

of the other rights of the soldier, who was always interested, in addition to rum, in more rations, the right to salvage, the right to grouse and above all, the right to damn the sergeant-major.

**Hon. Mr. Hugessen:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. White:** Any soldier who was on the Somme, or at Passchendaele, Vimy Ridge or Amiens, or at any other engagement, will readily understand and appreciate the life the soldier lived in the trenches. Certainly, there were no flags; but, as I said before, the flag was in France.

Any soldier who was in France will know what I mean when I mention the green envelopes. Our letters from France were censored, but once every week or two each soldier was issued one green envelope, and the letter that was placed in that envelope could be sealed and was not read by the censor. These green envelopes were much cherished, and I am sure Senator Hugessen will agree with me when I say that they had some value on the market.

Old soldiers will also recall the type of writing paper we used. At least one particular type was a rather small sheet of brownish-coloured paper of rather poor quality, and in the upper left-hand corner there was the Red Ensign.

If you will look at the first painting on the walls of this Senate chamber, which depicts the landing of the Canadians in the First World War at St. Nazaire, France, you will notice a large red flag in the stern of one of the ships. While it is difficult to make out all the details, it looks very much like the Red Ensign.

Reference was made yesterday and the day before to the graves of Canadian soldiers around the world. I have visited many of these cemeteries; they are all very beautiful and are a credit to Canada. Like other soldiers, I have helped to bury young Canadian soldiers who did not have the dignity of being buried in a coffin or at a funeral service. Like other soldiers, on occasion behind the lines I have taken part in that sad ritual when one of your comrades was given a burial with at least some dignity. There, a young Canadian soldier, wrapped in a service blanket, was placed in a rough, home-made box, and covering that box was a flag. I have seen both the Union Jack and Red Ensign used on such occasions.

In those days we were all very young. You stood there in silence. Outwardly, but silently, you cursed war and all its tragedies, but inside you wept, for that is the only way one retained his sanity. There we buried a young Canadian, and with him all the hopes, ambitions and dreams of youth. In that far-off land we covered with earth our chum, our

friend, our comrade, and, to paraphrase what Rupert Brooke wrote, in some corner of a foreign field there is a spot that is forever Canada.

The press has said that any reference by veterans to the flag has no connection with the issue and should not be mentioned in this debate, that it is only sentiment, and mawkish sentiment at that. Of course, I realize and appreciate there are some Canadians who think little of, or care little for, the welfare of veterans or what the veterans did for the world and Canada in two world wars and in Korea. How can anyone expect these veterans—the blind, the paraplegics, the amputees, the veterans of Hong Kong—to forget the past? Their flag was the Red Ensign, and their flag is going out the window within the next few days. This flag formed part of their lives, and they can never forget it. That is why they wish to retain their Red Ensign, or a new flag that incorporates some appropriate symbol of the Union Jack.

In hundreds of churches of every denomination across this country you will find a shrine of some type with a plaque or tablet. On this plaque are inscribed the names of the boys and girls from that community and vicinity who served in the wars, with a special designation for those who did not come back; and hanging over this plaque or at the side of the plaque, what do you find? You find our flag, the Red Ensign. Does anyone expect that these flags are going to be removed, or replaced within the next few years, or at any time in the future, by what is called a distinctive Canadian flag which has only a single maple leaf? If anyone thinks they are going to be replaced, just ask the parents and the brothers or the sisters of the boys whose names appear on these honour rolls.

We are told that this flag will unite the people of Canada. In my opinion there has never been in a hundred years of Canadian history any act of Parliament more likely to create more confusion, dissatisfaction and disunity than the so-called new flag and the manner in which it is being brought in. Many of you will not agree with that statement, but it is true.

The amendment moved by Senator O'Leary (Carleton) gives us the opportunity even at this late date to prevent this tragedy to Canadian unity. Honourable senators, I suggest that you take a long, hard look at what you are doing before you vote against this amendment, and that you take a still longer and harder look before you vote for the main motion. Everyone who votes for this motion will have to take his share of the responsibility for the disunity this new flag is going to create in Canada.

Before sitting down I wish to refer to the remarks made by honourable Senator Pouliot