

Senator Pouliot correctly, and from what I can read of the procedure followed in Quebec at that time, if Mr. Diefenbaker had followed Mr. Godbout's example we would have a resolution before us today dealing not with one symbolic maple leaf, but three. To my mind, however, the making of a choice between the two was not an earth-moving decision, because there is little beauty or substance in either.

Honourable senators, in summary, I have criticized the timing of the introduction of this subject in Parliament; I have criticized the technique and manner of its introduction; I have criticized the present proposed Canadian flag, not for its content, but for lack of it; I have indicated my choice of a flag; I have stated that all Canadians should make the final decision; and I have questioned the time element in so far as this chamber is concerned. Yet, I have not been unmindful of the proper and expeditious dispatch of public business, and I hope I may be forgiven if I say that neither am I unmindful of Christmas holidays.

With these thoughts in mind, and with the sincere hope that possibly Canada may yet receive its just dessert in the matter of what I feel is a worthy distinctive flag, I repeat that I will support the amendment. Unlike Senator Croll, I can wait, and I feel we must wait, otherwise we are inviting disunity, and consequent disaster for our country.

Hon. Sydney J. Smith: Honourable senators, there have been just about 300 speeches delivered during the flag debate, which is now in its thirty-fourth or thirty-fifth day. There is little that can be said now that has not already been said repeatedly, so I do not propose to add another version of the same theme. In fact, I had made up my mind that I would refrain from speaking at all, but that was before my honourable friend Senator Grattan O'Leary introduced his amendment yesterday. That made me change my mind.

I want to congratulate Senator O'Leary on making the finest speech of his career in the Senate. His dramatic appeal for unity was masterly, and I endorse it with all my heart. However, I cannot endorse the amendment with which he concluded his speech, which I considered to be completely contrary to his appeal for unity.

At about two o'clock yesterday morning the proposed new distinctive Canadian flag reached a point that was closer to unanimous Canadian acceptance than had ever been accomplished previously. The flag that had been chosen from among thousands was endorsed by an overwhelming vote in the House of Commons. All that remains to be done now is for us to lay aside our differences and

grudges, as suggested by the honourable Senator O'Leary before introducing his amendment, and to unite behind the flag that has been recommended and adopted in the other place.

Let us examine the exact wording of the resolution. It has already been put on record by the honourable senator from Winnipeg South (Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson). I do not wish to take anything out of its context, so I am going to repeat the body of the amendment, which reads in part as follows:

In amendment, that the motion be amended by striking out all the words after "Government" and substituting therefor "that the Government suspend further action on the proposal for a new Canadian flag in order to give reasonable time to the people and Parliament of Canada to reach agreement on a flag which will incorporate appropriate symbols of the founding peoples of this nation and which will be acceptable to all elements of our population.

I will repeat the portion that I want to deal with, leaving out the unrelated part. The main theme is that the Government suspend further action on the proposal for a new Canadian flag in order to give reasonable time to the people and Parliament of Canada to reach agreement on a flag which will be acceptable to all elements of our population.

I wonder if my honourable friend who sponsored the amendment seriously thinks that the people and Parliament of Canada have been unduly rushed into coming to a choice of a flag? Does he seriously think that a further indefinite period for discussion would produce a more unanimous decision? Or does he seriously think that resulting from any further period of consideration, any flag could be produced which would be acceptable to all elements of our population?

Honourable senators, I have no hesitation in saying that it is my considered opinion that such an accomplishment is a forlorn hope. We are individuals, and enjoy the freedom of individuality in our tastes and convictions. We are free to belong to the church of our choice, we are free to join the political party of our choice. We also enjoy countless other choices that reflect our individuality.

Many facets of society are better because of conflicting convictions, but not so in the case of a flag. If we could each adopt the flag of our individual choice, the result would be completely useless; it would not serve its purpose.

In the case of a flag, we must be prepared to submit to conciliation, and to compromise in a spirit of give and take. When we have adopted a common choice, the element of time