

Canadian Commonwealth Flag

and we have no business whatever appropriating it.

Some hon. Members: Question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Girouard (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, a few words only in order to explain my stand in connection with the votes that will take place in a moment.

We are requested to vote on the final report of the flag committee, a report suggesting the adoption of the union jack as a symbol of our membership in the commonwealth.

When I refer to the motion that had been made in the house to set up that committee, I note that in the French as well as the English text, it is written:

That is it established to study the question of the flag.

I really wonder why this committee had to submit a seventh report suggesting that a second flag be voted on here in this house. It had been requested to study the flag question, flag, not the question of flags.

I, therefore, strongly question the fact that the committee is suggesting a vote this evening.

I would more readily believe that the government is using a roundabout way to make believe there was unanimity among the parties in order to have us adopt a second flag in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly will not go over all the reasons which have been given here, why we should vote for a second flag in this country. I would simply appeal to my Liberal colleagues of the province of Quebec before it is too late.

Not very long ago, and on several occasions, my Liberal colleagues from the province of Quebec applauded loudly the courage and daring of the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Balcer). They even allowed themselves, on several occasions, to applaud your humble servant who rose to vote against his own party.

I would remind them, Mr. Speaker, that you have to be courageous and bold to do it, and that is hard. I should like to remind them particularly that you have to be most conscientious to vote against your own party, knowing that, for once, the interest of the voters lies on the other side.

Tonight I should like them to recall the courage, the boldness and the fortitude shown by the hon. member for Three Rivers who, on three or four occasions, voted against his own

[Mr. Howard.]

party in order to properly represent the voters of his riding and his province.

I do not see the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette), but I do see the hon. member for St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville (Mr. Dupuis). Those gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, speak loudly on the hustings and I would like to ask them tonight to speak just as loudly in order to voice the views of their voters who insist—and I challenge them to say the contrary—that they vote against the union jack as a second Canadian flag.

Mr. Speaker, this appeal is a simple one. The right hon. Prime Minister made it himself when he stated:

The members of my party are free to vote according to their conscience.

I challenge my Liberal colleagues from the province of Quebec to vote according to their conscience tonight. If they vote for the union jack, I challenge them to explain their attitude to the people of Quebec immediately. I challenge them to vote against the union jack.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it was easy to applaud the hon. member for Three Rivers, as well as those other members who followed him. It was said that they had voted against their own party. They were not voting against their party, Mr. Speaker, they were voting according to the wishes of their electors, they were voting according to their conscience, because the leader of their party had left them free to do so.

I am making the same appeal to them and I challenge them.

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker—

[*Text*]

An hon. Member: Filibuster.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: How interesting it is to hear a Conservative member talk about filibuster, although for six months those same Conservatives have been filibustering against the adoption of a distinctive national flag.

Mr. Speaker, the first and main reason why the government and the opposition are asking for the recognition of the union jack is because during the 1914-18 and the 1939-45 wars, many Canadians served for and on behalf of the union jack or the red ensign.

Mr. Speaker, under such circumstances it would have been preferable for the government not to give a flag to veterans, but rather to introduce legislation giving them pensions and the right to lead a decent life