

Canadian Flag

well accorded that widespread mockery which it may have richly earned and deserved?

Even now the bald fact that many of those who oppose this resolution are rather resigned about the whole thing has an ominous ring. The mere fact of the relatively peaceful discussion of such a resolution now taking place would indicate that to many of our people it is not regarded as a bold new step in the context of a Canadian awareness but a quiet acceptance, an acceptance based on that feeling that perhaps it does not much matter anyhow. What irony, that we Canadians are determined to take a step, for many years regarded as inevitable, only when the taking of such step would be devoid of much of its meaning.

If one of the motivations behind the design to establish a distinctive flag for Canada is the hope that it will stimulate a national pride, one wonders whether the timing is not perhaps too late. Is there not in this country a concurrent discussion generating much heat over the issue of federalism versus sectionalism? Right at this moment are there not many Canadians gravely concerned that the increasing demands of the provinces in jurisdictional matters are sapping the strength of our federal authority? One cannot help but wonder whether the cries of the provinces for more autonomy are not in some degree a reflection of that instinct for survival that tells us to get out of a burning building while there is still time.

Perhaps the reason that the aspirations expressed today are more of a parochial or provincial nature is akin to the feeling that a home owner has when his house is overencumbered. Why needlessly spend the energy in bringing about extensive changes? Is it not more practical to get out and build a new one from the ground up? Perhaps some of this discussion on my part is unduly pessimistic. My only personal hope and prayer is that it is.

I for one wholeheartedly endorse the resolution without amendment and respect and admire the Prime Minister for bringing it in at this time. I support it more for what it can mean than what it is.

Mr. Enns: Would the hon. member permit a question before his time expires?

Mr. Munro: Certainly.

Mr. Enns: During the course of his very learned observations, which were listened to with much care on this side of the house he made the statement that this was really an

[Mr. Munro.]

excellent time to introduce discussion of a flag and asked why we should postpone it for 10 years. There has been no suggestion by anyone that it should be postponed for that length of time but rather just for a matter of months. So I would ask the hon. member why he should want to make that kind of remark.

Mr. Munro: In the over-all history of the Canadian nation I think we must deal in terms of years. When we consider what an appropriate time is, surely we consider that in the context of this year or next year. Surely we do not consider it in terms of two or three weeks or two or three months from now. The fact of the matter is that we have gone this long without a flag. The fact remains that I think it has been injurious to our national aspirations to have gone this long without a flag, and my only point was to establish that now is as good a time as any other, if it is not too late already.

Mr. K. H. More (Regina City): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak at this time in this debate I want to make it clear that under any circumstances I would have sought to speak on a matter of this importance to Canada and its future. The fact that we are in the month of August and have not had the normal holiday period does not compromise my views in any way. It does not compromise me in my desire to do the duty which I feel I was elected to do by the people of my constituency.

I have had to fight not only serious illness but economic challenges in order to make my way in my lifetime, and in some years I had no holidays. I forwent them to meet the challenge facing me at that time. Equally as much as in the case of personal experience I believe there is a challenge to this parliament and to the people of Canada in the flag debate, and I forgo any hope of a holiday and sympathize with no one for having to forgo a holiday so that debate in this parliament, which is what this parliament is for, may take place.

I do not intend in my remarks to belittle anyone who has spoken in the debate, and there have been members on the other side who have spoken. I do intend to put forward my views on why this debate is taking place now, and on the serious misjudgment of the Prime Minister in having it take place now and forcing it to a conclusion in the dictatorial fashion in which he has started out. I think this is responsible criticism. Although there are those who differ with me and ap-