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**John Addison, Local Member of Parliament, Speaks To House In Support Of New Flag**

Mr. John Addison, our York North Member of Parliament, has received a good many queries from local constituents concerning his stand on the present flag issue. Mr. Addison has replied that it was his intention to make his stand known in the House of Commons, and the following is his speech in part, which Mr. Addison terms, "the most important I shall ever make in this House."



John Addison, M.P.

Mr. Speaker, in the 25th parliament of Canada I had the opportunity in my maiden speech of following the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette). This is now the 26th parliament of Canada, and as I watched the spectacle across from me this evening, while it seemed to me my maiden speech was a very important one, the speech I hope to be able to make this evening will be perhaps the most important I shall ever make in this house.

I represent the riding of York North and in it, from north to south we have the towns of Sutton, Newmarket, Aurora and Richmond Hill. Many of these towns were settled by United Empire Loyalists who left the United States during the rebellion against Britain, to live in a land loyal to British tradition and constitutional monarchy. These people preferred king and country to the so-called war of independence. They settled in Canada, and Canada has become strong with their strength and courage.

When the Loyalists came to Canada they bore with them the flag of a union, the union jack and it flies proudly today throughout my riding. The descendants of these people are still loyal to those traditions even today. In my riding we recall the indomitable little firebrand and rebel, William Lyon Mackenzie, our loyal representatives over the years, Aylesworth, Mulock, King, all leaders in government, pathfinders over the years, reformers loyal to the traditions of the flag of their day.

Flags, Mr. Speaker, are a strange creation. They are used merely as pieces of silk held aloft in some instances to identify the status of a chief, to mark the arrival of a leader, or to denote the arrival of an enemy.

They were first used in India and China, primarily for the purpose of identification. Other uses arose. They were used to show the forces of the leader. In medieval times, the flag was the first point of attack. When the flag had fallen, consternation among the flagless army ensued and the battle was soon lost. In victory, the flag rallied the victorious army to the chase to press on to the eventual rout of the enemy. Moreover, at sea,

the flag was more than a rallying point; it became a method of signalling. All this, of course, is aside from the mere decoration and display for which flags have been used. What English seaman has forgotten the white naval ensign of Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar? One of my hon. friends says it was the red ensign. In fact, that ensign is a good example of a flag which served as identification of the status of a commander, as a signal, as a rallying point and later for decoration and display after the battle.

In one word, then, Mr. Speaker, flags have become for us after all these uses, symbols. They become the physical manifestations of the emotions for which they stand. They remind us of our past, indicate our present status and point with pride to the future.

One of the flags I intended to vote for when the final division bells ring is the union jack. It reminds Canadians of their past traditions. It indicates our present status in the commonwealth of nations and points with pride to our future close association with Great Britain. The other flag for which I intend to vote will be a distinctive Canadian flag which will remind us of our Canadian past with a world recognized symbol of that past, the maple leaf; it will show our present status as an independent nation, being in the words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), a flag which is Canada's own and only Canada's. Moreover, it will point with pride to our future as a united nation—one Canada from sea to sea, strong, powerful and free.

I wish to direct my remarks to the amendment which has been proposed by the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), that is, the proposal to submit this question to a national referendum or plebiscite. I am astonished that the Leader of the Opposition should have made this suggestion because as late as last Wednesday speaking on CBC television he had this to say:

Put this matter of the flag before the Canadian people and I fear the result.

On the same program, he said: "You say, should it go to the Canadian people? I say no."

For someone who is well versed in British traditions as well as in the parliamentary traditions of this country to propose a referendum, is astonishing. A referendum strikes directly at the entire concept of British parliamentary democracy.

The encyclopedia concludes: It is clear, however, that both the referendum and the initiative are alien to the spirit of British parliamentary government.

Why are they alien? The answer can be found in the words of Professor Dicey, the late distinguished expert on constitutional law and practice. Professor Dicey says this:

The referendum diminishes the importance of parliamentary debate and thereby detracts from the influence of Parliament. That this must be so admits of no denial; a veto, whether it be exercised by a King or by an electorate, lessens the power of the legislature.

Of course, it is easy for us to see why the referendum has been used so often in the United States. There the division of powers is definite. In the federal government, and in each and every state of government, the legislative branch is distinct from the executive branch. The president is separated from congress; a governor is separated from the state legislature.

When the executive branch and the legislative branch in the United States disagreed, resort was made to the people to solve the disagreement and the public at large was asked to vote. The executive arm would request the referendum, the people would vote, and then the legislative would be forced to act in accord with the simple yes or no of the people. That may be compatible with the separation of powers in the United States. It is not compatible with the British and Canadian parliamentary and ministerial tradition.

Our system of government is based upon the direct responsibility of the ministry to the legislature and of the legislature to the people. There is no "double harness" here; a ministry does not ride the legislature and ride the people at one and the same time. The ministry proposes to parliament; parliament acts, and if parliament does not approve, the ministry tenders its resignation. It is, I think, significant that the 120's—and this will interest hon. gentlemen opposite in particular—the Progressive Conservative premier of Ontario, the Hon. George Ferguson, announced that there would be no more popular votes on the liquor question in the province but that the legislature and cabinet would deal with the issue and take full responsibility for it—as ought to be done in any scheme of government based on the direct responsibility of the ministry to the legislature, and of the legislature to the people. This government, too, has that responsibility and if parliament disagrees, the government will resign; or if the people disapprove, they may vote out the government at the next general election. But a parliament is elected to decide all questions of government and take responsibility for its decisions.

One party is given a mandate by the people on the basis of that party's leadership and the platform presented at the time of the election; another party forms an opposition, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, to play its role in that responsibility. A referendum isolates an issue; demands a simple yes or no. At times a great emotion—and any national symbols would be a referendum on the question of time of great emotion—a simple yes or no cannot decide governmental policy. At times such as the pressure groups that lobby here in the house. A referendum gives pressure groups time to organize, to spend a great deal of money and further cloud the issue by excessive emotionalism. The balkanization of this country would be a sad sight; the spectacle would become demeaning to parliament, because the legislature would be ignored in this particular process. If we had a referendum or a plebiscite the men elected to this legislature would be left to stand and watch, to abdicate their responsibility. The cabinet would be left in an invidious position as well. It must make a proposal under a plebiscite; a proposal it is elected to implement, not to the legislature, not to the

people's representatives, you and I,—and written in such a way as to demand a yes or no. It must bypass parliament and go directly to the people and then tell parliament in effect, the result.

It is little wonder, then, that the referendum has almost never been used in Canada — I think, twice—and I believe never in British political history. I would like to quote from the Prime Minister's speech of yesterday, as reported at page 4319 of Hansard when he referred to the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) and his remarks on January 26, 1942 concerning a plebiscite. The present leader of the Opposition had this to say:

Allow the members of parliament to vote on this question. Do not submit the question to the people of Canada, for in my opinion, the taking of a plebiscite at this time may well destroy the unity of Canada.

Then the Prime Minister said yesterday:

Later, when the decision was made he said this on February 25, 1942, as reported at pages 836 and 837 of Hansard.

"A plebiscite is to be taken regardless of the fact that in the long history of Great Britain, with all the constitutional changes which have taken place no government has ever submitted any matter to the people by way of plebiscite."

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to quote excerpts from a television interview of last Wednesday, June 10, of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, who said this:

"But this is not a matter for an election. This would solve nothing. As a matter of fact in parliament today it is parliament's responsibility to look after this matter, providing we could come to a reasonable degree of agreement."

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I reject the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

I reject it because, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, it is demoralizing and demeans the parliament elected to consider the actions of the government of the day. We were all elected to be the people's representatives and decided

(Continued on page 11)

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