

*Private Bills*

question. It need not be a committee identical with that which was set up in 1945 and 1946, but a study should be made of whether the flags we have in Canada are satisfactory. If they are not then we should set about to change them and bring in something which would be suitable to the Canadian people.

The question has been asked whether it should be in the census. We all realize that it has cost a great deal already to reprint the census forms. Therefore, I do not think it would be feasible or wise to spend a great deal of money to reprint census forms to include a question concerning a distinctive flag, but something along that line should be undertaken. A questionnaire should be sent out, or the people should be canvassed on whether they want another flag. I think that question would be in order before any definite steps are taken to change the flag we now have, or the two flags which are flown in Canada.

While there is a great deal of concern over this question in Canada—maybe more so in some parts of Canada than in others—yet, it seems to me, after listening to both sides of the question, that it is a controversial one and before any action is taken on it perhaps a little further study ought to be made and a questionnaire sent out in the form of a minor census in an endeavour to find out whether the people actually want a new flag or whether a change is desirable. If it should turn out that a change is desirable, then somebody should design a flag which would be suitable to all Canadians.

**Mr. Terry Nugent (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, like other hon. members, I suppose, I have been besieged with letters, suggestions and talks on the question of a national flag for Canada. My desk and the file in my cabinet are full of many suggestions along this line.

First, I must say that I am a little surprised myself to find the extent of the interest in and the depth of the feeling about the subject. I was born and brought up in this country and I think I have taken my proper amount of interest in the affairs of this country. I have served in the armed forces and I think I am as patriotic as are most Canadians. As I say, I am a little surprised at the depth of feeling, because frankly the question of the sort of national flag we should have, whether it is distinctly Canadian or not, really has never bothered me very much. Therefore it was with a little bit of surprise at first that I found so many citizens dedicating so much of their time—they must have—to designing flags, organizing groups and pressing and working so hard that this country might have a

national emblem of its own, and to learn of the variety of ideas that have been presented to us from day to day for this purpose.

I note that the bill before us does not deal with a specific flag already used in Canada or press for one of the specific designs that several groups in this country have already prepared. However, I think I would prefer to see a bill introduced by a private member calling for a specific nationally designed flag. The bill says that the governor in council shall prepare one. I suggest to hon. members that since there have not been any steps taken to use anything but the union jack or the red ensign in all the years since confederation it might justly be felt that the government has been quite satisfied to have one flag or both of these flags and that the government's policy, no matter what was the form of the government at the time, is reflected by this same acceptance of those flags as the Canadian flags.

I think the spirit motivating most people who ask for government action, or who press for their own ideas or designs of flags, is that they are not satisfied that this country has an emblem that they can point to and say, "This is ours; this reflects Canada". I think the variety of the designs presented to us for consideration strengthens my own belief; my own feelings about it are somewhat encouraged by the fact that those same designs are so varied. There are so many ideas expressed that one encounters great difficulty when one tries to find some flag which will reflect this distinctly Canadian nationalism of ours.

First of all, I think I should say that I am not one who is really concerned about increasing the amount of Canadian nationalism in this country, along certain lines at least. We live in an age in which life is getting more and more complicated, where everything that is done in one country is reflected so quickly in another, and where for various reasons we must be more and more careful of what we do so as not to annoy our neighbours, and where for various humanitarian reasons we must more and more often extend a helping hand to our neighbours.

In this house we are, I am sure, almost completely dedicated to the support of the United Nations. The fact that such a body of necessity has to take care of some of our problems to that extent at least reduces the need for Canadians to be ultra nationalistic. As I say, this motivating spirit in the country seems to move us away from nationalism in some respects, while the growing development, the growing population and the growing importance of our country seem to foster that spirit.

However, Canada's position in international affairs is only one aspect of the problem of