

a part of or had representation on the committee of Parliament to select the design for a national flag for Canada.

In the result, a flag comes to us from the other place, ready made, and without anyone here having had anything to do with the selection of the design. The proposed design is simply brought to us and we are told to take it or leave it. We are asked to be a rubber stamp for the other place. Indeed, I was somewhat surprised when the honourable senator from Churchill (Hon. Mr. Crerar) suggested yesterday that the Senate, being a non-elected body, should not be too concerned with this question of Canada's national symbols. Surely we should not agree with that proposition, in the light of the very strong emotions aroused in our people on this issue and indeed in the light of the great importance that it has for the people of Canada.

In respect to this matter involving, as I have said, the basic symbols of our nationhood, arousing as it does the deepest emotions of many millions of Canadians, the present Government has, to my mind, unwisely, seen fit to throw this time bomb into the other house where it lacks a parliamentary majority. It has stubbornly and obstinately demanded that the debate on it must have priority over other matters which in the national interest required to be dealt with.

More recently it has kept the debate going under circumstances where ministers of the Crown have been immune from answering questions in Parliament, at a time when the country's newspapers have been making disclosures of improprieties by ministers that have literally rocked this whole nation; and, finally, it has applied the ultimate weapon of closure in the other place.

What, may I ask, was the real purpose of all these unordered events? It was so that a Prime Minister with an obsession could have Santa come down his chimney with a flag for his Christmas stocking. Surely such procedures need to be reviewed in this house.

As the honourable senator from Carleton (Hon. Mr. O'Leary) said yesterday, the occasion of the changing of our symbols of nationhood is a time for greatness, not a time for petty politicking. I have no objection to the Liberal Party putting a plank in its platform promising a new flag in two years; but I object most strongly when a new Prime Minister fails to recognize the precedent established by wiser men and, instead of following their example, adopts measures which have created national division and disunity in our country, unprecedented except in time of war. Indeed, such a degree of blundering and misadventure has been the history of the present Government that any measure coming from it to this house of sober second thought

should be highly suspect, and certainly should not be rubber-stamped here without the most searching inquiry and critical debate.

I am far from being alone in saying the present Government has been a fumbling one. The editor of the *Montreal Gazette* put the matter very succinctly in one paragraph of the edition of November 30. This newspaper referred to the Government as "The awkward Squad" and went on to say, in the editorial, in one paragraph:

The storm in the House last week, which came close to bringing the Government to defeat, is something far more than an incident. It dramatically demonstrates the Government's primary weakness. It is its perverse disposition to take its stand on shifting ground. One measure after another is poorly planned and publicly corrected, with retreat and humiliation. This constancy in fumbling, and talent for misadventures are seriously undermining and obscuring much of the Government's good intentions and real achievements.

I ask this question at this time: By what standard of parliamentary democracy should the Senate of Canada be expected to concur in a decision of this importance, involving the most sacred treasure of the Canadian people, our national flag, just because 11 out of 15 members of the other house choose to come and approve the one design selected in this manner, and at which committee, by all reasonable standards, this body should have been represented, but was not.

We, in the Senate, are placed in the position that not one of us had anything to do, nor anything to say, in selecting the design of the flag which is now brought to us for approval, involving, as the honourable leader's resolution does, the depriving of millions of Canadians of the symbol which for almost 100 years, has had such an important place in the heart and soul of this nation.

I for one condemn in the strongest way possible the fact that up to this point the Senate of Canada has been ignored and treated as a class in a kindergarten school. I say that the method adopted by the Government in this matter is both as wrong and humiliating for this body as it is disruptive of the unity of our country. It has set race against race, region against region, family against family. By the conflicting emotions it has engendered, it has set father against son, mother against daughter, and has made no pretence whatever of seeking that amicability or unity which is so essential to our well-being as a nation.

Apart from being an error in judgment, which should be severely condemned here,