

Canadian Flag

The Liberals will find it impossible to make this lie stick, since it is well known and very obvious here—

This is in Ottawa.

—that the overwhelming majority of Tory M.P.'s, as well as the smaller parties, consider another election neither necessary nor desirable.

The Pearson government is now frankly making no attempt to get urgent legislation—

Mr. Byrne: Will the hon. member please identify the source of this article?

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): I will when I have finished reading it.

The Pearson government is now frankly making no attempt to get urgent legislation passed by parliament—this is the farcical climax of its vaunted "60 days of decision" and its subsequent 390 days of dancing.

Now, the mayor of Ottawa describes "dancing" as the Ottawa three step: one step forward, one shuffle woofing sideways and one retreat shamefacedly backwards.

Miss LaMarsh: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): By all means.

Miss LaMarsh: Perhaps for the education of the house the hon. member would be good enough to compare the quotation he is making from the mayor of Ottawa with certain published quotations from a mayor in his own constituency who, I understand, resigned from his constituency organization over the member's stand on the flag?

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): There is so much noise from these little trained seals over there that I could hardly hear what the minister said. If the minister is referring to the resignation of a minor official in my organization, I would be only too glad to explain that.

Miss LaMarsh: Go ahead.

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): This chap was a very good Liberal two years ago. I thought he was showing very sound judgment when he left the Liberal party. Now, I am beginning to wonder whether or not he had that sound judgment.

Miss LaMarsh: Wait until they read that at home.

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): An hon. member asked me to identify this columnist and I may say it is Patrick Nicholson. I continue quoting from the article:

Obviously a flag won't provide a single new job or improve any Canadian's welfare; and it is too late to reunify Canada without more concrete steps.

But the flag certainly is, in the Liberals' view, a honey of an issue on which to precipitate an election; why, it should put every French Canadian seat securely in the Liberal bag.

Now, it may be useful—and perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you might muzzle the noises coming from across the floor—for the purpose of getting the flag issue in proper perspective to list the series of events leading up to the introduction of this most divisive subject into the arena of political affairs. In 1961 the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) told a Halifax radio commentator that he favoured a new flag. He said he would poll the people on the question in a general election and they would let us know in no uncertain terms. I am referring to an interview with the Prime Minister by a Halifax radio commentator which was reported in the *Amherst Daily News* of Friday, September 9, 1961. At that time he would not discuss the design of the flag he intended to introduce. The reporter said that, perhaps in that case he would not vote for him and the Prime Minister replied, "Perhaps you would not." I should like to add that perhaps a lot of other people will not either, if he continues to harass parliament and the country with the flag issue instead of giving consideration to other more pressing problems.

This interview took place in 1961 and there seems to be no record of any mention of a flag by the Prime Minister or anyone connected with the Liberal party during the subsequent 1962 election campaign. Of course, they were too busy telling the people that the 92.5 cent dollar would ruin the nation. Subsequent action on their part showed they knew this statement to be untrue. Aside from the sale of wheat to China and the U.S.S.R., it has proven to be one of the most important factors in Canada's continuing prosperity. I notice the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Sharp) smiling over there when I mention the sale of wheat to China and the U.S.S.R. I would say it was a happy day when the former government introduced a measure to extend credit to those countries so they could buy our wheat.

The Prime Minister first became publicly involved in the flag issue when in 1963, more or less out of the blue—"the blue" meaning political expediency—he promised a group of foreign language newspaper editors that a Liberal government would produce a flag within two years or by the spring of 1965. At that moment he not only surprised his audience, but I am sure he must have surprised himself. He just dug it out of his pocket,