

*Canadian Flag*

[Translation]

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege which concerns all members of this house.

I would like to point out that with the present speaker, we have just broken a record in the house. It seems that the fact is worth mentioning: This is the 200th speech given on the same subject. It is like a hockey game; when Maurice Richard scored his 500th goal the game was stopped so that the puck could be presented to him.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Grégoire:** If you allow me to state my question of privilege—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member should come to the point quickly because there does not seem to be a question of privilege in what he has just said.

On the other hand, the Chair realizes that the hon. member should have the opportunity to submit his argument.

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege deals precisely with what is going on today for the first time in the House of Commons. I should like us to confer the "Order of filibuster" upon the hon. member who is about to deliver the 200th speech on this matter.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

[Text]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The alleged question of privilege raised by the hon. member is not any more legitimate than the one raised by the hon. member for Argen-teuil-Deux-Montagnes. I recognize the hon. member for Kent (Ont.).

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Pugh:** Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I feel the hon. member who raised the question of privilege should have enough knowledge of what takes place in this house to know that he did not have a question of privilege, and that he was interrupting the debate on a phony point. He also stood up while you were on your feet, defying the Speaker. He has been doing so constantly ever since he came to this House of Commons.

**Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent, Ont.):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset I should like to point out through you to the hon. member for Lapointe that in rising to speak on this question I make no apology to the house or to him. I want the record to show how I feel about the flag question and this debate, and

how the constituents I represent feel about the flag question and this debate. I intend to support the amendment because it will give the people in my riding and across Canada an opportunity to express their views. Once those views have been expressed perhaps some of the members of this house will realize that they have not been presenting the views of the people they represent but rather their own views when speaking about this emotional and delicate subject.

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Danforth:** Mr. Speaker, in spite of the levity of the remarks coming from the opposite side of this chamber, some of us feel that this is a very serious and emotional matter which affects all people in Canada and has a direct bearing on this so-called unity the government has been trying to promote. Some of the actions of the government are having exactly the opposite effect across Canada.

In my riding we have residents of both basic Anglo-Saxon and French origins, of whom we are very proud. We do not have any bilingual or bicultural problems because we all went to school together, grew up together and work together, and are proud of each other's culture, heritage and efforts as Canadians. That is as it should be.

A plebiscite is necessary on this flag question because of the great diversity of opinion which exists in Canada, and certainly in that part of southwestern Ontario I represent. I am sure that most Canadians want a distinctive national flag. The question is not whether we want a distinctive flag but, as we all appreciate, what symbols should appear on such a flag.

As we have heard today, whenever we stand in our places to put opinions on the record we hear charges of filibuster and charges that we are prolonging this debate. How can those accusers justify that criticism in view of the fact that during the 60 days the government has been proposing a distinctive Canadian flag it has wholeheartedly proposed two distinctive flags? That fact in my opinion justifies the belief of the Conservative party that the people of Canada should have a choice as to what should be Canada's distinctive national flag.

A great deal of criticism has been expressed through the press and on the radio about the character and length of this debate, suggesting that perhaps nothing new can be said regardless of the number of speakers taking part. Some of that criticism may be justifiable; we all make mistakes, and none of us is per-