

grievously afflicted by the debate of the past six months, and the results flowing therefrom.

We have spoken overly much of a distinctive national flag. What, for instance, could be more distinctive than a flag containing those eternal symbols of our past: the Union Jack, the fleur-de-lis, and, if you wish, a maple leaf emblazoned on such a flag.

Yesterday I listened carefully to Senator Cameron's extremely able and persuasive speech. I congratulate him on it. Indeed, I would wish that the result he envisages could come true, but I am afraid it will not; at least, for a long time there may be many sore and severe wounds to be healed.

Senator Cameron never gave one thought or phrase to those millions of Canadians who feel mortally wounded at the tearing away of the Union Jack as part of our national emblem. Furthermore, let me say that Senator Cameron based most of his argument on his statement that he was sure 60 per cent to 70 per cent of Canadians wanted a distinctive Canadian flag. It is just a matter of definition of the word "distinctive". I would say that 100 per cent of Canadians want a distinctive Canadian flag, in so far that it is not the flag of any other country—which even the Red Ensign is not, inasmuch as it distinctly contains on the fly the Canadian Coat of Arms.

If the honourable senator looks at the terms of reference of the 1945-46 Joint Committee on Canada's National Flag, he will ascertain that by a majority of 23 to 1 the committee deemed that the flag it accepted, which included the Union Jack, was a distinctive Canadian flag. That is what the terms of reference required the committee to do, to present a design of a distinctive national flag. As far as I can see from the reports and proceedings of that committee, no one suggested that the flag recommended by the committee—although not adopted, it is true—was not a distinctive national flag. Would not such a flag be even more distinctive if it also incorporated the fleur-de-lis, which that proposed flag did not? Surely, such a flag is more distinctive than the proposed flag vis-à-vis the flag of Peru?

Honourable senators, you can be as callous as you like about this matter. You can wield your majority rights if you wish. Nothing can stop you in this house from crushing a minority like a bulldozer wipes out a fly. But let me say this: I doubt if there is a case in history where a flag was born in circumstances paralleling what we have here, where a Prime Minister set deadlines and then put his majority into action against the minority, and finished the deal by the lethal weapon of closure.

I say that is not the way to give birth to a national flag; that is a serious error, the ultimate result of which will be bitterness, division and disunity, and may eventually help lead to the disintegration of our nation as we know it today.

I plead with honourable senators to give to this matter sober second thought, as it is our duty to do in this chamber, and to support the amendment proposed by the honourable senator from Carleton.

Hon. Norman P. Lambert: Honourable senators, my first word must be one of appreciation and gratitude to my friend from Winnipeg, Senator Thorvaldson, for his reference to myself in connection with the joint committee of both houses which considered this same problem in 1945-46.

In connection with that I would like to offer, first of all, a word of sympathy and approval regarding the unenviable task just performed by the parliamentary committee which, after several weeks of intensive discussion, produced in its final report the recommendation which is now the subject of our debate.

To a certain extent, I contrast some of the circumstances which characterized the meetings of the committee on this occasion with those which I had to deal with some 20 years ago. First of all, the joint committee of both houses in 1945-46 had to sit in the humid, hot weather of the summer months, and I remember very vividly that despite the fatiguing course of the discussion, the hearing of many resolutions and many witnesses, and the hanging of many samples and designs of flags on screens in the railway committee room, the membership of that committee stayed with its job consistently and, I think, devotedly, without regard for any sort of distinction that might have aroused either racial or sectional feelings at any time. Ultimately, when the report was made, it was made with a very large measure of unanimity. With one exception, the members of that committee, who were present at the final drafting of the report, voted in favour of a distinctive Canadian flag. I believe I am not exaggerating in the slightest degree when I say that, as I recall it, the obvious purpose and intention of the membership of that committee—which represented a pretty broad cross-section of all parties at that time, including Mr. Coldwell of the C.C.F.—was to display a magnanimous attitude towards the prospect and project of establishing a distinctive flag for Canada, regardless of its design or anything else.

In the end, as is well known now, in the exhibition of the flags which was presented in connection with this report in the upstairs