

*National Flag*

I must also acknowledge another debt of gratitude to the Solicitor General for understanding as we do the necessity of a distinctive flag.

Mr. Speaker, the proposal I am introducing today does not mean in any way that my opinion has changed on this problem because I am now in the opposition. It is not my own opinion, but the Canadian people's opinion that has changed, and allows us at last to take up the problem of adopting a national flag which would be a symbol of unity and not of division.

Time, the great healer, has put an end to spurious sentiment and we can now discuss a truly Canadian flag without giving rise to backward and outmoded reactions.

Evidence has come in from all racial groups that make up this nation. From every part of the country and from every cultural, university or trade association we find that there is spontaneous enthusiasm for a symbol of unity appropriate for an independent nation. Canadians no longer want barriers between races, languages and religions; 90 per cent of Canadian citizens are broadminded enough to understand that the time has come to unite under a distinctive Canadian flag and to continue our progress in peace and unity.

This feeling was convincingly expressed when a poll was conducted in the high schools of ten large Canadian cities: Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Calgary, Toronto, London, Montreal and Saint John, New Brunswick. The results of this poll were published in *Canadian High Life News* of January 25, 1958.

Twelve hundred students were polled, and were asked the following question: "Do you believe that Canada should have a distinctive national flag?" The replies in favour of this were 83.7 per cent; against, 13 per cent; while 3.3 per cent were undecided.

A second question was asked: "If you are of the opinion that Canada should have its distinctive national flag, should it carry the fleur-de-lis or the Union Jack, or both, or be altogether different?" The answers were: fleur-de-lis, 1.9 per cent; union jack, 12.8 per cent; part of both, 28.2 per cent; altogether different, 35.7 per cent; undecided, 21.4 per cent.

The inquiry was pushed one step further and the following question was asked: "Do you think Canada should have its own national anthem?" The answers to that question were

[Mr. Boulanger.]

as follows: 73.7 per cent answered yes; 23.9 per cent, no, and 2.4 per cent were undecided.

As for the fourth question of the report which asked: "If you believe Canada should have its own national anthem, what do you think it should be?" 29.9 per cent answered "O Canada"; 1.6 per cent, "The Maple Leaf Forever"; 1.4 per cent "God Save the Queen"; 67.1 per cent were undecided.

In fact, we have opinions from all ethnic groups, as I said a moment ago, and I could give you the results of several inquiries, but I shall confine myself to the major organizations which sent in reports.

Thus, at the general convention of the chambers of commerce last October, delegates defeated a motion recommending the adoption of the red ensign as a distinctive flag and approved without discussion a motion introduced by a delegation of the Sarnia chamber of commerce, which reads as follows:

Whereas Canada, now the fourth largest trading nation in the world, is still without a national flag;

Whereas surveys conducted among the people of Canada show that a great majority of citizens, especially among younger people, want a national flag;

Whereas a national flag would be a factor of strength and unity in the nation:

Be it resolved that the chamber of commerce urge the government of Canada to officially adopt and approve a distinctive national flag.

That resolution reflects the desire of all French-speaking Canadians that Canada have its own distinctive national flag. However, those people cannot be accused of trying to force their choice on the rest of the country, since that resolution was introduced by a delegation of English-speaking Canadians. The chamber of commerce decision therefore shows that all Canadians are unanimous on that point. Almost 800 cities across Canada were represented at this national conference. Half the delegates, 700 of them, were from Ontario.

Another body with no less merit and quality, the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Canada saw fit to conduct an extensive inquiry across Canada. The flag committee, under the direction of Messrs. Marius Crête, of Shawinigan Falls, and Bill Bellefontaine, of Scarborough, Ont., prepared a list of questions which was sent to its 2,000 members. That committee sought the advice of 16,000 members, 13,200 or 80 per cent of which unreservedly supported a distinctive Canadian flag. Most of the objections originated from Newfoundland and eastern Ontario.