

*Canadian Flag*

**Mr. Muir (Lisgar):** No respect for anyone. Actually there is a growing suspicion, not only in this house but across the country—

**Mr. Moreau:** Would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Muir (Lisgar):**—that the government is mortally afraid of a referendum on the flag issue. I will let the hon. member speak later; he can make a half hour speech. There is a growing suspicion as I say, particularly in view of the recent poll, that the government is much afraid of a referendum on the flag issue because it knows that a great many people would vote to retain our flag in its present form, or at least some modified version of it. The government is afraid, because it has ignored the Canadian way of settling differences. Because we are of different races does not mean we are a melting pot in the sense that we consider our American cousins are. We must settle our differences by compromise because we have to live together and respect each other's wishes. But the government wants to present the Canadian people with an accomplished fact. The government hopes that by giving the Canadian people an accomplished fact now it will be forgotten when the next election is held. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it is underestimating the great regard in which this flag is held in the hearts of millions of our people.

**Mr. Winkler:** History will prove that.

**Mr. Muir (Lisgar):** On an earlier occasion when speaking on this issue I asked the Prime Minister to give consideration to withdrawing the resolution until such time as the people of Canada could voice their opinion on the flag issue. I think it is only fair to ask the same question again. Let us bend all our efforts to bring unity to our country before the one hundredth anniversary of its confederation, and having achieved that unity we will have something to symbolize. Perhaps on that momentous occasion we will be able to raise a new Canadian flag brought about by compromise, and the wisdom of the people of our nation.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I must say I have no apologies for entering the debate at this time. The Conservative party represents at least one third of the voters of Canada, as at the last election. There has been no disposition on the part of the government to take into consideration the views of this large segment of the Canadian people. No compromise has been offered. In fact a com-

promise of the views represented in parliament has been rejected both in the house and in the committee. We in the official opposition feel that it is in direct contradiction to our national concept of democratic rights. Completely ignoring the views of any minority is repugnant to us. To ignore the views of a large segment of our population on a matter as important as the flag is nothing less than scandalous. Once again I ask the Prime Minister to withdraw his flag resolution, in the interests of national unity, until the people of Canada have indicated their wishes in this matter.

**Hon. George C. Nowlan (Digby-Annapolis-Kings):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the raucous applause which greets me from the other side of the house and which pays tribute to me. This is only the second time I have risen in a good many months during which the flag debate has been before the committee and the house. Therefore I think I have some reason for speaking on the matter at this time. There are many aspects of the flag question on which I should like to speak, and I think I can speak with some force and perhaps spirit. But having read your rulings, Mr. Speaker, and knowing that we have an amendment before the house which calls for a plebiscite, so far as it lies within one Irishman to follow the rules of relevancy strictly and to deal strictly with the legality of this amendment I intend to speak only about the plebiscite, which I am sure will be a relief to you, sir, and possibly to others as well.

The first suggestion I would make in the few minutes remaining to me tonight is this. If the government or if parliament had decided to hold a plebiscite, the debate which has been going on for a long while now would have been relatively short. Much as many of us may disapprove of the design of the flag, much as many of us, and I particularly, disapprove of any change to a flag which has been recognized as the flag of this country for many years, we would have been prepared to accept the judgment of the Canadian people had the matter been submitted to them, and had there been an affirmative vote one way or the other as to the design of a flag. That of course has not been permitted, which is one of the main grievances of the official opposition, and I think one of the main grievances of the Canadian people. They are disturbed over the way this matter has been dealt with. If the people had been given the chance to speak and the matter had been referred to the Canadian public and a verdict