

Canadian Flag

In war it has become the emblem of the men in uniform; their official and their unofficial emblem. The words "maple leaf", in fact are synonymous with Canada in uniform. Those words mean a great deal, as the maple leaf badge does, to all veterans of the two world wars. The official badges of the three armed services all include maple leaves, and have for a hundred years. A similar situation applies to regimental badges. Of the 462 cap badges of Canadian units in world war I, 409 included the maple leaf; of 133 in world war II, 83 included maple leaves. It is the official emblem of Canada in NATO and is the central device of the Canadian U.N. patch worn in Egypt, the Congo and Cyprus. It is on regimental flags, war service buttons, medals and decorations. It was used by the Royal Canadian Naval ships in world war II for identification by painting a large red maple leaf on the front.

Just after the end of hostilities in world war II the Canadians forces newspaper, the *Maple Leaf*, printed many letters from soldiers on the question of a distinctive Canadian flag, indeed they encouraged expression of viewpoint of the men in uniform who were at that time awaiting demobilization. A majority favoured a flag with a maple leaf design as a unifying element, representative of Canada itself, without reference in its design to one or the other of Canada's founding graces. The Canada medal authorized in 1943 but not yet issued has three maple leaves conjoined on one stem.

An hon. Member: What happened to that?

Mr. Pearson: We will be resurrecting that, perhaps, one of these days.

A special copy on parchment of the bill of rights printed for distribution to schools, and with the name of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) on it, bears three maple leaves on one stem, although I confess this insignia is not as prominent as I wish it had been.

The Leader of the Opposition, on December 20, 1963, as recorded on page 6226 of *Hansard*, in discussing the world fair symbol—hon. members will recall that debate when the house took violent exception to a symbol which has now been judged by North American experts as the symbol of the century—said this:

—I would have thought that this would be an ideal occasion to place the maple leaf in the centre to show it was Canadian.

[Mr. Pearson.]

I am inclined to think he was right. Then, as recorded on page 6233, the right hon. gentleman had this to say:

—I was particularly impressed—by the hon. member for Leeds, who pointed out that the official emblem of Canada is three maple leaves.

All this is pretty impressive sponsorship for the three maple leaves design.

Indeed, the three joined red maple leaves have for us a historic and heraldic significance which, in my view, make them preferable on a flag, to a single maple leaf which has not the same significance and has not, in fact, any formal emblematic authority; but that does not necessarily exclude it from consideration.

The three joined maple leaves first appear in our history in a heraldic sense in 1868, when Queen Victoria gave "armourial ensigns" to Ontario and Quebec based on a sprig of three maple leaves. The Great Seal of Canada also carries three maple leaves.

Mr. Aiken: So does the red ensign.

Mr. Pearson: So does the red ensign; indeed it does. I think it accounts for about one forty secondth of the flag.

Then in 1921, and I believe this is of very considerable and formal significance, an order in council was passed and a royal proclamation was issued approving arms for Canada which included, as the purely Canadian part, three maples leaves on one stem with the motto "A mari usque ad mare" and established white and red as the official colours of Canada.

If I may paraphrase this royal proclamation of 1921 establishing the arms of Canada, by simplifying the heraldic language, what it said in essence was this: The King, at the request of Canada, assigns to Canada the national colours white and red, and declares that the national emblem of Canada shall be three red maple leaves on one stem, on a white field. These shall be used to represent Canada on all appropriate occasions.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, that answers the two questions "What are our national colours?" and "What is our national emblem"? By order in council on April 26, 1922, this Canadian coat of arms replaced the shield formerly used on the red ensign, and in 1957, under the administration of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, the arms of Canada with the three joined maple leaves were simplified and confirmed.

In 1939, at the beginning of the second world war, the government authorized a battle flag for the first division and presented