

*Inquiries of the Ministry***CANADIAN FLAG**INQUIRIES RESPECTING CONSIDERATION OF  
NEW DESIGN

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Reid Scott (Danforth):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister concerning the flag. I know the Prime Minister has told the country that the issue of a distinctive national flag is a matter of confidence, but in view of the importance of the matter I wanted to ask the Prime Minister this question. Can he say whether a vote of parliament changing the design of the distinctive national flag for example to a single maple leaf instead of three, would be considered by the government as a motion of non confidence?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take notice of that question and answer it subsequently.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. While the Prime Minister is on this subject would he tell us what are the plans of the government regarding the debating of these two resolutions?

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, the farm credit bill is before the house, as my right hon. friend knows, and it must be completed before we go on to the flag resolution. It has also been made clear to the house that there are two other matters which must be decided, and the time taken on them will influence to some extent when we will get on to the flag resolution. I am referring to interim supply, which must be discussed before many days have passed, and the other matter is the resolution regarding the constitutional amendment for survivors' benefits. The formula has been agreed to by all the provinces, but with regard to the province of Quebec the agreement is subject to approval by the legislature. It is now on the order paper of the legislature, and as soon as it is dealt with there a resolution will be brought in here. Those are the three matters.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Will that precede the debate on the flag issue?

**Mr. Pearson:** It depends. If that were passed through the legislature of Quebec this afternoon, it would be important to get that question disposed of at once so it could go to Westminster for the necessary action. We have been informed that it should go to

[Mr. Sauv .]

Westminster as quickly as possible because of the parliamentary situation there. Those are the three matters before the house. I would like to proceed with the flag resolution immediately, subject to those considerations with regard to the other two matters.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, in order to have a degree of definiteness—and I thank the Prime Minister for his explanation—would it not, under all the circumstances and having regard to those matters which require to be discussed, interim supply and the like, be desirable that he fix the date for next week, so that members will be in the position to know when it is coming up and can arrange to be sure they are here; because we have to make plans?

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman is perfectly reasonable in that request, but I am sure he understands our difficulty.

**Mr. Howard:** It sounds like collaboration to me.

**Mr. Pearson:** We are not in a position to say when we can proceed with the constitutional resolution until it is dealt with in the Quebec legislature. If we were to proceed with the flag resolution at once, and then Quebec passed the constitutional resolution, we could interrupt the flag resolution and we could go right ahead with the constitutional amendment. The only possible interruption then would be interim supply. If we left interim supply until the very last moment we might very understandably be criticized for trying to get interim supply through by shotgun methods. So it is not an easy situation. But I hope before the end of the day we may be in a better position to indicate what will be done. If we could agree that the flag resolution would start on a certain date, say next Monday instead of tomorrow, because of the uncertainty of the situation, that would be perfectly agreeable to this side.

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the urgent desire to deal with the question of the constitutional amendment and interim supply as well as the flag, would the Prime Minister consider introducing a motion for the house to sit on Saturdays, during which time we could discuss the flag and then spend the rest of the time on these other important matters?