

Canadian Commonwealth Flag

Mr. Churchill: Perhaps we could have an indication as to how many more members wish to speak so that we can set some time limit.

Mr. McIlraith: I believe there are one or two members who wish to speak, but it is my information that the speeches will be very short. If they will give some indication as to how much time they require I am agreeable to setting a definite limit.

Mr. Fisher: How about 10.15?

Mr. McIlraith: Would eleven o'clock be agreeable?

Mr. Howard: I think 10.15 would be much more agreeable.

Mr. McIlraith: Perhaps there would not be enough time if we agreed on rising at 10.15. Perhaps 10.30 would be agreeable.

An hon. Member: Sold.

Mr. Winkler: Perhaps we should allow the Minister of Agriculture to run this raffle.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There seems to be agreement on 10.30.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the next speakers are being asked to be rather brief, whereas for the past two or three months, or more exactly for the past seven months, we have been asked to adopt flags. In the last minutes of this debate, we are being rushed so that a second distinctive flag might be adopted.

As previous speakers have pointed out, we already have a national flag, and the problem facing us at present is to select a second flag.

I did not have the opportunity, or at least I did not avail myself of the opportunity to speak about the first flag, because I fully endorsed the resolution. When it was time to vote, I showed that I was in favour of a distinctive national flag, like all other members of my group.

But after listening to all the marathon speeches made in this house about those two proposed flags, I feel entitled to make a few remarks tonight.

The other night the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) made a pathetic appeal about our national flag, saying that we should be proud of it, rally around it, that we should be happy to adopt a national flag liable to favour unity.

Mr. Speaker, I maintain that if our national flag was a source of unity, as I be-

lieved at first, the resolution on the second Canadian flag, which will be put to a vote in a few moments, will be as great a source of division as the single leaf flag can be.

At this stage I ought to thank the Speaker who, when the resolution was introduced, was kind and gracious enough to separate it into two parts so that we may vote according to our conscience and more freely.

I wish to congratulate the English speaking Canadians who took part in this discussion this afternoon, and among others, the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) who, with several of his colleagues, approved the single leaf flag and now favour but one distinctive national flag with a view to promoting Canadian unity.

Mr. Speaker, like many other members, I am now asking the Liberal members of the province of Quebec to rally around the single maple leaf flag, because they are the ones who will now give us a second flag, which, in future, will divide this country, because the second flag which we will adopt tonight will give rise to more separatism in the province of Quebec and in other provinces. In fact, this flag will cause disunity.

As the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) so aptly said: Which of the two flags will have precedence? The single leaf flag in the province of Quebec, and the union jack in Newfoundland? Why? Because the hon. premier of Newfoundland stated that whatever distinctive flag was chosen, only one flag would be recognized, or flown, in Newfoundland: The union jack.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we are living at this time a very significant moment in the last minutes of this long debate, perhaps the longest since confederation, on a most important matter.

Our distinctive national flag is an instrument of unity, of mutual understanding. As to the second flag on which you will vote tonight—and the Liberals will be held responsible for it—it may well favour and spread separatism in the province of Quebec and in the rest of this country.

As for me, like my colleagues, I shall vote against a second flag.

And once again I must congratulate the English speaking members who have rallied around the maple leaf flag and who do not want to recognize a second flag.

To them, I say that I look upon them as patriots. But to the Liberal members who were asking us to rally around the maple leaf flag and who may, in a few moments, vote for a second flag indicating our allegiance