

Canadian Flag

people there have a mayor and reeve who could have decided the matter, but they put it up to the people to decide and I am happy to report that the people decided in favour of the hospital.

Press reports claim that public interest in the flag issue has dropped off. This is not the situation in my constituency, and I am sure it is not in a great many other constituencies. I admit we are not receiving as many letters on the flag issue as we did just after the Prime Minister unveiled his three maple leaf design, but most of the correspondence I receive from my constituents still carries a note in support of our stand. As I stated last night, I am receiving letters every day asking us to continue our stand on the flag issue. I have one here that I received yesterday and I want to put it on the record again. It reads:

Dear Sir,

As my representative at Ottawa, please insist on the inclusion of the union jack in any proposed flag. In the interests of Canadian unity we should have one flag only.

I am sure government members have received letters from the Canadian Corps Association, and that they will agree with me its interest and concern in the flag issue are not dropping.

Our members have made reference to the stand taken by the Canadian Corps Association. I should like to place on record in order of the dates on which they were received a number of letters from this association to show that the demand for a plebiscite is continuing; indeed, I believe it is increasing. On April 20 the Canadian Corps Association said in a letter that the government's course of action in this matter should be determined only by a plebiscite. On June 8 the association wrote:

With such divided opinion throughout Canada on the flag question we cannot understand why Mr. Pearson will not allow the people of Canada an opportunity to choose between the Canadian red ensign and his new suggested maple leaf choice.

At that time it was three maple leaves. Then on August 5—interest in the need for a plebiscite was still continuing and growing—a letter from the corps stated:

The Canadian Corps Association dominion command again emphatically requests the Prime Minister of Canada and parliament as a whole to place this subject before the people at the next regular general election. Let the voters of Canada finalize this matter.

That is exactly what we are asking. Then on November 27, only a short time ago, another letter came from the corps as follows:

[Mr. Pascoe.]

The Canadian Corps Association dominion command at this time reiterates that no change in Canada's present national flag should be made unless the government is so instructed by the citizens of Canada by means of a plebiscite vote conducted in conjunction with the next general election.

I have read those four letters and referred to the dates on which they were written to show that the demand for a plebiscite is continuing. The Canadian corps represents a very large body of opinion.

In conclusion I express the hope that supporters of the government will express their views on the subject of a plebiscite in the course of this debate. As has been said many times, we all realize that the scrapping of a flag is a very emotional issue. I have spoken on this matter before, but I feel compelled to speak again on this amendment to express my views. I hope all members across the way will take the opportunity to express their views. The Canadian people think they should be allowed to decide for or against a new flag. We also believe this. In all sincerity I say that a decision on the flag by means of a plebiscite would be much more widely accepted than the compulsory imposition of a flag selected by a divided vote in parliament.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Grey-Bruce (Mr. Winkler).

Mr. Byrne: Things must be getting tough.

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate those remarks from the hon. member for Kootenay East (Mr. Byrne). They are typical of what he might interject into any debate, particularly when I am involved. I would like to say once again that I would certainly appreciate hearing his views from the floor, and not from his seat. First of all I would like to refer to *Hansard* for December 3, 1964, page 10,803, the right hand column, where Your Honour, in correcting the speaker who had the floor, used these words:

It seems to me that he is away off the point of a plebiscite, how it should be held, where it should be held, when it should be held and if it should be held.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, you feel those are the points which are relevant in this particular debate. I agree with those points and would like to add one more, with Your Honour's concurrence; that is, why it should be held. On that premise, and in connection with the amendment that is before us, I would like to make a few remarks.

I believe that we as members of the opposition are fulfilling a very useful purpose in