

Many people are convinced that Canada as a nation is breaking up and can no longer be relied upon. This thing has gone so far that it is virtually impossible to convince people that we are not in the same category as the newly emerging states with their insecurity. But I must admit our present Government is doing nothing to alleviate the tarnish on our image. Indeed, they are merely contributing to the erroneous impressions already held.

I am embarrassed, when asked what we in responsible positions are doing to close the growing breach within our boundaries, to tell people, "We are bringing in a new distinctively Canadian flag to heal the wound." It certainly makes people wonder. "If a new flag would cure all, then the problem could not have been very serious," they say. But I have to tell them that the problem is serious and the flag will not be our salvation because, in the first place, it deals only with reflection of the problem and not the problem itself, and, secondly, many thousands of Canadians do not want this Liberal banner anyway.

While I believe that a rational, intelligent Government would bring in constructive measures of assistance to help Canada regain her unity, her identity, and her place on the international scene, I have found it is folly to try to convince people of this after mentioning our flag fiasco.

I suggest that it is time our Liberal friends allowed other hands to direct the nation's business. We cannot afford much more Liberal rule. They are capable of doing more damage in the space of a few months than good government can correct in years. Before matters go too far and are beyond saving, we must allow good government to have that chance. I am hopeful that day is not too far hence. In fact, the calling for closure might be the last will and testament of our Liberal friends. Perhaps their realization of what the future holds for them has given them cause to think that we need a memento of their term in office. I should think we have all the mementoes we want or need without having to bear the brand of their chosen flag all our days.

In the light of recent disclosures regarding both members and aides and the incompetent way in which they manage both personal and departmental affairs, I submit that it is indeed a miracle that the country manages to survive at all. The Prime Minister's time would have been better spent trying to put his own house in order and giving it a thorough "housecleaning" than in trying to

devise flag designs and scheming to perpetrate ways in which to have his will imposed on the nation.

Many thousands of Canadians will continue to fly the Canadian Red Ensign proudly and happily, and would be pleased to see it wave over a strong unified country, governed by mature and trustworthy individuals who seek to bring all Canadians together for a better Canada both at home and abroad.

Honourable senators, I support the amendment before the house.

(Translation):

Hon. Sarto Fournier: Honourable senators, in the history of all nations, one can see periods of hesitation. We have the impression that is somewhat what is happening now in our country. We have witnessed, as Canadians, a very lengthy debate in Parliament, more exactly in the House of Commons, about the proposal made by the government of Canada to create a Canadian emblem, an exclusively Canadian flag.

The debate was rather prolonged and reading the newspapers and listening to the news, we noticed a lack of forbearance at times. In my opinion, that kind of debate is normal. We are, in fact, on the verge of taking a decision that will certainly have an influence on our country's future. We are under the impression that Canada is on the point of making a fresh start, even though the matter now under discussion is not new.

As far as I know, there has been some talk of giving our country an entirely and exclusively Canadian flag for at least the past thirty years. There is no doubt that such an important decision deserved to be thoroughly considered and should be discussed at length.

Since the decision we are going to make will surely have a great influence on the general attitude of the Canadian people, not only for a number of years, but for centuries to come, I feel, honourable senators, that we are considering now a very serious matter and that we have to settle a more important point than those brought before this house in the past century.

Therefore, I consider it as a great privilege and an exclusive honour to be personally and directly involved in the discussion and to take part in the final vote which will take place in the end.