

Sir John A. MacDonald



Biography

(1815 – 1891)

“A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die”

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, John A. Macdonald immigrated to Canada with his parents when he was five years old. He articulated with a Kingston lawyer at the age of fifteen; by nineteen, Macdonald had his own legal practice. His introduction to politics came in 1843 when he served as a city alderman.

The following year, he was elected Conservative representative for Kingston in the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, first with Étienne-Paschal Taché and then with George-Étienne Cartier. Throughout the 1860s, Macdonald worked in support of the Confederation movement. There had been for several years a movement to unite the Maritime Provinces. When the Province of Canada showed interest in Confederation, a conference was held in Charlottetown, September 1, 1864. Each province was contending with its own "anti-Confederation" forces, and Newfoundland would reject union outright. The more prosperous Maritime Provinces felt Confederation would weaken their autonomy. In Canada East (Quebec), there were fears that Confederation would dilute French-Canadian interests.

Finally, external events hastened the acceptance of Confederation. The American Civil War, the Fenian Raids of 1866 and a generally aggressive American foreign policy caused concern about the defence of the British North American colonies.

Macdonald played a leading role in promoting Confederation, to the point of making an alliance with his staunch political rival and Opposition leader, George Brown. With his wide-ranging personal vision and constitutional expertise, Macdonald drafted the *British North America Act*, which defined the federal system by which the four provinces were united on July 1, 1867.

Macdonald was appointed Prime Minister of Canada and won the federal election the following month. In his first administration, his primary purpose was to build a nation. Communications between the provinces were essential and to this end, Macdonald began the Transcontinental Railway. It would run from Halifax to the Pacific coast and include Canada's two new provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories. Under Macdonald's leadership, Canada achieved a certain degree of

autonomy from Britain in foreign affairs. He also brought in a system of tariffs to protect Canadian products from foreign imports, especially those from the United States, in order to boost economic growth.

While Macdonald's administration accomplished great things, it was also fraught with difficulties. Revelations of the shady dealings between the Conservatives and the railway syndicate led to the Pacific Scandal in 1873. Macdonald's government was forced to resign and lost the election in 1874. He regained power in 1878, but political troubles continued. Macdonald's handling of the Northwest Rebellion in 1885 and execution of Louis Riel outraged French-Canadians, sparking an antagonism between them and English-Canadians that would continue for years. The federal powers envisioned by Macdonald were weakened by legal challenges launched by the provinces.

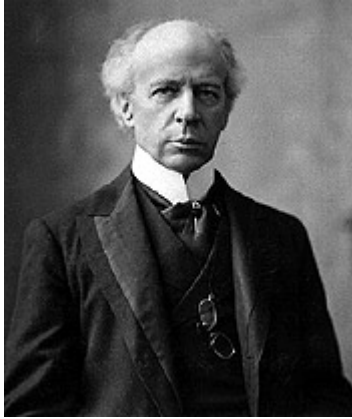
In March 1891, Macdonald won a fourth consecutive electoral victory. He died three months later while still prime minister, having forged a nation of sprawling geographic size, two European colonial origins and a multiplicity of cultural backgrounds and political views. Grieving Canadians turned out in the thousands to pay their respects while he lay in state in Parliament and they lined the tracks to watch the train that returned his body to Kingston.

SOURCE:

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/premiersministres/h4-3025-e.html>

Sir Wilfrid Laurier

Biography (1841 – 1919)



"Canada has been modest in its history, although its history, in my estimation, is only commencing. It is commencing in this century. The nineteenth century was the century of the United States. I think we can claim that Canada will fill the twentieth century."

His skill as a politician gave him the longest unbroken term of office as prime minister, while his charismatic personality endeared him to friend and rival alike, and made him a hero to the nation.

Wilfrid Laurier was born in St. Lin, Quebec in 1841, the son of a farmer. After a few years at the local elementary school, Laurier was sent to New Glasgow, a nearby town, to learn English. He spent seven years at a Roman Catholic college, and then studied law at McGill University. Laurier graduated in 1864 and began practising law in Montreal.

It was during these years that Laurier became involved in politics, supporting the Liberal Party or "Parti Rouge", as it was known in Quebec. In 1866, he moved to L'Avenir and took over as Editor of *Le Défricheur*, defending liberalism. It was not an easy platform to support in Quebec at that time; the clergy fiercely condemned "Les Rouges," and the rival "Parti Bleu" dominated the provincial government. Laurier won a seat in the legislature as a Liberal member in 1871, but resigned in 1874. That same year, he was elected to the House of Commons. During the brief Liberal regime under **Alexander MacKenzie**, Laurier served for a year as Minister of Inland Revenue. His spirited defence of Louis Riel in 1885 brought his oratorical abilities to the attention of the party, and when Liberal leader Edward Blake resigned in 1887, Laurier succeeded him.

During the election of 1891, the Liberal platform of unrestricted reciprocity with the U.S. proved unpopular, and the Conservatives won again. But with the death of **Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald** later the same year, the collapse of the Conservative party began. The Manitoba Schools Question hastened the process, and Laurier simply

bided his time. After eighteen years of Tory government, the nation voted Liberal in the 1896 election and Laurier became Canada's first francophone prime minister.

National unity was of supreme importance to Laurier. He had seen how divisive the issues of Riel and the Manitoba schools had been, and he sought to reconcile the interests of French and English Canada with his policies. Laurier was a great admirer of the principles of British liberalism, and felt they offered the means by which Canadians of all ancestries could live in one nation. But at all times his dedication to Canadian unity took precedence over his esteem for British tradition.

In 1897, he was invited to London for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria's reign. Although Laurier had indicated that, in the tradition of former Liberal leaders Alexander Mackenzie and Edward Blake, he did not wish a knighthood, preparations to knight him had already been made. To avoid appearing rude, he accepted. There was an ulterior motive in the extravagant welcome Laurier received in Britain. Anxious to re-establish control over the foreign policy and defence of their colonies, the British were hoping that Laurier would acquiesce and convince others to follow. But they underestimated Laurier's determination to maintain Canada's control over her destiny. At three more Imperial Conferences between 1902 and 1911, Laurier held firm against the British encroachment on Canadian autonomy.

The fifteen years of Laurier's government were distinguished with unprecedented growth and prosperity. Immigration expanded, especially in the West, leading to the creation of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905. Such growth required expansion of the railways and two new continental lines were built.

The golden age came to an end in 1911, when the Liberals lost the election over the issue of unrestricted reciprocity. As leader of the Opposition, Laurier maintained the confidence of his party until the First World War. While he supported Canada's contribution to Britain's war efforts and urged young men in all provinces to enlist, Laurier was against conscription. The Liberal party was badly split over this issue in the 1917 election, and several Liberals formed a union government with the Conservatives for the duration of the war.

Laurier died on February 17, 1919, having served for forty-five years in the House of Commons. At his funeral, 50,000 people lined the streets of Ottawa, while hundreds of dignitaries and officials from all over the country followed the funeral procession. This solemn occasion was one of the first public events in Canada to be recorded on film.

SOURCE:

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/premiersministres/h4-3175-e.html>

William Lyon Mackenzie King

Biography

(1874 – 1950)

"It is what we prevent, rather than what we do that counts most in Government."



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Mackenzie King led Canada for a total of twenty-two years, through half the Depression and all of the Second World War. Like every other prime minister, he had to possess ambition, stamina and determination to become prime minister and, in spite of appearances, his accomplishments in that role required political acuity, decisiveness and faultless judgment.

William Lyon Mackenzie King was born in Berlin, Ontario in 1874. His father was a lawyer and his maternal grandfather was William Lyon Mackenzie, leader of the 1837 Rebellion in Upper Canada. From an early age, King identified with his grandfather, an association that influenced him throughout his political life.

King studied economics and law at the University of Toronto and later at the University of Chicago. After graduating with an M.A. in 1897, he pursued his studies at Harvard. In 1900, he entered the civil service and became Deputy Minister of the new Department of Labour. King joined the Liberal party and won a seat in the 1908 election. The following year he was appointed Minister of Labour in Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Cabinet.

In 1919, King was elected leader of the Liberal party in the first leadership convention held in Canada. The party was still bitterly divided, with some Liberals in the Union government and some in Opposition. King's stand on conscription two years before won him the loyalty of Quebec. Furthermore his skills as a conciliator were well developed by his labour experience and he put them to good use rebuilding the party. The Liberals won the 1921 election.

The contentious issue of King's first term of office was tariffs and freight rates. King reduced them, but not enough to satisfy the prairie farmers, who gave their support to the Progressives, a new political party formed to represent their interests. After the 1925 election, King could maintain his majority only with their support. The Liberals lost a vote of confidence the following year. The Governor General refused King's request to dissolve Parliament and called on Arthur Meighen, Leader of the Opposition to form

the government. However, this lasted only four days, until King called for a vote on the constitutional right of Meighen to govern. The Conservatives lost the vote and an election was called.

Despite a recently uncovered scandal involving the Liberal Minister of Customs, King and his party won the 1926 election. He took advantage of the prosperity of the late 1920s to reduce the war debt and to introduce an old-age pension scheme. Although the Liberals lost the 1930 election, it was to their benefit in the long run. The worst years of the Depression were associated with the Conservatives. The Liberals were reinstated in government in 1935.

King led the nation through the Second World War, during which Canada contributed food supplies, financial aid, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, ships, aircraft, tanks and over a million Canadian troops to the Allied cause. The close friendship of King with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President F. D. Roosevelt was one of the cornerstones of the Allied effort. One of the secrets of King's success as a leader was his ability to recognize the talents of his party members. He filled his Cabinet with extremely capable men and delegated to them the authority to carry out their tasks. National unity was King's most important goal. He recognized that this did not mean forcing all Canadians to espouse one single vision, but accommodating a multitude of differing, and sometimes conflicting, viewpoints. It was this wisdom and his ability to compromise that allowed King to successfully negotiate the issue of conscription in 1944 and avoid the divisiveness of 1917.

As part of his ideals on social reform, King introduced unemployment insurance in 1940 and family allowance in 1944. Perhaps the most significant indication of King's success as prime minister is the fact that upon his retirement in 1948, his successor, **Louis St. Laurent**, won an election the following year and kept the Liberals in power for another eight years. Politics had been King's life and an exhausting one at that; he died in 1950, less than two years after retiring.

SOURCE:

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/premiersministres/h4-3250-e.html>

Lester Pearson

Biography

(1897 – 1972)

"I have done it by hard work and long hours, by making it evident that I was available for whatever was to be done; by welcoming every opportunity for new and more responsible duties; and by accumulating all the experience possible in all the varied aspects of my profession."



Such a philosophy led our fourteenth prime minister from playing semi-pro baseball for the Guelph Maple Leafs, to the highest position in Canada and to the presidency of the United Nations. Yet he never lost the easy-going, friendly aspect of a rural Ontario boy; indeed, it was exactly this manner that won him the trust of so many nations and led him to win one of the world's highest honours.

Lester Bowles Pearson was born in Newton Brook, Ontario in 1897. His father was a Methodist minister who moved frequently, so Pearson and his brothers were schooled in Peterborough, Aurora, Hamilton and other small Ontario towns. In 1913, he went to the University of Toronto to study for a general B.A. Two years later, in the midst of his studies, he enlisted. Pearson served two years as a medical orderly in a military hospital in Salonika. In 1917, he requested a transfer to the RAF and went to air training school in Hendon, England. He survived an airplane crash during his first flight, only to be hit by a bus in London during a blackout! Pearson was invalided home in 1918.

He returned to the University of Toronto and graduated in 1919. After a year in Chicago at a meat packing plant and then a fertilizer company, he was offered a scholarship at Oxford University. There, Pearson distinguished himself on the Oxford hockey team. He returned to Canada in 1925 and taught history at the University of Toronto.

While doing research at the Public Archives in 1927, Pearson was invited to join the Department of External Affairs. He came first in the departmental exams and was appointed first secretary. During his twenty-year career in External Affairs, Pearson proved himself a natural diplomat. He was hard working, quick to comprehend complex issues and his congenial charm quickly disarmed potentially hostile negotiators. Recognizing that any successful compromise must spare all parties from humiliation was his secret to effective diplomacy. Pearson served as first secretary at the Canadian High Commission in Britain from 1935 to 1941, and then moved to the Canadian Embassy in

Washington in 1942. Three years later he served as Canadian Ambassador to the U.S., attending the conference that founded the United Nations in 1945.

The following year, Pearson was made Deputy Minister of External Affairs, where he played a key role in Canada's joining NATO. The only position left in his progress was Minister of External Affairs and to do this he had to enter politics. He gained the Commons seat for Algoma East and served in Prime Minister **Louis St. Laurent's** Cabinet. In 1952, Pearson was president of the UN General Assembly, where he attempted to resolve the Korean conflict. The Suez Crisis occurred in 1956; hostilities pitting the British and French against the Egyptians threatened to plunge the world into war again. Pearson met with the United Nations and suggested an international peacekeeping force to supervise the withdrawal of the combatants. The proposal was agreed on by the UN; the peace-keeping force included and was led by Canadian troops. For his efforts, Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.

The following year, the Liberals lost the election and St. Laurent retired as prime minister. Pearson was elected Liberal leader and served in the Opposition during the **Diefenbaker** years. In 1963, the Liberals won a minority government. An attempt to win a majority in 1965 was not successful and the Liberals continued with the support of the Social Credit and New Democratic party.

Governing under such circumstances is never easy, and Pearson's party endured scandals, bungled budgets and the contentious flag debate. His conciliatory approach which had proved so successful in diplomacy did not always translate to politics. Pearson's efforts to accommodate all views were often interpreted as poor leadership and a lack of direction.

Nevertheless, his five-year legacy is very impressive: a new flag, the Canada Pension Plan, universal medicare, a new immigration act, a fund for rural economic development, and the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which led to the foundation of a bilingual civil service. The Centennial celebrations of 1967 awoke Canadians to their great heritage and reflected the optimism that signified the latter years of Pearson's government. One of his great talents was recognizing ability in his colleagues: three future prime ministers were all members of his 1965 cabinet.

In 1968, at the age of seventy-one, Pearson announced his retirement from politics. He returned to the academic world and lectured on Canadian foreign relations at Carleton University, while writing his memoirs, Pearson died in 1972.

SOURCE:

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/premiersministres/h4-3350-e.html>

Pierre Elliot Trudeau



Biography

(1919 – 2000)

"I believe a constitution can permit the co-existence of several cultures and ethnic groups with a single state."

Pierre Trudeau held his philosophy of one Canada and a strong federal government before he became prime minister and he maintained it throughout his political career. His response to the FLQ Crisis, his rejection of the Quebec separatist movement, as well as his patriation of the Constitution and promotion of official bilingualism are all manifestations of this belief.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau was born in Montreal in 1919; his father was Québécois, his mother of Scottish descent. He went to a local school, Académie Querbes, and then to the Jesuit college, Jean-de-Brébeuf. In spite of the Depression, Trudeau's father had become a wealthy man in the 1930s and the family toured Canada and Europe frequently. In 1940, Trudeau began studying law at the University of Montreal. As a student, he was required to join the Canadian Officers Training Corps during the war, but like many Quebecers, Trudeau was opposed to conscription. After graduating in 1943, he passed his bar exams, and then enrolled in a Master's program at Harvard. In 1946, he went to Paris to study at the École des sciences politiques, and then at the London School of Economics in Britain. By 1948, Trudeau was on a backpacking tour of Eastern Europe, and the Middle and Far East, areas of considerable turbulence in the post-war world. After many adventures, he arrived back in Canada the following year.

Trudeau worked in Ottawa as advisor to the Privy Council before returning to Montreal. He began supporting labour unions, especially during in [*sic*] the Asbestos Strike, and criticized the repression of the Union Nationale under Premier Duplessis. With other outspoken intellectuals, Trudeau started the journal *Cité Libre* as a forum for their ideas. In 1961, he began teaching law at the University of Montreal. In 1965, the Liberal party

was looking for potential candidates in Quebec; Trudeau and two of his colleagues, Jean Marchand and Gérard Pelletier, were invited to run for the party in the federal election that year. They won their seats, and in April 1967, Trudeau became Minister of Justice. Within a year, he had reformed the divorce laws and liberalized the laws on abortion and homosexuality.

When **Lester Pearson** resigned as prime minister in 1968, Trudeau was invited to run as a candidate. He won the Liberal leadership convention and called an election immediately after. Capitalizing on his extraordinary popular appeal, labelled "Trudeaumania" by the press, he won a majority government in the June election. One of the most important bills passed by his government was the *Official Languages Act*, guaranteeing bilingualism in the civil service.

A serious threat to national security occurred in 1970, when the terrorist group, Front de libération du Québec, kidnapped a British diplomat. Upon the request of Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa, Trudeau imposed the War Measures Act. The situation was quickly resolved and the terrorists apprehended, but not before Quebec Cabinet Minister Pierre Laporte was murdered and hundreds of people arrested and held without charges. In 1972, the Liberals were returned with a minority government, but regained a majority in 1974. This decade experienced a period of high inflation, which Trudeau's government attempted to contain with wage and price controls. These economic difficulties and a sense of alienation in Western Canada led to the defeat of the Liberals in 1979. Deciding not to serve as leader of the Opposition, Trudeau announced his resignation from politics. However the Conservative comeback was short lived; their minority government was defeated within six months. Trudeau was persuaded to return as party leader and the Liberals won the election the following year.

His last term in office was devoted to national unity in opposition to the separatist goals of the Parti Québécois who governed Quebec. Trudeau campaigned vigorously for the "No" supporters in the Quebec referendum on sovereignty-association in 1980. He also set about patriating the Constitution and drafted a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The cooperation of the provinces was required to accomplish this; the eighteen-month federal-provincial negotiations were drawn-out and highly contentious, with dissenting ministers and rulings from the Supreme Court and various provincial courts. Consent was finally achieved in 1982, but without the cooperation of Quebec Premier René Lévesque. In a ceremony on Parliament Hill, the Queen signed Canada's new Constitution Act on April 17, 1982. Having accomplished his goal of strengthening Canadian federalism, Trudeau turned his attention to international affairs, campaigning for world peace and improving the relationship between the industrialized nations and Third World countries.

SOURCE:

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/premiersministres/h4-3375-e.html>

The National Flag of Canada



The official ceremony inaugurating the new Canadian flag was held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on February 15, 1965, with Governor General Georges Vanier, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, the members of the Cabinet and thousands of Canadians in attendance. The Canadian Red Ensign, bearing the Union Jack and the shield of the royal arms of Canada, was lowered and then, on the stroke of noon, our new maple leaf flag was raised. The crowd sang the national anthem O Canada followed by the royal anthem God Save the Queen.

The following words, spoken on that momentous day by the Honourable Maurice Bourget, Speaker of the Senate, added further symbolic meaning to our flag: "The flag is the symbol of the nation's unity, for it, beyond any doubt, represents all the citizens of Canada without distinction of race, language, belief or opinion."

The Royal Union Flag



The Royal Union flag, commonly known as the "Union Jack", has a long history of usage in Canada dating back to the British settlement in Nova Scotia after 1621. Although the Red Ensign was widely used in Canada from the time of Confederation until the national flag was adopted in 1965, the Union Jack was the affirmed national symbol from 1904 and was the flag under which Canadian troops fought during the First World War. The Union Jack maintains its presence in Canada through its incorporation in the provincial flags of Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia.

SOURCE:

http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/df1_e.cfm



The Shield

The design of the arms of Canada reflects the royal symbols of Great Britain and France (the three royal lions of England, the royal lion of Scotland, the royal fleurs-de-lis of France and the royal Irish harp of Tara. On the bottom portion of the shield is a sprig of three Canadian Maple leaves representative of Canadians of all origins.

The Three Royal Lions of England

The first quarter consists of the three gold lions of England walking and shown full face, on a red background. The lion is kings of Leon, Norway and Denmark as their emblem adopted the oldest device known in heraldry and, as "king of beasts". However, the origin of the three royal lions of England still remains a mystery.

In the 11th century, Henry I, known as "the lion of justice", may have been the first English king to use a lion. It is uncertain as to why a second lion suddenly appeared. When Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose family emblem was also a lion; it is believed that he added the third lion. There is no question that, when he led his English troops in the Crusades, Richard I, "the Lion-Hearted" carried a shield emblazoned with

three golden lions on a red background. To this day they have been the royal symbol of England.

The Royal Lion of Scotland

The second quarter consists of a red lion rearing on the left hind foot, within a red double border with fleurs-de-lis, on a gold background. The royal lion of Scotland was probably first used by King William, who was known as "the lion". However it was certainly used by his son, Alexander III, who made Scotland an independent nation.

The Royal Irish Harp of Tara

The third quarter is a gold harp with silver strings, on a blue background. North of the present city of Dublin, there is a hill called Tara, which for centuries was the religious and cultural capital of ancient Ireland. If you visit the site, you will see a 750 foot earthen work that is said to have been the site of the banqueting hall of Irish kings. Thomas Moore recalls the history of this site in one of the most famous of all Irish lyrics that begins: "The harp that once through Tara's hall the soul of music shed..." There is a legend, recorded in C.W. Scott-Giles monumental work *The Romance of Heraldry* that this harp was found and came into the possession of the pope. In the 16th century, Henry VIII suppressed the Irish people in his attempt to become the lawful successor to the kings of ancient Ireland. The pope sent the harp of Tara to England whereupon Henry added its likeness to his royal shield. From this time it has remained a symbol of Ireland.

The Royal Fleurs-de-Lis of France

The fourth quarter depicts three gold fleurs-de-lis, on a blue background. The fleur-de-lis was the first heraldic emblem raised in Canada. On July 24, 1534, Jacques Cartier landed at Gaspé and erected a cross, affixed with the symbol of his sovereign and the royal house of France.

The Three Maple Leaves

To complete the design of the shield, a Canadian symbol was required. Three red maple leaves conjoined on one stem, on a silver or white background, were then added. Throughout the 19th century, the maple leaf had gradually become closely identified with Canada. The maple leaf had been worn as a symbol of Canada during the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1860. The song "The Maple Leaf Forever", written by the Toronto school teacher Alexander Muir in 1868 had become Canada's national song. During World War I, the maple leaf was incorporated into the badge of many Canadian regiments. It was most appropriate that three maple leaves were given a commanding position within the shield, which made it unmistakably "Canadian".



The Ribbon

On the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada, Her Majesty The Queen approved, on July 12, 1994 that the arms of Canada be augmented with a ribbon with the motto of the Order of Canada: "Desiderantes Meliorem Patriam". (They desire a better country).



The Helm and The Mantling

The helm (heaume or helmet), which in heraldry is usually placed above the shield of arms, not only serves as a means of displaying the crest, but also has a significance of its own, since its type denotes the rank of the person bearing the arms. On the helm lies a mantling or lambrequin. The mantle, originally, was to protect the head and shoulders of the wearer from the sun's heat. It has become a decorative accessory to the crest and shield.

The arms of Canada show a royal helmet, which is a barred helm of gold looking outward and draped in a mantle of white and red, which are the official colours of Canada.



The Crest

On the royal helmet is the crest. This symbol consists of a wreath or ring of twisted white and red silk on which stands a crowned gold lion holding in its right paw a red maple leaf. The lion is a symbol of valour and courage.

The crest is used to mark the sovereignty of Canada. It is now the symbol used on the Governor General's Standard.



The Supporters

The figures that stand on either side of the shield are known in heraldry as "supporters" and are often depicted in a ferocious manner. The King of England chose two lions while Scotland chose two unicorns.

When James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603, he chose one lion and one unicorn as the supporters of his royal shield. Canada adopted the same pattern and used a lion on the shield's right holding a gold pointed silver lance from which flies the Royal Union flag, and a unicorn with gold horn, mane and hoofs, on the shield's left. Around its neck is a gold and chained coronet of crosses and fleurs-de-lis. The unicorn holds a lance flying a banner of royalist France, namely three gold fleurs-de-lis, on a blue background. The two banners represent the two principal founding nations that had established Canada's most enduring laws and customs.



The Motto

Canada's motto "A Mari usque ad Mare" (From sea to sea) is based on biblical scripture: "He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth (Psalm 72:8)". The first official use of this motto came in 1906 when it was engraved on the head of the mace of the Legislative Assembly of the new Province of Saskatchewan. The wording of the motto came to the attention of Sir Joseph Pope, then Under Secretary of State, who was impressed with its meaning. He later proposed it as motto for the new design of the coat of arms, which was approved by Order in Council on April 21, 1921 and by Royal Proclamation on November 21, 1921.



The Four Floral Emblems

At the base of the arms are the floral emblems associated with the Canadian Monarchy: the English rose, the Scottish thistle, the French fleur-de-lis and the Irish shamrock.

- **English Rose**

The rose first became the symbol of England when Henry III married Eleanor of Provence and the golden rose of Provence became England's new floral symbol. From this golden rose eventually came the red rose of the House of Lancaster and the white rose of the House of York.

- **Scottish Thistle**

There is a legend that, in 1010 when they attempted to capture Scotland, the Danes landed secretly at night. As they approached Stains Castle they removed their shoes to avoid making any noise. When they reached the castle's moat, they jumped in not realizing that the moat was dry and overgrown with thistles. The screams of the bare-footed Danes roused the garrison. The castle and Scotland were both saved and, according to legend, it is in memory of that night that the thistle became the floral emblem of Scotland.

- **Irish Shamrock**

In Irish legends, it is said that when he brought Christianity to Ireland, Saint Patrick used the three petals of the shamrock to illustrate the Holy Trinity. As a result, the shamrock became the floral emblem of Christian Ireland.

- **The French Fleur-de-Lis**

Following its adoption as the symbol of France's king, the fleurs-de-lis also became the symbol of Christian France. By the 13th and 14th centuries, the three petals of the lily of France were being described by writers as symbols of faith, wisdom and chivalry. As in Ireland, they also came to be seen as symbols of the Holy Trinity.



The Imperial Crown

On top of the "achievement of the arms of Canada" is the imperial crown which is indicative of the presence of a monarch as Canada's Head of State.

The shapes of symbols in a coat of arms can be altered by an artist since heraldry is an art as well as a science. However the symbols themselves can never be changed without formal approval. In 1957, when Canada's arms were slightly modified to produce a cleaner more contemporary design, the Government replaced the original Tudor crown of the 1921 design by a crown that would represent not just one of the royal families of English monarchs, but centuries of kings and queens of England. In accordance with the expressed wishes of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Saint Edward's crown is now used for the arms of Canada. It is this crown that has been used for the coronation of kings and queens in Westminster Abbey for centuries.

SOURCE:

http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/arm2_e.cfm#ribbon