

In 1945, when a parliamentary committee suggested the adoption of the Red Ensign with certain modifications, some opposition was voiced regarding the inclusion of the Union Jack, but there was also opposition from those who wanted to retain only the Union Jack.

Senator Gouin indicated yesterday that when he was young, at home, the flag of France was hoisted but I remember that when I was young, it was not the Red Ensign that was flown at the mast of the summer home of one of my uncles, but very simply the Union Jack.

There was an evolution. From the Union Jack, they switched to the Red Ensign.

The Red Ensign was never recognized as the flag of Canada. However, by order in council, it was decided to fly that flag over Canadian government buildings for the past several years, but it never succeeded in being accepted by the great majority of Canadians.

There was an evolution. Had the time come to deal with the matter? I doubt it. Personally, I always favoured an exclusively Canadian flag, but I am not sure that the circumstances were truly favourable to a final solution.

However, since the government set out on the road towards a solution, I am afraid that it might not be possible to go back. Consequently, it is to be hoped that the new flag—which, in spite of an opposition that seems to be justified in certain parts, will be tomorrow the official flag of Canada—it is to be hoped, as I say, that this flag will be gradually accepted everywhere. I do not say it will be so tomorrow or in a matter of a few weeks, but as time goes by.

As regards my friends opposite, I hope that much care will be taken not to use that flag for election purposes. I also hope that on this side of the house the bitterness felt during the flag debate will be forgotten. I hope it will even be forgotten that one of them did not share their views, so that gradually this new flag whose design inspires very little enthusiasm—I do not think it has inspired very much yet—because of its simplicity, will become in the future a rallying sign for all Canadians.

It is in that spirit that I endorse the resolution. I feel that as Senator McCutcheon said yesterday, many opponents of the flag, after the battle has subsided, will make a sincere effort to promote its acceptance. This flag must not represent for the supporters of the Red Ensign, a forsaking of British traditions or even an opposition to Great Britain and to the cultural heritage it bequeathed to us here

in Canada. We all should agree on the flag selected and the opponents should endorse the maple leaf. Even though it might not be the extraordinary symbol we would wish for our flag, we all admit that it is the only one unlikely to create disunity.

Hon. Mr. Pouliot: Very well.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: With time and like other very simple flags, it could become a rallying sign for a happy people.

(Text):

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators—

The Hon. the Speaker: I must inform honourable senators that if the honourable Senator Connolly (Ottawa West) speaks now, it will have the effect of closing the debate.

Hon. Malcolm Hollett: Honourable senators, I just want to say a word or two. There are millions of people in Canada who are going to be extremely disappointed tonight. I know that several hundreds of thousands in the province from which I come are going to be disappointed to know, to think, that we in this Senate have taken away from our people a flag which many of them worship.

Speaking for my own province, I am a sorry man tonight and I know that my own people of Newfoundland, in large measure, will be sorry and sad to think that our Government has taken away that which means so much to them.

I am not going to argue against this action now. I hope you will make the maple leaf something which we can all like and adore, as we did our own flag.

I said last night that you were making this a political issue. I was perfectly right, and as I also said last night, I am ashamed of this Senate.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: I am too.

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, I do not think that anyone in a long time has faced a more formidable task than I do at this moment. I do not propose to speak at great length, and I do not flatter myself that I can deal with the entire debate the way it deserves to be dealt with.

Due to the fine co-operation we have had here in making the arrangements for this debate, it was thought that without proliferating speeches I might wait to wind up at this stage rather than have spoken on the amendment proposed by the honourable senator from Carleton. While we did depart from the strict rules that we have in this chamber to accomplish this, we did so, I think, to suit the convenience of the Senate.