

Canadian Flag

believing that a plebiscite should encompass not only those who ordinarily would be permitted to vote on the occasion of a general election but as well all Canadians 18 years and over; for the younger Canadians will be the ones who will live the longest under whatever flag is determined upon.

Now, it is of interest that in the committee a motion for a national plebiscite was defeated by a vote of 9 to 5. It is of even greater interest that the adoption of only one national flag was carried by a vote of 14 to 0, only to be altered later apparently following further discussion and deliberation; that the red ensign was not to be the national flag of Canada was determined by a vote of the committee of 10 to 4. Those four were the Conservative members of that committee.

Then, finally, an elimination took place. All this is necessary if one is to understand fully the need for a plebiscite. An elimination took place, and I should like to quote from the committee report so there will be no misunderstanding. There were two classes of flags; class B, those containing one maple leaf, and class C, those containing the union jack and/or the fleur-de-lis. I quote from the report:

Elimination by an agreed procedure left only one design in each category. A vote for the retention of each finalist was then taken with the following results:

A—The three maple leaf design was retained by a vote of 8 to 6;

B—The single maple leaf design was retained by a vote of 13 to 1;

C—The design containing the union jack and/or the fleur-de-lis was rejected by a vote of 9 to 5.

A vote was then taken to determine the committee's preference between the design containing three maple leaves and the design containing one maple leaf. The single maple leaf design was retained by a vote of 14 to 0.

It is made perfectly clear by that vote that it was a preference as between two designs that were before the committee. This is the committee report in part, most of which will have to be, as we say, placed before the Canadian people. It was then moved:

That the government be authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to provide that the Canadian red ensign may continue to be flown as a symbol of Canada's membership in the commonwealth of nations and of her allegiance to the crown. An amendment was moved to substitute the words "royal union flag, generally known as the union jack" for the words "Canadian red ensign."

The amendment carried by a vote of 7 yeas, 2 nays and 5 abstentions.

There is the background of the matter set out objectively and fairly by quotations from the committee report. What actually hap-

pened was that the committee expressed a preference, as I said a moment ago, for the single leaf in an elimination process over the three leaf flag that the government had advanced as its design the first time.

Now, sir, I want to refer to the stand we took on November 9 as to the course that might be adopted, following the report of the committee. I am quoting from page 9877 of *Hansard* of November 9, 1964:

We were unable to agree with the suggestion that we should apply to ourselves a self imposed closure, but my own feeling is this. In so far as the flag debate is concerned, this represents the views of my caucus, the caucus of the Conservative party—

I think quite a number wish to express themselves on this matter. That does not mean they will be repeating themselves more than once, but they have their views to express and they do not intend to have imposed on them anything in the nature of closure, other than, of course, if the government chooses in its wisdom to bring about that measure; and we will come to that matter if it arises. We do feel however, that in order to expedite the business of the house Canadians as a whole would expect us to vote on the question whether there should be a plebiscite.

Then I went on to ask consideration for that view. Now I want to summarize our position on the report. We cannot accept the recommendation contained therein. The Social Credit party, with one or two exceptions, accept it. The socialist party—they have a maple leaf on their literature—will accept it with one or two exceptions. The Créditistes embrace it because they do not want anything connected with the British tradition on the flag of this nation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: During the progress of that committee we made alternative suggestions with which I shall deal later on. We wanted to bring about in a spirit of compromise the assurance that what would be arrived at would meet with general support across Canada. What was advanced in the committee by the Conservative representatives after the red ensign had been turned down was a design I did not know of and of which I was never informed; I had no information about it until I read a report which a member of that committee gave to the press before that committee reported.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What was advanced by our members, after first standing on the red ensign, was a flag consisting of two red bars, one bearing the union jack and in the other the fleur-de-lis and in the centre a maple