

Inquiries of the Ministry

before the coming into force of the said measure who resigns his place in the Senate after having attained the age of 75 years or having become afflicted with a permanent infirmity disabling him from the performance of his duties; and to provide further for the granting of an annuity to the widow of a person who was granted such an annuity upon resigning his place in the Senate.

Motion agreed to.

CANADIAN FLAG

REPORTED PRESENTATION OF DESIGNS BY
PRIME MINISTER

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister, now that he has returned to Ottawa from the fields of prophecy, whether he would tell the house why the announcement as to the alternative designs he had in mind was not made in the House of Commons. Second, are these designs his own particular persuasion or have they been submitted to the cabinet? There are other questions that naturally arise, but I will commence with those two.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in my statement to the Royal Canadian Legion on Sunday night the only reference I made to the design of a Canadian flag was as follows:

I believe most sincerely it is time now for Canadians to unfurl a flag that is truly distinctive and truly national in character—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson:

—and as Canadian as the maple leaf which should be its dominant design.

How the maple leaf is to be reflected in the design, which will be brought before parliament in due course, remains for decision.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Now may I refer to the press conference which was to explain what up to that moment had been inexplicable. I ask the Prime Minister this. Did he place before the press conference two designs? Did he express a preference for one or the other and, if so, has either of those designs been considered by the cabinet, or are they simply an emanation of his own desire to bring about an even greater disunity in Canada than he has succeeded in doing thus far.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pearson: My purpose in the pursuit of this policy, contrary to what the right hon. gentleman has said, is to bring about a greater degree of unity in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Mr. MacNaught].]

Mr. Pearson: In that objective I hope—I am sure—I will get the support of the right hon. gentleman and of every other hon. member of the house, though we may differ as to the means by which that objective can be achieved.

As far as the press conference is concerned, the press asked me whether we had made any decision about this maple leaf design and I said no final decision had been made. I showed the press some of the great many designs which have been submitted to the government, especially three to which I was attracted, but no decision has been made as to the design which will be put before the house. The cabinet has been discussing the matter this morning and as soon as a decision has been made, and it is possible to do so, we shall put our policy in all its details in the form of a resolution and submit it to the House of Commons.

Mr. Diefenbaker: With the objective which the right hon. gentleman says he has in mind I am in agreement. But I am certainly in disagreement when he says that what he is doing will do other than work division.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I now ask this. Will the Prime Minister table these several designs which he placed before the press conference, or referred to there, in order that parliament may have at least as much information on this matter as outsiders have?

Mr. Pearson: As I believe I have stated, a great many designs have been received. In a short time—in a very short time—I hope the government will have made a decision with regard to a particular design, and this design will be placed before parliament for the decision of parliament in this matter.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The question I asked was whether these three designs would be tabled—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Is there not a degree of unity across the way yet as to which it should be? They cannot agree among themselves, and I can understand why they cannot agree anywhere else. I ask the Prime Minister this. How is the design which is ultimately determined upon to be presented to the house? Will it be by resolution or by bill, or does the same degree of disunity in the thinking of the government exist in this regard as in so many other matters?

Some hon. Members: Listen.

Mr. Pearson: I am happy to inform the right hon. gentleman that there is a very great degree of unity in the party I have