

Canadian Commonwealth Flag

bec members would do. He should let us vote, and then he will find out.

Several amendments were moved, and at this stage I must point out to the house that when the Conservatives were accused of obstruction, at least in the meantime we could work in our offices, the ministers could attend to their work and the committees could sit. But when an amendment was moved, the committees could not sit and the ministers could not perform their work, because everyone had to be called back to the house in order to vote on a question the result of which was known beforehand.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that if it can be said that some overstepped the mark in their speeches, others did the same through the amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I shall not express any other opinion this evening for, as early as on the 18th of August, I recommended that closure be imposed by the government, as I felt that it had given all members opportunity to express their views. If only the members had had new opinions, new interpretations or new solutions to proffer: but back came the same old speeches.

I had even declared that if, as a private member, it had been in my power to apply closure, I should have been pleased to do so. But I realized that it was impossible for me to do it, as only a minister could move closure.

Before moving a motion myself and notwithstanding the respect I have for the committee, I wish to express my personal views and those of my constituents.

There are in my riding about 85,000 voters, and none of them asked me to vote for a second flag. In fact, in the few letters which were sent to me, I was told to vote for a distinctive flag but, for goodness' sake, for one only. That means that I will vote against the adoption of a new flag to mark our allegiance to the crown. I wonder also why others voted against one flag and wanted to propose another one? I am against any flag to show our membership in the commonwealth. We should use our national flag in the meetings of the commonwealth nations as elsewhere.

Moreover, I wonder whether those who said they would vote against the union jack, because it is the flag of another country, will not be the first to stand up and sing "God Save the Queen" which is also the national anthem of another country.

Personally, I already stated that I was against; I am against another flag. I am

[Mr. Marcoux.]

against the adoption as ours of another country's flag.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, the debate should certainly be allowed to continue in the house, since hon. members are free to speak, but there should be no other amendment.

Therefore, in order to have no more amendments to discuss, and basing my suggestion on standing order 51 which says:

The previous question...shall be in the following words, "That the question be now put"—

And, further on, citation 216, paragraph 2 of Beauchesne, fourth edition:

The previous question prevents an amendment to the main question and thus forces a direct vote on the main question.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Portneuf:

That the vote be now taken on this question.

[Text]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt this motion?

Is the hon. member for Skeena addressing the house on the motion?

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I hope to, if I get the floor. I really do not think the motion which is before you should be put at this time. All it does is attempt to choke off the birth of debate on this particular question which is before us. It is a lefthanded way of introducing closure, especially in view of the fact that a great number of members in all parties have, as I understand, reached a general understanding about the time at which the debate should end in any event. There is a certain hazard involved in rising to speak about this question and about the question of the flag itself; that is, that one may become guilty by association of something of which he is not guilty. For instance, my own view with respect to the whole number of motions which have been before us in respect of the two flags for Canada could, on the one hand, make me an associate of les Québécois members in the house and I would thus be sort of tainted with that; or, on the other hand—and this applies to other members also—I might become guilty by association with the Liberal party. God forbid. I do not know which would be the worst of the two, really. Even taking another course could make one guilty by association with the Conservative party.

Mr. Graftey: No, no, no, no.

Mr. Howard: Those are aspects of this question that one has to consider. The hon. mem-