

*Flags of Canada*

per cent wanted the maple leaf and 16 per cent the union jack.

The institute of public opinion reports in the *Star Weekly* of March 21, 1957, after having taken a poll involving 1,110 adults of all ages and professions, that is four times as many as in the ordinary Gallup polls, that in Canada, three people in four are favouring a distinctive flag, which would differ from that of any other country.

At the junior chamber of commerce the answers of 2,400 of its members to a set of questions gave the following results: English-speaking members: 79 per cent in favour of a Canadian flag with no emblem of any other country.

Of 3,800 English-speaking Canadians asked to take part in this vote, 70 per cent were in favour of a distinctive flag. According to press reports during the recent Liberal rally, a referendum by the Calgary young Liberals indicated that 7 per cent voted, at the Calgary Stampede, in favour of a flag showing a maple leaf and nothing else.

Moreover, it may be concluded from the fact that in 1946 the joint committee recommended the adoption of a flag with a maple leaf in autumn colours and the union jack in the canton and that this proposal remained buried in some office drawers for 15 years, this decision was certainly not based on evidence received by the committee. If we take as basis the analysis made by Mr. McNicoll, M.P., we are satisfied that the members of the joint committee in 1945 and 1946 did not take any decision with regard to the evidence submitted, because as can be recalled and as I have read in the official record for 1945 Mr. Mackenzie King and Mr. St. Laurent, who was then minister of justice, had, during the three days of debate on this matter, expressed the view that the union jack should be included on any flag that might be chosen.

When the leader of a party in power or the minister of justice gives his opinion to the committee, can the committee be expected to take a decision contrary to the opinion stated in advance by the government? That is why this flag has remained and still is out of sight.

This is why I am asking for a referendum the possibility of which has already been considered. Indeed, I feel that a referendum is not necessary, because every day, the Canadian people express their opinion on the matter and this is enough for the present government to act upon.

Maybe the government declines the honour of selecting a flag for Canada. All the same, that honour should not be denied to the Canadian people.

[Mr. Regnier.]

If a referendum takes place, I suggest that it should be held at the same time as the next election, so as to avoid additional expenses.

Mr. Heward, an Ottawa lawyer, had this to say about the 1946 flag committee:

(Text):

This recommendation was made by the committee:

(Translation):

Pardon, Mr. Heward then refers to the committee's recommendation. I quote:

(Text):

Your committee recommends that the national flag of Canada should be the Canadian red ensign with a maple leaf in autumn golden colours in a bordered background of white, replacing the coat of arms in the fly; the whole design to be so proportioned that the size and position of the maple leaf in relation to the union jack in the canton will identify it as a symbol distinctive of Canada as a nation.

(Translation):

Such was the recommendation, Mr. Speaker. This is actually the flag that I should like to see included in the referendum.

(Text):

This recommendation was arrived at by the committee on the 11th July, 1946. A bill was not introduced by the government at the session then sitting to implement the report and was not introduced at the next session. The government no doubt recognized very well that because of the very great opposition to such a flag, as recommended by the committee, they would lose the support of Quebec certainly and also lose some support in other places. The government might, quite possibly, be defeated on such a bill.

(Translation):

And further on, he stated:

(Text):

The introduction of a bill to adopt a flag has apparently been indefinitely postponed. This, it is believed, is a very proper policy for it is much better to wait even for some years to adopt a flag than to decide on a design now which is opposed by so many Canadians. Canadians are not yet sufficiently Canada-conscious to appreciate the necessity for a flag of purely Canadian design; the patriotism of very many of them is still given to the United Kingdom and only what is left is given to Canada. They do not consider, as do their French compatriots, that Canada is their homeland, their fatherland. This unfortunate condition is being rapidly changed; the effects on the soldiers who have been overseas have been very great. They have come back Canadians. And until Canadians have acquired a Canadian national consciousness it would only divide the country into distinct opposing groups to adopt a flag that has the union jack in the upper staff quarter. How long this delay should be depends on the development of that national consciousness—three, five or perhaps more years might be needed, but it would be time well spent in doing nothing towards adopting a flag but spent in education in Canadian citizenship and appreciation of the fact that Canada is now, and has been for some years, a sovereign independent state entitled to a purely Canadian flag.