

*Canadian Flag*

outcome was exactly the opposite. The people had voted two to one in favour of conscription. The same holds true of the province of Quebec. When the vote was taken on the question of conscription it was expected that perhaps 5,000 or 10,000 people would vote for conscription, but when the ballots were counted it was found that 376,188 in Quebec had voted for conscription. So one never knows what the public are thinking on these matters that are so close and dear to them. Just as the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) found out that the flag he introduced into the house was not acceptable, so we might be quite surprised to find out in a plebiscite how people are thinking on this very important matter.

Let us briefly look into the history of plebiscites. I am a great believer in turning back the pages of history to find out what has been done, and what we should do. As far back as 1517 Erasmus, the great philosopher, stated in very precise language that all power and authority over people rests on their consent and that title by conquest is a fallacy. In 1527 Francis I of France, perceiving the political value of the principle, used it as a weapon of diplomacy. Henry II used self-determination; it is very interesting to note it was not referred to as a plebiscite in those days, but rather self-determination, for assuming control of Toal, Metz and Verdun.

Now we come to the period when the method of popular consultation or self-determination enjoyed its greatest use. From 1855 to 1866 scarcely a year passed without some endorsement of the plebiscite method. Napoleon's treaty with Cavour contained a clause providing for consultation of the inhabitants. The treaty of Prague on August 23, 1866, terminated the war between Prussia and Austria over the spoils they had seized from Denmark in 1864. Article V stated that Prussia could only incorporate the duchies if a free vote or plebiscite was taken.

In the case of the separation of Norway from Sweden in 1905 several joint committees were set up and meeting after meeting was held to decide what the solution should be. A plebiscite was proposed. The result settled the issue and today we have the two separate countries of Norway and Sweden. The island of Bartholomew in the West Indies was given to France by the Swedish cabinet in 1877 but not until a plebiscite or self-determination vote had been held.

Australia has used the plebiscite on several occasions and most recently to determine whether or not the communist party should

be allowed to operate in Australia. New Zealand used the plebiscite on the liquor question. Ghana used a plebiscite for deciding whether or not it would be a republic and so did South Africa in 1960. We are all aware that in the United States all state constitutions except one contain provision for taking a poll of the people, or holding a plebiscite. So we find plebiscites have been used down through the years. They are very necessary and have played a part in solving many difficult problems.

We only have to think of how often plebiscites are used at the municipal level. Right in my own city this month two plebiscites are being held, one on the question of Sunday sports and movies and the other on fluoridation. Why are they being held? Because these are matters that are personal to the people and close to their consciences. Do the people of my city criticize the aldermen for using a plebiscite? Do they accuse them of not being able to make up their minds as members of the council? No. No such suggestion has ever been made. The people are anxious to have the opportunity to express their views according to their own consciences on matters so personal to them.

Therefore I maintain that in deciding the flag issue, an issue so close to the consciences of the people of Canada, we should give the people the opportunity to decide through a plebiscite. As I said, plebiscites are not new. They have been used through the ages. I cannot understand why the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) does not see the advantage of a plebiscite. One would think he would jump at the opportunity. Even Francis I of France, as I stated, recognized the political value of the plebiscite as far back as 1527 and used it as a weapon of diplomacy. Great diplomat that the Prime Minister is, one would think that he too would use the plebiscite, this weapon of diplomacy, as one way to find the answer to this difficult problem.

Indeed, Liberal governments have used plebiscites on two occasions. One was held in 1898 to settle the issue of prohibition and one was held in 1942 on the question of conscription. So this would not be the first time that a Liberal government has used the plebiscite.

I believe I have given enough examples, Mr. Speaker, of the many instances in which a plebiscite has been used to settle major issues to prove the value of a plebiscite from the point of view of the results that can be obtained. Finally, I say, not only what I said at the beginning of my speech, but also

[Mr. Hales.]