

Canadian Flag

on a single stem were the only emblem which could appear on our national flag. However, after such a lengthy discussion, they all voted against a national flag with three maple leaves. Many suspicions are aroused and we are prompted to ask ourselves if it was not previously arranged before the establishment of the committee, that the flag contain a single maple leaf. But I will not dwell on this subject and will immediately refer to other considerations.

However, I must emphasize most especially the resolution introduced on October 22, 1964, which reads as follows:

[Text]

—that this committee select only one national flag, and that such selected flag be recommended for adoption by parliament.

[Translation]

Obviously, up to that time, it was our intention to select a single flag for Canada; yet, the resolution now before us calls for the adoption of two flags.

It is well known that I have always been in favour of a single flag, as is my party. All my efforts were directed toward that end during the discussions of the flag committee.

I must admit, however, that I was sorely disappointed at the final meeting when another resolution asking for the adoption of a second flag, that of a foreign country, was submitted to the committee.

I like clearcut attitudes and I propose, before going ahead with my remarks and to avoid interruptions from my friends opposite, to clearly establish my stand on the national flag issue. My views are based on information I gathered in two questionnaires completed by my constituents.

Before going any further, as I said, I put the question to the members of the committee during its deliberations. Here was my question: Why adopt two Canadian flags? What is the purpose—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Ricard:—of having two Canadian flags? Give me the name of another commonwealth nation which has two flags, if you can. Why go against the aspirations—

Mr. Speaker: The house is now considering the matter of a plebiscite and not that of one, two, five, six or seven flags. I would therefore ask the hon. member to deal with the plebiscite.

Mr. Ricard: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your direction, but I was laying down the basis of my argument to justify my position

[Mr. Ricard.]

toward the plebiscite, and as some members opposite are anxious to hear my views on the matter, I want to say forthwith that I shall vote in favour of a plebiscite.

Some hon. Members: Oh.

Mr. Ricard: In this, I do respect the will of my electors. I have here before me a questionnaire I sent to my electors and in which I asked the following question:

Do you believe it would be preferable to hold a referendum on this matter?

There were 216 answers favouring a referendum, whereas 155 were against. I am therefore respecting in every respect the wishes of my constituents and to those who dare shout in the house, I would say: Stand up and tell us how you intend to express your opinion in regard to the plebiscite.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that you will go on maintaining order as you have done so well up to now and that you will pay no more attention than I do myself to those interjections from the other side of the house.

In the event that the plebiscite should be refused and that we are called upon to vote on the choice of a distinctive flag, I will act as I did during the proceedings of the committee and I will vote for the flag with a maple leaf on a white field and two red stripes. However, I want to add that, as far as the second part of the resolution is concerned, I shall support neither the red ensign nor the union jack, and I would ask hon. members, especially those of the province of Quebec, to make their position known as clearly, honestly and sincerely as I am doing now. That will take only 30 seconds of their time. I therefore ask the members from Quebec to rise, if they still have the courage to do so, if they are not entirely silenced by party discipline, and to tell their constituents how they intend to vote. I am convinced that the constituents of hon. members on the other side of the house would be interested to know the latter's views on that matter.

Since committee meetings began I have received a number of representations and letters, which I forwarded to the committee chairman, and which I also acknowledged.

It is interesting to note that I have received until now—the last letter reached me yesterday—a total of 100 letters from various parts of the country. For instance, I got 28 from the province of Quebec and they are all in favour of a distinctive flag. Out of 34 letters from the province of Ontario, 14 were in favour of a distinctive flag, 18 for the red