

Currency Act

Mr. Speaker, what has kept me going is that I realize that whenever changes are suggested, it causes a lot of problems. I will never forget the courage shown by Mr. Pearson when he talked about a distinctive Canadian flag for the first time, and this was in Winnipeg. I was the only Member with him when he first suggested that the time had come for Canada to have a distinctive Canadian flag. And he had not chosen the easiest spot to make this announcement, because we were in Winnipeg at the Annual Convention of the Canadian Legion. In fact, it caused such an uproar that we were in for a very stormy session. I think there were about five people who applauded: the Prime Minister's wife, his secretary, myself and two other people.

However, the concept gained credence, and gradually, everyone agreed that it was an excellent idea. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that if today we were to tell young Canadians about all the problems we had to overcome to have our own Canadian flag, and if we were to suggest changing it back to what it was before there would be a violent protest, because everyone in Canada is now used to this flag.

And that is why I suggest that we proceed with the Canadianization of our coins, because as I and thousands and millions of people see it, Canadians must be made aware of their institutions.

• (1200)

[*English*]

If we are to have a history of our country we must teach it to Canadians, to young Canadians and new Canadians. What a golden opportunity has been presented to us by Bill C-118, which will change the \$1 bill, not by another \$1 bill, but, rather, by a coin, so that it is new. Something new is about to take place. I will, of course, give my consent. I will, of course, with my Party, vote for Bill C-118. It is at this time when there is a change that we must consider what we can do to better enhance the word "Canada". This is not a lack of respect for what took place before. It is a suggestion for the future.

My first suggestion, as I was saying earlier, was to honour the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, whom I had the honour to know. I received some surprising mail from both sides. People ask, "How can you, a Liberal, dare to consider a Tory proposal?" Well, my hon. friend from Hamilton knows that I was very close to the Prime Minister. I may not have agreed with him, but he was very close to me and I was very close to him. As I said in committee to the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. McInnes), when the Prime Minister would speak in the House, his Secretary would call my office and say, "The Right Hon. John Diefenbaker is about to speak, Mr. Prud'homme"; and I would do likewise, but it was much more interesting for me to get to the House to listen to a great speaker. As I say again, I may not have always agreed with him, and he may not have agreed with me either, but it was something to hear the gentleman and his concept of Canada,

and he always debated, with me, my concept of Canada, of slowly going toward full Canadianization of our institutions.

Now we have an occasion to honour another Prime Minister, and as I was saying earlier in French, maybe he should not be placed on the new coin. Maybe for historical reasons we should place on the first coin that will be minted, the first Prime Minister of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald. Since the \$10 bill will be reprinted, maybe the time has come to make a proposal to these people who should listen to the voice of Canada through us, because bureaucrats are very sensitive and they are good at putting forward proposals but they are not good at consulting parliamentarians. Therefore, as a parliamentarian, I am making a suggestion to them that we place Sir John A. Macdonald on the coin and then place John Diefenbaker on the \$10 bill.

I know that some day many of my friends on the other side will propose that the time has come to also honour the Right Hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Pearson, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, and Louis St. Laurent, a great Prime Minister. I see that my friend from Hamilton is agreeing with me.

I know I have much support, as I have spoken with many Members of Parliament, from the majority and the minority, and from the Opposition, and it is a good step forward. It is a good concrete proposal. It is not an insult to anyone. I do not understand why, every time I speak of my kind of Canada slowly going toward total Canadianization of our institution, this should look like an insult to someone. Is it insulting Canada to have a Canadian Prime Minister? I spoke with many people, even many of the pages who are here, and they say it is a good idea, as the name is inscribed and this way the history of Canada can be intelligently taught. The problem, as I said on Friday during the debate on Africa, is that only Canadians do not know what Canada is all about. It is true internationally; it is true inside Canada. We must make an effort, slowly, progressively. I do not like revolution; I like evolution. I do not like insult.

We have a Royal Highness, our gracious Queen at the moment, honoured in so many ways. I see nothing wrong in honouring some of our Canadian Prime Ministers. Later on, we should also honour the first Canadian-born Governor General, Vincent Massey. And then the great, great Governor General, the second Canadian-born Governor General, Georges Vanier, should be honoured. I think we should continue on like this, but progressively, to intelligently teach new Canadians, who are here by the millions, and young Canadians. Everyone is using a piece of money, everyone is using coins and bills. One will look at the bill and ask, "Ah, who is that?" "Oh, that is Sir Wilfrid Laurier". "Ah, who was he?" "Prime Minister of Canada for 16 years, from 1896 to 1911, 15 years". Then they will ask, "Oh, who is that guy on the \$10 bill?" "This was a great Prime Minister of Canada, the first Prime Minister of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald. He was Prime Minister for a long period of time". One sees on a \$50 bill a reproduction of Mackenzie King. People will ask: "Who is that man"? Mackenzie King was Prime Minister of