

*Canadian Flag*

right to be heard. Speaking out against this white flag is the only weapon we can use to register our opposition. It is not only our right but our duty to use it to the full.

The flags of the great nations of the world have over the years been the symbol, the rallying point in times of crisis. The stars and stripes of the United States of America, the union jack and the tricolor of France have been unifying influences under which people of various racial origin and creeds have stood as one. Now the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) of this country proposes to force upon millions of loyal Canadians a flag which has no tradition, a flag which has been shown by recent public opinion polls to have less public acceptance than the flag we now fly. It is not a unifying influence, certainly, but a divisive one at a time when Canada is already deeply troubled by unrest in one of its founding provinces: I ask hon. members to note that it is only one province. I would point out to the Prime Minister that nine out of the ten provinces of Canada have indicated that more of their people want the red ensign than want any other flag. I would point out to the government that there are many millions of loyal Canadians, such as those in the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, the Orange lodges, the women's institutes, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Canadian corps association and many other organizations who have gone on record as very strongly in favour of that flag which has been our recognized emblem for many years.

I would like to discuss the Prime Minister's so-called flag address at the opening of the Royal Canadian Legion convention in Winnipeg in May. I was one of those who were there that evening. Over the years I have been deeply interested in the welfare of veterans and have served on dominion and provincial levels of the Royal Canadian Legion. I was not one of those who in any way interrupted the Prime Minister. The feelings of the Royal Canadian Legion about the red ensign are well known. The Legion supports the red ensign. It supports a national plebiscite on the question. In my file, which is a very heavy one, of telegrams and letters of support for the red ensign, is one letter from the national president of the Canadian Legion supporting, on behalf of that organization, the red ensign. Another is from the New Brunswick president of the Royal Canadian Legion, an office which I once held. He is a close personal friend of mine and also supports the red ensign. The hon. member for

Victoria-Carleton (Mr. Flemming) mentioned this gentleman. He is a decorated war veteran wearing the Distinguished Flying Cross and whose brother gave his life in world war II. He has been, as the hon. member said, over the years a loyal supporter of the Prime Minister and the Liberal party.

At the opening of the Legion convention more than 1,000 veterans were present, and I would say at the most 10 or 20 registered their objections vocally during the Prime Minister's address. I do not condone that type of behaviour, Mr. Speaker, but it is surprising to me that there were not many, many more who objected. Certainly the majority were deeply disturbed. Yes, they were deeply offended. It is a tribute to the delegates that they showed the admirable self-restraint that they did.

As the Legion points out in an editorial in the July issue of *The Legionary*, of which I think every member has a copy:

No Legion officer on any level had been notified previously by the Prime Minister or any member of his staff that the main subject of his address at the opening ceremony would deal with the flag issue. That, in effect, he would use the occasion as a springboard for launching a national flag campaign.

The Prime Minister had given no advance notice whatever of his intent to the Legion, though obviously the press gallery in Ottawa and other news media must have been tipped off because they were in Winnipeg in full force for the occasion.

Personally, I think, as do others, it was exceptionally poor taste on the part of the Prime Minister to issue this challenge to an organization of the high standing of the Canadian Legion at its national convention. A few days later one of the most vicious cartoons I have ever seen appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*. This cartoon depicts two veterans, obviously members of the Canadian Legion, apparently intoxicated. Outside the window Mr. Pearson is running along with his three maple leaf flag, and the caption underneath is, "I guess we showed him, didn't we?" The inference in the cartoon is obviously that veterans and members of the Canadian Legion are drunkards, that they are boors. It is an uncalled for slur upon an organization which is the acknowledged spokesman of the more than one million men and women who, like the Prime Minister of this country, the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), and many others, put on the Canadian uniform and offered their lives in the defence of that freedom which we enjoy today in this country. I have seen no apology in the *Ottawa Citizen* for this cartoon. I would say it is to