

Editorial Policy Politique éditoriale

The CHA *Bulletin* is published three times a year by the Canadian Historical Association. Notices, letters, calls for papers and articles of two pages or less, double-spaced, are welcome on topics of interest to historians, preferably accompanied by a translation into the other official language. Deadline for submissions of articles etc. for the next *Bulletin* is the following:

31 January 2000

We reserve the right to edit submissions. Opinions expressed in articles etc. are those of the author and not necessarily the CHA. Direct correspondence to:

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Le Bulletin de la S.H.C. est une publication bilingue qui paraît trois fois par année. Les articles, les notes et les lettres de deux pages ou moins, dactylographiés à double interligne et portant sur les sujets d'intérêt pour les membres, sont les bienvenus, de préférence accompagnés d'une traduction. La rédaction se réserve le droit de couper ou de modifier les textes soumis. Les opinions exprimées dans les articles ou les lettres sont celles des auteurs. La date limite de tombée des articles pour le prochain *Bulletin* est le :

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Veuillez acheminer toute correspondance au **Bulletin,**

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THE FLAG DEBATE 1964 REMEMBERED

On June 10th, 1999 in the Senate Chamber, the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians gave its first Distinguished Service Award to John Matheson who, as a Member of Parliament at the time, was a strong supporter of a new flag.

The flag debate was bitter, rancorous and prolonged. A member of the Press Gallery at the time opined "the flag debate may be the stuff of which history is made but if it is, the historians are going to be bored stiff". Today's readers are unlikely to be bored by John Matheson's account *Canada's flag - a search for a country* (Mika Publishing Company, Belleville, 1986).

John Matheson, convinced that a Canadian flag would contribute to national unity, was persistent and persuasive in the house and in committee. He is reported to have stood in the house with tears on his face saying "I plead, I beg with you to understand what this means for the country we love."

Mr. Matheson's patriotism was demonstrated by more than words. He served in the Army in World War II for five years before being invalided home in 1944 with very severe injuries.

In 1968, Mr. Matheson was made a judge, first for the Ottawa-Carleton district and, later, in Lanark county. As a judge, he had a reputation for being courteous and fair. He served until he reached the retirement age of 75 in 1992. He has continued to work for social betterment through active involvement in church and other voluntary agencies.

The Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians began in 1987 and was recognized by an Act of Parliament in May 1996. Membership is open to all former members of the House of Commons and the Senate. Among the objects of the Association are: (a) to put the knowledge and experience of its members at the service of parliamentary democracy in Canada and elsewhere, (b) to serve the public interest by providing non-partisan support for the parliamentary system of government in Canada. The Association is non-profit and is expressly prohibited from pursuing its objects for any partisan purpose.

The award to John Matheson was the first award under this power. The Honourable Mitchell Sharp, the Honourable John Fraser, the Honourable Bob Rae and the Vice-chairperson formed a committee to develop criteria and a process for selection of recipients. It is hoped that an award, based on the same criteria and process, can be made each year.

Requests for further information should be addressed to: Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, Houses of Parliament, P.O. Box 768 West Block, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6, tel: (613) 947-1690; fax: (613) 947-1764.

Finally, association members are available to participate in seminars and lectures with students of Canadian history. Please feel free to contact us at the above address.

Aideen Nicholson, former Member of Parliament, Trinity.