

*Flags of Canada*

The Canadian government appoints its own Governor General who is chosen from among the most distinguished citizens of Canada. I am proud to commend the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) for having given the Canadian people as a second Canadian Governor General, His Excellency Georges Vanier, a career soldier, who not only has done honour to our people on the battlefields but who also is a great French Canadian of the Catholic faith.

Canada has ambassadors and consuls in a great many countries. It is represented in the United Nations by an important delegation. Canadian observers are sent to international conferences of interest to our country.

Everywhere Canada is represented by men of great merit whose ability is beyond question, but there is no Canadian flag symbolizing our country and permitting our representatives to be identified.

On September 26, 1960, the Prime Minister of Canada delivered a magnificent speech against the communist bloc before the United Nations General Assembly. Knowing how successful he was in putting Mr. Khrushchev out of countenance, and having regard to the wide approval he gained in the free world, don't you think he would have been proud to see the flag of his beloved country for which he exerts himself so much waving over the U.N. building?

Canada has taken part in two world wars. Our soldiers have fought in Europe and in Asia. However our forces have never been able to fight under their own flag, but had to serve under some other country's colours. Nevertheless, our soldiers did not fail to distinguish themselves on many occasions by winning signal victories. We have in this house members who fought in both world wars. They had only a foreign flag in which to bury their comrades in arms who died on the battlefields.

Is it not the prime concern of some of the colonies achieving independence to give themselves a flag of their own?

Is the referendum suggested by the member for St. Boniface really justified? That is the point to which we must give our attention at the present time.

Different associations have already carried out surveys of public opinion. In 1958, the Canadian junior chamber of commerce held a referendum in all its branches and in all localities where a chamber of commerce is to be found. On July 3, 1959, it made public

the following results: 79 per cent of its English-speaking members voted in favour of a distinctive national flag, while 78 per cent of the citizens of those localities declared themselves in favour of a flag. The report of the French-speaking chambers showed a 100 per cent vote, among both members and citizens, in favour of a distinctive national flag. An ever increasing unanimity is to be noted in that regard. All our French-Canadian organizations, which so efficiently uphold the interests of their members and of their fellow citizens in every country are asking for a distinctive national flag for the whole of Canada. They are not asking either for the union jack or fleurs-de-lis on our future Canadian flag.

Even the senior chamber of commerce of Canada, at its October 1958 convention, adopted a motion asking for a distinctive national flag.

Canada is a great country, playing an increasingly important part in international affairs. We are approaching the centenary of the confederation, which will be celebrated in 1967. We must reach unity on the one design of a flag which will be ours, without any tie, without any narrow and petty partisanship, in accord with the sovereignty of Canada, a distinctive national flag.

We must give the hon. member for St. Boniface the credit he deserves for introducing a motion to ascertain the public views and also for presenting a comprehensive and well-ordered argument. I extend to him my most sincere congratulations for having discussed the question of a national flag and for having done it so broadmindedly in order to reach the ultimate goal of a distinctive national flag for our country, Canada.

I express in this house the wish of all my constituents: that Canada be provided, as soon as possible, with a distinctive national flag. It is a subject of glory and pride for every people, a distinctive sign which, through the symbols that appear on it, invites respect from other powers.

The hon. member for Drummond-Arthbaska (Mr. Boulanger) and the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) mentioned the Liberal party motion adopted during their convention in January to the effect that their party would give Canada a flag two years after assuming power. In the first place, the Liberals will not assume power after the next general election nor in the following ones because the people of Canada know only too well the value of promises that never materialize.

Besides, although the Liberals were in power for 22 years, they never gave Canada a flag which it could really call its own.