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Wanted — A Canadian National Flag

(By the Wayside Philosopher)

We see much in the press, we hear more or less discussion in other quarters of the desirability of a Canadian National Flag—or as some more properly put it—a New Flag.

We have, therefore, to ask ourselves seriously what the real position is regarding the Canadian Flag and, if a change is required, what that change should be?

It is understood, of course, that we have a Canadian Flag, which is a marine ensign used to designate ships of Canadian ownership or Canadian registry. Apart from that it seems to be taken for granted that we have no Canadian National Ensign.

It might serve some useful purpose to examine the different ways by which a flag or national ensign may become such, but instead let me suggest a question.

We have in Canada a history dating back to the beginning of the 17th century. Between that time and July 1st, 1867, we have the development and progress of those lands and dominions which were to become, and are to-day, Canada. On July 1st, 1867, we became a country—shall I say a Nation?—though our treaty-making powers—one of the attributes of a nation—were undoubtedly limited and curtailed. Since 1867 we have extended our boundaries, added new lands and occupied practically all the vacant territory open to occupation between the 49th parallel and the North Pole—which could be at all supposed to come within our hegemony. During part of this time an ensign has flown from our merchant marine as a Canadian Flag. Under what flag have the rest of our activities been carried on? What banner has waved over the years of achievement as colonists and pioneers, and, lastly, though for no more than the last few years, as a Nation in the Band or League of Nations known as the British Empire?

One further question at this point. How far have the Canadian people and the Canadian Parliament by their action appropriated the Union Jack as the Canadian National Ensign?

It will no doubt be pointed out, what the origin and history of the Union Jack have been. Some will, no doubt, endeavour to show that that origin and that history are inconsistent with its being flown as a Canadian Flag. It may, however, be well worth while to consider what leading Canadians of the past have thought and what the generations who made Canada thought and did in respect of this question.

It may also be pertinent to point out the course pursued by the other members of the British Empire in the matter of individual flags and to ask whether, or not, in their course of action, South Africa, Australia

and New Zealand have not conceded a certain standing to the claim advanced by some, at least, that the Union Jack is to-day the Canadian National Flag.

Leaving the question of what is Canada's National Flag to be determined from the fact that so far, apart from the Union Jack, the Merchant Marine Flag is the only ensign she claims as her own—let us turn to the question of why any change should be made.

One of our esteemed fellow-subjects, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, addressing the Native Sons of Canada is reported in the press to have stated, after referring to efforts made by himself to have a Canadian Flag for our Merchant Marine — that there was no good reason why we should not have a land, or other flag, as well.

We venture to think that Sir Charles, in taking this position, was only stating that it was permissible for Canada to adopt a national ensign, and that there existed no legal or constitutional reason why she should not do so—in that it is within her power to do so if she chooses—and we will agree with him.

This, however, is only one part of the question. However permissible or possible it may be, there is, in the last resort, but little question as to its desirability—unless we take the view that Canada's destiny is apart from that of the British Empire.

To any who believe in the union of Canada with the United States, or its intermediary step, Canadian independence, it is perfectly legitimate to ask for a

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