

Canadian Commonwealth Flag

in their country, Canada, for which they fought.

Mr. Speaker, there are also the widows of veterans. Hundreds of them write to us in this House of Commons asking that their pensions be increased and imploring the passing of legislation which would enable them to lead a decent life in their country, Canada.

Mr. Speaker, instead of offering them decent pensions, instead of coming to grips with this problem, the lot of our veterans, those people who served Canada under various flags, the union jack or the red ensign, instead of passing legislation enabling them to live, we are arguing in this House of Commons whether we should give them a flag called the red ensign or the union jack.

The colour of the flag matters little to a veteran, to a 65 or a 70 year old man, to a 50 or 55 year old man, to a veteran of world war I or II if they are starving in Canada.

We have seen ministers under the MacKenzie King government deliver speeches in Europe to our young people and tell them: "Young Canadians, fight with bravery and courage and when you return to your country you will never experience a depression or unemployment and you will never be considered outcasts."

Mr. Speaker, I feel that veterans or their widows are now treated like outcasts or second class citizens in the country for which they fought on two occasions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the hon. member, because it seems to me that his remarks are not relevant to the subject matter, which is concurrence in the seventh and last report of the special committee of the Canadian flag.

In my opinion, the study of the economic situation in some sectors of our population is not directly connected with this question and I ask the hon. member to make sure his remarks are relevant.

Mr. Caouette: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for calling me to order.

However, I would like to submit most humbly that since the discussion on the seventh report on a second flag for Canada, Liberals and Conservatives in turn have told us this was a national emblem which would respect and represent those who served Canada on the occasion of both world wars.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe sincerely that my remarks are quite within the ambit of the question of a second flag which the government wants us to adopt.

Mr. Speaker, I shall not say more on this point, because all the hon. members who served during any of the world wars are well aware of the problem we raise at this time about the veterans of any of those two wars, their widows and their families.

Mr. Speaker, during the flag debate we heard the Liberals say that we needed a distinctive national flag and later the Conservatives repeated that we needed only one distinctive national flag. The representatives of both old line parties contradicted themselves within a few weeks. We heard the Liberals, not only from Quebec but from elsewhere, tell us that one distinctive national flag was enough. I hope that there will be a vote shortly, because this will indicate clearly, not only to the people in the province of Quebec but also to those in the rest of the country, how much sincerity or honesty the Liberals and the Conservatives have toward the Canadian voters.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard Conservative members, including the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Balcer) and the hon. member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière (Mr. Paul) oppose the adoption of a second flag for Canada. I congratulate them. They represent a sector of the Canadian people that must be taken into consideration and is entitled to its opinion.

The hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency (Mr. Marcoux) a while ago moved that the house revert to the previous question, under standing order 51, to cut down the discussion on the adoption of a second flag. He went about it the wrong way, because we shall have to vote on the previous question motion and then on the main motion, that is, on resolution 44(B), in order to decide whether or not the union jack should be adopted as Canada's second flag to show our allegiance to the British commonwealth of nations.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the way to cut the debate short. It is rather a good way to extend it. Surely the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency was wrong when he moved his motion on the previous question according to standing order 51. We shall vote against the previous question motion and then against the main motion intended to give Canada a second flag, whereas we had enough of one, that is the distinctive national flag we adopted just two days ago.