

Hon. Mr. Brooks: Will we change our mind every 20 years?

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I do not think that is necessary. But I do think we can make progress and over a period of 20 years in our constitutional development surely we should make progress. I say this is progress.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Not to the Conservatives, though.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: It is just a convenience.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I hope I am not provoking people. I have sat here without interrupting for two days, listening very patiently and very interestedly to what has been said. I do hope that I will have that privilege accorded to me as I have accorded it to other honourable senators.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: It is easy when everything is going your way.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): Senator Crerar spoke yesterday. He is the most senior of the privy councillors. He was a member of the Union Government in the First World War and a member of many governments since. Senator Crerar is not a young man, and I would think that perhaps he might have felt that the recommendation by the committee set up in 1946 represented his view at that time. I think many people would be impressed with the fact that now this new design proposed by Parliament in 1964 is the flag that meets with his approval.

Some people have said that the Government has no mandate to do this. This is always a difficult question to decide, but it was part of the Government's program during two general elections.

There has been criticism of the timing used by the Government to introduce this measure. But this would always be an issue when personal preferences are so firmly and so deeply held. I do hope that the emphasis, when this debate is over, will not be on dissension and division. We have had debate. We have had full debate, a lengthy and widespread debate, not confined to Parliament alone. But, honourable senators, we must remember debate is one thing but decision is another, and decision is also necessary. I say the time has come. I say it is Parliament's duty now to make up its mind. And I believe, again in all sincerity, that the proposed design for a new national flag for Canada is more likely to meet with more general approval than any other design suggested at this time.

Senator Smith (Kamloops) said we cannot expect unanimity. This is true. Certainly

there was no unanimity in 1946, and obviously there is no unanimity in 1964. But I suggest to honourable senators that more delay is not likely to improve the situation. Now, honourable senators, we are about to make this decision, and having made it, I hope we accept it in the spirit in which Senator McCutcheon said he would accept it, even if he disagreed with it. It will be the national flag of all of us. It will be our duty as Canadians to honour it. In doing so we are not rejecting a glorious history. We are not being untrue to our great traditions, those traditions that have been built by people of many racial strains and creeds and colours in this country. In a young country like Canada we respect our history, but we must also ever remember that those of us who are contemporary in Canada are also here to make history. This flag has been created along the lines of many of the initiatives taken to build this country and so many of the significant steps in the constitutional development of this land. All parties have taken part in various of these steps. They have not hesitated to take steps that were bold. I think that the step that is now proposed is a logical one.

Let us remember, too, that a flag is a sign; it is a symbol—a metaphorical symbol—and I think on this point Senator Hugessen helped us greatly last night. The flag is not the country. The flag is not the history of the country. The flag is to suggest and to signify and to symbolize the country and its people; it is to symbolize all the history of the country, all the traditions of the people and all the history of the people. But it does not purport to spell them out. Much history has been given to us in this debate. Many senators have mentioned the very touching reference made by Senator Irvine yesterday on this point.

The Canadian flag, when one considers the numbers and varieties of people who live in Canada, could not possibly contain a symbol for every racial or linguistic group. The Canadian mosaic is much too complicated to have a national flag of this kind. But what we have and what is proposed by this resolution is a simple, clear symbol which, in my view, suggests the Canadian mosaic as it is today.

There have been many impressive performances in this debate. I think Senator Croll's moving passage about new Canadians is something we are happy to have in the annals of this chamber. I think Senator Cameron's speech giving the western attitude and describing the characteristics of the youth of this country was outstanding. In passing I would say to him that I hope that