

*Canadian Flag*

are not sure what Quebec wants. I think I heard the Minister of Justice (Mr. Favreau) say that the other day, that Quebec is not sure what it wants. Therefore I would make this suggestion to the hon. member. I think it is a little unfair to suggest that I should explain the attitude of Quebec to my constituents, in view of the fact that members from Quebec cannot explain that attitude to me in this house. Be that as it may, I think the remarks I have used in reference to that attitude have been fair.

I was treated very nicely while on a visit to Quebec city. I returned and described my treatment and visit there to my colleagues as being, except for the language difficulty, very hospitable and friendly. I said the people there were more western than westerners. Certainly I have said nothing in describing Quebec that would aggravate the situation. In fact on many occasions I have said that the economic ills and complaints of Quebec are similar to those voiced on the prairies during the hungry thirties, at which time the blame was placed on the Bay street boys. All the economic ills of those years were thought to have been caused by the financiers in Toronto. That was the general feeling throughout the west.

The only explanation I can discover in respect of the present feeling in Quebec is that some politicians have twisted the blame in some manner, aiming it at the rest of Canada.

I suggest instead of attempting to change the symbol of what this country is, has been and is hoped to be in the future, the government should initiate legislation to cure the economic ills of the province of Quebec. If that could be accomplished by the government should initiate legislation to cure the in Quebec would disappear. I am sure there would not be an intensive drive to rid ourselves of our national flag.

[Translation]

**Mr. Boutin:** Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

I appreciate his feelings for the province of Quebec, but could he tell the house whether he agrees with the opinion expressed in 1957 by his leader, the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), when he said that he did not need the province of Quebec to come into office in Ottawa?

**Mr. Graftney:** He never said that.

[Mr. Nugent.]

[Text]

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I rise immediately to speak to a question of privilege. That is an unadulterated falsehood.

**An hon. Member:** Withdraw.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I should like to state that the question is out of order.

**Mr. Crouse:** Withdraw your remark.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Nugent:** Mr. Speaker, I am always willing to entertain questions, but I do hope they will be sensible and based on something factual, relevant and truthful.

I have only referred to one or two letters I have received. I am not anxious to read more of them into the record, although I should like to mention that I have received so many that I am concerned. Most of them contain the suggestion that the people of Quebec desire a change in everything; that our symbol, which indicates that we have been a nation for quite some time, must be destroyed and that there must be a new Canada. The suggestions indicate a feeling that the people of Quebec desire to rid this country of its ties to the commonwealth. I am not sure how far this feeling goes, or how far these reformists wish to move in this direction. I am sure this feeling could be alleviated or relieved to some extent if a spokesman from Quebec could clearly state the intention in this regard. Certainly the unknown is feared more than anything else.

We do know that many extreme expressions have been made in Quebec. We do know there is a genuine widespread dissatisfaction at this time on the part of the people of that province. Certainly it is understandable why there is so much feeling of uneasiness in the rest of Canada, in view of these many expressions of dissatisfaction and unknown intention.

At the present time there is no explanation why the government is commencing to deal with the national flag issue, or as to the immediate need for such action. There is no explanation of the method to be followed. No reply has been made to the suggestion that the method of choice is contrary to common sense. I submit the lack of explanation in respect of these various things has heaped fuel on what could only be an embarrassing situation.

I should like to know how the Prime Minister can rightly refuse to initiate a referendum. I suggest it is the duty of the members of this house to represent their constituents in