



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 19 February 2015

### **Queen Congratulates Canada on 50th Anniversary of Their Own Flag**

**(Australia Looks Like Being the Last Nation on Earth to Fly a Colonial British Ensign)**

The Executive Director of Ausflag, Harold Scruby, today drew attention to the fact that the Canadian Flag has just turned 50. Queen Elizabeth sent the Canadian people her congratulations (quote):

*Message from Her Majesty The Queen - February 15, 2015*

*Message from Her Majesty The Queen on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the National Flag of Canada*

*"On this, the 50th anniversary of the National Flag of Canada, I am pleased to join with all Canadians in the celebration of this unique and cherished symbol of our country and identity."  
Elizabeth R.*

Mr Scruby said: "I can't recall the Queen sending a similar message of congratulations about the Australian flag when it turned 50 in 2004. Perhaps that's because the current Australian flag isn't a 'unique and cherished symbol of our country and identity'.

"The Queen's message also proves the fact that the national flag and the constitutional status of the monarchy are irrefutably separate issues. Yet so many monarchists deliberately try to confuse the issues of republicanism and the flag. The word "flag" does not even appear in our constitution.

"Additionally, in the past year, the Prime Ministers of both New Zealand and Fiji have announced that they want the Union Jack removed from their flags.

"This will leave Australia as the only nation in the world (with the exception of Tuvalu - population 8,000) which still flies a defaced, British, colonial ensign.

"It's time for Australia to catch up and grow up". Mr Scruby added.

#### **RECENT PRESS CLIPPING BELOW**

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Robert Watt, former Chief Herald of Canada, poses on Sunday with the Canadian flag, at his home in North Vancouver. CONTRIBUTED

# A 'very dramatic, very stylish' Canadian symbol

**Maple Leaf 50th.** Robert Watt witnessed our flag's early milestones, and went on to become the first Chief Herald

Robert Watt was sitting in the public gallery of Parliament as a young university student, watching intently as the final day of debate over replacing Canada's flag carried on into the wee hours of the morning.

"I'll never forget the excitement and the fierce arguments and the passionate tone of the speeches by (prime minister

Lester) Pearson and by (opposition leader John) Diefenbaker," said Watt, who would go on to become the first Chief Herald of Canada.

"The debate went on and on ... and I was there," he added, describing the experience as a true milestone event, both for him and the country.

Fast-forward two months and the former Carleton University student remembers standing on the snow-laden grounds of Parliament Hill on a bright, crisp Ottawa day at noon, watching then-governor general Georges Vanier oversee the raising of Canada's new flag for the first time.

Fifty years later, Watt de-

## Quoted

**"Symbols matter ... (A flag) is only fabric with a design on it, but it speaks to people very powerfully."**

Robert Watt, former Chief Herald of Canada

scribes the Canadian flag as "a superb example of the very best" of iconic national symbols.

And he should know. As the country's Chief Herald for nearly two decades — between 1988 and 2007 — Watt oversaw the creation of hundreds of official symbols across Canada.

Included in his brimming portfolio are the City of Quebec's flag, a coat of arms for

the University of Northern B.C., and both the flag and coat of arms for Nunavut.

"Job No. 1 is it must be beautiful and simple; close behind that is it obviously has to have meaning," said the Picton, Ont. native, adding the Canadian flag strikes gold in both those categories.

"It says 'Canada' in a very clear, unambiguous, very dramatic, very stylish way," said

the former archivist for the City of Vancouver.

One clear indication of its success was the remarkable speed with which Canadians embraced their new icon, he said.

Watt also designed Vancouver's official flag, which was adopted in 1983 in anticipation of the city's centennial.

"When I see it, I feel a real sense of pride as having a part in creating something that's a symbol of a great city."

Watt now works as a citizenship judge, presiding over citizenship ceremonies for new Canadians, but he retains close ties to Canadian heraldry.

GEORDON OMAN/FOR METRO



# OUR OWN FLAG

## UNITED STATES



Colonised 1607



Grew Up 1776

## IRELAND



Colonised 1170



Grew Up 1921

## INDIA



Colonised 1611



Grew Up 1947

## GHANA



Colonised 1662



Grew Up 1957

## MALAYSIA



Colonised 1786

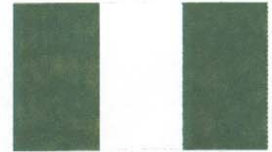


Grew Up 1957

## NIGERIA



Colonised 1861



Grew Up 1960

## CANADA



Colonised 1583



Grew Up 1965

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Colonised 1884



Grew Up 1975

## SOLOMON ISLANDS



Colonised 1893



Grew Up 1978

## SOUTH AFRICA



Colonised 1795



Grew Up 1994

## AUSTRALIA



Colonised 1788



Grew Up ?

**OVER 50 BRITISH COLONIES HAVE GROWN UP. SHOULDN'T WE?**

