

Flags of Canada

matter comes up in Canadian politics. In the past, governments, organizations, members of parliament and many Canadians raised that significant issue, without obtaining definite results. I hope that, thanks to this discussion, we shall make some progress in this field.

In 1925, the Canadian government entrusted to a committee composed of government officials the study of designs for a national flag. That short-lived committee had to be dissolved because of its non-representative nature.

Later on, some hon. members engaged in discussions in the House of Commons but did not succeed in obtaining a vote of approval. We may recall, among other things, the motions that were submitted in 1931, 1933 and 1938. Other resolutions were introduced in 1934 and 1935.

More recently, that is in 1945, after the second world war, upon the return from overseas of our men who had been many times humiliated by other allied soldiers because Canada, though claiming to be independent, did not yet have a flag, the matter was taken up again. Public opinion had evolved by then, that is after the last world war and the matter gradually progressed.

For instance, in 1945, the government set up a joint committee of both houses, composed of 12 senators and 25 members of this house. That committee sat until July 11, 1946, but no report was ever tabled. Several hon. members who preceded me mentioned that fact during this debate.

I should now like to quote a few excerpts in order to prove that unanimity has gradually been reached in the matter of a distinctive Canadian flag. However, before doing so, I want to mention an editorial published on the subject in *Le Soleil* quite a while ago, on November 19, 1958. In view of the length of this text I propose to read, I suggest that it be printed in *Hansard* as read.

Mr. Dupuis: Oh. No.

Mr. Martel: Well, if I am not allowed to do so, I shall not read it in full, but just the more interesting parts. The editorial dated November 19, 1958 is entitled:

New reasons for choosing a Canadian flag.

And, it must be said, we often are the laughingstock of our neighbour, the United States—as I shall show in a few moments, quoting from *Time* magazine—and of other

nations throughout the world. That situation is reflected in the editorial, which says:

The press agencies who report news items from abroad often give their articles a savour which they don't suspect. Sometimes however, they do get somewhat suspicious.

Such is the case concerning a report of the United Press International from Karachi following the arrival of Prime Minister Diefenbaker in the capital city of Pakistan. We know that this is one of the main stopovers in Mr. Diefenbaker's visits to the capital cities of the commonwealth countries. It is reported that upon his arrival at the Karachi airport the Prime Minister was standing between the "Canadian" and Pakistanese flags. It is not without reason that the news agency puts the word Canadian in quotation marks.

As Canada assumes increasing international responsibilities, which is normal for a country in full development like ours, the absence of a really Canadian flag is tragically felt. One might say that a flag is only a symbol. It must be recognized that it is a particularly important symbol since all great countries are jealously safeguarding their respective flags. Is it not a fact that even the smallest nation upon reaching independence hastens to adopt its own national flag?

And the editorial goes on as follows:

Should we conclude that we are not yet completely independent? Such an objection would certainly not come to the minds of Canadians. But what about foreigners? Besides, the facts are there to show that we do not miss an opportunity on that score.

We are living in an era where international exchanges are numerous; no doubt the Prime Minister had a strong feeling about it when he was in Karachi. While Canada considers increasing its material assistance to Pakistan, that country could perhaps adopt for our benefit some kind of a Colombo plan to bolster our national pride and bring all its contribution to an underdeveloped country in that respect.

And the editorial goes on:

Nations of Asia... might unite their efforts to advise us concerning the question of a flag. In order to spare our national feelings, so that such an aid does not bear any sign of heraldic domination, the best procedure would be no doubt to pass their suggestions through an international organization such as the United Nations, for instance. This organization in turn could dispel the fears of Canadians and explain to them that the suppression of a foreign emblem on their own flag does not necessarily constitute a provocative action which might cause an armed conflict, since there are after all a few nations which are not afflicted now with such a flag.

Lastly, since we are talking about international organizations, it might be useful if UNESCO were to organize in our country a comprehensive program of public education (through moving pictures as it is done in India, since a nation without a flag is certainly illiterate) to teach Canadians, slowly and painlessly, all that a national flag represents for a nation. With all the international organizations on our side, with the support of countries like Ghana and Pakistan, we would certainly obtain concrete results—which our Liberal and Conservative governments did not manage to