

*Canadian Flag*

The question whether or not Canada should have a new distinctive flag has been a perennial one. It crops up sometimes from the most unexpected sources, which would appear to indicate a serious lack of information concerning the flag itself and the source from which the propaganda originally emanated. Does it stem from citizens loyal to Canada and the crown or from subversive forces who desire to dismember the British commonwealth and break every link that binds together all the units of our great commonwealth of free and equal nations? God forbid. I say this because in the past I spent some time in England and Scotland and I came home thanking God that there were people in Great Britain ever ready to help, wonderful people, people whom I consider among the finest in the world.

Such information should be given to all who raise the question in order that the general public will be able to weigh the various arguments with understanding of the various issues involved and arrive at an intelligent conclusion. Surely we all realize that the Canadian red ensign has gradually grown up with the dominion until today it is the symbol of Canada's place of importance, not only among the great dominions of the commonwealth but among the nations of the world, as a symbol of leadership and prestige. It is a well known fact that people from other countries of the world recognize our Canadian red ensign as Canada's national flag. But are we in Canada too complacent about knowing our own flag? Ask yourselves this question in all sincerity.

Our men and women of the army, air force and navy services have proudly served under it in foreign lands, just as their fathers did before them during the first great war. To them it represented all for which they stood, all for which they were ready and willing to lay down their lives if necessary, and for it many shed their blood.

Have those of you who are ready to discard this fine flag asked yourselves this question? What would the 110,000 men and women who laid down their lives during the first and second great wars say if they were able to come back to this life? What would be their reaction to such a move? I am sure their answer would be: Why do we need a new flag?

Some time ago I read in one of our daily papers that in choosing a new flag we should forget our past. Just imagine someone like myself forgetting my past. What would the answer be from the thousands of disabled

veterans, the blind, the amps and paraplegic cases like myself, who have to carry our scars to our graves? Can we forget the past? I ask hon. members that question. I am sure we have carried our scars without complaint but I ask you not to make our load a greater burden.

By common custom the Canadian red ensign has been recognized as a distinctive Canadian flag, and this position was tacitly acknowledged and confirmed by prime minister Mackenzie King, who was born in Kitchener in my riding of Waterloo North and whose former home was redecorated by the former government as a historic place for visitors. We have not forgotten the former prime minister of the Liberal party. No, we have redecorated his home because we wanted to preserve it for historical purposes. He said that only an act of parliament is now required to make it the national flag of Canada, but before the final step is taken there should be an educational campaign, as I mentioned before, to supply information as to the full meaning and history of the flag so that every citizen may be assured that it is the most eminently suitable flag for our use. I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that if the present government had carried out the wishes of the prime minister of that time such a resolution would not be necessary now.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) mentioned something which I have in my speech and should like to repeat. The distinguished commander of the first Canadian army in world war II, General Crerar, recorded an incident of great historical significance to all Canadians when recounting the official welcome to him in August, 1945, by our wartime prime minister Right Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King. The general wrote in the March, 1963 issue of *The Legionary*:

As we moved away from the central entrance of the parliament buildings Mr. King turned sideways in the car and looked upwards to the peace tower where, at the top, the Canadian red ensign waved. He then said, "And that, General, is another problem which your Canadian army has solved for Canada—the matter of our national flag".

When our prime minister of that day made this remark to General Crerar he was, in effect, saying that history produces an acceptable national flag for a people. At a time like this can we overlook statements made by such distinguished Canadians as these men and others?

It is not generally known that in 1921 the Canadian government specifically requested