

Canadian Flag

I am speaking about the plebiscite, Mr. Speaker, and that seems to be a pertinent subject. I had just finished indicating the results of a plebiscite held in a classroom in the city of London. The point I should like to make at this time is that if the results of this vote are any indication of the feelings of the people in my riding then I have every right to be standing in this house and speaking in the manner in which I am speaking.

Mr. Grégoire: No.

Mr. Winkler: Certainly.

Mr. Caouette: Why not vote on the amendment?

Mr. Millar: Why don't you fellows go outside and settle the argument and let me talk?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. May I suggest to the hon. member that he direct his remarks to the Chair. The Chair is listening very attentively to them.

Mr. Millar: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. You are absolutely right. I suggest that other people in the house should do likewise rather than addressing their remarks to me. Following the ballot held in this schoolroom I gave the children the opportunity of asking questions which I answered to the best of my ability in a strictly non-political way.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Millar: Well, I was at least fair enough to suggest to that class that the next member of parliament who addressed them might be of a different political faith than that represented by myself. To get back to the questions, there was one question I could not answer. A young lad about 10 years of age spoke up and said: "Mr. Millar, why do the people of Canada not have the opportunity to vote on the new flag?" What I should have done was suggest that he direct that question to the Prime Minister of the country.

The present government has tried to justify the introduction of this controversial issue on the ground that it will unite Canada. I suggest that if the division throughout Canada is indicated by the division in this house and the present controversy, the Prime Minister of the country has done the greatest disservice he could possibly do, and that the only way the situation can be remedied is to take this issue out of the House of Commons.

I for one, Mr. Speaker, question the design of the present flag. I question the sincerity of the present leader of the government.

Where is the Prime Minister who stood up and said: "I support the tri-maple leaf flag and I am prepared to have my government stand or fall on that design"?

An hon. Member: He did not say that.

Mr. Millar: Where are those few members on the government side who stood up and took up the time of the house trying to justify that design as having historical significance, and as being the only flag design acceptable in this situation? Where are they today? Where are those members of the government who blindly support the government and refuse to stand up in the House of Commons and justify their position? Are those the people who continually say "question, question", and are prepared to vote blindly?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Millar: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I question the design of this flag.

Mr. Grégoire: Dispense.

Mr. Millar: In support of my stand I should like to read a letter into the record. I think all members should listen to this, particularly those French Canadian members who are so interested in interrupting me. This letter is written by one, Lord Elgin, at Quebec. The date of the letter is September, 1847.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am wondering whether that letter is relevant to the amendment before us.

Mr. Millar: If it is not relevant I am prepared to have it struck from the record. It is dated Quebec, September 27, 1847 and is written by one, Lord Elgin.

[Translation]

Mr. Plourde: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Reading letters dating from 1845 or 1847 is really too much. Do you think the hon. member for Middlesex East (Mr. Millar) abides by the rules? We of the Ralliement Cr ditistes, as well as some members of other parties have both feet on the ground. People ask why the Tories are filibustering; it is precisely because they are up in the clouds, they balk. We expressly object to this letter being read, and we request that the hon. member be called to order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I see that the hon. member for Quebec West shares the apprehension of the Chair as to whether this