

Canadian Commonwealth Flag

[Translation]

Mr. Graffey: He is referring to the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker).

Mr. Paul: Ask John. I would say: "Ask Réal."

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, in order to become final this royal proclamation must bear the signature of the Governor General. Has the latter the right to give our country a flag which is already that of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II?

A problem of constitutional and international law arises. Can the Governor General, without consulting Her Majesty the Queen, allow Canada to have a second flag, the union jack, which has already been chosen by our ruler, Her Majesty the Queen?

Unless the Minister of Transport had the opportunity to discuss the matter when he was in London last summer, the problem has remained unanswered. If at that time, the Minister of Transport consulted Her Majesty the Queen, it might be interesting to know what answer he obtained. If he did not consult Her Majesty the Queen, let us by all means do so, for I fear the Governor General might be faced with a dilemma which, from the point of view of international law, would prevent the implementation of the order in council adopted by the government, provided of course a second flag is adopted by the house, not to unify Canada but to divide it.

We have had the opportunity of selecting a first flag. I have no doubt that the hon. members on the other side, specially those from the province of Quebec, will set aside all partisan considerations and vote—

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): You have no right to mention my name in this house.

Mr. Paul: Does the hon. member for Longueuil have a question to ask me?

Mr. Côté: You said "l'esprit de parti de côté." I made the remark because you mentioned my name, and it is forbidden to mention a member by name in the house.

Mr. Paul: I have no doubt that the hon. members will be allowed to have a free vote against the subamendment which is even more illogical than the main motion, and Canada will have only one flag after 97 years of existence.

For all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I shall vote against the main motion and against the subamendment.

[Mr. Caouette.]

Mr. Lucien Plourde (Quebec West): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the hon. member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière (Mr. Paul), one is reminded of a proverb which could very well be applied to him, namely: There are none so deaf as those who do not want to hear. I think that is literally true in the case of the hon. member. If he had listened to the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier), he would have known exactly where we stood and would not have talked through his hat. It seems that he wants to get the population as confused as the members of his own party. That is why I will not waste my time disproving what he tried to say, because he simply got everything mixed up. I will therefore proceed with my speech.

I will try to be brief because I feel the marathon has gone on long enough in this house.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree with the seventh report of the special flag committee and I strongly support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Beaulé).

I believe that for the good of Canada the said flag committee should be reconvened, with instructions to suggest to the Prime Minister that he propose the adoption of a British commonwealth flag at the next meeting of the prime ministers of the member countries of the commonwealth. This does not mean that we accept a second flag, but on the contrary that we do not want a second flag adopted by the Canadian parliament. This is up to the commonwealth and let the commonwealth find some emblem. It is not our problem, and that is what it means.

I think it is not our responsibility, as members of parliament, to accept or impose a symbol of Canada's membership in the commonwealth and of our allegiance to the crown.

I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that it was our responsibility to give the country a truly distinctive flag. And that is what we were happy to do. But when it comes to accepting a second flag for this country, we beg to disagree. If there is only one Canada, there should be only one flag. At first, the government showed great courage when introducing in the house a motion to endow this country with a flag of its own. But what a mistake was made when, a little later, Mr. Speaker, Canada was to receive a second flag.

We have waited 97 years, sir, to have a flag, and I think we might be ready to wait another 97 years before discussing this sec-