

Private Bills

several attempts, I am satisfied to have submitted it to the house, a fact which has brought me a flood of approval from all parts of Canada. We should rejoice to see unanimity being reached on the principle of a distinctive national flag, but Canadians are very surprised to note that nothing has been achieved in spite of it.

The situation seems, indeed, very odd, and one could wonder why the matter is not settled by a final vote or why the government, through the voice of its Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker, does not reveal its position on a matter which is of the highest interest for the Canadian people.

The unity mentioned a few years ago by the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent now seems to be attained, as shown by the polls organized by the chamber of commerce, the Gallup institute, students associations and many others.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks by saying that the refusal to have this bill read a second time might be interpreted as if this were a bill prejudicial to the interests of the Conservative party, because it is introduced by a member of the opposition.

Hon. members of the Conservative party may be at rest. When one of them submits a bill aiming at giving Canada a distinctive national flag, I shall hasten to withdraw my own bill and to support that of my fellow member.

I want some hon. members—who have already misinterpreted my intentions when I submitted a similar bill last year—to know that I do not submit this bill in order to rouse the attention of the newspapers, nor to entice my colleagues into making compromising statements. My only aim is to call the attention of those who have the responsibility of giving us that symbol of independence which is the sign of a country having attained its maturity.

There has never been any doubt in my mind as to the aim that was to be reached.

Let those who doubt this take up the challenge and bring in a similar bill. I shall be happy to support them and give them the credit for it.

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, I placed on the order paper, at the beginning of the session, the following resolution:

That, in the opinion of this house, consideration should be given to the advisability of appointing a committee comprising members of this house and of the Senate to look into the ways of giving Canada a distinctive flag and an official national anthem and to hear in this connection the views of Canadian organizations, public bodies and private citizens.

[Mr. Boulanger.]

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that for the sake of national unity, the government should follow up the resolution I placed on the order paper at the beginning of the session and that a committee of both houses should be set up as soon as possible to hear the views of the various Canadian organizations, so that we may obtain a distinctive Canadian flag.

I know that all members of the house support the idea of a national flag for Canada.

Some favour a certain design, and some another.

If the committee I am suggesting were established, I would have a suggestion to make to the hon. members. I have before me a flag which, in my opinion, truly represents the aspirations of all Canadians. You can see it has blue corners representing—

Some hon. Members: Order.

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member, I think, should be reminded of two matters, one that we are debating this Bill C-17, not his resolution and, secondly, that it is not customary to introduce other than words into the house. I did not object to reference to the other motion, but the matter for debate is Bill No. C-17 which has been introduced by the hon. member for Drummond-Arthabaska (Mr. Boulanger).

(Translation):

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I simply wished to submit to the house a design for a distinctive flag, which could be submitted, and adopted, if found acceptable. This is a purely personal suggestion. But in any case, if a joint committee of both houses is set up, I shall have the opportunity, in due course, to submit that design.

Mr. Speaker, I simply wished to make these few remarks so as to make it clear that I am not opposed to the bill introduced by the hon. member for Drummond-Arthabaska (Mr. Boulanger) but that, if the matter is put to a vote, I would not like to see a flag adopted which would not be truly distinctive.

In the interest of national unity, we must adopt a genuinely distinctive flag. That is why I would prefer that a joint committee of both houses be set up as soon as possible, to consider the matter so as to enable the house to come to a decision in keeping with the principle of national unity.

(Text):

Mr. J. H. Horner (Acadia): Mr. Speaker, this question has come up before and has been discussed for some time in this house. I think I spoke on a truly distinctive flag once before. As I mentioned previously, perhaps a committee should be set up to study this