

*Parliament Hill*

In this country we have people who speak French. I say to my very good friend opposite, we have four million people who speak only French in my province in Canada, nothing else but French, and they claim to be as good a Canadian as anyone in British Columbia, Alberta, the Yukon, Newfoundland and the Atlantic Provinces who speaks nothing but English and who equally believes he or she is a good Canadian.

The spirit of compromise was something Mr. Pearson taught me as a student by the way he lived his life, his reading, his actions in the United Nations. My very esteemed colleague, the Hon. Member for New Westminster—Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett), sat in the House with me then. We knew who Mr. Pearson was. People may like to read the debates which have taken place recently and compare them with what took place on January 19, 1987 in the House of Commons when my colleague, the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria), introduced an identical motion to the motion of our hon. friend, the Hon. Member for Scarborough Centre (Mrs. Browes).

I cannot do otherwise but recall the immense courage of Mr. Pearson. Our young Canadians, our new Canadians, should look back to the debate on the Canadian flag we have today, something which everyone takes for granted. It was a passionate debate. True to our principle of British democracy, the British parliamentary system, we debated that issue for months in the House of Commons. People objected passionately to changing the flag. Others, with as much passion, wanted something truly Canadian. They did not want the Fleur de Lis nor the Union Jack. I remember a debate I had with Mr. Diefenbaker. He was ready to compromise by having on the Red Ensign the Fleur de Lis. I remember having said, to his surprise, that I would never accept on my Canadian flag a Fleur de Lis. That was quite a surprise because I was expected to say something else.

We got our Canadian flag. I remember as a fairly new Member of Parliament attending a meeting in Winnipeg when Mr. Pearson spoke for the first time. I remember his wife was there and the beloved Mary MacDonald, principal secretary to Mr. Pearson, along with a couple of other assistants. At the annual meeting of the Royal Canadian Legion he spoke for the first time about a truly Canadian flag. It was not the best of our days. However, the idea took hold and we won. We got our flag. We did not win and we did not lose. Canada won a beautiful flag. It could have been different. Mr. Pearson proposed two blue bars to represent the two oceans. After compromise we ended up with the flag we have today.

I remember also, and this is never mentioned, that Mr. Pearson appointed a Special Committee of the House of Commons on the National Anthem. I had the honour to sit on that committee. The only two members of that committee left are the Hon. Member for Dartmouth—Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) and myself. We sat on the Special Committee on the National Anthem for months. Can you imagine Canadians who are listening—

*[Translation]*

—who were listening for weeks on end, Mr. Speaker. We were in a room, behind closed doors, with a musician who played us every possible precursor to what would finally be our national anthem. We had people come in and sing us the anthems they wanted to have, safely ensconced behind the doors of certain offices. We even had a bilingual anthem: *Ô Canada, My Land ton front est ceint*—

*[English]*

—there was something mixed up in French and English. For months we listened to various versions of the national anthem, I say that to those who sometimes despair of the importance of patience when passions are involved. We recommended the French version, which we had been singing since 1880 in various parts of Quebec. In fact, a granddaughter of Senator Tremblay is a descendant of the person who wrote the words of *Oh Canada*. We proclaimed *Oh Canada* as the national anthem on July 1, 1980.

I went past what my dear colleague, the Hon. Member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, said about the Canada Pension Plan and election expenses. To address myself to the subject directly in the two minutes I have left, I will say I hope that we will pass the motion and erect on the Hill a statue of Mr. Pearson to depoliticize this debate. We should, as was suggested, stop thinking of what we should do in the future. I know for a fact that when they put up the statue of Mr. St. Laurent in front of the Supreme Court of Canada—and this has never been said or written—it was understood that when Mr. Diefenbaker would die, his statue would face the statue of Mr. St. Laurent. The reason the statue of Mr. St. Laurent is positioned in such a way is that there was supposed to be a second statue, that of Mr. Diefenbaker, there.

I believe that if we are to build a country and if we are to teach those who visit the Hill, a statue of every Prime Minister should be here. It does not matter to me if it looks like a series of statues one after another, because as a Member of Parliament, when I walk with students and friends, I want to be able to point to Sir Wilfred Laurier, Queen Victoria, and our different Prime Ministers and explain what Canada is all about. It is as if we were afraid to talk about our country and teach others what Canada is all about. I am not. It is the best country. One of the ways to show that is to teach young Canadians and new Canadians what Canada is all about.

If one were to walk to the back of the Parliament, one would see a statue of Baldwin, but no one would know the meaning of it. When Baldwin was defeated by the Anglophones, he was elected by the French. When Lafontaine was defeated by the French, he was elected by the Anglophones. That is part of our history but no one talks about it. If we could go back to the spirit of what Canada is all about, we would have much less difficulty to explain even what this new Government is trying to do.

It is with great honour on this special day that I say that I hope we pass this motion, that we do not hesitate a moment to