

Cleared of confusing terms and items, and written in plain language—with “argent” translated as “white”, and “gules” as “red”—the vital part of the Proclamation would read:

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.

That answers the two questions: “What are our national colours?” and “What is our national emblem”?

(12) *Authority for national and provincial devices and flags*

If you are not familiar with the arms of Canada and what they mean and what they contain, it is not the fault of the Government of Canada, for the text of the Royal Proclamation of 21 Nov. 1921 has been printed verbatim again and again in government publications in both English and French. That is the proclamation I have just read. In 1921 the Department of the Secretary of State issued an explanatory pamphlet of 15 pages printed by the King's Printer with a coloured illustration. A second edition was published in 1923, a third followed, and the fourth in 1937. The Canada Year Book for 1921 has a rendering of the achievement which I show you here. It is a coloured picture of the Ensigns Armorial—which means the devices all assembled in proper order—as a frontispiece, and page 17 gives the following explanations:

EXTRACT FROM THE CANADA YEAR BOOK 1921 PAGE 17:

THE ARMS OF CANADA.

Armorial bearings owe their existence to the need of providing men with some mark of identification. They originated in the Middle Ages, when few men could read, but when all were trained to distinguish such symbols at a glance. Under these circumstances, the arms of the sovereign became generally identified with the arms of the nation, were emblazoned on shields and were later often incorporated into the national flag. In the case of England, the royal standard bears the Coat of Arms of the Sovereign, while the union jack or national flag is composed of the combination of the red cross of St. George on a white field, borne as their banner by the English from the time of the second crusade, the white cross of St. Andrew on a blue field (Scotland), added in 1707, and the red cross of St. Patrick on a white field (Ireland), added in 1801.

Until 1921, the question of the Arms of Canada remained in an unsatisfactory position. In this country the Royal Arms, in their English form have always been freely used. Soon after Confederation, when a Great Seal was required, a design approved by Royal Warrant of 26 May, 1868, displayed the arms of the four confederated provinces—Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. This design, though not used for the Great Seal, was gradually adopted as the Arms of Canada. As the number of provinces increased, it became a common practice to add their arms to the original design. This resulted in overloading the shield with a multiplicity of detail, and a Committee, appointed to submit proposals, recommended the adoption of a coat of arms which has been approved by the Government and duly authorized, on November 21, 1921, by the King.

Three considerations were kept in view in determining the “achievement of arms,” i.e., the combination of arms, crest, supporters, and motto, which I have just described and which has now been authorized. These were: first, that Canadians stand to their King in as close a relation as do