

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I do not think they have left, but their departure is imminent.

CANADIAN FLAGINQUIRY AS TO DELAY IN ESTABLISHING
COMMITTEE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I ask the Prime Minister the reason for the delay in setting up the committee to deal with the selection of a distinctive national flag for Canada. This matter was agreed to unanimously by the house last Thursday, but so far the committee has not been set up. Everybody seems to be getting into the act and seeking to predict what the committee is going to decide. It seems to me the committee ought to be appointed as quickly as possible. I ask the Prime Minister the reason for the delay.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): The names selected from the government side were given to the government whip last Friday evening. The names of representatives of the smaller opposition parties were also sent to the government whip last Friday night, though in one case this was subject to confirmation on Monday morning, which confirmation was received. We have received no names from the official opposition as their representatives on the committee.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I should like to say that what the Prime Minister has said regarding the opposition is correct. We were waiting for the return of two members, and later today the names will be made available, just as soon as we can secure confirmation from those two members.

Mr. Douglas: May I ask a supplementary question. I wonder if I could ask the Prime Minister whether the party leaders could agree to adopt a moratorium on making predictions as to what the committee is going to recommend as a flag design. It seems to me that the committee's work will be made much easier if we can persuade both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, to take the veil of silence for the next six weeks.

Mr. Pearson: I think this would be an extremely good idea. I was very disturbed, as I know my hon. friend was, when after a meeting of the party leaders the other day

[Mr. Churchill.]

at which it was agreed that the committee should be set up, this agreement was interpreted in certain quarters as a retreat by the government, that they had the government on the run, that we were giving up on our own desire for a distinctive maple leaf flag. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I felt it was desirable for me to express my own view that we should have such a flag.

Both sides having stated their position on this matter, and the committee being set up I hope tomorrow, with no instructions having been given to members of that committee by any of the party leaders—I hope that is the case with my right hon. friend, because it is certainly the case on this side—perhaps the committee could be allowed to do its work in peace and quiet.

FINANCEPAYMENT OF U.S. SHARE OF COLUMBIA RIVER
DEVELOPMENT

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Finance.

Is it true that the Canadian government has accepted, as payment for financing the development of the Columbia river, treasury notes or other securities from the United States government in lieu of American dollars and that those funds were not deposited to the account of the Receiver General of Canada?

[Text]

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government is investing these funds to the best advantage, and I think it is a satisfactory way of handling this transaction.

WATER RESOURCES

INQUIRY AS TO PROVISION FOR PROTECTION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Léon Balcer (Three Rivers): I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister intend to take steps to set up completely new machinery to deal with the protection of our water resources, the wastage and mishandling of which has reached the proportions of a national disaster, as revealed in a very informative study which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* on Saturday?