

problem more effectively in a few months than has been done so far.

My fifth reason, which I have already indicated, is that surely this is a matter which raises a special challenge to the Senate. I have mentioned the matter of minority rights. I would remind honourable senators that Senator Grattan O'Leary's amendment asks only the exercise of sober second thought. It asks only the cognizance of essential minority rights. It asks only of the Senate action to preserve historic symbols of our history and heritage.

Honourable senators, I come now to the second large principle in Senator O'Leary's amendment. Why do I think that further agreement is possible? Among many reasons, I will mention only four.

The first is that we have already had a measure of agreement, we have already had compromise. The flag which is before us is not the flag which was introduced into the House of Commons at the start of these discussions. The Government wisely, as certain circumstances developed, withdrew from its first position and took other steps which resulted in not merely a compromise, but a compromise flag. In my mind, it should not be criticized on that score.

The Opposition, as I read their attitudes in the debates, and in discussions outside the house, have also compromised considerably. The stand they are taking does not seem to me to be today, or in the last few days of this debate, as adamant as it was in the beginning. Far from it. These two antagonists have come a long way together. What is the evidence that they cannot be brought more closely together? If there is such evidence, I have not heard it. This compromise was achieved under what I think we would all agree are the worst possible circumstances. Senator O'Leary's amendment suggests that, under much better circumstances, much more agreement and compromise could be reached. It has the possibility of that compromise and that will haunt Canadians for a generation, if that possibility is at this time forgotten and arbitrarily brushed aside.

My second reason, cogent to the first, is that this discussion has, in my view at least, brought about a new degree of understanding between English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians.

My impression is that all across this country English-speaking Canadians have come to understand the importance to their French-speaking fellow Canadians of their race, religion, laws, institutions, culture and background. I am assured by those who know much more than I do about these matters that much the same thing has happened in

the Province of Quebec, that many there, reading, hearing of the attachment of English-speaking Canadians to certain symbols, have come to understand that those symbols have for others all the deep affection and deep love that those understandable symbols of French Canadianism have for those who hold them. I did not expect in my lifetime to see such a rapprochement in at least a large part of both English-speaking and French-speaking Canada. What a pity it would be, honourable senators, if this new flag, instead of being a symbol of the meeting of Canadian minds, were to be another symbol of the old misunderstanding, misinterpretation and misrepresentation that has divided us in the past.

My third reason for believing that agreement is possible is that we can now turn the horror of the last five or six months into an asset, because I believe that if Senator O'Leary's amendment were adopted, if we had a cooling-off period, a breathing space, those who would then sit down to try to resolve this problem anew would be spurred on by their determination not to let this matter go back into the holocaust of the House of Commons, under the circumstances with which we have been faced with the present decision.

If one looks back to our origins, one finds evidence that this may well be so, for surely it was the fear of return to the old frustrations that was the major motivating force in bringing about Confederation and this new nation.

In Upper and Lower Canada it was the determination not to go back to the struggles of the fifties and sixties, when the capital of the province of Canada was being moved from one city to another every few years, when finally it was impossible for any government to remain in power. In the Maritimes it was a determination not to go back to those economic and other frustrations of other years, which became the motivating force of this nation.

I believe there is a lesson for us to learn in our attempt to resolve this new problem of that new nation.

My fourth reason for believing that agreement could be reached if Senator O'Leary's amendment were adopted is that it would then take this matter out of Parliament. I have the greatest respect for Parliament, but I do know there are matters that can be resolved better outside than in Parliament.

I am fully aware that this matter must eventually come before Parliament, because under the present order in council the Red Ensign, for certain purposes, is the flag of Canada until Parliament decides otherwise; but I suggest that if there is a breathing spell, we could give other bodies outside