

*Canadian Flag*

greater than 5 per cent, I have overwhelming evidence that my instruction is to use every effort at my command to see that this apparently inevitable decision is not taken by this house.

One of the members who spoke before me during this debate—one of the few members from the other side who has spoken, the hon. member for Terrebonne (Mr. Cadieux)—asked what more we wanted than 72 per cent of the committee supporting the design as recommended in the report. I suggest to him that that does not mean too much, because 20 years ago a committee of this house, composed of men as dedicated I presume as those who served on the latest flag committee, approved the report by a vote of 95.8 per cent. An astute leader of that time recognized the consequences of adopting a report that had received even such an overwhelming majority as that, and the report was never moved for concurrence and never dealt with by the house.

I wonder, in the present circumstances, which in my limited knowledge appear to me to be far more dangerous in their potential divisiveness than the circumstances surrounding the report of the committee 20 years ago, whether the wise course has been followed in moving concurrence. I have read much about this debate and listened to many expressions of opinion, and when I spoke before I said I did not understand the Prime Minister's apparent obsession with this matter in light of the evidence. One individual who expressed himself on this matter commenced his comments by saying:

What bugs Pearson? Is it love of exerting power over others against their will? Is it a misguided streak of Tom Sawyer adventure in his nature that leads him to go his own way? It could be; but I am inclined to think he took on a job too big for him and is showing an obduracy that inevitably causes trouble.

I do not like to engage in personal comments on matters of substance such as the one now before us, and it has not been one of my traits. I have a rather charitable nature that precludes me from indulging in personalities. But we have come to the point where I have to speak strongly because I feel I have no other choice.

I am reminded, as I proceed to make my case for a plebiscite, of the remarks of the hon. member for Danforth (Mr. Scott) when he spoke in seconding the motion to concur in the report. As found on page 10694 of *Hansard* he said in his last sentence:

I hope that in time it will win the allegiance of the Canadian people.

What stronger evidence could you have than that? Even though he is supporting concurrence in the report at this time, he recognizes the dangers in rushing into this inevitable decision. Let us face it. None of us is so silly that he or she does not recognize what that decision will be when the vote comes. I have never indulged or found much pleasure in standing before a mirror and speaking and gesticulating to find out whether or not I was effective. It has tried me sorely in sitting here throughout this debate and listening to those who have been trying to contribute sincerely and with some cause to a proper solution of this matter, to note that in speaking to the other side of the chamber and other sections of the house they have been addressing what appears to be a stone wall. Any member who has looked around the house, seen the attitudes and heard the interjections and the nonsense recognizes what the situation is, because it is evident there are no open minds in other parts of the house.

I think I cannot make my case properly without referring to some of the remarks made by other speakers in this debate. The hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Matheson), the great lover, spoke in this debate. I have listened to him speak several times on this subject. I know that he would have to cry a wee drop if the red ensign came down. He said that. I know that he would love the Pearson pennant. He belaboured my leader for calling it the troika flag. You would think that my leader was the first to suggest that this pennant was the troika flag. I should like to remind him that the idea of calling it the troika flag originated with the Postmaster General (Mr. Nicholson) who, in speaking outside the house about the three maple leaves design, said that one was for the English, one was for the French and the other was for the rest of us. That was what gave rise to calling it the troika flag. It was the troika love of the hon. member for Leeds. When I heard him say that he loved the flag recommended by the committee I wondered whether he had been playing the old children's game we used to play of picking petals off a daisy and saying "I love you, I love you not". My experience was that you did not always wind up with "I love you"; but apparently he has had a run of luck far beyond anything I have ever heard of before.