

*Canadian Flag*

I would call your attention to these words, Mr. Speaker, that a Liberal government will establish a distinctive Canadian flag within two years. It is my opinion that this is exactly what they are doing, and part of the machinery they are using to do this is contained in the Prime Minister's speech when he said that if parliament decides that it cannot support a government on a matter of major policy our system does provide for a referendum to the people in an election. I want to make the point very clear that I believe this is a part of the machinery that the government is using to carry out its commitment, which was that a Liberal government would establish a distinctive Canadian flag within two years.

In election campaigns many promises are made and many ideas are put forward as to what a government will do; but yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we were confronted with deciding on two issues in one resolution and you, Mr. Speaker, and rightly so I believe, divided the two issues so that they could be voted on separately. Compare this with the long list of election promises on election day. Are we allowed on election day to sort out the various promises of the various parties seeking election and say: I am going to put my X behind this, and I am going to eliminate this? No, we have no choice.

As a matter of fact, in the Prime Minister's speech yesterday he said that we are responsible for broad policies. The flag issue is not a broad policy. It is the narrowest of narrow policies and it is something that certainly must fall within the purview of a reference to the people in a plebiscite. The Prime Minister also had a great deal to say yesterday in his speech about the unity that this action would bring about. I agree with the editorial that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* this morning which said in effect that this was a very bad joke.

I do not believe that this action is going to bring unity to Canada at all. I certainly suggest to those people who believe it is going to bring unity to Canada that they travel throughout the length and breadth of this country to find out what the people are saying and thinking. By no stretch of the imagination, Mr. Speaker, is this action going to bring about unity in Canada.

There were a great many references in the speeches yesterday to symbols. We had a sort of by-play by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) on this question of symbols because at one stage he told us we were going to part company with the past, and at another stage

[Mr. Leboe.]

the symbols were rooted in the past. I refer to page 4320 of *Hansard* where the Prime Minister is reported as saying:

In this evolution I believe that the time has now come for another change by the adoption of a distinctive Canadian flag which cannot be mistaken for or confused with the emblem of any other country but Canada.

In contrast to that statement, the Prime Minister said, as reported at page 4321:

The maple leaf itself has been accepted as a Canadian symbol since long before confederation. It is deep in our history and in our traditions.

Then, on page 4323, he is reported as saying:

This resolution does indeed mark a break with the past, as every accepted stage in the evolution of men and nations must mark a break with the past.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, a cartoon came to my desk. It depicts a lady sitting at a table with a politician. She says, "Sir, this is the first opportunity I have ever had of sitting with a politician; is it true that a politician can talk out of both sides of his mouth at once?" We cannot have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. We cannot cut the ties with the past, as the Prime Minister said, and link ourselves with the past in our minds and in our hearts. This is impossible. I say to you that the time has come when we must be sensible about this proposition and refer it to the people of Canada.

There was a reference to the maple leaves being one forty secondth part of the flag. I for one, cannot see what the size of the maple leaves on the flag has to do with what it represents. If we followed this principle, then we should have a flag about 50 by 100 flying over the parliament buildings, if the size of the flag means much. In this connection, speaking of emblems, is it not true that in Great Britain they have the lion for an emblem and in the United States they have the eagle. The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) referred to the eagle clutching a beaver. Is it necessary that we have the maple leaf emblem brought into the flag at all when, according to the Prime Minister, we are going to depart from the past? Why have this long discourse about the maple leaf being rooted in the past?

I say to you that the maple leaf about which we are talking is found only in this part of eastern Canada. It is not a Canadian emblem, by any means. It has been accepted as an emblem, certainly, just as we have other