

Canada Flag Day

with a fervent love of their country and of their flag. I feel that the most fitting way in which I can end these remarks is by quoting a short statement uttered by the late Hon. Lester B. Pearson on the day the flag was inaugurated eight years ago.

As the symbol of a new chapter in our national story, our Maple Leaf Flag will become a symbol of that unity in our country without which one cannot grow in strength and purpose; the unity that encourages the equal partnership of two peoples on which this Confederation was founded; the unity also that recognizes the contributions and the cultures of many other races.

Under this flag may our youth find new inspiration for loyalty to Canada; for a patriotism based not on any mean or narrow nationalism, but on the deep and equal pride that all Canadians will feel in every part of this good land.

God bless our flag!

God bless Canada!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Maurice Dupras (Labelle): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, intend to be brief and I shall only say a few words on the subject because I wish this bill to be adopted.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, when I was in the Canadian Air Force and we spent our evenings in the officer's mess, groups of men would often talk about the kind of Canada we would find when we returned, if we ever did, and the kind of country that was going to be built for us, after having helped other countries to fight against the assailant and to rebuild a united Europe like the one we know today. And at that time already, my friends, whether they came from Halifax, Vancouver, Toronto or Winnipeg, were as sorry as I was, that we did not have a real Canadian flag.

We wondered whether the Canadian people would ever be Canadian enough to have their own flag. Of course, we had colours which identified the members of Canadian Armed Forces, whether they belong to the Air Force, to the Army or to the Navy; but we felt a little like the head of a family who walks along with the picture of his neighbour's children in his pocket. Yet we had something to show that identified us, but it had nothing really Canadian, nothing peculiar, nothing that represented the Canadian unity.

This is why I am so proud today to see the Canadian flag displayed in this House, and I want to congratulate the mover and the seconder, the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr) and the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart), for being responsible for what will surely be an outstanding event in the life of the Canadian parliament. And I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that my predecessor who is now our ambassador in Paris and who was vice-chairman of the committee on the Canadian flag must have really felt Canadian this morning in our embassy when he learned that for the first time and for ever, the flag of which he was one of the advocates, will be displayed in the House of Commons.

But it is not enough that our colours should be displayed in the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker; a day should also be set aside to honour them. Even more should be done; we must also ensure that our colours are on display in every classroom in the country, that the place of honour in every school, every province, every territory in the land is reserved for the flag. Indeed, parliament must take the steps required to ensure that everywhere in Canada, in

[Mr. Stewart (Cochrane).]

the east as well as in the west, we can unfurl that flag, symbol of the pride and unity of all Canadians.

I also think that there should be a law to punish those who show a lack of respect for our flag, who violate, tear or burn it. Those measures should be passed as soon as possible.

As I hope this bill will be passed, I shall conclude my remarks by saying how proud I am of this typical Canadian flag now unfurled in this House of Commons.

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief. I don't want to miss the opportunity to say a few words on the bill setting apart a special day to commemorate the adoption of the Canadian flag.

One of the reasons I rise on this occasion is that, with the hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé), I am the only member to have had the privilege of sitting for six weeks on the special joint committee which in 1964 studied the thousands of models submitted and chose the single maple leaf design followed by a recommendation to the House in the fall of the same year. Those who were then in this House will remember for a long time, not to say all their life, all the debates which took place, the adoption of the project at the end of 1964 and the proclamation on February 15, 1965.

This day is most important to me and I am quite proud to have lived this period of 1964 when we chose this flag and I am all the more proud as I am among the 15 members who approved the design and recommended it to the House. Moreover, I always keep at home a picture signed by those 15 members, a picture which is so valuable to me that I would not part with it at any price. There are only 15 copies of this picture and only those 15 members have one and even today—eight years later—three or four members of this committee are deceased.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that at that time we listened to interesting debates and I am quite happy to see this flag now in the House of Commons thanks to the motion adopted by all hon. members and I can only approve the place chosen by the Chair for the flag, to the right of Mr. Speaker himself. I think it was not possible to make a more sensible choice.

• (1730)

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): Mr. Speaker, it is not uncommon for certain bills to be introduced in this or any legislature, for that matter, which on their surface seem to be very attractive, indeed compelling, but which, when one looks into all their implications and their motivations, really say a lot more than hon. members, perhaps even the hon. member proposing the bill, would desire. It is in this category that I fear I must place the bill we are now discussing. On the surface it is very nice, very moving, very appropriate; and all the more so, I might add, Mr. Speaker, in view of certain events earlier today and yesterday. But for all of that, there is something missing.

As hon. members will remember, the flag debate aroused passions in this dominion seldom seen before or since. But when that flag was passed into law I believe all of us respected that decision and I know we all honour the flag as the flag of Canada. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I should