

of this design. I do not know whether this has been overlooked. Perhaps it has been deliberately overlooked, and this is the reason for the adamant refusal of a plebiscite. Perhaps a plebiscite would make this fact clear. Surely, honourable senators, it is a mistake to impose a flag when there is evidence, or at least a very grave suspicion, that the majority of Canadians in the majority of provinces are against this design.

I plead at this time for the application of the principles of co-operative federalism which has had, I must admit, considerable success in solving some other problems. I plead that the spirit and principle of co-operative federalism be now applied, and I suggest that if they are applied honestly the Government will have to say to themselves: We cannot proceed with this when not merely the majority of one province objects to it, but when a majority in a majority of provinces object to it.

Where, I ask the Leader of the Government and honourable senators, is co-operative federalism at this moment on this issue?

My second reason for suggesting that a delay at this time would be in the general interest is that this is, of course, an imposed decision. I need not validate that statement, I think, because it has been already proved in the regrettable use of closure. I suggest that Senator O'Leary's amendment offers a palliative to the harm and the hurt that has been done by it. It offers an opportunity to those who closed the doors, to open them again, and were they to do so I predict that they would draw to themselves the admiration and the approbation of a very large majority of the Canadian public.

At this moment I think of those great lines of Kipling:

If you can meet with triumph and
disaster

And treat those two imposters just the
same...

You'll be a man, my son.

I say to my friends opposite that the apparent victory at this time is "an imposter." I would plead with them to see this imposter, this imposter of the spirit of Canadians, for what he is, and treat this imposter in their house the same as they would treat the other imposter, the imposter of defeat.

My third reason is that at this time the adoption of this flag necessarily means the overriding of the feelings, the opinions, the wishes of a substantial minority, if it be a minority, of Canadians. I have mentioned the provincial aspect of that. I have heard it said that this or that percentage is in favour of this flag or some other flag. I do not know

the answer. As far as I know, nobody knows the answer. It is one of the most amazing things about this decision, that no attempt has been made, as far as I know, to get the facts. Indeed, the suggestion that the facts be obtained before this matter went any further, has been turned down. It matters not whether 65 or 70 per cent of Canadians will go along with this new design. What matters is that there are, at the lowest estimate I have seen, 35 to 40 per cent Canadians whose feelings are being ridden over roughshod.

Where does the Senate stand? As I have read the history of this great chamber, what impressed me more than anything was that its greatest historic role was the protection of minority rights. If ever there were an opportunity presented to this honourable body to rise to the occasion of that historic challenge, surely this is it. Surely here, in a matter of the greatest and gravest national importance, the Senate is not going to say "Forget the minority; we will not stand up for that minority."

Honourable senators, if this were a bill affecting a public company and if we were faced with the situation where a majority, following the directions of the executive of a company, were treating minority rights and feelings as they are now being treated here, what would we do? We would refer such a bill to a committee, and we would insist that there be delay until a thorough investigation had been made of the rights of that minority. Will we do this now? Will we do less for those Canadians who have strong emotional feelings on this matter than we would do for a minority of shareholders in an ordinary company?

My fourth reason is that I believe that very shortly our Constitution will be "repariated"—to use the current, though not altogether correct, word. It seems to me that this would give an excellent opportunity for a much more objective discussion of this question of a flag than we have had so far. Indeed, I think nobody will argue for one moment that there has been any objective collecting done, any objective analysis, any objective assessment or objective judgment in this very important matter.

In the atmosphere that will surely be, when we discuss our Constitution anew, men will cast their minds back to 100 years ago almost, and try to recreate that atmosphere—conciliation, compromise and agreement—which brought about this nation.

I cannot believe that inspired and dedicated men, wrestling as they will be with more difficult and more controversial problems than this, will not be able to deal with this