

Canadian Flag

his party as a legacy when he departed. His successors continued to act as if the outcome were still in doubt.

I hope the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) is satisfied with this article.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I say to my hon. friend, if he will permit me, that the views of Mackenzie King with regard to the commonwealth were precisely those of Sir Robert Borden of the Conservative party.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Not at all.

Mr. Skoreyko: I thank the minister for that observation. Were they the same as those of Louis St. Laurent? I continue to quote from the editorial:

Louis St. Laurent, when he was prime minister, adopted a deliberate policy of expunging symbols from Canada's past that were intimately connected with this nation's origins. The first indication was when the time-honoured designation "dominion government" disappeared from telephone directories from sea to sea. It was replaced by the phrase "government of Canada".

Then the designation royal mail was placed under a cloud and the term "Canada post" was accorded official favour. Then there was the deliberate policy of combing through federal statutes to eliminate the word "dominion". The fact that the word was scriptural and chosen by the Fathers of Confederation was overshadowed by the suspicion in certain quarters that somehow it denoted subservience. There was an attempt to force the dominion bureau of statistics to become the bureau of statistics and so on.

There seemed to be a deliberate policy of rooting out little by little distinctive terms and designations that bound the nation to its past.

Years ago Dr. Eugene Forsey asked: "Where is it all going to stop? Are we going to wake up some morning and find ourselves citizens of the republic of Canada? It looks like it. But I think there are a lot of people who don't want it."

Prime Minister Pearson's preoccupation with the flag issue and the manner in which he has brought it forward make these questions even more relevant and disturbing today. The arguments Mr. Pearson has advanced for getting rid of the red ensign could be applied with equal force to getting rid of the monarchy. Is this the ultimate goal of the policy and program initiated by Mackenzie King and carried on by his successors?

The people of Canada have a right to ask this question and to expect an unequivocal answer from Mr. Pearson and his advisers.

Then, the last line of the editorial reads:

Is the Liberal party dedicated to turning this country into a republic?

The minister of external affairs may like to answer that question. In so far as a distinctive Canadian flag is concerned, the previous speaker eloquently pointed out the reasons he felt there should be no change made. Every member of this House of Commons has

received a small pamphlet, similar to the one I now hold in my hand, from the various Legions across the country. I cannot help but refer to one little paragraph in it. There is a reference to a statement made by General H. D. Crerar, the distinguished commander of the first Canadian army in world war II. In recording an incident of great historical significance for all Canadians he recounted an official welcome accorded him on August 8, 1945 by the wartime prime minister, Right Hon. Mackenzie King. He said that as they moved away from the central entrance of the parliament buildings Mr. King turned and looked up to the peace tower at the top of which the Canadian red ensign waved and said, "And that, General, is another problem which your Canadian army solved for Canada, the matter of our national flag". The previous speaker put on the record all the information necessary with reference to orders in council 588 and 134, and I will not do that at this moment because I have very limited time remaining and I want to deal with some of the opinions that have been expressed with respect to this resolution by people not only in my own riding but all across Canada.

At the outset I must say that of the 200 to 250 letters I received in the last month, two asked me as the member of parliament for Edmonton East to support the new flag. The others asked me to support the red ensign or a modification of it. A few minutes ago I noted with some concern the lack of interest shown in this flag debate by other parties in the house, and I was particularly amazed to see there was only one Social Creditor sitting in his place when the previous speaker was on his feet. I find this difficult to understand, since I have here a copy of a resolution sent to me by the Social Credit women's league of the province of Alberta, asking me to support the red ensign. I shall indeed communicate with these women and tell them the degree to which that party has participated in the debate.

I have here a short note from a veteran of the first world war, and clipped to it is a newspaper picture of the red ensign with the words written on it "our flag." There is also another newspaper picture of the three maple leaves and the appropriate note on it says: "Reminds one of a firescreen." The letter reads:

Enclosed is a picture of the only flag we need. It covers all ethnic groups and unites all Canada. While the maple leaf is good, it does not represent western Canada—