

Canadian Sovereignty

As concerns the national anthem, as for the distinctive national flag, there is no agreement, since similar bills have been introduced for five years in a row, and nothing tangible has been achieved as yet.

The Liberal party has decided, as a matter of policy, that we shall have a distinctive national flag. We shall have a distinctive flag—

An hon. Member: Two.

Mr. Boulanger:—a distinctive national flag.

Mr. Pigeon: Six.

Mr. Boulanger: Hon. members opposite do not want to understand. Yet, our leader has explained the situation clearly and unequivocally. I wonder if they are not blinded by the Union Nationale screen.

Mr. Speaker, I should not like to delay passage of this bill. I know that other members wish to express their views on the subject. So I say that it is our hope that the proposal put forward by the hon. member for Sherbrooke will be accepted as a second best choice.

Besides, at the next session, with the Liberal government in power, we shall adopt a bill which will come into force the year after, as promised by our leader (Mr. Pearson).

An hon. Member: Two flags, two bills?

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Allard: I want to direct a question to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. He pointed out several times that the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent had not been afraid to express his views on the matter of a Canadian flag. Would he kindly tell us what was the opinion of the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent on the matter of a Canadian flag? What was it supposed to include?

Mr. Boulanger: I have already said it in this house. Perhaps I am not able to repeat word for word what Mr. St. Laurent said at the time but he did say that as long as the national flag is not a rallying sign, there would be no distinctive national flag.

And since we are talking about a distinctive national flag, I should like to add this: if Mr. St. Laurent, at the time, did not want to give Canada a distinctive national flag, why is it that the Conservatives who, during the 1957-58 campaign, kept promising, all over the province of Quebec, the adoption of a flag, did not fulfil their promise after having been in office for five years?

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I shall commend the hon. member for Sherbrooke

(Mr. Allard) for having submitted this bill, on which I want to make a few remarks.

In 1967, Canada will celebrate its centenary as a colony, and not as a sovereign state, unless the British North America Act is properly amended.

As a matter of fact, clause 56 of the British North America Act, stipulates that the parliament in London can disallow any act passed by the Canadian parliament. Therefore, there is some urgent need for Ottawa to approach the British parliament with a view to having that clause removed from our constitution.

To my mind, Mr. Speaker, this is the first step towards an independent Canada, that is to say a country with a sovereign status.

Moreover, every Canadian is, at the same time, a British subject, a Canadian citizen and a citizen of the commonwealth.

Any Britisher is automatically a Canadian citizen.

Our country should pass some legislation conferring on every immigrant, from the British Isles or elsewhere, the rights ordinarily granted to immigrants. They should not have the right to exercise any public function before becoming Canadian citizens.

Before adopting a distinctive national flag, it is important for Canada to clearly establish its sovereign status.

We can talk of national independence when we are part of the commonwealth of the United Nations organization and of the North Atlantic alliance.

The word "dominion" should also be removed wherever found. As to the national anthem of this country, "O Canada" is now to my mind, officially recognized.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson), has advocated having two flags: one for Sundays and one for week days. He also favours two national anthems, whereas the hon. member for Bonaville-Twillington (Mr. Pickersgill), wants six flags.

Mr. Speaker, this indicates the confusion within the opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition advocates two flags and two national anthems, whereas Mr. Pickersgill wants six flags and probably six national anthems.

Mr. Speaker, the promise made by the Leader of the Opposition to give Canada two flags and two official anthems, characterizes very well the policy of his party which wants to divide the country in two and offer a flag and a national anthem to the English-speaking group, and another flag and another national anthem to the French-speaking group.

By this very fact, the opposition wants to destroy confederation and proclaim Quebec