

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? National Flag of Canada Day is coming next week

The Canadian flag is arguably the most revered and important of all the symbols of Canada.

We fly our red and white flag with tremendous pride, as it represents our shared values of peace, freedom and diversity. The Canadian flag we know and fly today is celebrating its 52nd anniversary in 2017, coinciding with Canada's 150th anniversary, also taking place this year. Feb. 15 is National Flag of Canada Day and presents all of us with an excellent opportunity to show our immense national pride for this most spectacular Canadian symbol.

During the Ftwo World Wars, our country fought under the Red Ensign flag. Following these wars, discussions ensued about Canada having its own flag. However, efforts to select a specific flag design were unsuccessful, as widespread agreement on a particular design couldn't be attained.

In 1964, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson advised the House of Commons that the government would be undertaking to select a unique Canadian flag, given Canada's centennial would be coming up in 1967. Consensus on a design couldn't be reached in Parliament and the considerable job was passed on to an all-party parliamentary committee. The committee went to work and began receiving design submissions. After receiving thousands of various potential designs, the committee narrowed its selection down to three options: a Red Ensign with the fleur-de-lis and the Union Jack; three red maple leaves between two blue borders; and a red maple leaf on a white square between two red borders. The committee ultimately recommended the third option of the single, red maple leaf design (the design we know today) to Parliament. The House of Commons later passed a resolution Dec. 15, 1964 to adopt the design as Canada's national flag. The resolution also passed in the Senate Dec. 17, 1964, followed by a proclamation by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, to become effective Feb. 15, 1965. It was on this date that the Canadian Red Ensign Flag was lowered and the new, single, red maple leaf National Flag of Canada was raised for the first time on Parliament Hill.

Years later, in 1996, Parliament declared Feb. 15 as National Flag of Canada Day, which is a tradition we as Canadians have celebrated every year since through events and celebrations, and of course, by flying the flag high and proud from buildings to parks, and at our homes.

This year, 2017, is particularly special, as National Flag of Canada Day coincides with Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation. We have much to celebrate Feb. 15 and what our magnificent country has achieved over the last 150 years. Our national flag is a very important part of our shared national history and identity.

I encourage you to show your national pride Feb. 15 on National Flag of Canada Day and celebrate everything it means to be Canadian!

