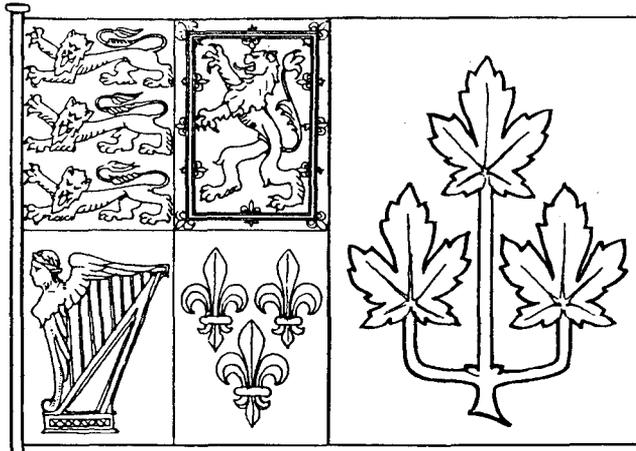


The Canadian Flag Question Again!

WE HAVE been fortunate enough to obtain opinions with regard to a Canadian flag from three contributors who are well qualified to discuss the question. Colonel Duguid possesses historical knowledge of a high order. Professor Nobbs is a well known authority on heraldry, and his keen aesthetic sense is also apparent in his paper. As regards Colonel Forbes, he is not only a highly gifted draughtsman, but also has a most competent knowledge of the making of flags.

It is not for us to pronounce judgment on the views of these contributors. We present their opinions as a matter of interest, and to stimulate discussion on this recurrent question. It is interesting to see that Professor Nobbs and Colonel Forbes put forward nearly identical proposals. Colonel Duguid, on the



other hand, has weighty arguments to support his point, not the least being that the flag he designed has actually been accepted by our Army. That circumstance may constitute a very potent factor in moulding the public opinion which will eventually decide what the pattern of our national flag will be.

As an introduction, we reproduce the design which appeared in an article on Canadian flags by Pro-

fessor Ramsay Traquair in the June, 1934, number of THE MCGILL NEWS. This drawing shows the arms granted to the Dominion of Canada by King George V in 1921. The manner of their arrangement as a flag is as suggested by Professor Traquair, in whose opinion the granting of these arms by the King automatically confers the right to their use as a flag.

The Flag of the Canadian Active Service Force

By
A. FORTESCUE DUGUID

IN SETTING out to make anything, it is well to decide upon the exact purpose to be served. This done, examination of specifications, plans or directions applicable, and reference to the rules and regulations governing construction, will be fully repaid.

And so it is with a flag, which all will agree is essentially for the purpose of indicating by visual means the identity of the bearer. A flag then is a signal, and, if by its colours and design it conveys to beholders the message intended, it is a good flag in that it fulfils its main purpose.

The main purpose of the flag required to designate the Canadian Active Service Force overseas was, and is, to declare "CANADA" as directly and as forcefully as possible. The general attributes common to all good flags—distinguishability and distinction, for visibility and identity—must be pre-eminent: if the result is pleasing and artistic, so much the better.

The specifications for the device and colours to be used, when the signal is "CANADA," were established on November 21, 1921, by King George V who issued a Royal Proclamation, at the request of Canada. Therein he proclaimed that the device to be used to indicate "CANADA" henceforth shall be *three maple leaves conjoined on one stem, as in nature, and displayed on a white field*: he further proclaimed that *the crest shall be a lion holding a red maple leaf* and that

the national colours of Canada shall be red and white: so the leaves are red, making the flag red and white.

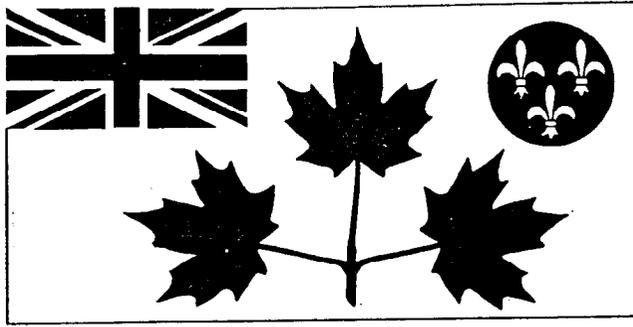
It may here be noted that the idea has got abroad that the maple leaves signifying Canada should be green. If that were so the national colours of Canada would be green and white, which they are not.

From the beginning of time men have identified each other in several ways—by family or ancestry, by place of residence, by personal peculiarities, and by association with others better known. So in heraldry, which is the science of identification by means of line and colour, these ways of informing the beholder are often employed, and frequently the information is conveyed through adding to the personal device of the bearer other devices reminiscent of his famous relations. Thus in the Canadian Ensigns Armorial described in the Royal Proclamation there are no less than fifteen such additions or honourable augmentations of various sorts: but all are indicative of England, or Scotland, or Ireland, or old France, each of which is represented three or four times. There can be no doubt that the intention was, whenever convenient, to augment the characteristic geographical and climatic impressions already conveyed—through the red maple leaves on a snow white field—by adding information as to the personality, ancestry

and historical associations of Canada. Without some of these the flag might belong to any undistinguished private person, club, or corporation, rather than to a sovereign state.

Having a free choice of the various devices assigned, the selection of the Union Flag to represent England, Scotland and

Ireland conjointly in the C.A.S.F. flag was obvious: by that symbol they are best known, and most readily distinguished; moreover, it is the flag properly flown by every subject of the British King. Its place is in a rectangle occupying the upper corner next the staff, where, according to heraldic practice, it indicates close association. Now old France still remains to be represented, and here an appropriate heraldic method is used, that of placing the three gold fleurs-de-lys on a blue ground within a circle, which means association only less close than the other described. So much for specifications, for all have now been filled and the design is complete.



Flag of the Canadian Active Service Force.

There remain the rules and regulations governing construction and display, which must be complied with, and they are to be found in the King's Regulations for the Navy, Army and Air Force, and in the accepted laws of heraldry. Examination shows that the C.A.S.F. flag does not contravene

any British practices, nor does it infringe upon the rights of any other persons, or states, corporations, or other bodies, British or foreign. The King himself, whose prerogative it is to personally assign and control the use of honours and distinctions such as are contained in armorial bearings and flags, is pleased with it. By actual test it fulfils its purpose in conveying the signal "CANADA, associated with Britain, and with France." It is distinguishable at a great distance, and it is distinctive in that it resembles no other flag that flies. It leaps to the eye of the stranger, and brings the homeland close to our countrymen abroad—the men of the Canadian Active Service Force—the bearers of this flag.

Canadian Flag Problems

By
PERCY E. NOBBS

THE FLAG now flown at Canadian Headquarters, Overseas, was specially designed and made up for that specific purpose. Its appearance on the scene has revived interest in that hardy perennial question:—the Canadian flag; to be or not to be; and if so, what? Why not this flag? That, I take it, is why the editor has asked me to express my views in this magazine; that, and the added fact that I have an interest in heraldry and have been credited with some knowledge of its mysteries.

I do not propose to criticize Colonel A. F. Duguid's design for the H/Q flag; but as to the proposal to adopt it, as it stands, for the Canadian flag, I have the following observations to offer.

First of all, let us make the assumption that there is going to be a Canadian flag some time. All the other Dominions have their flags, and what is called the Canadian Ensign is generally regarded as unsatisfactory. This consists of the British Mercantile Marine 'red duster' with a blotch in the fly, which, on close inspection, proves to be the not-very-happily-conceived Arms of Canada. These defects of composition are another story, but it is pertinent to the matter in hand to note that there should be nothing on any flag that cannot be 'read' clearly from half a mile away without a telescope.

Assuming then that, sooner or later, there will be a Canadian flag, there arise the following questions. Firstly, what is to go on it in the way of subject matter? Secondly, how is this subject matter to be assembled so as to show best on the flag? And thirdly, is the arranged subject matter to be drawn in 'any old way,' or in accordance with the sound traditions of British heraldry?

The symbolism requires careful thought. There is already a considerable body of opinion favouring a white field because, it is stated, the first French ships to come to the St. Lawrence flew a square, plain, white flag. I am quite prepared to accept the white field for another reason. Snow is white and very beautiful and we have more of it than any other Dominion; indeed than all combined. General opinion also seems to favour the incorporation of a Union Jack somewhere. So long as there is a Northern Ireland, sending members to Westminster, the Union Jack, as we now know it, will stand. Should Northern Ireland, however, cease for any reason to send members to Westminster, it is to be presumed that St. Patrick's cross (the red saltire now divided with St. Andrew's cross, which is the white saltire) will drop out. We would then have again the Union Jack as Cromwell made it in 1653 and as it remained till

1801. Possibly the Union Jack may continue as it is, standing as it does now for something rather wider than its origins in the crosses of the three patron saints of three ancient kingdoms. But one cannot be sure; and whatever happens to the Union Jack we might include it in the Canadian flag as a historic memento, because Confederation was brought about by an act of the United Kingdom at a time when there was no need of a Unionist party to defend its united character.

Then there is also considerable unanimity as to the maple leaf (or leaves) finding a place in the Canadian flag. So far so good.

There are some who would like to see one or more fleur-de-lys on the Canadian flag. Well, all I can say about that is that, if I were a French-Canadian, I would not want it. The power that sported the three golden fleurs-de-lys on a blue field did not treat the French-Canadians very well, and when the time came, rejoiced to be rid of responsibility for them. I think French-Canadians might reasonably be satisfied with the white field and a maple leaf, or leaves, as symbols appertaining to themselves as much as, if not more than, to other Canadians. But, if the French-Canadians, unitedly among themselves, do want a fleur-de-lys in the flag, they should have it.

There is much other appropriate symbolic subject matter that could be suggested, but the material above alluded to has, among other merits, a good deal of public opinion behind it.

Now, what about the arrangement of the subject matter above described. Following British precedent a great many national flags today have a canton in the upper corner next the mast; that is perhaps as good a place as any for the Union Jack element in the Canadian flag. On a white field there would be no confusion with the flags of Great Britain—the blue ensign, the red ensign, or even the white ensign; for this last, the flag of the Royal Navy, has a red St. George's Cross, top to bottom and end to end of the flag, and the Union Jack is in one of the quarters so formed.

As to the maple leaf, my view is very clear; one leaf only and that a red one. Three maple leaves are confusing in a flag. Maple leaves never occur in threes. It is rather a problem to design three maple leaves in a group, consistently and conventionally. As to the colour; green is no colour to put in a flag except over a large area and certainly not a colour to put patchily on white. Whereas, no colour would show better on white than red; and after all, the most characteristic thing about Canadian maple leaves is that they can be so very red. These red leaves, fallen on an early snow, are associated with the finest gift of nature to this land—October days.

Now we have arrived at a white flag with a Union Jack in the corner and a big red maple leaf on the

fly. That ought to suffice and could certainly be 'read' from afar by sea and land.

But there may be the question of one or more fleurs-de-lys, and the placing thereof, and their colour. Now the fleur-de-lys properly drawn is the most exquisite thing in all heraldry, but till recently it had not been properly drawn since the days of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. It should certainly be gold (the heraldic *or*) and that in flag-work is best rendered by orange hunting. But where to put it without confusing the design? Even orange will not show very well on white at a distance and the Italian device of putting a fleur-de-lys on a blue roundle or disc (as in the later arms of Medici) is not to be commended for a flag. My choice would be to put the fleur-de-lys on and within the single maple leaf. That is to say, heraldically, to 'charge' the maple leaf 'with a fleur-de-lys.' But, as there is no question of putting a rose, a thistle, a shamrock and a leek on our flag, the beautiful fleur-de-lys could similarly be done without. Let us have the maple leaf as the symbol of our unity before the world, and maintain our duality with full enthusiasm for the enlivenment of domestic relations and the enrichment of our culture.

Thirdly and lastly, as to the drawing and setting out. Although it is now the custom to make flags nearly twice as long as they are high, the composition may well be such as to be equally applicable to an old-fashioned square flag. The Union Jack would in either case occupy a full quarter and the principles for the correct setting out of a Union Jack are well recognized, though somewhat recondite. All I need say is that the narrow whites should be narrower than is now usual, being mere separation lines between blue and red; and the broad white and the red in the interchanged saltires should be equal and broader than is now usual. When I say 'should' I mean that to be consistent with origins, with good heraldic usage and with clarity of expression, these things are best so.

As to maples, there are dozens of kinds and no two trees of one kind give quite the same pattern of leaf, nor indeed are any two leaves off the same tree quite the same. But there is one kind of maple tree that is recognized as indigenous here and unique. Its leaf, unfortunately, is not as shapely as that of most of the other maples. In 1920 I worked up a geometrical setting-out for a conventional maple leaf, based upon the average proportion of parts of no less than eight kinds. I flatter myself that the resultant has as much concentrated character as has the flavour of maple syrup. Drawn in that way, we get a form that could not possibly be mistaken for the leaf of a vine or of a red currant bush.

As to the fleur-de-lys (if required) the best types are to be found in French heraldry between the time of

Joan of Arc and Francis I. The central petal should be long and stiff and the side petals very springy and sharply turned in at the ends. The pendant below the bar has, by the way, no relation to the side petals; it is a continuation of the central petal. The fleur-de-

lys (more properly 'fleur-de-luce') is a conventionalized yellow wild iris, not a lily at all.

The great national flags of the world are all strikingly simple. If we are to have a national flag let it have that artistic quality.

C.A.S.F. Flag Needs "Certain Simplifications"

Says
D. STUART FORBES

MANY generations of students at McGill have become aware of Lieutenant Colonel D. Stuart Forbes' knowledge of heraldic design. Football fans have long admired over two score university flags made under the Colonel's direction by the skilled hands of Mrs. Forbes, and the former's studies in the heraldic derivations of flag designs lend authority to his opinions concerning the new Canadian Active Service Force flag.

When consulted, Colonel Forbes felt that this flag, designed by Colonel A. Fortescue Duguid, Director of the Historical Section of the National Defence Department, ably represents Canada in the war, but suggested certain simplifications which he felt might well create a flag worthy of national adoption. As the place of honour, the upper corner of the field next



Colonel Forbes' proposed Canadian flag.

the staff should, of course, be reserved for the Union Jack, and the white field with its many associations with Canadian snows might well be retained. Colonel Forbes feels, however, that it might be better to adopt only one leaf of the spray of Canadian maple leaves, and to place it as a conventionalized heraldically designed red maple leaf in the centre of the fly of the flag. Superimposed on this red maple leaf could well be a gold fleur-de-lys representing French Canada.

The adoption of certain portions of one device in forming another is good heraldic practice, and such a simplification, he suggests, will have the advantage of greater legibility and ease of manufacture, while retaining all the legendry expressed in Colonel Duguid's excellent design.

Graduates' Society Nominations

THE By-Laws provide in Article XV that nominations for offices falling vacant at the end of the Society's year shall be made by the Nominating Committee prior to March 1 and shall be published by March 15 in THE MCGILL NEWS. Nominations for this year have been made as follows:

For President. Term two years.

G. McL. PITTS, B.Sc. '08, M.Sc. '09, B.Arch. '16.
Architect.

For First Vice-President. Term two years.

H. R. COCKFIELD, B.A. '10, M.A. '11.
Advertising Agent.

For Members of the Executive Committee. Two to be elected. Term two years.

H. AUSTIN ETERS, B.Sc. '10; Stockbroker.

WALTER G. HUNT, B.Sc. '17; Building Contractor.

WM. J. McNALLY, M.D. '25, D.Sc. '34; Otologist.

LINDSAY P. WEBSTER, B.Com. '25; Accountant.

Additional nominations, if signed by at least fifteen members of the Society entitled to vote, will also be placed on the ballot if received by the Secretary before April 10. Prior to April 30 the letter ballots will be sent out. All votes received on or before June 30 will be counted by the scrutineers.

Smoker on March 27

THE Montreal Branch of The Graduates' Society and the Graduates' Athletic Club are arranging an unusually good entertainment as a *smoker* which will be held in the main hall of the new Sir Arthur Currie Memorial Gymnasium-Armoury on Wednesday evening, March 27, at eight o'clock. The programme will be under the direction of John Pratt as master of ceremonies who will draw on the best available talent in the city to make this smoker an outstanding event marking the first use of the new Gymnasium for a Graduates' Society function. Arrangements for the presentation of the annual athletic awards are being made by the Graduates' Athletic Club. A feature of the smoker will be the presence of the male members of the graduating classes of 1940 as invited guests, which will enable them to make the acquaintance of the graduate body which they will soon be joining. Principal F. C. James will also attend. Profits are in aid of the C.O.T.C. Equipment Fund and it is hoped that graduates will turn out in large numbers and bring their friends. Tickets (\$1.00 each) may be purchased at the office of The Graduates' Society, or from the Hyman Cigar Stores, Montreal hospitals, and officers of the Society.