

Announced Removal of Coat of Arms

that all this tinkering, including removing the flag from the Royal Canadian Navy, is part of a trend to Canadian republicanism.

I say there is nothing more urgent requiring debate. If the government wants to take this stand that the monarchy must go, and supports the desire of the young university Liberals of Canada that republicanism be established, then let it act and bring the matter before parliament, but not by the back door. That is the reason for the urgency.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman, who of course went far beyond dealing with the urgency of the matter, has accused me—

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): It isn't for you to say.

Mr. Pearson: —has accused me of being the leader of an underground revolution which is tinkering away with the—

Some hon. Members: You are. That's right.

Mr. Pearson: —of tinkering away—

Some hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Can we have order, please.

Mr. Pearson: —of tinkering away with the traditions of our constitution, introducing surreptitious republicanism and all that kind of thing.

Mr. Starr: Well, come out in the open, then.

Mr. Pearson: This underground revolution, according to the right hon. gentleman, has already had some disastrous results, including no doubt the introduction of the Canadian flag, so strenuously opposed by my right hon. friend because it had the maple leaf on it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: This is the kind of thing the right hon. gentleman has raised this afternoon under the guise of urgency. He has asked us to set aside the ordinary business of the day, the important business of the day, so this matter, which is not a matter of immediate urgency, be debated this afternoon or we will have republicanism tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, there will be an opportunity to deal with this matter. We will be very glad to provide this opportunity and I think it will show that the facts alleged by the right hon. gentleman have no foundation whatever,

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

which is not unusual. I would welcome an opportunity for this kind of debate to expose this spurious attack on the government.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that no case has been made for setting aside the debate on the medical care bill to deal with this matter this afternoon.

Mr. Lambert: That is real urgent; 1968.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take part in this debate. I just want to say that I regret that the newspapers seized upon that report before I could make a statement, before orders had been issued by the Post Office Department. I will be ready to make a statement when the time comes and I think that it will help.

It is quite easy, Mr. Speaker, to raise questions which can turn into political discussions. However, I can assure you that I will make a statement very shortly on that matter. If someone on this side of the house could be blamed because such action was or was not taken, I assume full responsibility.

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing once again a truly anti-Canadian spectacle when we hear the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) raise a question about an order which has not yet been given by the office of the Postmaster General (Mr. Côté). Besides, the minister has just said, in reply to the charges made by the Leader of the Opposition, that no order has been given by the Post Office Department. The Leader of the Opposition is asking us to consider a definite matter. How can he call a definite matter something about which he knows nothing or practically nothing, or a matter of urgent public importance, something about which the public has not been told officially yet? The motion reads in part as follows:

Namely, the announced intended removal by administrative decision, with no reference to parliament, of the coat-of-arms of Canada from the vehicles and equipment of the Post Office Department, such action being invalid and unconstitutional, representing, as it does, a derogation from the sovereignty of this nation and the usurpation of the rights of parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity in the last two years to visit some foreign countries. In Russia, for instance, from the north to the south, I did not see the Canadian coat-of-arms at any time.