



Robert Chambers - Halifax Chronicle-Herald; 15 February 1965

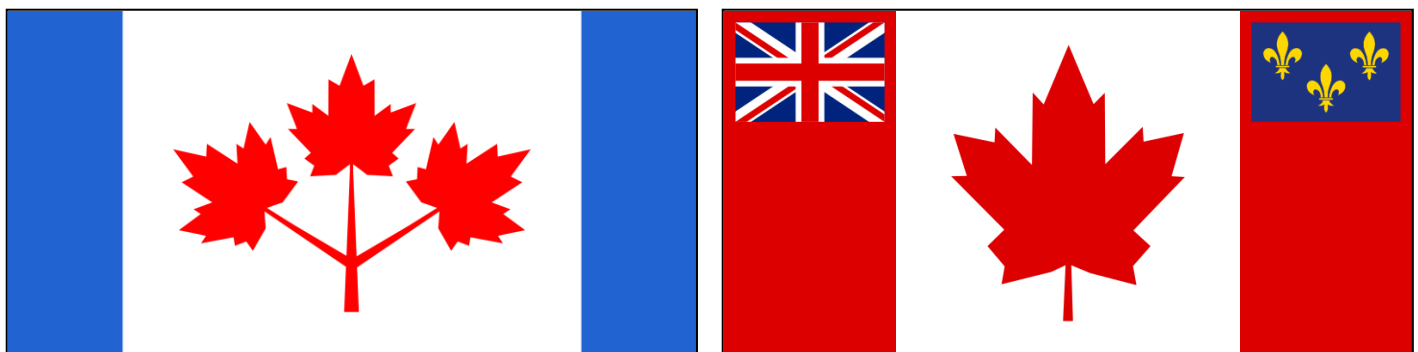
A New National Flag of Canada Proclaimed February 15th, 1965

(Text from the Department of Canadian Heritage Website)

At the time of Confederation, Canada's national flag remained the Royal Union Flag (Union Jack). However, Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, flew the Canadian Red Ensign as a distinctive flag of Canada. Following the Second World War, in 1945, an Order in Council authorized the flying of the Canadian Red Ensign from federal government buildings, in Canada and abroad.

In 1964, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson made the creation of a new Canadian flag a priority. John Matheson, Member of Parliament, was Prime Minister Pearson's key advisor and supporter in this objective. On June 15, 1964, the Prime Minister presented his proposed flag to the House of Commons, launching a divisive Canadian flag debate. After three months without resolution, the question of a national flag was referred to an all-party committee.

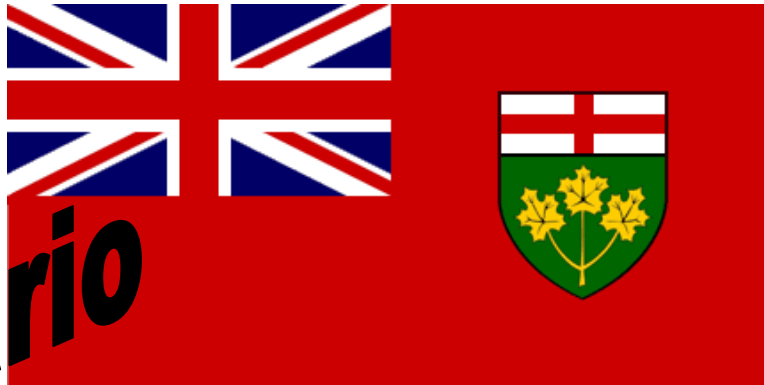
In October 1964, after eliminating thousands of proposals, the Special Committee on a Canadian Flag was left with three possible designs: one incorporating three red maple leaves with blue bars (nicknamed the "Pearson Pennant"), a flag with a single stylized red maple leaf on a white square with red bars, and another version that contained both the Union Jack and three fleurs-de-lis.



On October 29, 1964, the committee recommended to the House of Commons that the single-leaf, red and white design be adopted. Debate in Parliament continued, however, and it was only at the early hour of 2:15 a.m. on December 15, 1964, that the motion to adopt the National Flag of Canada was carried by a vote of 163 to 78. Approval by the Senate came on December 17, 1964, and **on January 28, 1965, the National Flag of Canada was proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to take effect on February 15, 1965.** Since 1996, February 15th has been observed as The National Flag of Canada Day.

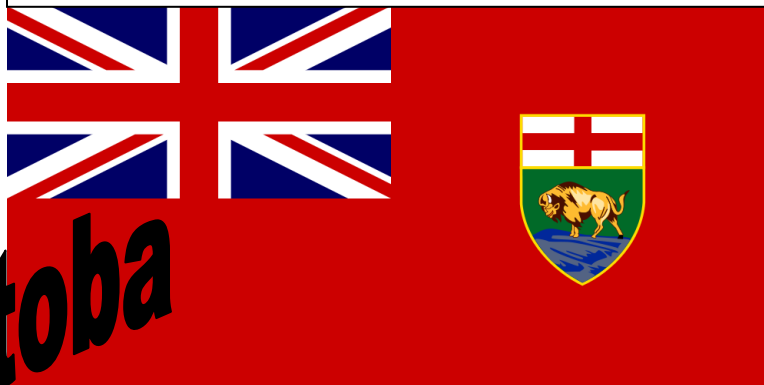
The inspiration for a red and white flag came from Dr. George Stanley, Dean of Arts at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario. Impressed by the Commandant's flag at the College (a mailed fist holding three maple leaves on a red and white ground), Dr. Stanley suggested to Mr. John Matheson a similar design with a single red maple leaf at the centre. This red - white - red pattern bore a strong sense of Canadian history: the combination had been used as early as 1899 on the General Service Medal issued by Queen Victoria.

Ontario



Not everyone was in favour of the new Canadian flag – Ontario and Manitoba proclaimed their own provincial Red Ensigns soon after the Maple Leaf was raised over Ottawa.

Manitoba



3,541 entries were submitted to the Special Committee on a Canadian Flag. Common elements found in the different designs:

2,136 contained maple leaves,
408 contained Union Jacks,
389 contained beavers, and
359 contained Fleurs-de-lys.