

the Canadian flag. A few weeks ago I myself wrote a short letter to the *Montreal Star* advocating the use of a single richly-tinted maple leaf, but probably the difficulty of printing an object in different colours would be a serious obstacle to its adoption. Since then, I find that the suggestion of a maple leaf in a white disc has found most favour, and, I think, with reason, inasmuch as it is at once simple and effective. Mr. Sandford Fleming's suggestion of a star has not, I am glad to note, found a seconder. In itself the star would be objectionable, as it is specially associated with the United States. A flag with one star is the flag of a U.S. Commodore; one with two stars is that of a Rear-Admiral; one with three stars is that of a Vice-Admiral; while that with four stars is the flag of an Admiral, as also that of the Secretary of the Navy. The single star is also the flag of Chili, of Siberia, as well as that of the State of Texas. If the white star is placed on a red field we have the flag of Samoa, as also that of a certain steamship company! Again, if the points of the star are to be altered to suit the creation of each new Province it would, in time, become so many pointed as to look, at a distance, little better than a blur.

Mr. Hodgins seems to prefer a shield to a disc, and suggests the maple leaf on a white shield. But this shield is too suggestive of a memorial tablet on a church wall. His reason for this preference, namely, that it would differ from, and would therefore be preferable to the disc-shaped emblem of Australia is not one which should be allowed to carry too much weight, inasmuch as this shield is to be found on many of the flags of the older lands, such as Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Servia, and the Pontifical States, besides the small South American Republics of Peru, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Hayti and Paraguay.

The adoption of the disc would be an admirable idea, as it would probably lead to the assumption by all the British colonies of a disc on which their respective emblems might suitably be portrayed. The members of the great British Confederation would then be one "flag-family," as it were, each with its distinctive badge, but all of one form. The device recommended by the Canadian Club of Hamilton is the best which has yet been brought out or suggested, namely, the green maple leaf in a white disc, on the red fly of the British flag.

A. BISSET THOM.

Galt, July 8th, 1895.

#### THE ROYAL STANDARD ADAPTED TO CANADA.

SIR,—To many, the idea of modifying the Royal Standard so as to make it specially suited to Canada, no doubt, appears very absurd. They believe it to be wholly Imperial, and, therefore, appointed to be the same in all parts of the Empire. I am of a different opinion, and that for the following reason: Scotland has her own form of the Royal Standard. In it, instead of having only one quarter of the escutcheon charged with her lion, as is usually the case, she has *two*. Why, then, should not also Canada have her own form of it, even though it should not be so much?

We often see a Canadian form of the Royal Standard. The general design is very good. But the escutcheon has two defects. (1) Britain has no place in it. (2) A still greater one—there are far too many objects on it. When to these are added the coats-of-arms of Newfoundland, and of the new provinces into which the North-West will in the not very far distant future be divided, it will not be an example of "the more the merrier." I venture to suggest that one of the two quarters usually occupied by England, say the lower one, be occupied by Canada. This may consist of a golden beaver on a red field, or simply a maple leaf.

My design of the escutcheon has the following advantages over the other one: (1) It is very simple. (2) It recognizes Britain as well as Canada. (3) No matter how many provinces may, in course of time, be in the Dominion, it would not need to be changed.

In closing, I would ask, would not a Royal Standard such as I propose, surmounted by the crown, set in the centre of the Union Jack, be a suitable flag for the Governor-General?

T. FENWICK.

Woodbridge, Ont.

#### THE CANADIAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL CELEBRATION OF 1897.

Sir,—I have read with much pleasure Mr. Winton's

letter in your last issue, showing the concurrence of a gentleman who is well-known as a zealous and public spirited native of Newfoundland in our project for a centennial celebration in Canada of the discovery of 1497; towards which valuable assistance may be hoped from that Island. Mr. Winton's letter, however, indicates that he has not followed the latest and most valuable literature on the subject of the circumstances of the discovery. Otherwise he could not very well have re-stated in such positive terms the old theories, once, no doubt, pretty widely accepted, claiming for Sebastian Cabot the honour of the first discovery, and also attributing the scene of the first landfall to a point on the Island of Newfoundland. He could not have held with such unshaken faith to these conclusions had he had before him the conclusions of the author of the chapter on "the voyages of the Cabots," in Justin Winsor's recent and important "Narrative and Critical History of America" (Vol. III); with its learned array of maps, histories, and other materials, some of them recently discovered, but of the highest authenticity. Still less could Mr. Winton have had the advantage of perusing the splendidly scientific re-examination of the whole subject—the latest and most conclusive yet published—in the paper read by Dr. S. E. Dawson before the Royal Society of Canada in 1894. He will find in both those papers very conclusive historical records, establishing the fact that John Cabot made the discovery on the 24th June, 1497, under his commission from Henry VII. Sebastian, his son, was named with him in the commission and was probably on the same ship. In the first-mentioned authority, Winsor's history, he will find the more doubtful point of the exact scene of the landfall decided with great probability as being not on the Island of Newfoundland but upon the continent of America, at Cape Breton, where it appears on the first known map, that of Juan de la Cosa, made in 1501 and also in Sebastian Cabot's own map published in 1544. The probability seems to be converted into something as near certainty as any result of human reasoning can be by Dr. Dawson's further exhaustive critical examination of the whole subject both from a historical and nautical point of view in the Transactions of the Royal Society.

I think Mr. Winton will find that he has laid too much stress on the single fact of the language used by Henry VII. in the year of the discoverer's return, describing him as "the man who discovered the New Found Isle." Cabot and his Royal Master were under the popular impression which inspired all the exploratory attempts of the period. The continent of Asia, the land of spices and cities of fabulous wealth, was the object of discovery. Columbus' discovery had proved to be a mere island still far off from the desired continent. Every disappointing barren land met with by the first Discoverers was at first fondly supposed to be merely an island in the ocean, on the way to the populous continent. Thus "Island" was pretty nearly a synonymous term with "discovered land." Thus in the despatch of Raimondo de Soncino, envoy of the Duke of Milan, writing from the English Court to his Government on August 24th, 1497, he relates: "Also some months ago His Majesty sent out a Venetian who is a very good mariner and has skill in discovering new islands, and he has returned safe and has found *two very large and fertile new islands*." One island, no doubt, was Newfoundland, which the discoverer is related to have practically circumnavigated by entering the Gulf at Cape Breton and returning by way of the Straits of Belle Isle. The other "large and fertile island," could only have been Cape Breton, which he touched on his left hand, and the southern limits of which he had not explored on this voyage.

So in Raimondo's later letter in the same year, notifying his Court of Henry's intention to despatch a second expedition the following year: "There is in this kingdom a Venetian fellow, Master John Cabot by name, of a fine mind, greatly skilled in navigation, who, seeing that those most serene kings, first he of Portugal and then the one of Spain, have occupied numerous islands, determined to make a like acquisition for His Majesty aforesaid."

It will be one advantage of the coming international celebration in Canada that an opportunity will be given at geographical or historical congresses to be held on the occasion, to enable Dr. Dawson's conclusions to be brought before a larger public and made the subject of an extremely interesting debate by scholars of all nations. That debate, however, whatever may be the result of it, cannot affect what I believe