

Canadian Flag

that the Prime Minister should call in the leaders of the four opposition parties and thresh out the whole matter with them. They say that he should attempt to find agreement on a method of proceeding with the flag resolution and keeping the debate within bounds.

That is too much to hope for, Mr. Speaker, because the Prime Minister has indicated that the flag resolution has priority on his list of legislative matters, and he is determined to go through with the flag debate even if it costs the government its life. In an editorial on May 26 last the *Edmonton Journal* reviews the flag question and makes this comment:

Mr. Pearson's haste, and his total commitment, on the flag issue are on the face of things inexplicable. With so many problems bedevilling our country—

They are many, Mr. Speaker.

—why must he single out this issue and, in effect, stake the survival of his government, to say nothing of his own political future, on the result? It seems foolhardy and senseless...

Ottawa is in some danger of ceasing to be the real capital of Canada. There is a danger, that is to say, that the federal power will lose control of Canadian affairs. If this happens, our country is obviously doomed; it will disintegrate into a number of fragments, none of which can, by itself, survive as a sovereign nation.

The flag issue, as we see it, is therefore an attempt to do two things at once: to demonstrate the genuine desire of the Pearson government to reach a rational accommodation with Quebec, and thereby to re-establish Ottawa's power to control Canadian affairs.

It is, as we say, perilous—more perilous because Mr. Pearson for obvious reasons cannot publicly explain what is going through his mind...

There are more Anglo Saxons than French Canadians in Canada. Is it reasonable to ask them to abandon something which the vast majority of them hold precious?

During the past few weeks, the question has caused much heartsearching in the office of this newspaper...

There is, of course, no guarantee that a new flag will accomplish anything of the kind. But if parliament agrees to a new flag tomorrow—

This is a strong editorial, Mr. Speaker.

—it should simultaneously be made clear to Quebec that this, as the *Calgary Herald* rightly pointed out a day or two ago, represents a massive concession. It should also be pointed out that Quebec can expect no more concessions of this magnitude.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister tries to make the people of Canada believe that the flag is being introduced for them, a nation of 19 million people. This editorial says the action is taken solely to satisfy Quebec. If this is the case, Mr. Speaker, why does the Prime Minister not stand up in this house and say so? Perhaps if he did make such a statement, then the rest of Canada

[Mr. Skoreyko.]

might consider some of the better after effects of such a move.

The editorial goes on to say:

The rest of Canada will be entitled to paraphrase some famous words of the late John F. Kennedy. We can properly say to French Canada: "Let us stop talking about what Canada should do for Quebec, and let us start talking about what Quebec is prepared to do for Canada".

Then again, Mr. Speaker, when I look at some of the reasons for the introduction of this flag resolution, I cannot help but think of Mackenzie King who always looked upon England as a country we should stay away from.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Of course that is not true.

Mr. Skoreyko: It is true, and I intend to read a document I have here which will satisfy the minister's curiosity.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): It is not my curiosity; it is my knowledge.

Mr. Skoreyko: Then, it will correct his knowledge. This editorial is entitled, "Republic of Canada", and reads in part as follows:

During much of his political life Mackenzie King feared and fought what might be called the philosophy of the imperial commonwealth.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is different; so did the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Diefenbaker: We would like to hear a speech from the hon. gentleman on this subject.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I would be glad to make one.

Mr. Skoreyko: I continue quoting:

He had a deep distrust of centralizers in London and an unwavering opposition to an empire approach to politics, economics, trade or defence. He was determined that Canada should be a sovereign nation in full charge of its own destiny at home and abroad. To Mackenzie King must go much of the credit for the events that culminated in the Statute of Westminster.

But at times King's determination that Canada should be mistress in her own house became a suspicious obsession—

This could never be attributed to anyone else.

—as incidents in Vincent Massey's recent book of memoirs so clearly reveal. Furthermore King imbedded both the determination and obsession in the Liberal party of which he was undisputed custodian for so many years.

To the end of his life King did not seem to realize that his great battle to make Canada an independent nation had been won—at least as far as London was concerned. To the end he remained militant and wary. He bequeathed his attitude to