

Canadian Flag

liberately set out to deal with this controversial and divisive issue in the almost absentminded fashion in which he has proceeded up to the present time. I believe he has stumbled into this difficulty in much the same manner as the government stumbled into its problems with the budget, stumbled into difficulty over the Canada pension program and generally have stumbled along in an unplanned, haphazard fashion which I do not have to emphasize during this debate tonight because it has been commented on by many of Canada's leading journalists as well as by the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher), who also doubles as a journalist.

I think it results from a lack of firm leadership on the part of the Prime Minister and I think it results too from the fact of his diplomatic training. In the world of diplomacy you almost have to be a chameleon. You have to be all things to all people if you are going to bring about the kind of reconciliation that he has been so successful in achieving during his years as a diplomat representing the Dominion of Canada. I think too of his background, as it was pointed out the other day in a little exchange between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, when he indicated that the Leader of the Opposition had once been a Liberal and the Leader of the Opposition shot back that the Prime Minister had once been a Conservative. I think his difficulty results from the fact that he has fallen into bad company. He was once a Conservative. I am sure those Conservative instincts must still be there, but he is surrounded by bad company at the present time. It is interesting to note that a convert to a political party is always more extreme than those who are born into that party.

As another illustration of this point I would refer to the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill), who spent most of his formative years in the province of Manitoba and was a Conservative, but now has become an extreme exponent of the worst aspects of Liberalism. I am also reminded of Sir Winston Churchill, that great parliamentarian, who changed parties twice. He was a Conservative, became a Liberal and then in his more mature years he returned to Conservatism and wound up his parliamentary career in a blaze of glory.

The reason I interject this thought is that what the Liberal government is doing in dealing with this important issue is typical of their attitude toward Canada and confederation down through the years. It is the old divide and rule formula. As a western mem-

ber I have been subjected to this right from the days I first entered parliament. At that time—and they are great sloganeers—they used the slogan: A vote for Dinsdale is a vote for Drew, is a vote for Bay street, is a vote for duplicity. This is the sort of divisive tactic that they pursued in my early experience in politics, and they are still using it today. I have an advertisement here which goes back about 10 years in Canadian politics. It reads in part as follows:

Manitoba now receives \$23 million yearly under the dominion tax agreement. Drew would scrap this to fatten the money bags of Ontario and Quebec.

This is the old divide and rule formula which has been used with such a devastating effect on national unity in this country. At the bottom of the advertisement you are urged to vote Liberal. This formula, applied by the sort of company the Prime Minister finds himself in at the moment, found expression in a rule or ruin policy during the period when the Liberals were in opposition, at which time they downgraded Canada in the eyes of the world for the sake of political expediency. I read recently an interesting speech by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Sharp) which was delivered on Friday, June 26, to the British-Canadian trade association at the Seignory club in Montebello. On page 7 of his speech there is this interesting paragraph:

Shortly thereafter I visited Britain to discuss with the government a number of trade matters, and also to try to break down the psychological barrier that seemed to have been created by giving some reassurance about the underlying trend of conditions in Canada and the growing opportunities for sales in this market.

Who created the psychological barrier? The hidden persuaders of the Liberal opposition of those days. And so I could go on with the campaign gimmicks, the party slogans imported from the United States such as "get the country moving again", the comic books, the pigeons, etc., etc. These tactics are being repeated in the government's handling of the very delicate issue of the flag. They have resorted to the same divide and rule tactics.

They have attempted to destroy the opposition leader in a personal assault. They have allowed themselves to become the representatives of the extreme forces in this country, and I shall be dealing with that in a moment. They have brought in the flag with typical Liberal arrogance, without having it passed upon by a parliamentary committee and without any referral to the other groups or other parties in this House of Commons. Even worse than that, it was never even dis-

[Mr. Dinsdale.]