

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Pearson: I am sending out different kinds of replies to different letters, but I will be glad to table the replies in order to give the right hon. gentleman the information he wants.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I would also like to ask the right hon. gentleman why it is that people who are definitely opposed to his flag design are receiving from him letters purporting to be signed by him "with kind regards" and saying "I wish to thank you for your warm support for a distinctive national flag". Why are people who are opposing the model that he has produced, or anything in the nature of a change, being subjected to letters on his part purporting to signify an approval of that which they condemn?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I wish to satisfy the right hon. gentleman's curiosity about my correspondence, but the right hon. gentleman has been among the first to insist that the red ensign is a distinctive national flag.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: You cannot wipe this aside that way.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I know that was the endeavour. But I asked him—and I have numerous examples that are being sent to me—about this because these people want to know why Lester B. Pearson signs a letter "with kind regards" and thanks them for the support of this flag that he produced, when in fact they have written him opposing it.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I told the right hon. gentleman that I would look into my correspondence and table it. It might be important, perhaps, if, as a salaried officer of the house, the right hon. gentleman would table some of the replies he is making to the letters he is receiving.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I can tell the right hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that I do not send out an unsigned letter with simply a photocopy signature and "with kind regards" thanking people for that which they did not put before me.

PROCEDURE RESPECTING CONSIDERATION
OF RESOLUTION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister with reference to the arrangements being made for the flag debate.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

I wonder whether the Prime Minister is aware of a short sentence on page 298 of Bourinot, fourth edition, which reads as follows:

A motion which contains two or more distinct propositions may be divided so that the sense of the house may be taken on each separately.

I do not ask him for a definitive answer at this point but I wonder whether he would discuss this possibility with the Speaker in case it might meet with the desire of the house?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of that rule and I will be glad to discuss it with Mr. Speaker.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Did the Prime Minister not say the other day that he was not going to divide the resolution, or has he changed his mind on this too?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I did say the other day that we were not going to divide the resolution, and we are not.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Oh, no? Another back-track.

PUBLIC SERVICE

NATIONAL DEFENCE—BENEFITS TO CIVILIAN
EMPLOYEES COMPULSORILY RETIRED

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the right hon. Prime Minister and ask him if he can advise the house now whether the government has arrived at a decision on the request of the national defence civilian employees to have extended to them special benefits similar to those now proposed for the members of the armed forces upon severance of employment.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that a decision has been conveyed on this matter, and I will be glad to deal with it on Monday.

NOMINATION OF LABOUR REPRESENTATIVE ON
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): I should like to ask the Minister of Labour whether the Canadian Labour Congress has as yet submitted a name for appointment to the unemployment insurance commission. If so, who is that person?