

*Canadian Flag*

if you could give them serious consideration in relation to what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has said. The motion which is before us amounts to the setting out of a principle, an exposition of the policy of the government, and the two ideas are so closely related that I think they must be considered as a whole. I will leave the matter at that point.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition):** The references to which allusions have been made by my hon. friend are, of course, known to hon. members of the house. I wish to draw Your Honour's attention to this, that these authorities all advise to the effect that where a resolution contains different propositions, consideration can be given to dividing it within the limitations referred to by my hon. friend from Winnipeg South Centre.

But what is the proposition here? The government introduces a resolution. The contention now is that this resolution, which must have taken a great deal of thought and consideration on the part of the government, does infringe on ancient rights, rules and privileges of parliament. This places a Speaker in a very difficult position. It may well be that the government now finds itself in a position where it would like to see a division of the resolution which it has itself created. It may very well be that. But let us read the proposition. It is this:

That the government be authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to establish officially as the flag of Canada—

Here it goes on to describe the three maple leaf flag.

—and also to provide that the royal union flag, generally known as the union jack, may continue to be flown as a symbol of Canadian membership—

And so on. How does one divide that? Does one divide it by leaving out "and" and "also"? You cannot divide this proposition. This is an entire proposition. This was the government's policy. This is what the Prime Minister told Mr. Smallwood, the premier of Newfoundland, in the telegram which was tabled here. It is not a question of a resolution being produced which ignores the rights and interferes with the privileges of parliament. This is something which represents the carrying out of a promise by the government.

No doubt the government now finds itself in a somewhat invidious position. Did not Premier Smallwood himself, following receipt of the telegram in question, interpret that telegram and interpret the conversation he

[Mr. Churchill.]

had with the Prime Minister in the legislature of Newfoundland? At any rate the premier announced during a session of the legislature that he had received an assurance from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, replying to a telegram from Premier Smallwood, said:

There is no question of the federal government's intention to recommend that both the union jack and Canada's proposed new flag be proclaimed by the Queen.

Premier Smallwood had asked for an explanation of the course to be followed by the government if the motion were adopted to authorize the government to provide that the royal union flag, generally known as the union jack, may continue to be flown as a symbol of Canadian membership in the commonwealth of nations, and so on. Premier Smallwood had asked for an explanation of the course to be followed by the federal government. He wanted to know what would happen. He went even further. He said the Minister of Transport was in London on Thursday to see Her Majesty the Queen on the flag issue. He said he had been informed of this by the Prime Minister. This, he said, was an honour to Newfoundland.

Now the government stand on a certain resolution they placed before parliament. It may be that they find it a little difficult. I am sure there would be no co-operation or discussion between the government and the hon. member who proposes the course we are considering, but if there was not the hon. member is a mind reader of the first rank; he knows the position in which the government now finds itself in having this resolution in its present form.

**Mr. Pearson:** I rise on a point of order. The right hon. gentleman is surely dealing now with substantive matters, not just the point which is before the house; but since he is doing so, and referring to what he considers to be the policy of the government in this matter, may I point out to him and to the house that the government has no intention of moving that this resolution be divided.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** All right. I am happy to have that assurance, which means that the Prime Minister of this country says that the resolution does not contravene the ancient rights and privileges of parliament. I agree with him in that regard; it does not. That being so, Mr. Speaker, you are now to be placed in the position where one member of