



**Hank Gigandet**  
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### **Our Maple Leaf Flag has just celebrated its 40th. Anniversary**

On Feb. 15th. 2005, Prime Minister Martin and Canadian Heritage Minister Frulla attended a ceremony in Kingston, Ontario where they deservedly paid homage to Judge John Matheson who spearheaded the Flag Committee while serving as an M.P. in the Pearson government. His relentless drive and passion, along with that of the other members of the committee, has resulted in our proud national symbol, the Maple Leaf Flag.

The three designs among the thousands submitted that the committee chose to vote on were: the three red maple leaves, representing the English, the French, the Native people with all other cultures, between blue borders (the Pearson Pennant); the Red Ensign with a fleur-de-lis and Union Jack; and a red flag with a white square featuring a single maple leaf which was Matheson's choice derived from the Kingston Military College flag. The Coat of Arms was replaced with the single maple leaf as suggested by Dr. George Stanley.

Canadians eager for a new flag had mostly preferred the single red maple leaf representing a unified Canada, with blue borders signify-

ing Pearson's theme 'from sea to sea'.

When Opposition Leader Diefenbaker, who bitterly opposed a new flag, saw the public backing the red, white and blue design, he told his members of the flag committee that they would never accept blue on the flag and told them to vote for the red and white flag. He gambled that Pearson would never give up his theme of

'sea to sea' and that the whole flag debate might end in a draw and die. When Pearson found out the Tory plan, he told his members to vote for the red and white design, 'better red and white than no flag at all'. To the astonishment of the Tories, the vote carried through overwhelmingly for the red and white maple leaf design. (Former Liberal minister Paul Hellyer's rendition of behind the scenes manoeuvring).

Over the last 40 years, our flag has gained international recognition and respect. It is our source of pride and identity as a nation, but not without reservations. Our country has evolved and grown in the last 40 years taking its place in the G7 and other world organizations, but internal conflicts also arose from lack of recognition and mutual respect. After the adoption of the red and white maple leaf, we have embraced official bilingualism, repatriated the Constitution and instated our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, our official languages have never been recognized by any official Canadian symbol, yet they are the cornerstones of our society, our window to the world.



*Pearson Pennant 1964 Most Popular 1964*



*Duality Flag Our Flag*

In the last 40 years, a reservation of our red and white flag is that it is too unilingually English and that it does not adequately symbolize the French fact in Canada. Just as our country has evolved, perhaps it is time to include blue to our national colours in recognition of our official bilingualism and linguistic duality.

Adding blue to our flag would have very positive effects for Canadian unity. After 40 years, isn't it time to share and renew (not change) our flag to a bilingual one, all without losing our own identity? Identity instills pride and pride builds nations. It works both ways. With the red and the blue, and the Maple Leaf symbolizing our great land, its vast territories and first peoples, Canada would have no where to go but up.

*Hank Gigandet is a manager in the electro-mechanical engineering field. He became a unity activist in 1992 after the failures of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords and the ensuing tension between French and English Canada. In 1994, when the government failed to respond, he started promoting the Canadian Duality Flag which recognizes our two official languages, amongst our multicultural society. The flag symbolizes French and English-speaking together, and notably aboriginal people.*

*Ref: [www.trcf.ca](http://www.trcf.ca)*