

Canadian Flag

of the adoption of a distinctive Canadian flag or with the retention of the red ensign, but I do think they should have the courage to get up on their feet and express in no uncertain terms their feelings on this issue. One member of the government party did stand up and voice his opinion. I think he has carried out a service on behalf of his constituents.

I do not believe the members of this house do express a composite view of the people of this country. I wonder whether members on the opposite side of this house are so devoted to the stand taken by the Prime Minister that they do not now have the courage to stand up and express their views.

In asking for this plebiscite I should like to emphasize that we in this party who have taken part in the debate on this amendment have not attempted to delay passage of this resolution or the passage of the business of the house. It has been almost on the insistence of the opposition that the government has passed what little legislation it has passed. I can only laugh when I hear some hon. members from the government side, while speaking in other parts of the country, talk about the obstruction the Conservative party has perpetrated on parliament, while in the same breath they list all the legislative items that have been passed during this session. Those members cannot have it both ways; we are either obstructing or you are not doing your jobs as legislators, I think you are misleading the public in this regard.

As far as a plebiscite is concerned, our position has not changed. We have always advocated a plebiscite on this matter. I should like to refer to a speech made by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) on July 22, over the national television network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in which he stated:

We have endeavoured to stop this headstrong and stubborn rush of the government. We want the people of Canada to have a chance to have a say in the matter and suggested that a plebiscite be granted to the Canadian people in order that they could determine their wishes. Such a plebiscite could take place at the next general election. Among the questions to be asked might be such as: Are you in favour of the red ensign? Are you in favour of the red ensign with changes made thereon to show both heritages? Are you in favour of the three maple leaves joined together? Are you in favour of the one maple leaf?

Our position has been consistent in calling for a plebiscite right from the beginning of the flag debate, and we are still being consistent in calling for one now. I spoke earlier in the debate and at that time said that I

favoured this matter being taken out of the House of Commons by referring it to a committee of the house. If the government wanted this question removed from the house, why did they not refer the matter to a committee originally? They wasted the taxpayers' money by their obstinacy. They wasted the time of the house by keeping the debate going in this chamber when the matter should have been referred to a committee in the beginning. Finally they did agree to that suggestion and I said at that time that, should the committee report indicate disagreement, and it has, then we should have a national referendum. I am of the same view today. My view has not changed in this regard. If members will refer to my speech in August they will see that I said exactly the same thing. If they did not listen to it the first time I would certainly recommend that they listen this time. I suggested that this committee, although it might not be unanimous, could do a great service for this country.

Mr. Godin: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Slogan: I will permit it at the end of my remarks. I have only 40 minutes and I have a two hour speech prepared. I will try to cut it a little shorter to leave the hon. member a couple of minutes in which to ask me a question. I suggested at that time that this committee would render a great service to the country by bringing in a report which would narrow down the designs exactly in the manner in which it has reported, but because of the fact that a small group of people could not agree I could not see that in this larger house we could have any greater agreement. So my suggestion was that we should take the recommendation—

Mr. Godin: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is suggesting that the committee could not agree on a design. I would appreciate it if he would refer to the 14 to nothing vote for the design now before the house.

Mr. Slogan: Obviously the hon. member, as he did in my last speech, is trying to trap me and get me off the rails, but I will answer that question.

Mr. Godin: Why did you say the committee did not agree?

Mr. Slogan: Obviously the hon. member did not understand the vote in the committee. The vote of the committee was not to