

Starting with the Confederation Debates, he reminded us that Sir John Macdonald referred to the ultimate emergence of a nation "friendly" to Britain, and of the necessity to reaffirm the minority rights consecrated in the Quebec Act. He gave a brief history of our Canada from 1867 up to now, putting in evidence of what was done by our statesmen; and he concluded that no political party claims or should claim sole credit for our achievements. For this I have admired his impartiality and I want to congratulate him.

However, although he made a brilliant exposé of what has been done for Canada, I do not think that those premises draw the conclusion at which he has arrived in regard to the motion we have to vote on.

The intention of everyone in our country is to procure for Canada a distinctive national flag, and on this purpose I agree entirely. I must say, however, that to obtain a distinctive national flag for Canada, we must first agree on what those terms mean.

Personally, I want for Canada a national flag which nobody will be ashamed of; I want for Canada a flag which will be accepted all over Canada; I want a distinctive national flag which will satisfy the thinking and the respect of everyone.

To obtain this result, I think we should first ask ourselves, what is a flag? What is a national flag? What is a distinctive national flag?

To find out what is a flag, I have looked through many dictionaries, and I have finally found the real definition of a flag, which anybody can read in the dictionary of Guerin:

*Un drapeau est un signe métaphorique de ralliement autour d'une croyance, d'un principe, d'un parti.*

I will try to translate that by saying that a flag is a metaphoric sign of rally around a creed, a principle, a party.

If we look at the motion on which we have to take a decision, and on the flag that this resolution proposes, we first read:

*That this house does recommend to the Government that such steps as may be necessary be taken to have designated as the National Flag of Canada a red flag... etc.*

First of all, we are asked to recommend to the Government that the necessary steps be taken to have this flag which, as far as I know, has already been decided upon by a committee of the government. Not one senator was consulted or asked to give his opinion on the subject at this committee. At least, the resolution should have read that the Senate concurs.

Enough, however, on that matter, which is not important, when we have to consider a subject of greater importance.

We are asked to vote for a metamorphic sign of rally. Having read newspapers coming from all parts of this country, anyone must realize that this proposed flag will not bring to the minds of the citizens an idea of unity, but will rather bring an idea of disunion, and even separatism, in some parts of our country.

Does the proposed flag give us the idea of a creed accepted by anyone? Yesterday I was listening to the speech made by the honourable Senator Hugessen, when he was brilliantly revealing the origin and the idea that brought to us the Union Jack. He explained to us that we could see on that flag the Cross of St. Andrew for Scotland, the Cross of St. George for England, and the Cross of St. Patrick for Ireland. Do we see anything like that in a red maple leaf which has not even a colour of life, but represents only a dead leaf? Can we say now that the proposed flag represents a principle, which Webster translates as the beginning, the commencement, the origin, the foundation, which in our case will be Canada? Certainly not; because we do not see in it anything of the great races which founded Canada. On the contrary, in looking at that flag we do not see something which survives in our mind, but that which represents something dead—a leaf that the wind carries away for ever.

A metamorphic sign means something that will immediately, at the sight of it, recall the origin of our country and its founders.

Personally, I want for Canada a national flag. We must remember that the United States was separated from England by a revolution; but that is not the case with Canada.

**Hon. Mr. Choquette:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Méthot:** We want a flag which reminds us of our founders. This is the flag we need, and nothing else. We need such a flag with the condition that we will be able to carry it not only in this country, not only in one province, not only in one home, but all over the world—even at a meeting of the Commonwealth.

We must also remember that a flag must rally around it and unite the people of this country, and not divide them.

Honourable senators, this is why I am still convinced that the best thing that was said in these last years was said by a Prime Minister who, although not now in office, is still living. I refer to the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent, who said:

*We want a flag that will unite and not divide, and the minute you will agree, I will give you one.*