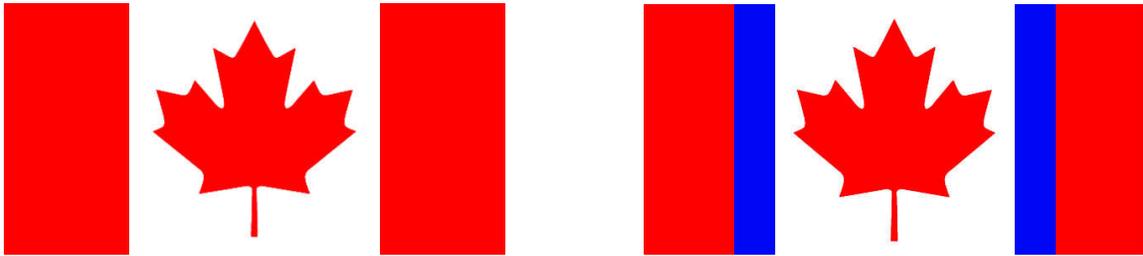


BON FLAG / BAD FLAG



Steady Progress for the Canadian Duality Flag

The Canadian Duality Flag has made great strides in the past 12 years since its creation and its first public showing on Parliament Hill and at the National Archives Library, on Oct. 24th. 1994, for the photo session of five Prime Ministers (Joe Clark, Pierre Trudeau, John Turner, Kim Campbell and Jean Chrétien). To date over 250 flags have been handed out gratuitously and are flying across Canada from Summerside PEI to Victoria BC. Over 30,000 cards and decals have also been produced and distributed at different events mainly in Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City. Visitors to Ottawa have taken these Duality Flags to all parts of Canada. All this without any sponsorship of any kind, nor any ties to political parties, it is strictly a grassroots movement. It was a hit on the very first day, when a fellow Canadian, smiled and said “merci pour la saveur francophone au drapeau”, (thank you for the Francophone flavour in the flag). Isn't that what Canada is all about?

The great flag debate of 1964 left Canadians stunned since the most popular flag design had a large red maple leaf with full blue borders to represent Canada from ‘sea to shining sea’. Yet politics forced Prime Minister Pearson to abandon his traditional blue borders for the red borders. We were sold the line that we didn't want to be like the Americans with red, white and blue, so that Canadians would accept the red and white colours. But the Americans don't own these colours, 34 countries use them, including our colonizing motherlands France and Great Britain. Nor do we own the red and white, 17 countries use these as well. The Americans are the “Stars and Stripes” while we are distinctly, the “Maple Leafs”. This doesn't change. For more insight and photos, see “Quik Start” on homepage www.trcf.ca.

The Canadian Duality Flag came about after the failures of the Meech Lake and the Charlottetown Accords and the ensuing tension between English and French Canada. Recognition and identity were the prime objectives of the Accords and it was these that caused the most hurt when the Accords failed. It became apparent that the red and the blue needed to bond together instead of the continuous confrontation. England's former red and white colours, as given to us by King George V in 1921, fell short in representing our shared heritage. The British put blue in their flag to represent the Scots, why not Canada to represent the French?

In October 1992, the idea of adding blue to our national colours was proposed to ex-Prime Minister Joe Clark, who was Canadian Unity Minister at the time. When the proposal fell on deaf ears, it was time to take the bull by the horns and the Duality Flag has never looked back from its first public showing in 1994. Not since the Official Languages Act of 1969, nor Official

Bilingualism in the Canadian Constitution of 1982, has there been an outward Canadian symbol to recognize our linguistic duality. The Royal Heraldry Society of Canada has confirmed that no such symbol exists. The red and the blue truly reflect our official linguistic duality amongst our multicultural society.

Nowhere is our heritage more pronounced than in our national sport of hockey. From the very beginning, we had always dreamed of Wayne Gretzki/Mario Lemieux, Bobby Orr/Guy Lafleur and Gordie Howe/Jean Béliveau, holding a Canadian Duality Flag between them at centre ice. That would sell the Canadian Duality Flag in a minute, a redneck from Victoria BC assured us.

As a tribute to the great Maurice “The Rocket” Richard upon his death in May 2000, a Canadian Duality Flag bearing the No. 9 in the centre of the leaf, flew at his funeral services in Montréal. Silence fell upon the crowd at the raising of the flag in front of Notre Dame Basilica. The Rocket was the heart and soul, courage and pride of French Canada. Upon the unveiling of his bronze statue in Hull Quebec, in 2001, the No. 9 flag was presented to the Richard family who just loved it and thought it was so beautiful.

That same year saw the passing of another great French Canadian, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, in Sept. 2000, and the Duality Flag flew at his funeral services as well. What a fitting tribute to honour the man who brought official bilingualism to our great country.

In 2004, the Canadian Duality Flag flew at the funeral services of a leading Québec nationalist M. Claude Ryan, who had admitted to us previously that “It would be a very good thing for Canada”.

In March 2006, another great French Canadian hockey player, Bernard “Boom-Boom” Geoffrion, passed away and the Canadian Duality Flag honoured his memory a week later in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Montreal where five No. 5 flags were flown in his honour. One No. 5 flag was forwarded to the Geoffrion family in Atlanta just before his funeral, courtesy of the Montreal Canadiens. See photos: www.trcf.ca

The national exposure of the Canadian Duality Flag has raised many questions from Canadians across the land and many have requested flags to be flown in their respective parts of the country. Just as our country has evolved in the last 40 years since the adoption of our Maple Leaf Flag, so should our national symbol evolve. John Ross Matheson was the Liberal MP and chief architect of our Maple Leaf Flag who led the Flag Committee in 1964. At the first flag-raising ceremony on Feb. 15, 1965, he proclaimed “Now that we have our very own flag, it is up to us to maintain it, and the day that we stop maintaining it, is the day that nobody cares anymore”.

It is time to add blue to our national colours as a sign of mutual respect for the French fact in Canada and in recognition of Official Bilingualism and of our linguistic duality.

With the red and the blue representing English and French Canada respectively, the Maple Leaf representing our great land, its vast territories and natural resources, and notably the First Nations who are one with the land, Canada would maintain the vision shared by the Fathers of Confederation, along with the evolution of our great country.

We have a beautiful flag now, but we can make it even more beautiful and yet more inclusive. Identity instills pride and pride builds nations. It’s a win-win for Canada.

Hank Gigandet
trcf.ca



June 22, 2006, Parliament Hill, Statue of Lester B. Pearson:

(Photo courtesy of Nora)

“Well Mike (Pearson’s nickname), do you think that we will ever have blue in our flag as you had originally intended?”