

National Flag

route already. Churchill and de Gaulle would be there. It was a solemn moment where the value of the symbol we are talking about was amplified by the occasion. All these people waited for hours for the parade. And when the French, British and American flags were raised slowly to the sound of a military march, all those present were deeply moved. Tears of pride were shed by thousands of people that day because the sight of the national standard was a reminder to each and everyone that the fatherland was born anew. What would we do in similar circumstances?

Mr. Speaker, every day we hear somebody talk about the march of history. In many fields, Canada is not even part of history. That is why it is urgent to take at least certain symbolic steps. Let us settle the question of the national flag. In Canada, like everywhere else in the world, the ordinary citizen is on the move. A common understanding and brotherhood have been established among common people which goes beyond frontiers and continents. From various lands, people look forward to the achievement of long-suppressed legitimate hopes. The earth is shaking under the footsteps of those masses. Each group can be identified by the flag which unites its members.

As members of the House of Commons, it is our belated duty to give our people the symbols they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, like most hon. members, I had to make certain sacrifices that I am not permitted to regret. Public life has its burdens and rewards. In spite of my modest means, I have felt it necessary to ensure, within an honourable party and the limits of my riding, the representation of an important but minority ethnic group, in the parliament of a nation which has not, in spite of the great progress it has accomplished, found the courage to define its own identity. This house has done a lot of work and I have no intention of minimizing anything. Yet, as far as I am concerned, I will regret having been a member of this parliament if we cannot further the cause of national unity by adopting at least its most elementary symbol.

Mr. Bernard Dumont (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, following the nice speech we just heard, we, in this corner of the house, are a bit disappointed that the study committee set up by the Liberal party in 1945 did not

number among its members as convincing a man as the hon. member who just resumed his seat. He could have explained to all Canadians, from Halifax to Vancouver, the importance of having a flag.

If this matter has been under study for 35 years while we have had a Liberal administration for 22 years, we are convinced that at that time, the Liberal party could at least have given this great Canadian, who defended our rights overseas, the necessary means of convincing his fellow citizens that unity and brotherhood must come about in Canada.

Hon. members always seem more efficient when they sit with the opposition, especially when the passing of legislation needed by the Canadian people is involved.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to refer also to some remarks made by a government member and I want to be as accurate as possible on this point because I believe the mover did not mention a distinctive flag.

He simply asks for a flag. Let us agree on the principle of a flag, the details can come later.

What would you think of a world fair being held in Canada without a national flag? That would not be very interesting.

It is high time the people of Canada behaved as adults. Let us stop acting like nursery children.

A flag is the sign of a mature people, knowing where they are going. Without a flag our country looks like a man without clothes, and that is not very nice.

We need a truly Canadian flag for 1967 and it would be sacrilege to delay motion.

I therefore ask that it be passed immediately.

(Text):

Mr. R. W. Prittie (Burnaby-Richmond): I am sorry this discussion appears to be developing into a political debate. I notice Liberals accusing Conservatives about the stand they took with regard to a flag, and the last hon. member who spoke said something about the Liberal viewpoint.

Our party does have a stand on this question. It simply asks that there should be a distinctive national flag, while being careful not to say just what it should be. My hon. friend from Kootenay West (Mr. Herdridge) says he is in favour of a distinctive national flag as long as one quarter of it contains the union jack. In this country