

Canadian Flag

proclaimed by His Majesty King George V on November 21, 1921—three maple leaves conjoined on one stem—in the colours red and white then designated for Canada, the red leaves occupying a field of white between vertical sections of blue on the edges of the flag.

And the proposed amendment thereto of Mr. Diefenbaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Herman Laverdière (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to prolong the debate on this resolution which is, in my opinion, of the utmost importance for national unity.

I fully support the resolution and I hope it will soon be put to a vote. If the minority intends to delay the flag debate so as to prevent hon. members from taking holidays, then I would suggest that the question be put to a vote as soon as possible and that afterwards we continue, without any adjournment, with the other legislation on the order paper.

[Text]

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): Mr. Speaker, initially I should like to say to the house that on the basis of the invitation the Prime Minister extended to members of the House of Commons to participate in this debate, and contrary to the brief words by the previous speaker, it is my intention, as well as the intention of my colleagues who so desire, to express our views and the views of the people of our ridings in regard to this important matter.

I have before me a communication from the local council of the town in which I reside. This communication was prepared without any previous discussion or organization. It is addressed to me personally and sets forth the subject matter in this way:

The following motion was endorsed by Hanover town council meeting Monday, June 8th, 1964.

"Moved by Albert Seip, seconded by T.G. Fyfe that we again endorse the red ensign as the Canada national flag and petition the M.P. for Grey-Bruce to support our stand."

Carried.

Yours truly,
Duncan McCallum,
Clerk.

I am not going to go into the significance of the names contained in this communication but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the house that this is extremely significant to me. I am sure some of the names would be recognized by members on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, I think I mentioned that the date of that communication was June 10. On

[Mr. Gordon.]

June 26, again without any degree of prior communication, I received the consensus of the county of Grey, province of Ontario, which is many miles removed from my home town:

Dear Sir:

The following resolution was passed by Grey county council at its session last week:

"Moved by Reeve Hargest, seconded by Deputy Reeve Davenport, that Grey county council endorse the resolution of Hanover town council whereby the red ensign be retained as the national flag of Canada and the members of parliament for this riding, Mr. Eric Winkler and Mr. Percy Noble, be notified of action taken."

Your consideration and co-operation in this regard would be appreciated.

That is signed by Mr. H. Henderson, county clerk-treasurer. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have had over 2,000 communications expressing similar support and only three to the contrary. So I doubt very much that there will be any question in the mind of anyone as to where the residents of the county of Grey in the province of Ontario stand generally on this matter.

When the hon. member for Bellechasse speaks about the intention of other people in the house to delay, I refer him once again to the invitation of the Prime Minister in regard to this debate. I also express, as he did, my concern respecting the importance of this debate in relation to the unity of the country, the people of the country and particularly minority groups. I shall elaborate on that in due course. I believe that the balance of the debate will be very serious for Canadians, and I implore all members of the house who participate in the ensuing debate to use extreme moderation in their approach to this very important question even although I do not believe such consideration was extended when the Prime Minister presented this motion to the house. I do not believe there was very much, if any, consultation. Indeed, it appears to be the fact that there was little or no consultation so far as the cabinet was concerned, and certainly no consultation so far as the supporters of the government were concerned.

As witness to public reaction in this connection I refer to an editorial in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* of Tuesday, June 16, 1964, in which the following appeared:

Prime Minister Lester Pearson's claim that he has pressed the issue of a national flag at this time to promote national unity is now no more than a bad joke—a sick joke. It is painfully apparent that he has succeeded only in encouraging disunity.

I am sure the hon. member for Bellechasse meant to impress not only the house but the