

*Canadian Flag*

any connection with the private member's bill. Here is what the *Free Press* had to say about that particular period in Canadian parliamentary history:

Only two small remnants of extremism survive the earlier controversy. On the one hand, there are still some extreme "loyalists" who want the union jack alone, but to this there are overwhelming practical objections, besides the fact that citizens of the United Kingdom understandably show no enthusiasm for having their flag used by Canadians. On the other hand, there are those who want a flag that does not contain the union jack at all. The Canadian people have continually shown by their actions that the majority feels otherwise. Hence the red ensign has been for all practical purposes our national flag since confederation. Notwithstanding the lack of formal authorization, it has ousted all competing flags. It has withstood every effort to discard it. And it surely will withstand any future effort, for this is the standard under which Canadian soldiers were proud to fight and die in both world wars. It is by consent of parliament in 1946 our national flag "until such time as action is taken by parliament for the formal adoption of a national flag." The other day it was consecrated as such on the altar of Westminster Abbey.

In the result it may be said that the Canadian flag question is now settled, finally and irrevocably, except for formal recognition by parliament.

Surely the time has come for this final step. Parliament at the next session should declare the red ensign to be our national emblem.

That is what the editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press* said back in 1954 when this issue was before that parliament.

We are catering to the extreme elements on both sides of this question, on one hand repudiating our past by bringing in the maple leaf flag with no symbols of our heritage, and on the other hand going back to the union jack. It was a two flag resolution. Now it has been split into two resolutions which I think is symbolic of the split in our country on this issue.

The *Kingston Whig-Standard* of Saturday, May 16, had this to say:

As recently as February of this year Prime Minister Pearson said publicly there is more to this flag issue than simply satisfying the desires of those who make the most noise. It now appears that the noisy faction has got to him.

The final paragraph is this:

Mr. Pearson has issued a challenge to Canadians. He is betting on the weakness of parliament to sustain him in his decision to sell us out. This is a bitter day for Canada.

I know this is a device that has often been resorted to in parliament. Members of parliament in their desire to get home in the withering heat of July have often left their places of responsibility in the House of Commons, particularly those of us from remote

parts of the country, but not on this basic issue. We are here to discuss it in all its important aspects.

The fact that the government has capitulated to the extreme viewpoint in Canada is also revealed in the way this matter was initially introduced to Canadians, not through the House of Commons but by an insult to the Canadian Legion. I used to be the parliamentary secretary to the minister of veterans affairs, and in that capacity it was my privilege to attend the opening ceremony, on Sunday evening, of the biannual national meeting of the Royal Canadian Legion. It was always understood that was not an occasion for a political speech, that it was a semi-religious, dignified ceremony.

I can understand the response of the legionnaires on that occasion. Some of them indulged in booing, and a good many of the papers said it was a shame to boo Canada's Prime Minister under these circumstances. Mr. Speaker, I was in England at the end of the war in 1945 and I followed the post-war election there. I heard Sir Winston Churchill speak in Wembley stadium. I heard that great man, who led the free world through the holocaust of world war II, booed by a large section of the audience. They were not booing him; they were booing the domestic policies that he represented.

Was Winston Churchill vexed? Did he stand on his dignity and say, "You should not boo the prime minister of the United Kingdom?" No. He turned to the section of the audience booing him and he said, "Let's get it over," and he led them in a great booing chorus, and he won the meeting from that point on.

A journalist, Mr. Bill Smiley, had this to say about that particular episode in Winnipeg:

By the way, I think the Canadian Legion has had some pretty shoddy treatment from the daily press because of its espousal of the ensign, and it's less-than-enthusiastic reception of the Prime Minister, at the Winnipeg convention.

What's wrong with an organization standing up for something it believes in? Everybody else does it, from hog producers to folk singers. But the Legion was suddenly made the butt of a vicious and slanted attack in certain dailies.

The men who did the dirty work in two wars were suddenly catalogued as a group of reactionaries, or as one daily put it, a "bunch of old soldiers", trying to tell the rest of Canada what flag it should have.

I must congratulate the Legion for its responsible response to the attack made on it in sections of the press and in some other circles in Canada. In its own publication, *The Legionary*, it showed a great sense of responsibility—this is in its July issue—when

[Mr. Dinsdale.]