

of a world-wide Empire such as ours, affords but little information as to the quarter of the globe from which she hails, may possess a distinctive badge indicating the particular colony to which she belongs, or, it may be, the rank and status of some one on board. Reasons of convenience may sometimes render the adoption of such a distinguishing mark by ships or boats, desirable.

In the year 1869 the following Memorial from the Lords of the Admiralty was adopted by the Queen in Council:—

“The Union Jack having been established by Your Majesty’s Regulations for the Naval Service as the Distinguishing Flag to be borne by the Admiral of the Fleet, and whereas great inconvenience has at times been experienced by the Union Jack having been carried in boats and other vessels by Governors of Colonies, Military Authorities, Diplomatic Officers and Consular Agents when embarked, we have deemed it expedient to place ourselves in communication on this subject with the Commander-in-Chief of Your Majesty’s Forces and the principal Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs for the Colonies and for War, and with their concurrence we most humbly submit that Your Majesty may be graciously pleased by your Order-in-Council, to prescribe and direct that in future the Union Jack to be displayed by the Military Branch of Your Majesty’s Service on such occasions shall bear in the centre thereof, as a distinguishing mark, the Royal Initials surrounded by a garland on a Blue Shield, and surmounted by the Crown,—that the Union Jack to be used by Your Majesty’s Diplomatic Servants, Ministers Plenipotentiary, Charges d’Affaires, &c., shall bear the Royal Arms in the centre thereof on a White Shield, whilst Consuls and Consular Agents, &c., shall be limited to the use of the Blue Ensign with the Royal Arms in the fly thereof. We further submit that Governors of Your Majesty’s Dominions in Foreign parts, and Governors of all ranks and denominations administering the Governments of British Colonies and dependencies be authorized to fly the Union Jack with the Arms or Badge of the Colony blazoned in the centre thereof.

“A drawing of the Union Jack with the proposed distinguishing devices is transmitted herewith, for Your Majesty’s approval.”

Moved by considerations of a like nature, the Canadian Government in 1890 applied for permission, on behalf of vessels registered in the Dominion, to fly the Red Ensign “de-faced” with the Canadian Arms. The Admiralty, to whom this request was referred, while not questioning the expediency of granting it, pointed out with much force:—

“that there are not unimportant objections to interference with the simplicity and uniformity of national colours.

An important use of an ensign is to supply a ready means of indicating to foreigners the nationality of a ship which flies it. It is desirable that the pattern of this flag should be uniform and simple, so that there may, under no circumstances, be any excuse for failing to perceive what country’s it is. The adoption of a considerable