

room there was a design which was supposed to have been a fair representation of what was recommended at that time, but I found it had certain shortcomings because it was not an exact replica of the submission in 1946. The submission at that time of a flag that would have been acceptable, with one dissentient, was a modification of the present merchant marine flag, so as to reduce the size and proportions of the Union Jack in the corner by half its present size, leaving in the fly a large area which was to be filled with a white circle superimposed upon which was to be a maple leaf of autumn colourings of red and gold. That represented the submission that was made at that time with the unanimous approval of the committee, but for this one exception.

I should have said, in the first place the resolution to set up this joint committee emanated from the Government of the day, in the name of the Prime Minister, and when the report was presented to the house for adoption, objection was taken to the presence of the Union Jack, even in its reduced form in the flag. When it became evident that a definite cleavage of opinion existed on this point, the Prime Minister was instrumental, I think, in having the whole subject of the report referred to the Governor in Council for consideration. In that way I believe he wisely forestalled or anticipated possible disruptive discussions that might not have been fair to the whole conception of the committee. That was the last that was heard of that report of the joint committee over which I presided.

I think it is only fair to say that in the early forties a directive was issued from the Department of External Affairs to its representative legations in different parts of the world, that for purposes of Canadian identity during that period, and until further instructions were issued, the merchant marine flag with a Canadian Coat of Arms in the fly should be flown at the masthead of our legations abroad. That has continued to be the case during the past 20 years, until this resolution which resulted in the appointment of a new committee was adopted, and the report which we have before us today is the result of its deliberations.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: May I ask the honourable senator, did not that also specify it was a distinctive Canadian flag that was to be flown?

Hon. Mr. Lambert: In the report, as I recall it, there was no reference made to those words, but it was quite well assumed that the reference to the committee in the first place, coming as a result of the Prime Minister's resolution, was that it should inquire into the possibilities of introducing a distinctive Canadian flag. To that extent the report might be

considered as representing the fair and unbiased opinion of that committee.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: The Prime Minister used the word "distinctive".

Hon. Mr. Lambert: He may have used that word. I cannot recall the wording of his resolution but, at any rate, that was the request of the committee.

That is quite right; I will accept that reading of it. There was no question about the purpose or objective of the committee as I presided over it. My colleague at that time was Mr. Walter Harris, later to become the Honourable Walter Harris, and he shared with me some of the responsibilities of presiding over that committee. He was party to the report as well.

However, I would like to point out that this report that we have before us today and the pros and cons of which we are considering, comes 20 years later. I submit that the report of this most recent committee of the House of Commons, which was presided over by a very able and responsible chairman, Mr. Batten from Newfoundland—and from what I know of his performance I think he was just as good a chairman as could possibly have been appointed to head that committee—reflects an objective point of view which was adjusted to the changes that have taken place during the past 20 years. It reflected the will of the majority of the committee. I do not think there was any great difference between the findings of that committee and the findings of the committee in 1945.

I think it is very important in our approach to this subject to remember that the priceless value of compromise is in the liberty and freedom which is involved, rather than in the arbitrary alternative of autocratic action. The feeling in 1945 was unmistakably as favourable to a distinctive Canadian flag as it has been in the most recent report.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: But there is the question of definition.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: If I may proceed with a few remarks—I do not want to be too long because much has been said on this subject already.

I should say how much I appreciate the contributions made to this debate from the very beginning. I think the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Connolly, Ottawa West) made a very comprehensive, acceptable and able presentation of the whole subject from an objective point of view, without partisanship and without any particularly invidious connotations. I would also like to refer with deep admiration to my friend and colleague Senator O'Leary (Carleton), for his