

*Canadian Flag*

To the best of my knowledge and belief, certainly as far as the Pacific coast is concerned, there has been no terrific upsurge for the immediate adoption of a distinctive Canadian flag. There may be such an upsurge, but it remains for us to listen and learn if there are sections of the nation clamouring for such a change.

I cannot say I am too enthusiastic about the ensign that we now consider to be our national flag, but regardless of whether or not I am personally 100 per cent for it, the point of consequence is that if and when a change is made we do not, in making that change, destroy the many fine acts of unity that have been performed by prime ministers of various parties in the last 55 or 56 years.

I am moved, Mr. Speaker, by a debate that took place in this House of Commons last spring—and it is something I wish to refer to at this time—when the bill to bring about the establishment of the royal style and titles of Her Majesty the Queen was under discussion. All of us who sat in the chamber during that debate I think will agree that it was one of the most moving moments in the history of the twenty-first parliament. The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) delivered a magnificent oration on the subject, and the leader of the official opposition designated the then hon. member for Lake Centre, now the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) to make the official reply for the opposition.

On a matter of such great national importance I think it would be well for us on this occasion to refresh our memory of what was said then by the Prime Minister and the reply that was made on behalf of the official opposition in the house at that time. As will be recalled, the Prime Minister had just returned from a conference of the prime ministers of the commonwealth. During the course of his remarks he stated the object of the bill. I now quote from page 1566 of *Hansard* of February 3, 1953. The style and titles incorporated at that time in the bill were as follows:

Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom, Canada and her other realms and territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

That style and title remains today—as I hope it shall for a long period of time—as the way in which we in Canada designate our most gracious and beloved sovereign.

I will not quote the full text of the remarks by the Prime Minister at that time, but in speaking of the previous gathering of the

[Mr. MacDougall.]

prime ministers of the commonwealth he had this to say, as reported at page 1566 of *Hansard* of February 3, 1953:

The question then arose whether it would be proper to have in the title we would use the traditional words, "by the grace of God", sovereign. We felt that our people did recognize that the affairs of this world were not determined exclusively by the volition of men and women; that they were determined by men and women as agents for a supreme authority; and that it was by the grace of that supreme authority that we were privileged to have such a person as our sovereign. Then perhaps the rather more delicate question arose about the retention of the words "defender of the faith".

In England there is an established church. In our countries there are no established churches but in our countries there are people who have faith in the direction of human affairs by an all-wise Providence; and we felt that it was a good thing that the civil authorities would proclaim that their organization is such that it is a defence of the continued beliefs in a supreme power that orders the affairs of mere men, and that there could be no reasonable objection from anyone who believed in the Supreme Being in having the sovereign, the head of the civil authority, described as a believer in and a defender of the faith in a supreme ruler.

The Prime Minister went on at some length to make the position clear about the position that was taken by the prime ministers of the commonwealth on that occasion. I think it is well that we should take cognizance of some of the additional things that were said, and which were carried back to us from that conference by the Prime Minister. He also said this, as reported at page 1567 of *Hansard* to which I have referred:

We are all proud of being Canadian citizens because we can be so and can exercise all our rights as such without forgetting our racial origins, our ancestral traditions, and without there being any effort by any of our fellow citizens to make us over into any other kind of Canadian than we happen to be because of our racial origins and with our ancestral traditions.

As I said, the then hon. member for Lake Centre made an extremely stirring speech following the Prime Minister. In it he said, as reported at page 1568 of *Hansard* of the same date:

Mr. Chairman, it was a most moving address to which we have just listened. It is evidence of the strength of the parliamentary system that while we may be separated in smaller things, in respect to our system of government and to the unity that is provided by the crown, there is no division, there is no diversity of opinion, there is but a common devotion . . . As we listened to the Prime Minister without regard to party considerations this parliament became cathedral in devotion to our history, to our heritage and to our common pursuit of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I have read certain passages from the speeches made on that occasion by our Prime Minister and the then hon. member for Lake Centre, who acted on behalf of the