

Canadian Flag

the second world war. During this 40 year period Canada has earned a place of esteem among the nations of the world. When you visit foreign countries in which the Canadian government owns property the Canadian ensign flies over that property reflecting the prestige which is enjoyed by Canadians everywhere. Man's roots go deep. We cannot arbitrarily destroy the symbol which represents our loyalty and affection, not for the Queen of England but for the Queen of Canada. She is our Queen as well. We cannot arbitrarily destroy the symbol of old France, the fleur-de-lis which is on the red ensign at present. We cannot arbitrarily destroy a flag which in toto represents our membership in the commonwealth of nations.

We are not being presented with a new flag, Mr. Speaker, because Canadians generally are demanding a change. When speaking with my constituents they ask me: "What does the Liberal government and the Liberal party find wrong with the old flag? Why do they want to pull it down? Why do they want to destroy the symbol that truly represents our varied traditions and cultures?" I could bring into this house, as I am sure every other hon. member of the Conservative party could, thousands of letters received from our constituents in support of the red ensign. I have brought only a few. I should like to read into the record one written by Mr. J. D. Dexter to the editor of the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* on May 25. He says:

Just about everything has been said concerning the Canadian flag by the two sides, those of us who would keep the union jack in at least part of the design, and by those who would be satisfied with anything except the union jack. It now seems that "a banner with a strange device" will be forced upon us.

One thing that should not be forgotten, however, is the shameless impudence of those "representatives" who would undoubtedly vote servilely as their government tells them; many must well know that this will be against the wishes of the great majority of their constituents. They are perfidious toadies, allied with a lunatic splinter group from Quebec.

Is there none in the Liberal party with the courage and honesty to vote as his conscience tells him? It should be an honour to be read out of this particular government, and is the only way to be respected and remembered.

That is one of the mild letters which I have received, Mr. Speaker. I have received others. One from Mr. Norman Swain says this:

May I add my vote to the millions of Canadians who favour retention of the red ensign as Canada's national flag.

Being ex-air force like yourself, I can look back on many sad and also happy moments when the red ensign proudly flew to make us mindful

of just why we were waging the war. Let's not simply kick it aside like a worn out shoe.

It's high time we called a halt to concessions to the one province in ten.

You know the breed of the people on our south shore better than I. It will be a long time, if ever, when you can tell those mothers who lost sons in the war, those hardy fishermen who sailed under the ensign, that in order for them to be true Canadians it is necessary to change our flag.

Get on with the business of the country and stop fooling around with matters like the flag issue, designed to appease one province, and which is making Canada the subject of cartoons throughout the world.

This is a telegram I received:

Strongly urge you stand for referendum or national plebiscite on flag issue. No matter what outcome such high handed action by minority government although brave not to be tolerated.

Finally, one from Mr. Lee Crooker dated July 28, 1964:

The proposed destruction of our Canadian flag is the greatest crisis since confederation. It is greater than confederation. It will bring shame on every one of us and destroy all national consciousness.

Canada expects that the official opposition of which you are a member will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent this outrage.

This, Mr. Speaker, is our responsibility. We must present these views on behalf of our people who are calling out to us. They cannot come to Ottawa. They cannot stand up in this house and speak what is in their minds and what is in their hearts. They have charged us with this responsibility. And not only us in the opposition; they have also charged hon. members opposite. But they sit silent and will not portray the true thoughts of the people who elected them and sent them here. I hear a remark from the other side and I sincerely hope that an opportunity will be provided for the hon. member to make a contribution on his feet.

An hon. Member: One of the trained seals.

Mr. Crouse: Quite frankly I find it difficult to answer these questions which have been raised by my constituents because it seems that the Liberal party has designed a new flag in an effort to create a following among those who dislike the Canadian ensign because it reminds them of our connection with Great Britain. We cannot destroy the past through legislation, but we can through the passage of this flag resolution make our future progress as a nation more difficult.

Some of the Liberal supporters have said that we have a need for a distinctive flag, and that this is why this resolution was presented. Canada adopted the red ensign with the dominion badge for its merchantmen in