

*Canadian Flag*

tion for many years, is strongly opposed to hauling down the Canadian red ensign and replacing it with a flag carrying a political label.

Americans proudly and reverently refer to their flag as "old glory". If we are forced to hoist this political pennant, Mr. Speaker, I will leave it to the imagination of this house as to how it will be referred to by millions of disappointed and indignant Canadians.

I will now read to you some of the thoughts of my constituents as expressed in letters to me. This is part of a letter from a businessman:

I have talked with many people and have had several phone calls urging me to use any influence I might have to further encourage your stand which you have already taken... If people do not write you concerning the flag issue, it does not mean they are not up in arms. I have never experienced an issue that has roused the people as much as the present flag issue has.

This comment was written on a red ensign postcard; I will not mention the person's name. I am sure he would be recognized on the other side of the house:

I feel sure that the majority of our Meaford people prefer this flag. Hope you are "with us" in this matter.

This one is from a leading industrialist in my riding:

I entreat you to use your influence at this time with utmost urging for the retention of our red ensign as the true Canadian flag.

Here is one from a leading executive:

In my humble opinion there is nothing whatsoever wrong with our present flag. It embodies our ties with Great Britain and at the same time constantly reminds us through the crest of the peoples who settled this nation.

I have always considered myself as a democratic person, but I will never submit to a flag obviously designed to appease a minority group in this country. On the other hand if the Prime Minister will hold a national referendum I will, as a law abiding citizen, bow to the majority vote.

This letter is from a former school teacher, now retired.

A Canadian flag without the union jack wouldn't mean a thing to me. If the French people in Canada don't appreciate what Britain tried to do for them when she left them their language and laws and customs, they are an ungrateful bunch. Maybe it would have been better for all concerned if English had been made the only official language and if there had been no religion allowed in schools.

This letter is from an insurance broker:

May I commend you on your loyal and common sense stand on the flag issue.

Unfortunately, it would seem that Mr. Pearson and his cabinet are not men of true integrity like

yourself, but are intent on having their way by whatever means possible without regard to the wishes of the people of Canada as a whole. It would appear that they are trading on the intense loyalty of those who prefer the red ensign (or at least a flag with the union jack in the quarter).

...Mr. Pearson in his short term in office has done more to disunite our country than any subversive element could hope to do. In the first place when he promised a "distinctive" flag for Canada I would venture to say that most Canadians (outside of Quebec) thought he referred to finalizing the order in council which proclaimed the red ensign as the "distinctive" flag of Canada.

A vote by members of parliament is not a vote of the people as a whole. I know for a fact that two Liberal members wrote to some of their constituents, in reply to requests to support the red ensign, to the effect that they would vote with the party regardless of the wishes of their constituents. The past performance of the Liberal party and members thereof confirms that this will be the case with all members of that party.

Mr. Pearson should also remember that while his party has more members in the house, they were not voted in by a majority of the people of Canada. Even a vote on the issue of the flag would not necessarily mean that the will of the majority of the people would be implemented. It would seem to me that the sane and proper way to establish a symbol for our country would be to have a referendum at a time when there would be no additional cost except for printing and paper for the ballot... Let parliament get on with necessary business; let the flag issue be decided quietly with every Canadian being allowed to indicate his or her preference without any clashes with other loyalties.

This talk of Canada being a mature nation now and should therefore not show (by using the union jack) any subservience to any other power, is so childish—does a man on reaching maturity change his name (or symbol)? No. He looks forward to having sons and grandsons who will carry on the name (or symbol) he proudly bears. No symbol of Canada is distinctive of Canada unless it includes the union jack. For Canada to drop the union jack from its symbol would be like a man, on reaching maturity, dropping his surname and becoming just any Tom, Dick or Harry.

Another man says this:

If Canadians change their flag at the whim of every extremist or even every government, people in other countries may get the impression that Canadians may change their ideas and ideals the same way. The way I see it, Canada has an enviable reputation to uphold in most countries of the world. Anything which may jeopardize this position should be carefully scrutinized...

...However, if they definitely decide there has to be an entirely new flag, I still believe the union jack and the fleur-de-lis should be part of it. Leaving these two symbols out seems a little like discarding your grandparents or parents picture as soon as we become of age or they have passed on to their reward. We need to keep these symbols to remind us and especially succeeding generations that it was these two great countries who actually gave birth to this great country of ours... Does this government not intend to please the majority of its citizens?