

*Canadian Flag*

**Hon. J. A. MacLean (Queens):** Mr. Speaker, on rising to support the amendment I should like to start by reading part of it:

However, as the final vote of the committee did not reveal a sufficient degree of unanimity for the proposed design for a national flag for Canada, your committee therefore recommends that the government be authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to conduct a plebiscite to be held at the next general election—

Mention has been made of the fact that there was a vote in the flag committee of 10 to 4 in favour of the one maple leaf design, and the question was asked, "What is the significance of four votes against the proposal?"

**Mr. Winch:** Against ten votes.

**Mr. MacLean (Queens):** Yes, against ten; but I would like to point out that each vote in that committee represented about 1,250,000 Canadians, which means that about 5,500,000 Canadians do not favour the design recommended by the majority of the committee.

**Mr. Winch:** How about the 14 million who do support it?

**Mr. MacLean (Queens):** This is the point I am getting at, that in the interests of national unity some process must be found whereby we can arrive at a flag of which all Canadians can be proud. It has been said that the one maple leaf design is one that does not stir the imagination, and that there are millions of Canadians who do not feel strongly one way or the other. In my judgment a flag that does not raise some emotion, some feeling of patriotism and some enthusiasm in the hearts of Canadians is not worth having. A flag of that sort would be of little use to any country.

Flags are intended to represent the things, the principles and the traditions we hold dear. If the committee had come up with a unanimous or a virtually unanimous recommendation I would have supported it, but a unanimous recommendation is not possible unless recognition is given to the various large groups and traditional factors which make up Canada's total population. But it failed to do this and as a result failed to produce a design which was unanimously acceptable to the committee.

A little over a week ago I happened to turn on the television and I saw the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) being interviewed. He was at his benign, gracious best, the soul of reasonableness, and he was explaining to the Canadian people how this government was one which governed by con-

sent, as all governments govern by consent. He was the soul of reasonableness. In practice, however, we are finding that this government is one which is trying to govern by coercion and pressures of various kinds. First we were to have a free vote on the flag question. Then it was said the result of the vote would determine the life of the government, and government supporters were pressured into line. This is why it is important that the Canadian people should be allowed to decide this issue. The Minister of Transport makes a reasonable statement that Canadians should be governed by consent. I agree with that. But if the minister does indeed hold these views they are not evidenced in practice today. I have the highest respect for the Minister of Transport and I do not believe he is a callous hypocrite who would intentionally try to mislead the Canadian people by telling them something he does not practise or believe in. All I can conclude, therefore, is that his influence in this cabinet is virtually nil, because if it intended to carry out his proposition the government would welcome the opportunity to ascertain the wishes of the Canadian people with respect to a flag.

I hesitate to digress, because it is not my intention to be out of order, but as time goes by and especially since he took up his present portfolio, the Minister of Transport—and I do not intend to be offensive to him in any way—reminds me more and more of some phrases in a musical which was popular about a hundred years ago.

**Mr. Byrne:** Order.

**Mr. MacLean (Queens):** I will desist. The hon. member across the way does not want to hear it so I will leave it for some other time.

**Mr. Byrne:** Sing a carol.

**Mr. MacLean (Queens):** Well, if I were to mention this musical the Minister of Transport would be honoured because it is about a very famous person. The lines go something like this:

He has made with the aid  
At least of a geist  
Two books in the native vernacular,  
And the trips of his ships  
In a host on the coast  
Is something really spectacular.

But that is only in passing. I want to get back to my theme. I have a lot that I wish to say. We believe that the government should listen to reason. It is not too late. We believe the government should recognize the desires of the Canadian people and not continue to