

Canadian Flag

Mr. Fane: The flag of Peru. Look at the list of flags. We are not getting a distinctive flag, if this is the flag the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) intends to impose on us. In any case, he should be here. He should make a statement telling us exactly what we can expect and what we shall be voting for when we vote on this motion which is now before the house.

I for one am not prepared to accept statements by the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Matheson) as the spokesman for the government. I think the Prime Minister himself should make a statement and, failing him, a senior cabinet minister on the front bench whom he trusts, or should trust. If the right hon. gentleman feels it will compromise him to tell the people of Canada what national flag we are to have, why can we not hear from one of his senior colleagues instead of from a backbencher sitting in the front row over there, one who sets himself up as a heraldic expert?

One cannot expect anything better from this government, however. They are afraid to get up and speak. All except three have been afraid to rise during the last part of this debate. Not a cabinet minister spoke. That certainly shows disrespect of and disregard for the feelings of millions of Canadians across this country. Who is pushing them? Who is blackmailing the Prime Minister? Who is blackmailing the government? Why do they not have enough intestinal fortitude to get up and make statements in this house? They are extremely vocal at other times; ministers have been travelling all over this country of ours making speeches.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am wondering whether the remarks of the hon. member are really relevant to the resolution before the house. At the moment it is a motion for the adoption of the sixth report of the special committee on the Canadian flag. It seems to me that arguments advanced by hon. members should be in favour of or against the adoption of the report, and I should like the hon. member to refer his remarks to the subject matter of the discussion.

Mr. Fane: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I think any remarks I have made were very relevant to the debate. However, if you want to know right now exactly how I feel on the flag which has been picked out for us, let me say I feel it is not adequate. I am not in favour of its being the flag of Canada and I never will be. I served in two wars and I was proud to fight under the flag we had; and I wonder how many of the two or three

million ex-service men and women in this country would be proud to serve under the travesty of a national flag which has been presented to us today. We may have to call it our national flag but believe me I am one who is most unwilling to accept it.

An hon. Member: And you represent how many?

Mr. Fane: I represent, as I told the house earlier, people of 40 different national origins and I speak as one who received an over-all majority in the last election. Anyway, I want to say that the flag which the committee picked out is not distinctively Canadian. It has a red maple leaf on it. Maple leaves only turn red when they are dead. If there is to be a maple leaf on the Canadian flag it should be a green maple leaf to show the surging life of this nation. As I said the other day, Canada is a growing country, a country which in the course of a few years will be greatest country in the world. We shall be the leader of the nations as, today, the nation to the south of us is the leader of the nations. I predict that for Canada, and I have lived here for many years. I wonder now, as I have wondered for quite some time—in fact, ever since we began debating the choice of the flag committee—how the Liberal members on that committee can reconcile their choice of a flag with that of their Prime Minister. What must the Prime Minister feel like when every one of the Liberal members on that committee repudiated his choice of a flag.

Mr. Grégoire: Oh, that has been said.

Mr. Fane: That is something that is beyond understanding. It is beyond my understanding, at least, and if it is beyond my understanding it is beyond the understanding of a great many other people. What does the Prime Minister think of that? Is he going to resign because his appointees on that committee turned him down? There were seven of them. They turned him down to a man and woman, every one of them. I believe that is a slap in the face for the Prime Minister whom they claim to love so much.

An hon. Member: Absence makes the heart grow fonder; they certainly must love him.

Mr. Fane: This flag is supposed to create unity in our nation. I think the people who believe that are very blind. This flag will not create unity, and there is no other way to look at it.

Mr. Choquette: Your party is divided, that's for sure.