

Canadian Flag

mace lying on the table and cried "Take away that bauble".

That is what has happened today, Mr. Speaker. I believe that in this chamber today we again hear this cry "Take away that bauble!" in that we are taking away some of our symbols. I am afraid we hear this on the treasury benches too, benches so largely filled with ministers who were schooled and trained in the dictatorial branch of our democracy. We hear it from their men in the grey flannel suits, men bought and paid to erase the symbols of monarchy and to substitute the symbolic image of a man who never was—a man who was not in this house when his ministers two-faced a crisis—

Mr. Byrne: Order.

Mr. Ormiston: —a man who was not in the house because his ministers sent him to a prairie Coventry, not because he had broken our constitutional principles but because he might observe them. We hear: "Take away the red ensign". We hear: "Take away the Queen's picture from the citizenship courts". We hear: "Take away the word 'dominion' and the word 'national' from government doors and letterheads."

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must agree with one of the recent objections that this is not really germane to the question of a plebiscite. The hon. member is giving a personal opinion. I was trying to follow the hon. member in his symbolism as it dealt with a plebiscite and I thought he had a point, but when he goes on to pictures and things like that he is away off the mark.

Mr. Ormiston: Mr. Speaker, I will try to confine my remarks to the true meaning of symbolism.

Mr. Byrne: How are going to do that if you keep reading?

Mr. Ormiston: If we take away everything which reminds us that we inherited a democracy—our traditions, our habits, and most of all our symbols—certainly we have lost part of the element of democracy. The men who say this have now come to the point where they are prepared to move, and I would suggest that some members on the other side of the house are moving, not openly but stealthily, slyly and surreptitiously on the floor of this house against the prerogative of the crown.

This may seem a harsh statement to those not schooled in constitutional matters, but only the Queen of Canada can appoint a flag for

Canada. Yet never in all the statements made over the months inside and outside the house by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and some other ministers of the crown, or in the motions drafted by them and placed upon the official records of the house, has there been reference to that constitutional fact. Surely at some period or other, upon some occasion or other, it might be thought that the Prime Minister would be proud to tell this house, in the manner in which Right Hon. Mr. St. Laurent was proud to tell the house on February 3, 1953 with respect to the royal style and title, that: "It is Her Majesty who will determine, who will announce by proclamation what the flag will be for Canada". Right Hon. Mr. St. Laurent was, and is, a great constitutional lawyer. He was a good minister of justice and a good prime minister of Canada. He left those two positions, the two highest political offices in the gift of the Canadian people, the better for his holding them.

I ask now, Mr. Speaker, do those ministers of the crown who sat to the left and to the right of Prime Minister St. Laurent when he spoke those words, and who sit on the front benches today, believe that he demeaned himself when he said:

It is Her Majesty who will determine, who will announce by proclamation what her royal style and titles will be for each one of the several realms of the commonwealth.

Do these individuals who listened so intently at that time now repudiate as colonialism the words of this Liberal, this constitutional lawyer, this minister of justice and attorney general of Canada—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that in the present circumstances the hon. member is entitled to criticize the action of the government in bringing forward this matter for discussion, or the terms of the motion or anything else of that nature; but to impute motives to ministers which, to say the least, are subject to suspicion as stated by my hon. friend, is not correct. The hon. member may disagree with the actions which have been taken but I do not think it is right to impute motives to ministers who happen to hold a different opinion from that which is held by the hon. member. It seems to me that he is away off the point of a plebiscite, how it should be held, where it should be held, when it should be held and if it should be held.

Mr. Ormiston: I thank you for your direction Mr. Speaker, but I was just pointing out that there was a great deal of difference between the statements of the former prime