

Hon. Harry A. Willis: Honourable senators, it is with a great deal of pleasure I rise to speak today. I congratulate the honourable Senator Connolly (Ottawa West) on his lucid introduction of this legislation. He did it in a very fair, nonpartisan manner, and as always he did it very well. I also congratulate my colleague the honourable Senator O'Leary (Carleton). I do not think I have ever listened to a greater oration than that which he delivered yesterday.

I also congratulate the others who have spoken in this debate. However, might I remind Senator Croll that he was sworn in as a minister of the Ontario Government in 1934 under the Red Ensign. Whatever he may say now, he must remember that. I knew, of course, that my colleague, the revered surgeon Senator Joseph Sullivan was a great hockey player, having played goal for the Varsity Grads in the Olympics of 1928. He is running close to Senator O'Leary as an orator. In listening to him speak I could only wish that I had more Irish blood in me than I have.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: Who wouldn't?

Hon. Mr. Willis: I want to make it clear that we on this side of the house are not filibustering; we are speaking on our own. We have had that privilege conferred on us by our leader, Senator Brooks. We can say whatever we like, and, as I have said, we have no organized filibuster. But, as a senator appointed to this chamber, I feel I have the right to express my view.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Willis: I hold in my hand a copy of the Speech from the Throne delivered on February 18, 1964. Is there any mention in that of the flag? No, not one word of it. The word "flag" does not appear.

Now I want to ask the Leader of the Government and honourable senators opposite, why the urgency at this time since it was not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne?

May I remind my honourable friends opposite that at Easter 1964 the Prime Minister of this country made a speech in which he said there are certain priorities in legislation that have to be put through. Was the flag among them? No, it was not. He never thought of it at that time, apparently. The chronicle of the flag is this, and I quote from the *Ottawa Gazette* of December 15, 1964.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I think the honourable senator has reference to the *Montreal Gazette*.

Hon. Mr. Willis: Probably it is. At any rate it is not friendly to our party or to this side of the house. It says:

May 14: Prime Minister Pearson tells a few reporters at confidential briefing that new flag legislation will be introduced in Parliament shortly, says Government will stand or fall on the issue.

Did my honourable friend know about that at that time? Did my honourable friend or the honourable Senator Macdonald (Brantford), who was leader of the house at that time and a cabinet minister, know about that flag? Had he ever seen it, or had any of the honourable senators opposite ever seen it?

What right has one man to stand up and say he is going to introduce a flag, and later show it to reporters, and still later show it to the cabinet and take it to Winnipeg? We of my party are not opposed to a distinctive Canadian flag. We have welcomed it in our resolutions at conventions and at annual meetings. We want a distinctive flag, but we think its selection should be approached in a very careful, considerate and sober way. We do not think it should be introduced by one person, no matter how nice a man he may be, and no matter if he is Prime Minister of Canada.

I think the original design should have been submitted to a joint committee of the Commons and the Senate. Why did they not adopt the course adopted by the Right Honourable Mackenzie King in 1945 and 1946?

What is a flag? A flag embodies the heart and soul of a people. Surely in a period of six or eight months one cannot hope to reach agreement on what the design of a flag should be. As I have said, we of this party would like to see a distinctive flag, but we would also like to see thereon some of the traditions and heraldry of the past. I think we are entitled to that.

I cannot forgive the present Government for having a committee on this flag without having this chamber represented on it. The Parliament of Canada consists of the reigning Sovereign, the House of Commons and the Senate, and I think this chamber was shamefully ignored in that committee. I take the Government to task for that. I ask each honourable senator on the Government side whether they ever saw the design first produced by the Prime Minister to his cabinet. I venture to say that many of them wish they could answer the question as to when they first saw it.

A flag must not be the imagination of one man; it should be considered by a committee of all parties in both the Commons and the Senate. But we were completely ignored.

In 1945 the late revered and great Prime Minister of this country, Mackenzie King, called a committee of both houses under the chairmanship of Walter Harris, who was later the Minister of Finance and house leader, to