

Canadian Flag

and Mail and see what this famous columnist has to say on the subject. He is warmly in favour of a plebiscite.

Now I wish to say something about the preference I have in a personal way for the Canadian red ensign. I do not wish there to be any doubt in this chamber as to where I stand. I propose to vote for the referendum because I consider that the fair way to deal with the matter before us is to refer it to the people of Canada for settlement. But as far as my personal opinion is concerned, I stand foursquare for the Canadian red ensign.

I have had much correspondence on this subject. I have talked with many people, especially to people in my own constituency. I suppose I have contacted 500 people, and so far all of them favour the retention of the Canadian red ensign with the exception of two, and only one of those favoured the design now being put forward by the Prime Minister. I have advanced my own views and they have met with approval. As a matter of fact I have received a telegram from a prominent member of the Liberal party, a resident of Fredericton—an official, I believe, of the Liberal association in the constituency of the hon. member who represents York-Sunbury in this chamber. Apart from his political views he is an outstanding man who has won honours for gallantry in action, including the Distinguished Flying Cross as a pathfinder pilot in world war II. Here is what he says:

New Brunswick command of the Canadian Legion solidly in favour of retaining the red ensign as Canada's national flag.

Some hon. members have argued in this chamber that new Canadians favour the so-called Pearson design. I do not believe they do, at any rate to the extent they have been represented as doing. We have new Canadians in this house. I wish to quote what one of them said about the flag long before this controversy was injected into parliament by resolution. The words are to be found at page 382 of *Hansard* for May 28, 1963. This is what this hon. member had to say, and I will identify him in a few minutes:

I was one of the more fortunate ones who succeeded in emigrating to another country, in my case to Canada, and I well recall stepping on Canadian soil and being able to see for the first time the Canadian flag which stood for principles quite contrary to those experienced under the flag of the hammer and sickle. I was also aware of the fact that under this Canadian flag thousands of Canadians had fought and given their lives to preserve freedom and democracy as we know them today, all symbolized in the Canadian flag.

Later on he said:

I am not the only one who is concerned with this issue of the flag. Many new Canadians will also be concerned with the question of a new distinctive Canadian flag, since all of them at one time or another lived under another flag. Undoubtedly, the question will arise in their minds as to whether this new flag will be one which will stand for the same high principles, the same rights and privileges that have been afforded to Canadians of whatever race, creed or colour, as those which were available under the old flag, a flag under which Canada grew to the position of high esteem in which she is held by all the countries of the world. As a result of this national issue before us, all Canadians will search their hearts and souls in an attempt to find the right answer to the question of whether or not Canada should have a distinctive Canadian flag or retain the red ensign. An answer must be found and a decision must be made.

As I said at the outset, perhaps I should have been the last man to speak about the Canadian flag. My purpose in speaking, however, is only to enumerate the high principles for which Canada stands now, and for which she stood in the past, all symbolized in our Canadian flag. However, should the time ever come when this house decides to adopt a new Canadian flag then, as one who believes in democratic majority rule, I would accept this decision and swear my loyalty to Canada under this new, distinctive Canadian flag of whatever design. At the same time, however, I should like to be around when the old flag, the red ensign, which to me is the free flag, is lowered for the last time. I should like to pay my last tribute to it, to touch it for the last time and then wipe away a tear or two because of my affection for the old Canadian flag, the only free flag I ever knew in my life and the flag by which Canada is known all over the world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton): Those were the words of my hon. friend for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale (Mr. Rapp). May I add that it must be a matter of great encouragement to new Canadians when they come to a country like Canada and read of the career of our hon. friend who represents that constituency. It shows that an immigrant boy has been chosen after something like 30 years to represent the people of his constituency in the highest parliament in the land. It is privileges of that kind which are contained in the things for which the flag stands. We in this house have every reason to think that the hon. member to whom I refer, the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale, speaks for and represents the views of the new Canadians; we have no reason to think otherwise.

Since the Prime Minister is sensitive about election commitments I assume that he would consider them fulfilled when he presented his design to parliament. He said that he was under an obligation to present a design to par-