

general meeting, the association unanimously passed a resolution that said:

"Be it resolved that the Indian Association of Alberta favours the Red Ensign as Canada's flag."

A copy of this resolution was sent to the Prime Minister to show him how most Indians in Alberta felt about this matter.

I understand that many groups and individuals across the country have written to the Prime Minister or to their members, supporting the flag we now have. Maybe these form a majority; maybe they do not. But is it not the responsibility of this Government to find out? I am sure there are very few members in the other place who can say with any certainty that their constituents are for the Red Ensign, for the proposed flag, or for an entirely different flag. There is only one sure way that this can be determined, and that is by a plebiscite.

Personally, I would not want to see any other flag flying but the Red Ensign. To my people it is more than just a flag. It is a symbol of faith. When my own people, "The Bloods", signed Treaty No. 7 in 1877, each chief and headman was given a Red Ensign. Many of them erected flagpoles in front of their tepees and raised and lowered the flag each day. Under this flag they expected fair play and justice.

Even in the earlier days, before the west became part of Canada, my people knew the importance of a good flag. The Hudson's Bay Company traders used to give a Union Jack to each chief, and when they came to trade, the chief would often carry it at the head of his procession. It also became a symbol, and missionaries and travellers used to hang the flag from their carts so that they would not be mistaken for Americans. Our people knew the flag and they respected the people who carried it.

To my people, the flag is not just a bit of coloured cloth; it has real meaning for them. When the Northwest Mounted Police came to our land in 1874, we welcomed them because of their scarlet uniforms and their flag, both of which made us realize they came as friends.

As a matter of fact, when Colonel Robertson-Ross, Adjutant General of the Militia, toured the west in 1872, he recommended the colour of the uniforms. At Red River he met an Indian who said: "We know that the soldiers of our Great Mother wear red coats and are our friends."

And the mounted police soon showed us that this trust was well placed. There was not one law for the Indian and another law for the white man. They all came under the Queen's law, and those who violated that law were punished, no matter what their colour.

Some of you may say that this is living in the past, that times have changed and we should change along with them. But do not forget that confidence in the future is built upon a knowledge and appreciation of the past. And do not forget that the best way to generate a feeling of patriotism and pride in our country is to recall the glorious events of our history. At one time part of Canada was under a French flag and part of it was under a British flag. But for generations now we have been living under a Canadian flag—an official Canadian flag, I might add. Never before have I heard of a country throwing away one flag for another, unless chaos, or rebellion had changed its entire constitution and make-up. Perhaps the Soviets, when they overthrew the Czars, adopted a new flag. But we have not been through the bloodshed of a revolution. We have not thrown out our old form of government.

I think, during the reams of flag debate, there have been comments about a new flag to help unify Canada. So what is proposed as a national symbol? A maple leaf—the kind that grows in Ontario and Quebec. All we have on the prairies is the Manitoba maple, and I do not think its leaf looks much like the one on the proposed flag. As a national symbol, the maple leaf is useless. To many westerners, it is just another example of the arrogant east thinking that Canada ends at Algoma.

In my travels, some of my people have been puzzled by this flag debate. Off on our reserves, we may be away from the hustle and bustle of political life. And maybe that is a good thing. Maybe one can see things better when there is not too much city smoke clouding the issues. My people wonder what this flag argument is all about. Are we not part of the British Commonwealth? Has not the Red Ensign been carried in pride to war?

You know, honourable senators, among my people a war honour is a great thing. In the old days, if a man had something that he took to battle with him, and he won the battle, he would never cast it aside. He believed that the Holy Spirit protected him, and that the power of that Holy Spirit revealed itself in many ways. If he carried a special shield into battle and came through with honours, he would feel that part of the Holy Spirit's power was in that shield. He would treasure that shield, carry it in other battles, and carry it proudly. And when he went