

Canadian Flag

lieve the need for such changes will be made evident, not by managed news leaks but by natural developments.

I am receiving a tremendous amount of correspondence on this issue—more than 1,700 individual pieces of mail along with the usual flow of lobby material which all members of parliament receive on every subject. Of all these writers, there were only seven who wanted the Canadian red ensign dispensed with. There were 13 who indicated that their preference was for the union jack alone. The remainder all asked that the Canadian red ensign be retained—the flag of their lifetime, the distinctive Canadian flag which has been recognized on no fewer than three occasions. Although this correspondence cannot represent everybody in my constituency, I am sure Mr. Gallup would consider that it is an overwhelming indication of what the people in my area, at least, desire. Perhaps this situation has come about because the Prime Minister did not say clearly to the people during the last election that this was one of the planks of his platform. Perhaps the people were taken somewhat by surprise and were unprepared for this confrontation. I do not know.

I might take up a great deal of time by reading some of this correspondence. I have listened to many of the speeches which have been made in this house and I have heard other hon. members reading from the correspondence which they have received. All I need say in this regard is that I have had letters from wives of servicemen, from mothers of sons who were killed in action, from ladies who have lost not only their sons but their husbands as well. And the tenor running through all these messages is this: Please stand up and fight for our flag, which is the only reminder that we have of the sacrifices made by members of our families in two world wars. I am ashamed that those who seek to have their way with regard to this flag question should seek to demean the opinions expressed by those who do not feel as they do. I think this indicates the weakness of the whole argument put forward by those who say that the majority of the Canadian people want a new flag with none of our traditions attached to it. I cannot understand anyone taking part in a debate if his proposals are so negative that his only contribution must be to demean opponents who put forward ideas different than his own. I think the caricatures of the Canadian Legion for its stand on the flag question will take Canada many years to live down. I do not

[Mr. More.]

think it is proper to joke at the expense of people who have made sacrifices and who have offered to make the supreme sacrifice. I do not think people who have honestly made their views known to the government should be demeaned by a cartoon such as the one published by the *Citizen* with regard to the Legion's stand on this question. Those who for their own purposes laugh and scoff at letters written by sincere and honest people, members of whose families have made the supreme sacrifice as members of the armed services, and who wish to retain the red ensign for that reason should be ashamed of themselves. We may not agree with them, but if they honestly feel that way, and have so expressed themselves, they do not deserve to be scoffed at.

An hon. Member: Who is scoffing at them?

Mr. More: It has been done in this house.

An hon. Member: Nonsense.

Mr. More: It has. If the hon. member wants to make a speech, let him get up on his feet and not sit silent and refuse to carry out his obligations to his constituents and to parliament. There have been quite a few occasions on which members opposite have given me the odd lecture on conduct in this chamber, but I will stake my conduct against the conduct of those who have sought to lecture me and bring me to order. I had a little experience in conducting business and taking part in public meetings before I came to this house, and I have not been given to interruption. I have been given to listening to members while they advance their arguments in this house and taking what they say into consideration, because I believe that is what this house is for. All I ask in return is that I be given the same consideration in return. And if the hon. member, or any hon. member, disagrees with the arguments I am putting forward or the position I am taking, he will have at least an audience of one when he rises properly to make his own observations here in this house.

I say it is a shame to this nation that the opinions of people who have given everything to this country should be demeaned. I should also like to refer to the I.O.D.E. because I believe this organization also has given great service to our country. Its members, too, have taken a position which honestly expresses their views and, while it may not be the opinion of others in Canada, it should be recognized as an honest and sin-