

*National Flag*

there are three viewpoints on the flag question. There are those who insist the flag must contain the union jack. I think that is the view of the Royal Canadian Legion, and I heard some desk banging on this side when this point came up earlier. There are those who say there should be no union jack in any Canadian flag, and there is a third group which does not have strong feelings one way or the other.

I rather think that when a distinctive flag is adopted for this country it will be one without the union jack. I suppose I am as British as anyone here, and I like the red ensign well enough, but I rather think there would be no acceptance in this country of such a flag. Eventually, that is what we shall come to. It is probably a question of wearing down the opposition.

How does one select a flag? It seems to me it is an almost impossible task. I think that someone has to be a little authoritarian somewhere along the line; some government or prime minister will have to pick a flag and say: this is it. Then his party must be persuaded to give backing to the choice. I do not know how we shall get one in any other way. That is how we got a flag in British Columbia. We have one. I do not like it very much. However, Mr. Bennett liked it, and so we have a flag. Perhaps it was a lot easier then to make a decision than it would be at the present time.

In all seriousness, we must get down to this question one of these days. Even if this resolution, which calls for the adoption of a flag within one year, is not adopted, we must certainly aim to adopt a flag by the centenary of this country in 1967. I think the cabinet or someone in authority needs to look at a few designs, pick what seems to be a suitable flag in his view and present it to parliament. Otherwise, we shall go on and on—thousands of designs will be made and we shall never reach any decision.

**Mr. F. J. Bigg (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, the question of choosing and ratifying a flag for Canada is supposed to be one too hot to handle. I do not think it is. The only reason I hesitate at all to speak on the subject is because I do not want a flag or anything else to become a dividing point for my country. I, for one, came to knowledge of affairs of Canada at a time when we had what we thought was a flag. It was somewhat surprising to me to hear a controversy arise, well on in my lifetime, the point of which was that we did not have such a flag, or, at least, that we did not have one which would stand up as a legal flag of Canada. I suppose that is the contention.

[Mr. Prittie.]

I wish to keep the discussion to the point. Everyone says we want the flag to be a symbol of union. If we are putting unity ahead of any other consideration I do not know why we should object to any specific object being on this flag. What is a flag? It is a standard, a rallying point of the nation. At one time it was considered particularly useful in time of war. The same people who want a new flag, most of them anyway, are also very interested in peace; so I say we want a flag which is not only a rallying point in time of war but something which is symbolic of Canada today, in 1962, in 1967 and, we trust, forever.

My own opinion is that a flag should be more than just a piece of cloth. It must be more than the product of a federal statute. It must represent the very best traditions of our nation. I was satisfied with the union jack in the corner of the red ensign as a symbol of British freedom and British law. Since I am of English extraction I should like to spend a moment or two in discussing what the union jack means. Before we discard it, I think we should understand what we are discarding. The union jack was the symbol of unity under Christian ethics and Christian leadership. Sometimes the British commonwealth of nations has fallen far below the standard which the union jack was intended to set. Nevertheless, that standard is still there and it remains the same.

If you break that flag down the first element is the Christian cross of St. George. To this was added the Christian cross of St. Andrew. When Ireland was brought into the union—it was customary in those days to bring countries in by force of arms—the British and Scots decided to honour Ireland as part of the union and include the Christian cross of St. Patrick. In this threefold cross we have attained the highest standard of liberty that the world has ever seen. I claim this standard was retained because behind it was the Christian ethic symbolized by this Christian triple cross. And if England should go down and be never heard of again, if England should disappear in the north Atlantic, this symbol will, I trust, remain in history as a standard for many people throughout the world. The nations of the earth which have grown and achieved independence from the mother nation will see in the union jack something to revere, something to honour.

I do not insist that the union jack be retained in a national flag, the flag which is to be ratified and, I hope, soon. I am fully in favour of this move to ratify a flag for Canada, but I want hon. members to feel