

Canadian Flag

I think it is essential that everybody in Canada should be given a chance to express their views on the Canadian flag. I believe the designs put to the people might well be the three designs which the committee finally considered. The Canadian public is only now becoming aware of those designs. In passing, I wonder why more curiosity was not displayed on the part of the press in this regard. I wonder why pictures of those three designs were not published widely throughout Canada. The first was the Pearson flag, three maple leaves on a white background with blue edges. The second, the one chosen, was the one maple leaf, on a white background, bordered with red. The third flag was exactly the same as the flag finally chosen except that it bore the symbols of our past superimposed upon it, in other words, the union jack and the royal flag of France showing the fleur-de-lis. These three designs were not arrived at indiscriminately. In other words, the committee decided in its own right that they would group the flags in three set groups. Then we had a finalist in each one. In other words, the committee gradually cut down the number of flags in each group so that we had a final flag. It is this final flag in each group which I believe, if this amendment is agreed to and the whole matter is referred back to the committee, could form the basis of a plebiscite for the people of Canada. I do feel, however—and I will refer to the question of mandate later—that the majority of people in Canada would answer in the negative if they were given the opportunity of a plebiscite and asked whether they wished to change the flag we have at the present time. I feel absolutely positive about this, Mr. Speaker.

Now I will say a few words about the mandate, because it is to this mandate that my constituents have referred when they have said to me, "You must demand a plebiscite so we can say exactly what we wish". There is no qualification in that whatsoever. I have only to go back to the last election campaign, when there was some news received in British Columbia that there would possibly be a new flag, and candidates—

Mr. Smallwood: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and with all due respect to you—and you have my complete sympathy—could Your Honour possibly convince people over there that they should show some dignity in parliament, and would Your Honour ask the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) to resume his seat and act like a parliamentarian, instead of—well, I will not de-

scribe the way he has been acting. I would like a little dignity to be maintained in this house.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point on this question. This is the fourth time today when the speaker who had the floor was not being interrupted or interfered with in any way, but members of the opposition have risen and stated there was interference with the hon. member. That being the case, I think it is up to the Chair to indicate whether or not there is interference with the hon. member having the floor, rather than letting these remarks appear in *Hansard*, as has been the case, regrettably, today, when there was not interference.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, and so that the remarks on *Hansard* may be accurate and complete, members on the other side of the house, and the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) in particular, have been infringing the rule which I will give Your Honour; I refer to rule 12(1) dealing with order and decorum in the house. It is quite proper for us to call the attention of the Chair to this interference with the progress of debate in the chamber. Order and decorum should be maintained, under that rule, and if people are constantly interrupting or, as the hon. member for Lapointe was doing, standing up on the other side of the chamber and talking to the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) loud enough for us to hear on this side, that is surely interrupting the member who has the floor and who is endeavouring to present his case in the debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plourde: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege.

Since only a small group of Conservatives are making speeches, which are mostly prepared speeches, could we suggest that they hand them over to the Clerk of the house in order that we may vote immediately on this important flag issue?

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Since the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) has accused certain hon. members of taking no account of the decorum in this house, I respectfully submit that the useless debate going on today is deliberate filibustering and that Conservatives are destroying the whole decorum the House of Commons was enjoying—