

Canadian Flag

the years. If we as a group remove these symbols, I am afraid we will only leave bitterness, dissension and possibly division among our people which will last for many years.

Some people say we should forget the past and look only to the future. I would say that anyone who makes such a statement is only deluding himself. History is a recording of the past, and history is a part, and an important part, of any person, race or nation. Man's personal and intellectual history begins when he is born and ends when he dies. A nation continues to make history, and I hope Canada's future history will be as glorious as it has been in the past.

No doubt there are many things in our past history which we should like to forget, but on the other hand there are also many achievements of which we are proud. If we did not accept and remember the lessons of history we would still be a primitive people. As a matter of fact, our very survival, even militarily, is based on lessons learned from previous struggles. "The past is a fact, the present is fleeting and the future is unknown."

Mr. Speaker, I conclude these brief remarks regarding this question which has been before this house for so long by stating that I regret that we have had so much discussion about the flag issue and that the important business of this house has been put aside. I have no idea how much more discussion there will be on this question, so I urge the government with all my heart to again consider taking this question out of this house, and bring before us some of those things now on the order paper for which the people of this country have been waiting. These matters are important, and should be dealt with as quickly as possible. I am sure the majority of Canadians feel that these things should be done in priority to any discussion about something which is in effect a change in our symbolic past, and which means so much to us that it should be preserved and taught to future generations.

Mr. Joseph Slogan (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I think I am considered as one of the less vocal members of this house, and that I usually try to speak with some common sense. I hope that the people on the other side of this house who interrupted my speech some months ago so consistently will refrain from doing so today.

I speak at this time because I feel obliged to put on record some of the wishes of my constituents. I am obliged also to present some of the views held in my constituency.

[Mr. Kennedy.]

At the outset I should state that these views about a design or the necessity for a plebiscite are not universal. There are some differences in the opinions of the people in this country, as there often are in this house, and I think we must put those differing points of view in proper perspective. Because of these facts I support our position in asking for a plebiscite.

On June 24 I received a letter from one of my constituents who said:

I feel that this is not a matter to be settled by a handful of members but that it should be put to the people, and it will be with concern and great interest that your defence of this issue will be observed.

I hope I will not be accused of filibustering or of delay. I hope that I am living up to my responsibilities as a member of this house. After listening to the speeches of other members during this debate I feel that they also are living up to their responsibilities. I do not agree with all of them, and certainly they have not agreed with one another, but I respect their courage in standing up to present their views and to reflect the views of their constituents.

At the same time I regard the members on the other side of the house as not living up to their responsibilities. Perhaps they have been gagged by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), or some curtain of silence has been dropped around them. In honesty I feel that on the question of a plebiscite, or on any other question associated with the flag, the members on the government side of this house have not lived up to their responsibilities by maintaining a silence. Surely their constituents would like to know their views and how they are being represented. These members are not accepting their responsibilities. I should like to refer to an article which appeared in the *Aurora Banner* of July 29 under the heading "Liberal M.P.s should take wheel". The article reads as follows:

We have had poor drivers in Ottawa before. We have even had governments with engines missing, and we have had governments with no engines at all. Now we have a government with a poor driver at the wheel. We suggest that it is time for some of his own party members riding in the Liberal backseat—including our own member, Mr. John Addison—to reach over and try to put the old bus back on the road.

It is obvious that many members in this house are not speaking for the people they represent. Therefore the people should be allowed to speak for themselves. I have no argument with members on the other side of this house as to whether they are in favour