

Canadian Flag

work was carried out in connection with this matter by the committee established by Sir Robert Borden. At the conclusion of world war I it appears that a great many service people of military rank and experience had come back to Canada feeling that their own military insignia was somewhat deficient and lacked character and stability. Therefore a committee was set up by Sir Robert Borden, composed of Major General Willoughby, G. Gwatkin, who probably was the most knowledgeable man in this area, Thomas Mulvey, under secretary of state, Sir Joseph Pope, under secretary of state for external affairs, and Arthur G. Doughty, dominion archivist. There was also a Colonel Hamilton who helped these gentlemen in the capacity of secretary. These people—I want to point out “these people”—not just the college of heralds, worked at this matter for many months. I have read the correspondence involved and some of the proceedings. They thought this matter out very carefully, and as we look at the centre block of this parliament today and see the beauty of the heraldry there is in this building, in the entrances and porticos and elevator doors we can see the handiwork of a group of people who were looking a long way ahead. I hope Canadians will not think of this flag as being a creation of a government, because I do not think it is; I think it is the most honest search possible for what is distinctly and clearly and uniquely our own.

The arms of Canada were proclaimed by George V on November 21, 1921 at the request of the government headed by the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen pursuant to the recommendation of the arms committee set up by Sir Robert Borden's government on March 26, 1919. I ask you to note this, gentlemen, that a flag was flown on Confederation square in Ottawa to celebrate the royal visit of 1939. This flag was flown in a place of honour, and it showed three maple leaves conjoined on a white field. This was immediately prior to the war, and at this time Ottawa had this insignia emblazoned up and down its streets. Some hon. members may care to look at the *Illustrated London News* of May 27, 1939, particularly pages 988 and 989, in this connection.

Then there was the Canadian active service force flag which was adopted by the war cabinet and militia council on December 7, 1939, as the battle flag for the commander, 1st Canadian division, and later presented to George VI. This is referred to, incidentally, in the last edition of “Flags of the World”, edited by H. Gresham Carr. It is perhaps

rather presumptuous for an author to say this, but he says in this book:

After due consideration, the writer ventures to suggest that a flag similar to that designed for the Canadian active service force in 1939 might well be adopted as a new national flag.

This book dilates on the fact that our own system of flags has really fallen pretty much into disarray. In that flag there was a union jack in canton. This was included apparently because of the natural tradition and relationship of Canada to Great Britain and the fact that our forces were going to be in the United Kingdom for some period. Also on the flag, and to the right were the three traditional fleur-de-lis, which incidentally are also part of all British heraldry but the basic flag was three red maple leaves conjoined on a white field. Respecting the fleur-de-lis I think that having burned the Maid of Orleans in the 15th century and having discovered that she was such a saintly creature, the British thereafter did everything they could to appropriate her symbolism as their own.

Then there is the officers' hat badge of the Canadian Women's Army Corps, 1942; the Canadian Infantry Corps cap and collar badge, 1943-1951; the badge of No. 5 initial training school, R.C.A.F., 1943; the badge of H.M.C.S. *Donnacona*, being the naval division, Montreal. Then there is the Canada Medal, 1943. That had three maple leaves on one stem. There is the badge of the famous 405 R.C.A.F. fighter squadron, adopted in 1946; the ship's badge of H.M.C.S. *La Hullose*, a frigate; the war service lapel button for military service during 1939-1945, adopted in 1946; the cap and collar badges of army officers on the general list below lieutenant-colonel, 1946; the Canadian Army badge, which I have been told was actually chosen by George VI himself in 1947. That badge consists of three maple leaves, two crossed swords and the crown. Then there is the Canadian forces decoration. A good many hon. members of the opposition who are not happy about this emblem that is being suggested wear the Canadian forces decoration.

Mr. Churchill: We like the emblem, but not as a flag.

Mr. Matheson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. gentleman for his intervention. I respect the hon. gentleman; he is not only decorated but is a veteran of two wars. However, I would point out to him that flags are a specialized form of heraldry and when we are discussing flags and heraldry it is really the same subject. Unless a flag in some