

Canadian Flag

reason I believe this question should be referred to Canadians themselves who should have the opportunity of reaching a final decision on the matter.

It would be easy for me, perhaps, to cast more ridicule, to fan more fires, and perhaps this would win me a few votes from one side or the other; but it would really do very little toward solving the problem before us. After all, a man must indeed be very small if he would sell his convictions for a few votes which might re-elect him to a House of Commons that is bitter and rudderless. To serve in such a house would indeed be a very empty prize. I do not believe we should allow that type of disunity to be the result of the question before us, and because of this I sincerely recommend to the Prime Minister and the house that they support our call for a national plebiscite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Middlesex East (Mr. Millar).

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. C. E. Millar (Middlesex East): Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in this debate for the second time I cannot help making a comment regarding our friends in the other parties who are continually saying, "Question, question". I cannot help feeling that this indicates the type of consideration we would get from those people if by any unfortunate chance they ever formed the government of this country. I think the fact that I have only spoken in this house on only two occasions indicates that I have been somewhat reluctant to express my views with regard to the flag issue.

I am well aware that this parliament is subject to considerable criticism because of the extended debate on the question of a new flag for this country. However, whenever I have an opportunity to speak to these same critics I generally try and pin them down by asking this question, "Do you accept the present design for a new flag for the Dominion of Canada as proposed by the Prime Minister of this country?" The immediate answer, of course, is "No". It is true that many of them believe we should have a new flag, but those who accept the present proposed design are very few. I then go on to indicate to these same people that in so far as the official opposition in this house are concerned, we are faced with one alternative and one alternative only. We are in the position where we either accept this flag or continue to debate it. I think I can safely

speak for this party when I say that we choose to continue the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. There are conversations across the aisle, passing between hon. members. I took the liberty yesterday to bring this to the attention of the house and I do so again. It is rather unbecoming and certainly offends the dignity of the house. I would ask hon. members to desist from this practice.

Mr. Millar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is possible that these hon. members cannot hear me. The present Conservative amendment suggests that the people of Canada are entitled to the opportunity of indicating their feelings regarding a new flag for this country. I do not think this is unreasonable. I do not think it is undemocratic. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the present government is in a very delicate position; I repeat, a very delicate position.

Mr. Choquette: Your party is in a disastrous position.

Mr. Millar: Should the privilege of asking questions be restored this house, that position would be made quite apparent and some of our friends across the way who are now laughing might possibly consider the matter not quite so humorous. This government does not command the support of the majority of the voters of Canada. It is a minority government and I question its right to attempt to force upon the people of Canada, and the correctness of its attempting to force upon the people of Canada, a flag design which is not acceptable.

The present Prime Minister during the last election campaign—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I should like to call your attention especially to subsection 2 of standing order 34 which reads as follows:

Mr. Speaker or the chairman, after having called the attention of the house, or of the committee, to the conduct of a member who persists in irrelevance, or repetition, may direct him to discontinue his speech—

Mr. Speaker, do you not feel that the remarks made the hon. member have been repeated over and over again?

In fact, those statements have been constantly repeated in the house and I would ask you, under standing order 34 (2) to direct the hon. member to discontinue his speech because he is constantly repeating himself.