

Canadian Flag

considerably from the question at issue, and I suggest he may wish to return to the question which is now under consideration.

Mr. Weichel: Of course, Mr. Speaker, but this all comes from the criticism which the Legion has been receiving regarding the flag. I mention these services only to show the tremendous work which the Royal Canadian Legion is doing and has done for the welfare of thousands of Canadians. Its work, along with that of the war amputees of Canada, army, navy and air force association, Canadian corps association, Royal Canadian Air Force association, the Canadian navy association and others, has been tremendous.

These people who waste their time in order to criticize some of Canada's finest men should hang their heads in shame and thank God that we have men who, in time of need, gave their all for freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, ever ready and willing to make outstanding contributions for the betterment and welfare of our great Canada.

In closing may I say that these men in a democratic way, which is their right, have chosen to support the slogan favouring the royal Canadian ensign, "This is Canada's flag, keep it flying". My conscience tells me to support this solgan because thrice without hesitation our young men have fought under this flag and given their lives, and the best of their lives, for the righteous cause against the narrow nationalism of others. I am supporting the Leader of the Opposition in his amendment regarding the plebiscite.

Mr. John R. Matheson (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening with keen interest to all the contributions this afternoon and I confess I was rather moved by the comments of my hon. friend, the member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey).

As a young man he went to St. Patrick's school in Quebec and I went to the Protestant high school. We were mortal enemies in those days at football, hockey and such things, yet I am amazed in how many ways his views and mine tend now to parallel one another.

I recall that I was brought up next door to a boy two years younger than myself, a boy who was an orphan. His father had been killed serving as a field officer in the British Indian army, and our literary fare was Chums, Boys' Own Annual and the Waverley novels. I used to become irritated by this young fellow, almost to the point of desperation and whenever he was just at the point of getting a thrashing he would look up at me

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

and say, "John, are you British?" He and I knew exactly what he meant because to us, sir, being British meant being generous, being valorous and being kind.

I hope in my comments this afternoon I will be as worthy as those who have preceded me in being just that. We can touch on this subject of flag only in the spirit of chivalry.

I know that in the retirement of the Canadian red ensign some people in this country will exult, and I know that some will weep. For my own part I will be one of those who will be misty eyed, as though witnessing the retirement of a good ship of the line; but I think it would be helpful to review in a very cursory way something of the history of the flags of Canada and particularly the flag which is now characterized as the Canadian red ensign.

I have before me, sir, the Canadian Almanac of 1896 and in it an expert of those days, E. M. Chadwick, wrote an article entitled, "The Canadian Flag". He was a well known geneologist, a Queen's counsel who wrote considerably on armourial matters, and he recommended as the flag of Canada a blue ensign, which some hon. members might care to look at later, which contained in the fly a white roundel charged with three red maple leaves conjoined. On the opposite side of the page—this appears on page 232, there is the badge of the Royal Military College club, which had been in active operation for some years.

Again you have in the arm of the knight the perennial three maple leaves on one stem. This is not just a curious coincidence. I discovered, looking at some of the books on coinage we have in the library, that in the reigns of Victoria, Edward VII, George V, George VI and Elizabeth II coinage was issued in gold, silver and copper bearing the device of the sprig of three maple leaves. This pattern apparently evolved long before any formal attention was paid to it by the college of heralds or any of the authorities. New Brunswick, in 1862, had a five cent piece composed in this fashion. There is a token of 1866 which was used as money in Montreal showing a beaver, and in the beaver's mouth is a sprig of three maple leaves. In short the development of Canadian symbolism referred to by the Prime Minister has had a long history. Indeed, he could have spoken much more extensively with respect to the various patriotic societies in Upper Canada and in Lower Canada—Quebec, as we know it today. The St. Jean Baptiste Society had early adopted this symbolism as its own. So also