

*Canadian Flag*

we speak a great deal about the unemployed we tend to ignore the fact that there are 3,800,000 Canadians who live constantly in poverty whether they are working or not. This is something which ought to touch the conscience of Canada, yet we are doing nothing about it.

The government speaks of commitments, but the Liberal party committed itself at the last election to provide medical care insurance under which every Canadian citizen would be entitled to have their medical bills paid if they were in excess of \$25 per year. We have heard nothing about implementing this commitment. The government promised to the young people of Canada 10,000 scholarships of \$1,000 each for four years. No action has been taken. Instead, the government has reduced its commitment to one of interest free student loans. But no legislation has been brought down, despite the fact that we are now in the middle of the month of June and if students are to get any benefit from this legislation it ought to be available well in advance of the opening of the university year.

During the election the government made much of the fact that it intended to set up a Canada development corporation with a development fund. The government said this was the keystone in its plan for economic development; this was the program for economic expansion; this was the program which would provide jobs and create new industries in the underdeveloped areas; this was the program which would help regain control by Canadians of the Canadian economy. Well, a resolution concerning this matter appeared on the order paper last fall. Since that time it has been dropped into the wastepaper basket of oblivion and has been heard of no more.

The government also made a commitment to the Canadian people to do something about regaining control of the Canadian economy. Most members will recall that prior to the election the Minister of Finance was cast in the role of a St. George who was going to do battle against United States control of the Canadian economy. They will remember that he wrote an article which was circulated by the millions, entitled "Buying Back the Canadian Economy". What happened?

○ **Mr. Herridge:** He was unhorsed by his own colleagues.

**Mr. Douglas:** St. George rode forth to do battle. He made a few strokes with his sword which, though they did not wound the dragon,

succeeded in annoying him. The dragon roared in the voice of United States under secretary George S. Ball, and the Minister of Finance and the government fled the field, leaving the Americans in complete control. We contend that a Canadian flag is all very well, but that the government ought to concern itself about who owns the real estate over which the flag is going to fly. A symbol of national independence will have little meaning if in the meantime Canada has become an economic satellite of the United States. In that case, we shall be able to choose for a flag an American eagle with a beaver clutched in its claws.

During the last election the government claimed it was the only party in Canada which could make co-operative federalism work. In the space of more than a year which has elapsed since the government took office nothing fundamental has been done to close the fissures and divisions which have appeared in our federal system. A flag in itself cannot provide unity. Unity can only come about when a country has unity of purpose; when a government is prepared to tackle the social and economic problems confronting the people and unite them behind a national policy. Then a flag, which is a symbol of national unity, will have meaning.

The New Democratic party supports the idea of a distinctive national flag, but we are against the government's scale of values and its order of priority. This flag will not put food into one empty belly or provide jobs for the thousands who are out of work. It will not bring medical care to a sick child or ease the load on the poor and the afflicted. It will not supply decent housing for the aged or educational opportunities for the young. It will do nothing to give Canada social and economic independence in an era when United States corporate control is stretching its tentacles across the Canadian economy.

These are the problems which beset this nation, and so far the government's major contribution has been to take up its own time and the time of parliament with an untimely controversy over this flag issue. I think the government has put the cart before the horse. I think we ought to strengthen this country and unite it. We would then be in a position to talk more intelligently about a flag. It is my view that the whole question of a flag could have been left until we had dealt with the legislative program now before us. There