

*Canadian Flag*

rejecting the red ensign we would somehow be rejecting Christianity. Our friends to the south happen to feel they have a Christian country but I do not think they are going to suggest that the stars and stripes are Christian symbols. I have always felt that stars were the symbol of communist Russia or Mohammedans. If you look at all the national flags in the world, it is remarkable how few Christian countries, or countries which claim to be Christian, have Christian symbols on their flags. I think it is an extremely retrograde argument to suggest that those of us who are in favour of a new flag are willing to turn our backs on our whole Christian heritage.

I should like to suggest that speakers for the opposition have made their point and presented their arguments time and time again. After 29 days, do they not feel they should let us have our chance to vote on this question? We have sat here patiently, the majority of us, listening to them. Now give us an opportunity to vote on the question before the house. If they want to make this stand, they can do so. The previous speaker was proud to point out that he was a member of a major party. Well, I say this to hon. members to my right: You are a major party; this is a decision to be made by parliament; go to the people at the next election on the flag issue; say "If we are elected we shall bring back the red ensign". You can do that. You are a major party. You have a great leader.

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

**Mr. Fisher:** An election will come sooner or later and that is your opportunity. You may come back here with a majority and bring the red ensign back and throw out this un-Christian thing the rest of us want. I suggest you consider that, instead of holding up the majority of the members of this house and so many members of your own party who would like to get on with other things.

**Mr. Churchill:** Would the hon. member accept a question? I should like to ask him which flag he was willing to accept six months ago?

**Mr. Fisher:** The flag which was the choice of either the government or the committee which considered it.

**Mr. Churchill:** There was no parliamentary committee six months ago.

**Mr. Fisher:** I know, but there was a government which undertook to bring in a distinct  
[Mr. Fisher.]

tive national flag. They brought one in and I would have been in favour of it.

**Mr. Churchill:** I take it then that the hon. member is prepared to accept any flag which the present government may bring in?

**Mr. Fisher:** Yes, I am quite prepared to accept any flag which the present government brings in, because the present government has the responsibility; and our responsibility is to vote on their proposal, not to delay endlessly and forever.

**Mr. Webb:** I should like to ask the hon. member a question. Would he tell the house which flag the Royal Canadian Legion has accepted as its flag?

**Mr. Fisher:** My understanding is that the Royal Canadian Legion wants the red ensign as the Canadian flag. If the hon. member is referring to the allusion I made to a particular branch of the Legion, the executive of this branch thought it would reinforce the dominion command by getting a petition from all its members. And all it could get was 26 out of 127.

**Mr. Webb:** I was speaking of the Legion as a whole.

**Mr. George Muir (Lisgar):** After listening to two of the more leather lunged members of the House of Commons I am sure you will think, Mr. Speaker, that anything I have to say is like the calm after the storm.

One of the reasons I am speaking on this question tonight is that I wish to comment on a statement made by the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher) when he told us he was willing to accept any flag which the government might introduce. My contention is that this government has no mandate to bring in a flag for Canada, neither has this parliament. I agree the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) promised a new flag for the Canadian people, provided he was elected as head of the government party. It may be this was one of the reasons he was denied the majority he had sought in the last election. However, neither in his talks to the electorate nor in other public statements did he say he intended to remove completely the symbols of our heritage from the flag, or cut out all vestige of our founding races. I do not believe the government is capable of deciding on a flag which will represent this nation until the end of time.

I should like to read from Quebec *L'Action*. This is what it had to say about the government's action in this regard: