with it at all. However, the government will not let the people of Canada see these designs. We have to be satisfied with the one selected by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson). This is a form of dictatorship to which we are not going to submit in this country.

The design submitted by the Prime Minister, which has been leaked in advance, and so on,