

*Canadian Flag*

plaud the Prime Minister for bringing the matter forward, I think I have justified criticisms to offer with regard to his conduct in bringing it forward and imposing it on parliament in this fashion. I hope I will be given a hearing as I express, without any malice, my criticisms in this regard.

The debate before the house arose out of a motion proposed by the Prime Minister, which motion was proposed in one part and has since been divided into two. The motion now before the house is in these words:

That the government be authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to establish officially as the flag of Canada a flag embodying the emblem proclaimed by His Majesty King George V on November 21, 1921—three maple leaves conjoined on one stem—in the colours red and white then designated for Canada, the red leaves occupying a field of white between vertical sections of blue on the edges of the flag.

I know that the matter under consideration before the house is the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker). Mr. Speaker, the levity I hear on the other side indicates to me the attitude of many over there who choose to sit silent, not use parliament for its intended purpose and belittle those who feel it their duty to take part at this time.

In my experience or in my reading of parliamentary history of Canada, I do not know of any serious proposal that had to do, not with the economics of this nation or any subject upon which you normally pass judgment as a result of full consideration, but a matter dealing with emotions relating to the background of the people getting together to form confederation, that has been brought forward in such an arbitrary fashion as the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) has seen fit to do in presenting this resolution. It is claimed by the Prime Minister and those who speak for the government that the Liberal party had a mandate from the people of Canada. I ask where and when that mandate was given. Certainly I have taken part in four election campaigns during recent years. If a mandate had been indicated at all it would have arisen from the presentation the Liberal party made to the country in the general election in 1962 and again in the general election of 1963.

In both of these election campaigns the Liberal forces of this country did all they could to defeat me. They had the hierarchy on the front benches in my constituency. They were there between elections and they were brought back in the 1963 election campaign. I do not boast about the results. They have

been a deep satisfaction to me because I have lived in this community for over 30 years. The results were substantially in my favour. I think under the circumstances in which the election campaign was conducted I can, in all humility, feel very gratified indeed that the community in which I have lived for that period has seen fit to give me its support. I say the Liberal party had nothing to do with it. They marshalled their forces at the federal level. They were going to win Regina City. They had all their forces in Regina City, but at no time during the election campaign did any one of them mention the Liberal party stood for a new, distinctive Canadian flag which contained no symbol related to the past. They did not say that they would, if they were given a majority, introduce a distinctive Canadian flag. The Liberal candidate in the constituency never mentioned it, and certainly I never offered it to the electorate in any way, shape or form. I believe there are other constituencies in Canada in which the Prime Minister spoke, and in which members on the front benches spoke, in which they did not mention that one of the major planks in their platform was a distinctive Canadian flag. They did not mention that one of the major items with which parliament must deal in a particular session, regardless of the period of the session, would be the distinctive flag. What I have said cannot be repudiated.

It is passing strange, too, that the throne speech that was to herald the great 60 days of decision when everything the Liberal party had promised the electorate was going to be achieved, made no reference to the flag being introduced in this session of parliament. This fact gave heart to some of the people who stood for the Canadian red ensign. Members of the Legion, as pointed out in *The Legionary*, were given hope that this matter would not suddenly be forced into the realm of politics and partisan action. What changed the Prime Minister's mind? What brought on this sudden haste? What compelled him to make this a major issue in this session and completely disrupt the affairs of this parliament? We would like to know. I think the people of Canada would like to know.

I wonder if it is because of the extremist voice of Quebec? I wonder if that is what it is? I suggest this because in a speech delivered by the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Dupuis) he made a reference to this subject. I am sorry to see that he has left the house because I do not like to refer to remarks made by other members if they are not present. I hope the hon. member will