

Canadian Flag

philosophy, or the lack thereof, that we propose now to go ahead and tear down our flag, erecting a new one without any tradition, sentiment or regard for our history. I think that a large number of people are not prepared to do that at this moment. I am not suggesting for a moment that our flag should be the red ensign, per se. As I said last night, and on other occasions, I personally prefer the red ensign but I do not care whether our new flag is the red ensign or some modification thereof, but I do believe that a great majority of Canadians, regardless of race, want to see something of our traditions and history emblazoned or recorded on that flag.

While this is not the place to discuss designs I should like to mention that I saw a flag several days ago in a picture appearing in the Dartmouth *Free Press* of Nova Scotia which was proposed by a naval officer. It was a distinctive flag with a large maple leaf on it. I think it was printed in black and white, as the Dartmouth *Free Press* I do not believe has a colour press. The flag had a large maple leaf and superimposed thereon a small union jack, and superimposed on the union jack a large fleur-de-lis which maintained at least some reference to the two great founding races of this country. Somebody has suggested that to adopt this kind of flag would evidence traces of feudalism or subservience. I wonder how many Canadians believe that to be the case. I do not believe there is one in 10,000 who would believe that, because if this is subservience I should remind the members of this house of the flag of South Africa, where the bitter memories of the Boer war are more alive than any bitter memories we have in this country. On that flag they have the flag of the Capetown colony and the Orange free state, with a small union jack as well.

Those are some of the things which I think warrant this matter being referred to the people in the form of a plebiscite, so that a decision can be made without haste but carefully, and after due consideration. Those are some of the reasons we in this party have urged that there should not be haste, but rather a referral of the question to the Canadian people. This is a highly emotional issue.

Sometimes I become irritated by people who assume that we who speak in this house on this issue do so for some political purpose. Politics do enter into discussions in this chamber whatever is being considered, but I suggest that there has not been politics, in the

political sense of the word, behind the reaction taken by most of us on this flag issue. This issue means a great deal to us individually, and a great deal to our constituents. It means a great deal not only to Canadians of today but Canadians of the future, and that is why we have urged time and time again that there be a plebiscite.

If there is not to be a plebiscite, Mr. Speaker, I guess we have to accept that verdict, but certainly we cannot be accused of being poor Canadians or obstructionists because of the attitude we have taken up to this time. I have attempted last night and today to put my own views forward on this issue because personally I believe that hundreds of thousands of people feel very strongly about this issue, and I think their opinions should be voiced in this house.

Mr. H. M. Horner (Jasper-Edson): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to the amendment to the motion to concur in the committee report I feel that I should first of all place on record my intention. I intend to vote against the committee report, as a result of which I feel responsible for setting forth some of the reasons for my decision in this regard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. May I bring to the attention of the hon. member that the debate at this stage is not on whether the hon. member should vote for or against the report of the committee but how he is going to vote on the question of the amendment to the motion for concurrence in the report.

Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson): I was coming to that immediately, Mr. Speaker. I was about to follow up by saying that I intend to vote for the amendment put forward by the official opposition asking that the whole question be referred back to the committee and that a plebiscite be held to determine Canada's national flag.

There are a number of things I want to put forward with regard to why there should be a plebiscite. I want to refer first of all to something that was said last night by the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher). All of us, of course, cannot be television personalities or newspaper columnists. For a long time I have not had very much faith in newspaper columnists, including the hon. member for Port Arthur. He makes the suggestion that we should go ahead and get this thing over with, and when the Conservatives come back into power they can bring