

Canadian Flag

very silent so far as that particular matter is concerned.

There are those in the house who have referred to the union jack as a foreign flag. They have referred to the fact that the fleur-de-lis is something foreign.

Mr. Caron: Yes.

Mr. Nasserden: The hon. member for Hull (Mr. Caron) says "yes".

Mr. Caron: Yes.

Mr. Nasserden: And he repeats himself. But when I go into the province of Quebec what do I see? I see the fleur-de-lis flying from the flag poles.

Mr. Caron: I never liked it.

Mr. Nasserden: The hon. member for Hull says he never liked it.

Mr. Caron: No.

Mr. Nasserden: And he agrees again. But when I go into the province of Quebec I see the fleur-de-lis. When the people there have their parades you see the fleur-de-lis. Those of us who come from other than English or French stock are not ashamed that the French were a part of the founding elements of this nation, or that the English were part of the founding elements of this nation. That is one of the reasons we would like to see on the Canadian flag not only the union jack but also the fleur-de-lis.

I cannot imagine the guardian of our constitution, who after all is the Prime Minister of our country, countenancing an action that would wipe out in one fell swoop all of the history of this country. What complicates the whole matter is that from those Liberals who sit behind him in the house we have had during the debate so far this wonderful show of unity. There has just been one dissenting voice from all those on the benches across the way. Is that not an outstanding fact, one to be noted by history and one to be noted by the people in every part of this country?

Some hon. Members: Question, question.

Mr. Nasserden: I would be glad to answer any questions.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Nasserden: I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, those are easy questions to answer. It will not be so easy for those who ask these questions when they go back to the electorate of this country in the election that will follow. The answer to some of these

questions is to be found in the almost quarter of a million views that have been transmitted either individually or collectively to the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet by means of telegrams, petitions, letters and designs that have been submitted from every part of Canada. This government—

Mr. Grégoire: Name them.

Mr. Nasserden:—this careless Prime Minister, says this flag will be adopted in the name of national unity. How can there be the unity necessary when so many people have taken the trouble to write letters, send telegrams, sign petitions or submit designs? I imagine, in addition, that there have been those who have individually attempted to influence members on the other side of the house, just as they have tried to influence members on this side of the house on this important matter.

I hold no brief for any particular design tonight, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that I believe this is one of the saddest days in Canada's history. We see the Prime Minister's empty seat following the vote on the amendment and we know, whether through design or carelessness, the Prime Minister of this country is allowing this debate to continue without his intervention to shed some light on what the government proposes to do following concurrence in the report. I think thousands and thousands of people tonight will be wondering what manner of parliament we have in Ottawa.

Mr. Grégoire: We want the names.

Mr. Nasserden: Someone says, "We want the names". They are the unnamed Canadians—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nasserden: They are the unnamed Canadians who cannot sit in this House of Commons because they have sent others here to represent them. An hon. gentleman opposite made an interjection which I am not going to answer. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the people across Canada expect the Prime Minister of this country to give more attention to a matter such as this than he has shown in this cavalier dismissal of his responsibilities, this abdication of his responsibilities as the guardian of the constitution. He should give the opposition and the house some indication of the course the government intends to follow after concurrence in this report.

I do not wish to say any more.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.