

*Routine Proceedings*

of the Royal Canadian Legion at the Capital Theatre on Sunday, May 17, 1964.

It was for me an event that I will never forget. It is a lesson I will teach young Canadians, that when you have strong beliefs you must express them. Mr. Pearson did not choose to go to Quebec City where it would have been very well received and highly popular to say: "We have a new Canadian flag". No, he chose the place where he knew they were the most reluctant.

If you watched TV last night, you will know that he was completely booed by the attendees. I think there was Mrs. Pearson, Mary Macdonald his secretary, myself, and a couple of people somewhere who applauded. You saw that on TV last night. Yet, a few days later he started the debate.

• (1510)

I would like all of us to reflect on this quote in these so-called difficult times that our country is going through on another issue. He said: "We who are elected to serve Canada in Parliament owe all those who elect us more than the advocacy of non-controversial ideas. We owe Canada our best judgment and we fail Canada if we fail to exercise that judgment or if we pass our responsibility for judgment back to the electorate who send us to Parliament."

I would like us to reflect on that. I would like to pay tribute to the right hon. Mr. Pearson and to all those who accepted that it was in the best interest of Canada at that time, since today we all agree that it was the right decision. Young Canadians from all parts of Canada are proud.

[*Translation*]

Just travel across Canada, in all our provinces, and you will see the pride of our young people when they show they are Canadians by waving the Canadian flag.

Thank you for this occasion! I say to young Canadians: Do not lose hope. We have a great country to build, a country that is growing every day. We will keep building it, but we must not abandon our youth which was our hope, 25 years ago, when we chose this flag.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

[*English*]

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate together the twenty-fifth anniversary of the raising of the first national flag of Canada, the Canadian maple leaf flag.

As we stood today in front of the Peace Tower in a bitterly cold blizzard, I recalled the tremendous struggles and the many achievements of the people who have gone before us to build this great nation from sea to sea to sea: the aboriginal peoples who have protected this land from its beginnings; the explorers and early settlers in Upper and Lower Canada who spoke English and French; the Fathers of Confederation who met in Charlottetown; the influx of the European immigrants who homesteaded and settled the west; the Chinese workers who built our railroads and the many immigrants who joined them to settle in B.C. Our country and horizons expanded as Newfoundland joined the Canadian family and our appreciation grew with the vast and exciting northern territories.

Many of the pioneers in our history books are men, but the women who also homesteaded raised large families, suffered loneliness and hardship and often died young. They also are the heroines of our history.

My thoughts as we faced the blizzard also went back to my own first experience overseas as a Red Cross worker with Commonwealth forces in Japan and Korea. The maple leaf flag was our rallying point, and we were one Canadian family regardless of our home province or language.

When we travel away from home we realize how fortunate we are to be Canadians and live in a land that is so vast and beautiful and resourceful. We give out our flag pins proudly and usually receive a warm response around the world.

As we stood in the snow today, the hon. Stanley Knowles reminded me of the bitterness and partisanship that preceded the final acceptance of our red maple leaf flag 25 years ago. I could not help but think that watching high over us silently from his permanent place on the Hill was the Leader of the Opposition of that day. I wondered what he was thinking as he looked down on today's proceedings.

Our flag is our symbol of Canada. It symbolizes our love for this beautiful multicultural country and our distinctive Canadian values. We pass on this flag to our