

*Canadian Flag*

port, also in 1963, said that the leader of the Social Credit party was the most pathetic creature he had ever seen in his lifetime. He said he had a Pepsodent smile and a nice hair cut. Therefore we must get this issue before the people.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) has caused great disunity across this country by his appointment of the "B and B gang" and by bringing the flag issue to this house. The only way to settle it is by way of plebiscite. We have looked for support from the other side of the house, but what do we find? The hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan) is not afraid to express his opinions. But as for the rest of the members opposite, they seem to be afraid to speak their minds. We have heard nothing from the hon. gentlemen on the front benches, save the intervention of the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Robichaud) yesterday when the former minister of labour was speaking. We also heard from the hon. member for Kootenay East (Mr. Byrne) when an hon. member on this side from Nova Scotia was speaking in favour of the red ensign. The hon. member for Kootenay East said that it was a rotten speech; but I would remind him that if we are not to stand up in this house to express our views as to a national flag, then we must take the matter to the people. Then yesterday, to the astonishment of this house—I do not think this has ever happened before—when a member of this party was speaking a minister of the crown, the minister of health and welfare, interjected and said, as reported at page 10780 of *Hansard*:

May I suggest to the hon. member that the simplest way possible of achieving that is to sit down, shut up and let the matter come to a vote.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Smallwood:** Yes; hon. gentlemen opposite clap and enjoy that. I see even the "minister of bumper stickers" is back and is clapping.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I have listened to the hon. member with as much indulgence as possible during the last few minutes but I would invite him to confine his remarks to the matter which is being considered by the house.

**Mr. Smallwood:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was explaining why we should have a plebiscite. Hon. members opposite keep interjecting or raising their voices but I am prepared to answer any questions they might like to bring up.

As I say, we want to put this matter to the people, which is the only way to clear

[Mr. Smallwood.]

up the issue. The Prime Minister brought before the house a flag and informed us it was going to be his flag. He also informed us that the red ensign was too close a resemblance to the merchant flag of Great Britain. He wanted to rescind the red ensign in consequence, and force upon the people of Canada a flag which resembled the Russian merchant flag. This is why we want the people to vote on this issue. We want democracy in this country, which is why we want a plebiscite. I understand that the Prime Minister received a telegram from the communist party supporting the proposal for a new Canadian flag, which makes me stop and wonder why this issue is being forced on the Canadian people. That is why we are demanding a plebiscite.

**Mr. Barnett:** Then vote for it.

**Mr. Smallwood:** You see what we are up against, Mr. Speaker? These little babbling brooks down at the end are at it again tonight.

We hear a lot being said to the effect that this is an appeasement to the province of Quebec, and I do not like to hear that. I am sure there are many people in the province of Quebec who would like a plebiscite on the flag. In this connection I should just like to quote this brief article written by Peter Stursberg:

The Liberal party has drifted toward the right, into the hands of the mediaeval Montreal Liberals who don't really care about Quebec or the French Canadians but are ready to use them to stay in power.

We do not like that, Mr. Speaker. We want the people to vote on the flag. There are hundreds of farmers in the province of Quebec in great need of help. They are starving and neglected. The Prime Minister was questioned when he was at Amherst, Nova Scotia, and was asked whether he thought Quebec would approve of any flag without the fleur-de-lis on it, and he replied that the Quebec members in the cabinet would decide what the design would be. Again I do not agree with that. I think it is time this matter came before the Canadian people.

As I have said before, we have farmers in Quebec in need of assistance. We find there is much more important business to bring before parliament than this flag issue. We should have the labour code before this parliament rather than the flag issue.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.