

Further we are told that the union jack has a religious significance; that it stands for righteousness; that the holy crosses hold the most prominent place and stand for the redemption of mankind; that that is why they have been incorporated in the union jack; that the colours red, white and blue symbolize courage, sacrifice and purity, and that therefore there is a deep significance about the union jack, in that it reminds us of the blood of Emmanuel shed for our atonement, of His resurrection and ascension, assuring all who believe in Him of eternal life hereafter. These arguments used to uphold the union jack are wonderful arguments, and sound too, but they are no less applicable to the establishment for Canada of a distinctive national emblem equally as sacred as the union jack. I fail to see why such a flag would not mean the advancement and development of our country in a democratic and spiritual sense.

May I put on record some of the arguments presented for a national flag by the weekly and daily press of the nation? In my humble opinion they present the issue fully and emphatically, and the statements I shall quote are representative of the Canadian press from one coast to the other.

This is what the Winnipeg Free Press says on "Flags of the Commonwealth":

With the numerous flags, officially recognized, of the various parts of the British Commonwealth now being seen at Ottawa, the absurdity of opposition in Canada to the adoption of a flag of our own is very plain. Canada, which led the movement for constitutional freedom and whose government has been enamored of a "Canada First" policy, is the only member of the commonwealth which cannot use its official emblem on this occasion, and, for the sake of practical convenience, resorts to an irregularity.

Surely, after this conference the desire for a new Canadian flag will be unanimous.

I believe that the desire for a distinctive national emblem in Canada to-day is practically unanimous. There is a small though noisy opposition; I believe that we should not pay too much attention to it, but that we ought to go forward and make history in regard to this question. I quote the following from the Orillia Packet and Times, on "A Canadian Flag":

... But for our part we have never seen any reason why Canada should not have such a flag; and there are many reasons why, when inter-empire gatherings such as that at Ottawa are held, there should be some method of distinguishing the Canadian colours.

The inter-empire gathering referred to was that of the Empire Trade conference at Ottawa, 1932.

From the Hamilton Herald:

If prejudice could be put aside and reason were allowed to rule, it would be easy to make a compromise arrangement satisfactory to all parties.

Another statement, from the Toronto Daily Star:

The flag issue was not raised; it raised itself, and nothing could be more absurd than to suggest that under these circumstances the newspapers should say nothing about it. It is easily understood, however, that those newspapers which oppose a Canadian flag do not want it talked about on an occasion which so vividly illustrates the need of one.

The Winchester Press:

Candidly, we do not see why Canada should not have a flag that is at once British as well as Canadian. The governments of the dominions have adopted national flags. Why there should be any fuss about Canada having a flag that would be pronouncedly Canadian as well as British we cannot understand. This opposition to a "Canadian Flag" is silly sentiment and should not stand in the way of our government adopting a Canadian flag.

The Stratford Beacon Herald:

... If the Canadian people did decide to have a new flag it would mean doing away with the union jack as we have it now—

The old argument is used there, that we are going to destroy the union jack. There is not a word of truth in it.

—and there are many people in this country who would not care to do that—

I imagine there will be quite a number who would not want to do that.

—in fact many of them would not do it—

I am one who would not want to do it; and I am the mover of this resolution.

... and there would be no way to force unanimity of opinion and action.

We come to the Collingwood Bulletin.

Opposition to a distinctive flag has been based largely on a misunderstanding of the situation. Education on this subject is working towards a practically unanimous public sentiment on this subject.

From the Recorder and Times, Brockville:

The Expositor thinks that if an agreement could be reached whereby a Canadian device would appear on the union jack, it would promote an intenser spirit of patriotism and citizenship, not only for the dominion, but for the empire. Canadians, it says, are surely not afraid of an emblem that would characterize the flag as their own.

Another statement, from the Brockville Recorder:

Why should there not be equal approval of the institution of a Canadian national flag to fly on land? Mr. Chamberlain probably wonders. So do a great many others, who are quite unable to fathom the reasoning of those who object to such a proceeding.