

Motions for Papers

The government is dealing with the flag of Canada and it has thousands of designs. Some of them may be better than the one I have mentioned. I do not know, I have not seen them, but why should we not see them? Why should the people of Canada not have a chance to see these flags, or reproductions of them, and make their choice? Then perhaps according to the general attitude that has prevailed in Canada for so many years some compromise might be worked out, and not this frightful atrocity which the Prime Minister like a sawdust Caesar reminding me of Mussolini, is attempting to ram down our throats, trying to force this country to accept his personal choice for a flag.

All we are asking is, let us see the designs of the flags in the possession of the government and give the house a chance to formulate an opinion with regard to this issue. But that is denied by this government that denies so much information to this house and to the Canadian people.

Mr. Stewart: I wonder if the hon. gentleman would permit a question. I wonder if he would tell me if I am correct in assuming that he did not understand me—that would not surprise me—when I suggested to him that he, along with any other hon. members, could come along and inspect these flags which are in the possession of the Secretary of State? There is no objection to this whatsoever. Am I correct in understanding he did not see through what I said?

Mr. Churchill: Well, I understood the hon. member, but he seldom speaks very clearly. Fortunately I was alert enough to understand him. He is suggesting, "Go and call on the Secretary of State and privately he will show you the flags." Why not invite everybody? It would be simpler for the Secretary of State to come over here with his flags than for use to go individually to see them. This is one of the silly suggestions which I thought would not come from an hon. member for whom I had a high regard.

Mr. Stewart: I will drive you over in a car; you won't have to walk.

Mr. Churchill: So little concerned is the government with this issue, so bent is it on forcing this on the Canadian people that the ministers are not even in the house when the question of the production of flags is debated. This is a complete disregard for parliament, reminiscent of the days of 1956, [Mr. Churchill.]

an autocratic, arrogant, Liberal party that wants to destroy parliament.

Well, Mr. Speaker, at least that produced one minister, but it is under compulsion. That is the way we have to drag them in.

Mr. Sharp: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister called me to the telephone. I regret my absence.

Mr. Churchill: Well, it is not abnormal for people to have calls to the telephone when they want to get out of the house, because a debate is going on which they do not like. Because I was criticizing the government the minister did not defer the telephone call, as he might have; but no, he had to rush out. However he has come back under compulsion and we are glad one person is here representing this ineffective government. There is one confused member of the government present, instead of the whole crowd.

An hon. Member: Here they come.

Mr. Churchill: We are glad to see them. To get back to what is really a very serious matter, the production of these designs is desired by this house and I think this would be desired by people generally across Canada. Let us not just discard a flag which we have known and loved, which has been flying in this country for 100 years, and substitute another flag, the personal choice of the Prime Minister, without seeing these other designs on which the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Stewart) said people had worked with loving care. Why should we not show our appreciation of their interest by seeing the designs?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Batten): I must interrupt the hon. member and advise him that the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. D. S. Macdonald (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, surely the speech just concluded has been one of the most foolish we have heard—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Macdonald: One does not expect very much from the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) but we can be assured that when a poorer speech is made in this house that hon. member will make it.

Mr. Churchill: I don't want to compete with you.

Mr. Macdonald: It is distressing to hear a long standing member of this house, a privy