

consider this matter. He reported that the committee could not agree. Later, in 1946, another committee of both houses was set up to propose a flag, and its report received the approval of a majority of the committee. I think the voting was 23 to 1. Yet, Mr. Mackenzie King at that time refused to accept that committee's proposal. Later they brought in a report recommending the Red Ensign with other amendments, to which Senator Irvine referred in her splendid speech.

Why did Mr. Mackenzie King in that day and age, as Prime Minister of Canada, take that attitude? Why should we today accept a flag that is thrust upon us by the Prime Minister of Canada without the consultation of this house? This is why I agree wholeheartedly with Senator Grattan O'Leary's amendment.

All honourable senators have seen the post-cards that are on sale at hotels and book-stores. One carries a picture of a standing boy, saying: "This is my flag." When you open the flap you read inside: "Colour it yourself." It reminds me of the truth squad and the colouring books that were so prevalent during the last election campaign.

I say to honourable members of the Senate that we are here to take a second look at legislation, and I do not think that we should subject this flag to the ridicule that it is being subjected to across the country.

Honourable senators, I do not want to delay you long, but I do say that this flag, in my opinion, smacks too much of Madison Avenue advertising. It does not have on it any symbols whatsoever of our past. We are not saying that we should have the Red Ensign. Nobody on this side of the house has ever said that. We are entitled to have our opinions of a flag. What we want is a distinctive Canadian flag which has on it some of the tradition and heritage of the past of this country. We are entitled to that.

As you know, there were some 2,000-odd flag designs submitted in 1945, and to the Committee of the House of Commons that was appointed this year there were almost as many submitted. When you have as many designs as that submitted to a committee for consideration, why should our new Canadian flag be rushed through in such a short period of time?

I say that we as a nation should grow up. Our hundredth anniversary is not until July 1, 1967. In the time from now until then why should we not give careful consideration to our flag? Some people have advocated that there be a plebiscite. Perhaps that is wrong—I do not know—but I do object to the way in which this business of the flag has been handled. I object to the fact that one man brought in a flag design. I know it is not the one that is before us now, because it was

changed by the committee of the House of Commons, but that is where it originated. That is wrong. I say that a committee representing all the people of Canada—representing the House of Commons, the Senate and the ethnic races—should have been called together and told to produce a distinctive flag by 1967.

Honourable senators on the Government side think that we are all in favour of the Red Ensign, or that we oppose a distinctive Canadian flag. That is absolutely wrong. We on this side of the house want just as much as they do a distinctive Canadian flag, but I, for one, am opposed to the design that is submitted to us and which we are asked to approve. Perhaps we should have a referendum. I want something that is distinctive for Canada but which also represents the great traditions of our past and of what we owe to our forefathers.

I was very surprised to hear Senator Croll criticize Rudyard Kipling. I think Rudyard Kipling was one of the greatest poets this world has ever known. He spoke not only for England and the colonies but for the Commonwealth and for Canada. When Senator Croll says his poetry puts us back 50 years, he is speaking utter nonsense.

Honourable senators, I am making a plea for your support of the amendment moved by Senator Grattan O'Leary. I think that amendment is a sensible one at this time. I want each honourable senator to rise in his or her place and state when he or she first saw the new flag that the Prime Minister produced.

Hon. Mr. Smith (Queens-Shelburne): Do you want to swear us in first?

(Translation):

Hon. L. M. Gouin: Honourable senators, the speech I am called upon to make today is one of the most important in all my life, perhaps the most important one. But having just come out of the hospital, I am far from being in as good shape as I would like. That is why I am asking you, honourable senators, to bear with me as much as you can.

Opinions on this flag issue are tragically divided. This makes us realize once more how far we are from having achieved our national unity. To this sacred cause of our unity in diversity I have devoted all my efforts. In this, I have followed as best I could the example set by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Ernest Lapointe, Louis St. Laurent and his worthy successor, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson. I have also been inspired by the political creed of my father, Sir Lomer Gouin.

The flag, honourable senators—and on this point we all agree—is the emblem of the