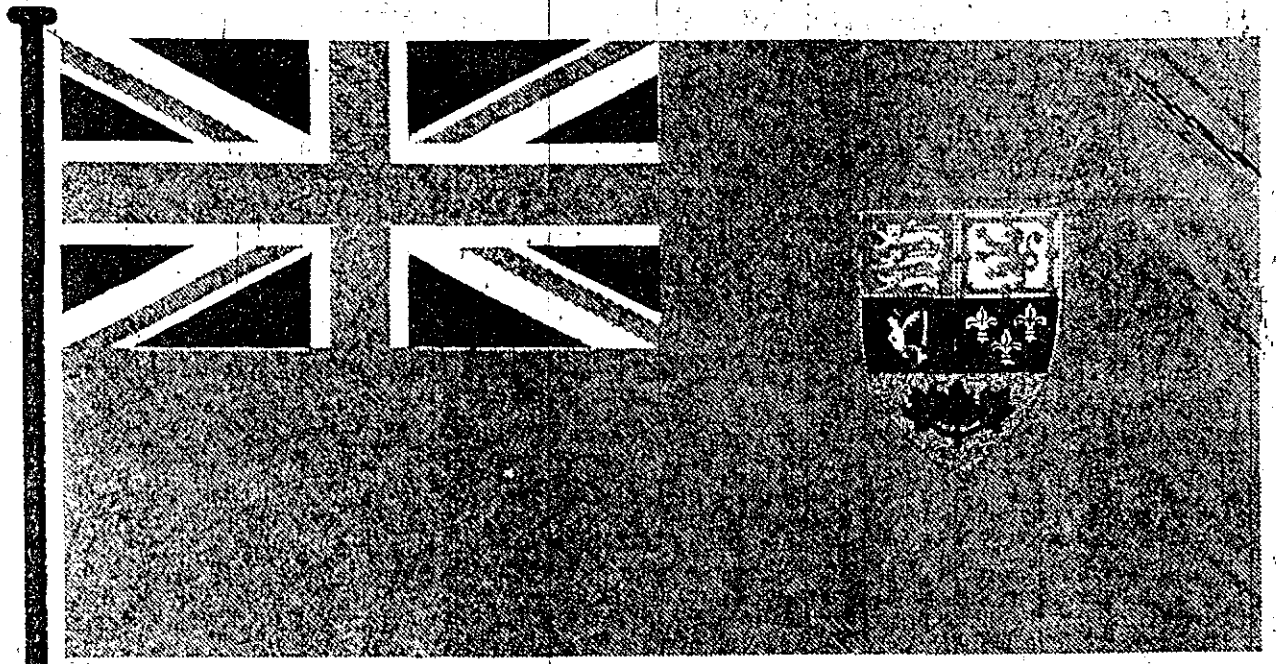


FREE PRESS FLIES CANADA'S NEW FLAG, INAUGURATED TODAY



THE HISTORY of the new official flag of Canada, the first authorized flag of the Dominion, which flies today from the Free Press flag-staff, goes back 32 years to the time when on February 2, 1892, the Canadian Red Ensign was authorized by admiralty warrant to be flown by Canadian registered merchant vessels. During these 32 years, the Canadian Red Ensign with the old coat-of-arms—an aggregation of devices which had wandered into being in a haphazard way on the basis of the old Great Seal design of 1868—"defacing" the fly, has been used, though without definite authority, as a national Canadian flag.

A little over two years ago, on November 21, 1921, King George authorized the use of the new Canadian coat-of-arms design that had been prepared by a special interdepartmental committee of the Canadian government. Then, on April 26, 1922, by order-in-council, the shield from the new Canadian coat-of-arms replaced the old shield on the fly of the Red Ensign (and also of course of the Blue Ensign flown by Canadian government ships). The use of flags bearing the old shield was permitted up to March 31, 1923. This period of license, granted in order that merchant concerns stocked with old flags might not be losers, has now expired. From today, the official flag of the Dominion of Canada is the familiar Canadian Red Ensign, used as Canada's flag for 32 years, with the shield from the new Canadian coat-of-arms substituted for the old shield on the fly.

Heraldry of New Shield

The main figure on the new flag is of course the old Union Jack, composed, of the St. George's, St. An-

drew's and St. Patrick's crosses. The minor figure is the shield on the fly. The heraldic description of the quarterings on the shield of the new Canadian coat-of-arms is as follows: "1st, gules, three lions passant in pale or ('or' means gold); 2nd, or, a lion rampant within a double tressure flory-counter-flory gules; 3rd, azure, a harp or, stringed argent; 4th, azure, three fleurs-de-lis, or (three gold fleurs-de-lis on a blue field); and the third division of the shield argent, three maple leaves conjoined on one stem proper."

The arms on the shield are those of England, Scotland, Ireland and France, with a "difference" to mark them as Canadian. This "difference" is the sprig of maple on the lower third of the shield. The committee of Ottawa experts which revised the coat-of-arms—Sir Joseph Pope, Sir Willoughby Gwatkin, Thomas Mulvey, and Dr. A. G. Doughty—came to the following conclusion: first, that Canadians stand to their King in as close a relation as do any of his subjects elsewhere; secondly, that Canada, an integral part of the British Empire, has emerged from the war a member of the League of Nations and lastly, that Canada was founded by men of four different races—French, English, Scottish and Irish—and that Canadians inherit the language, laws, literature and history of all four countries.

Criticism of Flag Design

The design of the new flag has not escaped criticism. Leading Canadian journals have protested against the shield on the fly. Most critics hold that the only "defacement" should be a simple maple leaf. The interest in Canadian flag designs was well shown during the discussion introduced by the Free Press in 1921, at the time when the parliamentary committee had the matter of the new coat-of-arms in

hand. Letter after letter was received, and the special flag section published by the Free Press on May 28, 1921, contained a number of clever flag designs submitted by correspondents, many of whom advocated the simple maple leaf and nothing else on the fly. The Free Press' own proposal was the Union Jack in the quarter with a white field whereon should be shown in blue the constellation of the Dipper and the North Star, thus producing a flag with a family resemblance to the sister dominions of New Zealand and Australia, whose flags display in the manner suggested the stars of the Southern Cross.

The Montreal Witness pretty well expressed a view freely reflected in letters received by the Free Press, when, in an editorial in the autumn of 1921, it said in part:

Why Not Maple Leaf Only?

"We have received from the Canadian department of naval service announcement of the perpetuity of the heraldic device on the flag. Not that the new escutcheon is not a vast improvement upon the old, it consists now of the English, Scotch, Irish and French arms with the maple leaf for Canada, almost for the first time fairly correctly drawn, though with no attempt at conventionalizing. So far, it is excellent. But it is not wanted on the flag. The Witness has pleaded with every government, from that of Hon. Alexander Mackenzie on, to have this meaningless spot—if there must be a 'defacement'—replaced by the simple Canadian maple leaf and no more, a symbol that could be distinguished at any distance, and would, make the heart of every Canadian, from whatever province, beat higher. The Australians have the stars of the Southern Cross on their blue ensign. Why should we be debarred of our own emblem?"