

The Crown and Honours: Getting it Right Christopher McCreery

INTRODUCTION

In the words of that early scholar of Commonwealth autonomy, Sir Arthur Berridale Keith, “The Crown is the fount of all honour.”ⁱ The role of the Crown as the fount of all official honours in Canada is a precept that is as old and constant as is the place of the Crown in our constitutional structure. Since the days of King Louis XIV residents of Canada have been honoured by the Crown for their services with a variety of orders, decorations and medals. The position of the Crown in the modern Canadian honours system is something that is firmly entrenched, despite consistent attempts to marginalize it in recent years. Indeed honours are not something separate from the Crown, they are an integral element of the Crown. A part that affords individuals with official recognition for what are deemed as good works, or in the modern context, exemplary citizenship. Just last year we witnessed the Queen’s direct involvement in the honours system when she appointed Jean Chrétien as a member of the Order of Merit. While many commentators and officials in Canada seemed confused as to just what this honour is – the highest civil honour for service – people did realize how significant it was, in large part because it came not from a committee or politician, but directly from the Sovereign.

With this paper I will delve into the central role the Crown and Sovereign play in the creation of honours and I will also explore the areas where attention and reform are required in the Canadian honours system. The focus is primarily upon honours bestowed at the federal level, although provincial honours and their positive role will be intertwined into this larger discussion.

CREATING HONOURS OF THE CROWN

Although it is not widely acknowledged, the cornerstone of the Canadian honours system was set in 1934 with the establishment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Long Service Medal. Now this does not fit into the official history of our honours system that holds 1967 as the magical year in which the system came into being with the creation of the Order of Canada.ⁱⁱ It is a convenient explanation that has been around for more than 40 years, but it is misleading. Some of this information has only recently been revealed through research into the creation of the RCMP Long Service Medal (1934) and the Canadian Forces’ Decoration (1949).ⁱⁱⁱ The creation of these two honours played a significant role in ensuring the central place of the Crown in terms of honours creation, administration and the symbolic element of honours.

The establishment of the RCMP Long Service Medal by King George V in March of 1934 marked the first time that an honour specific to Canada for services in Canada had been created by the Sovereign in Right of Canada. Previous honours such as the the North West Canada Medal and the Canada General Service Medal, created in 1886 and 1899 respectively, may have been awarded to Canadians for services in Canada, but they were also awarded to British service personnel and the medals were created by the Sovereign in Right of the United Kingdom. The project to create the RCMP Long Service Medal began in 1920 when the Royal North West Mounted Police Veterans Association petitioned the Commissioner of the RCMP to support the creation of a long service medal

– an interesting side bar is this early beginning of the grassroots nature of the Canadian honours system.

By 1928 Cabinet sanctioned the creation of a RCMP Long Service Medal and a RCMP Officers' Decoration. The entire project languished as the Department of External Affairs vacillated as to how to seek permission from the King to create the two honours. The Under-Secretary of State, O.D. Skelton and the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, W.H. Walker, who could never have been accused of being keen on the Crown, made regular reference to that old chestnut the Nickle Resolution and embarked upon a three-year process of delay.^{iv}

By January of 1932 the new Commissioner of the RCMP, James Howden MacBrien, went directly to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett to reactivate the RCMP Long Service Medal project. By January of 1933 an Order-in-Council was signed by the Governor General and the RCMP Long Service Medal began its new life in earnest.

The next step was to seek the King's approval and this was done through the Dominions Office. The description of the Medal was sent to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in February 1933. It was up to the Dominions Office to submit the proposal to the King on the advice of his Canadian Ministers. This was an imperfect system as it still involved a department of the British government, but other than the Governor General, the Canadian government of the day had no direct conduit to the Sovereign.

As Canada became independent from Britain in December 1931 with the passage of the Statute of Westminster, officials on both sides of the Atlantic were unsure as to how to proceed. No one had experience in the creation of a Dominion-specific honour. Prior to 1931, the Colonial Office and Treasury Department in Britain would have been heavily involved; however, the British government was aware of Canada's autonomy and endeavored not to become involved without direction from the Canadian government. Given that the Dominions Office had some experience in drafting Royal Warrants, it was left to them to create the Royal Warrant constituting the RCMP Long Service Medal. While the Order-in-Council passed by the Canadian Cabinet signified their authorization for the creation of the Medal, final Royal approval was deemed necessary to make the honour official.

By the fall of 1933 Commissioner MacBrien became concerned that, as in 1928, the project to create the Medal was coming apart. He wrote to Ephriam H. Coleman, the Under-Secretary of State, to find out what the delay was. As it turned out the Dominions Office had been stalling the entire project on account of George V. The King wanted the police forces throughout the Empire and Commonwealth to have a single standardized long service medal. This solution was adopted in 1930 when the Efficiency Decoration and the Efficiency Medal were established for members of the various militia and reserve forces throughout the Commonwealth, and George V felt that this would be an equally good idea for the various police forces. In addition to this, the King was also proposing that changes be made to the criteria for the King's Police Medal. The conflation of these three issues related to medals for police was the real cause of the delay. George V had always taken a direct interest in the administration of his honours system and was somewhat of an expert on orders, decorations and medals.^v

The Keeper of the Privy Purse, Sir Frederick Ponsonby, again wrote the Governor General to explain "insuperable difficulties were found. The King therefore abandoned

the idea of having a medal for the whole Empire, and decided that each of those Dominions that wished to have a medal of this descriptions should be able to do so. I only want to explain why there was so much delay in dealing with a letter from the Canadian Government which came early last year.”^{vi} Finally on 6 March 1934 at Windsor Castle, King George V signed the Royal Warrant constituting the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Long Service Medal. It was not until 15 December 1934 that the Royal Warrant was countersigned by Prime Minister R.B. Bennett – a legal necessity to signify that the King was acting on the advice of his Canadian Ministry.^{vii}

With this drawn out series of events the first Canadian honour came into being. Shortly after passage of the Statute of Westminster, the role of the King in Right of Canada was still being defined and this explains the continuing involvement of the Dominions Office. By the outbreak of the Second World War the relationship in terms of honours was much more direct and unencumbered by a British government department. This process served as a model that would be used by other Dominions in the creation of Dominion-specific honours in the period immediately following passage of the Statute of Westminster well into the years that followed the Second World War. It was essentially the same process that as employed in 1943 for the creation of the ill-fated Canada Medal and the highly successful Canada Volunteer Service Medal.^{viii}

The honours creation process was further refined in the late 1940s. In the post-war period the leadership of the various services of the Canadian Military; the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) became interested in the establishment of a long service award for their service personnel. Canadians were eligible for 12 different long service awards that were dependent upon rank, branch and length of service. The system was cumbersome and the Minister of National Defence, Brooke Claxton, was keen to see uniformity and efficiency brought to this area. A decorated veteran of the Great War, Claxton was a confident Canadian nationalist who sought to create Canadian symbols. Along with the Canadian Forces’ Decoration, he was instrumental in the widespread usage of the Canadian Red Ensign.^{ix}

As with the path towards creating the RCMP Long Service Medal, the process of creating the Canadian Forces’ Decoration was equally long and drawn out. However it served to further entrench the personal role of the Sovereign in the honours creation process. This process commenced in 1946 and would not be concluded until 1949.

Claxton was anxious to see the CD created in an expeditious manner. Although Cabinet had approved the establishment of the CD in October 1947, by Christmas Claxton was dissatisfied with the pace at which the process was moving and he proposed a short cut to create the honour. In October, King George VI had approved new Letters Patent constituting the Office of the Governor General. These Letters Patent authorized the Governor General to exercise – on the Sovereign’s behalf – many of the powers of the King. Being a lawyer, Claxton was aware that this gave the Governor General a much wider scope to act on the Sovereign’s behalf. What Claxton was not aware of was the fact that the King had specifically asked to retain direct control over a number of elements of the Royal Prerogative, and included in this list was the power to create honours. Claxton felt that the Letters Patent offered him a rapid mechanism to have the CD created. On 23 December, Claxton wrote to the Clerk of the Privy Council, Arnold Heeney, to ask that the Prime Minister write to the Governor General and request that the CD be created. Heeney responded noting that a letter that was exchanged between Prime Minister

Mackenzie King and the Private Secretary to King George VI, clearly outlined that the authority and power to create new honours was to remain in the hands of the King and be delegated to the Governor General only when “exceptional circumstances made it necessary to do so.”^x

Throughout the CD creation process, George VI was personally involved in the details related to design and the regulations that governed the decoration. Early designs for the insignia were void of the King’s effigy. Claxton was not fixated on issues related to design but when the proposal reached the Cabinet table, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and Secretary of State Colin Gibson were horrified that the medal had no symbolic connection to the Crown. Gibson surveyed every member of the cabinet and ex-servicemen who were members of the Liberal caucus and “in every case it was strongly urged that the head of His Majesty should be shown on the medal... There was also considerable feeling that the recipients of the award would appreciate having the head of HM on the obverse as an indication that it is a decoration awarded on behalf of HM.”^{xi} The design was quickly altered, the Prime Minister sent a formal submission to the King and on 20 August 1949 the George VI approved the creation of the CD. With the King’s approval the Privy Council drafted an Order-in-Council creating the CD.^{xii}

Our modern honours creation process was born out of the experience garnered in the establishment of the RCMP Long Service Medal and the Canadian Forces’ Decoration. It was a process that placed a significant level of importance on the Sovereign’s involvement and assent. Today, proposals for the creation of new honours come from the Chancellery of Honours or the Department of National Defence, although they occasionally emanate from organizations or individuals. The Chancellery researches to ensure that the proposed honour is needed and conforms with Canadian honours policy. A proposal can then be brought forward to the Honours Policy Committee (HPC), which is a committee composed of senior public servants. If the HPC agrees that the honour is needed, the Chancellery is directed to propose regulations and a draft Order in Council. Designs for the insignia are then devised by the Canadian Heraldic Authority. The HPC then reviews the proposal again and if approved, it passes to the Prime Minister for concurrence. Once the Prime Minister has agreed to the new honour, an Order-in-Council is passed. On the advice of the Prime Minister, through the Governor General, the letters patent and design for the new honour are sent to the Queen for consideration. It is only when the Queen signs the Letters Patent and design that the honour is officially created. Amendments to the criteria for Canadian orders, decorations and medals do not have to be approved by the Queen once an honour is created; changes can be made by the Governor General as the representative of the Sovereign.

THE SOVEREIGN’S ROLE TODAY

Despite the Queen’s central role in the Canadian honours system, there have been regular attempts to marginalize the role of the Crown in the realm of honours. This marginalization began in the early 1980s with the removal of references and photos of the Sovereign from official publications. In addition to this, despite numerous visits to Canada since the establishment of the Order of Canada, the Queen only held one full scale Canadian investiture and this took place in 1973 at Rideau Hall. Since then, it has only been the insignia of the Order of Canada and Order of Military Merit that Her Majesty has presented to newly appointed Governors General. Even this tradition was

hastily discarded in 2005 when Adrienne Clarkson insisted on presenting the insignia to Michaëlle Jean.

Little more than a year ago reference to the Queen was added to the various webpages related to honours on the Governor General's website, so there has been some positive movement in this area, but the changes are small. Unfortunately the present Governor General has never mentioned the role of the Queen in the honours system in any of her investiture speeches. It seems counter intuitive that while the Crown is the fount of all official honours, those who administer the system at the federal level have often attempted to remove the person of the Sovereign from the system. The most recent attempt to marginalize the Crown in the honours field occurred in relation to the Sacrifice Medal, which was almost created without the Sovereign's effigy on the medal.

One of the most unusual events related to the Order of Canada and the Crown occurred in 2000 when Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother was made an honorary Companion of the Order of Canada (CC). This is a distinction that at least one other member of the Royal Family has refused because the individual firmly believes appointment as an honorary CC is tantamount to saying that he/she is foreign and not a Canadian. The issue of the citizenship of members of the Royal Family, beyond the Sovereign, is a difficult one, however in terms of the Order of Canada there has always been a mechanism to have members of the Royal Family appointed without using the honorary designation. The Letters Patent constituting the Order make it clear that the Sovereign has ultimate authority over the Order and, on advice, the Sovereign could appoint any person including a member of the Royal Family as a regular (non-honorary) member of the Order. Similarly an ordinance of the Order of Canada could be adopted allowing for members of the Royal Family to be appointed as regular members of the Order. Yet another alternative would be to create an extraordinary division for Governors General and spouses (which are currently in limbo) and members of the Royal Family. Australia and New Zealand are much more flexible in this area. Despite numerous nominations for members of the Royal Family to be appointed to the Order of Canada, aside from the Queen Mother, there have been no appointments.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Order of Canada came under great scrutiny following the appointment of Dr. Henry Morgentaler as a Member of the Order in July of 2008. Despite the uproar surrounding his appointment and with the exception of five resignations, the Order weathered the most controversial honours appointment in Canadian history fairly well. A few things were revealed as a result of the appointment. The main one was the media and general public's thin understanding of the honours system. Many members of the general public believe that politicians decide who receives the Order of Canada and other honours. It also exposed the perception amongst some that the Order of Canada is only given to artists and promoters of left wing causes. One has only to consult the register of the Order to disprove this theory, but the perception persists.

As someone who has spent fifteen years studying the honours system, I was particularly disappointed to learn that the model of consensus that had been used by the Advisory Council of the Order of Canada to select names for submission to the Governor General has been abandoned. For at least thirty years of the Order of Canada's history,

the consensus model was employed with great success and it is a pity that this highly collegial mechanism is no longer employed.

Another concern with the Order of Canada has been the bending of rules to expedite appointments. This happened in October 2009 when a Member of the Order of Canada was appointed on 22 October 2009 and was invested by the Governor General while Her Excellency was on a state visit to Greece only a few days later.^{xiii} It was only five months after the insignia was presented that the name was published in the *Canada Gazette*.^{xiv} The entire process was expedited to allow the Governor General a photo opportunity, a step that only serves to trivialize the honours system. Historically appointments have only been expedited if the individual is terminally ill,^{xv} and the recipient in this case does not appear to have any health issues that necessitated this, so this example is highly unusual and hopefully, it will not be repeated.

GAPS AND ISSUES; GETTING IT RIGHT

Given that the honours are so closely intertwined with the Crown – they are dependent upon the Crown for their existence at an official level – it is valuable to reflect upon the state of the Canadian honours system. The Canadian honours system has done something particularly remarkable over the past four decades. It has largely filled the honours vacuum that existed in this country for nearly fifty years. While Canadians do not necessarily understand the nuances and intricacies of our various national and provincial honours, there is a general level of respect for those who have been honoured by the Crown. I firmly believe that Canada has one of the most balanced and well structured honours systems in the world. This does not mean that the system is perfect. Despite success in many areas, the Canadian honours system still has a number of gaps, and there have been recent failures in terms of the overall functioning of the system. I am not going to drill down to the minutia in this section, so I have chosen to focus on a few key areas. Less pressing issues relate to the continuing absence of mixed investitures at the national level, greater publicity of the honours system, appointments to the Royal Victorian Order, the lumping of all three levels of the Order of Canada into one part of the Order of Precedence and the quality of official publications and brochures.

The remaining gaps in our honours system are relatively few. We are one of the only polar nations that does not bestow a Polar Medal to recognize service in the north despite the north being such an integral part of our national identity^{xvi} and the significant amount of service rendered in the region by the Canadian Forces and RCMP. Canadian public servants receive no official honours in recognition of outstanding service or even long service. Prior to 1952 there was the Imperial Service Medal, and prior to 1946 there was the Imperial Service Order, yet there has been no attempt to fill these gaps. The Order of Canada has always been beyond the reach of even the most capable public servant, other than the Clerk of the Privy Council who has almost invariably been appointed to the Order sometime after retirement. There has long been an interest on the part of senior public servants to see an honour created to recognize federal, provincial and municipal service, however there remains no champion for this cause. The Order of Merit of the Police Forces achieves the same sort of recognition across many different police organizations so there is no reason that the same could not work for public servants.

Since the creation of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces in 2000, there have been calls from the various fire services to have an Order created along the lines of the OMPF. Quite rightly firefighters, look to their police colleagues and say “why are we being denied recognition, is our service to the community any less important than the police?” The honours system is not going to be able to resist this call much longer, and it is certain to be followed by similar entreaties by the corrections, peace officers, emergency medical services and coast guard. At present our honours system totally ignores the meritorious services rendered by the various protective services, other than the police. There is of course the option of creating a myriad of Orders of Merit; Order of Merit of the Fire Services, Order of Merit of the Corrections Service, Order of Merit of the Coast Guard, Order of Merit of the Peace Officers, Order of Merit of the Emergency Medical Services. Such proposals are impractical and our honours system would become cluttered with what amounts to vocation-specific honours. In an ideal world the Order of Merit of the Police Forces would be converted into an Order of Civil Merit that could be awarded to members of all protective services that receive long service awards from the family of Exemplary Service Medals. This issue is one of fairness and equity in providing national recognition for the various protective services that play an important role in maintaining the safety of our communities.

Canada has a distinguished history of creating honours that are never awarded – the most notable example of this was the Canada Medal. Established by King George VI in 1943, the Canada Medal was meant to serve as Canada’s foremost civil and military award for distinguished service. There was one small problem, the Prime Minister of the day, William Lyon Mackenzie King, could not decide who was to receive the medal.^{xvii} So for the ensuing twenty-three years the Canada Medal was on the books as our preeminent honour, yet no awards were made. The demise of the Canada Medal came in 1966 when it was abolished, just ahead of the creation of the Order of Canada.

Two awards in our modern honours system which are approaching the same fate as the Canada Medal are the civil division of the Meritorious Service Cross (MSC) and the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM); what are collectively known as the Meritorious Service Decorations (MSDs). There have been no awards of the civil MSC since 2004 and no civil MSMs since 2005. All this despite continued nominations coming from the general public and organizations. The military division of the MSDs, which is largely driven by the Department of National Defence, has been a highly successful program over the past decade,^{xviii} which makes the demise of the civil division all the more bizarre.

When the civil division of the MSDs were established in 1991, the decorations were intended to become the workhorse of the Canadian honours system, with the MSDs serving as a mechanism to reward contributions that fell short of membership in the Order of Canada and also to recognize single meritorious acts. It is the civil MSDs that are supposed to serve as a stepping stone towards membership in the Order of Canada. Our closest honours cousins; Australia, Britain, France and New Zealand, all make liberal use of intermediate awards.^{xix} Unfortunately for Canadians it is the Order of Canada, a provincial Order or nothing. Given the necessity for only a small number of annual appointments to these Orders, there is a desperate need for the civil division of the MSDs to be reactivated.

Along with the civil MSDs, another element of the honours system that is approaching the same fate as the doomed Canada Medal is the honorary division of the Order of Canada. Honorary appointments to the Order of Canada are a true rarity. For the Order's first thirty years of existence, only one honorary appointment was made. In 1998 it seemed that some progress had been made in establishing a protocol and process for appointing non-Canadian citizens to the Order to non-Canadian citizens. Over the past twelve years however, 16 additional honorary appointments have been made. A valuable tool for recognizing non-citizens who play a role in promoting Canada abroad and within Canada is left to gather cobwebs. When you compare this with the significant number of appointments that Britain and France make to non-citizens, one would assume that Canada is an isolationist country that does not welcome people from aboard and does not allow its citizens to travel abroad.

Certainly we should not go the route of the French who actively use their honours system as a tool of foreign policy, but there is much we could learn from their use of appointments to non-citizens as a highly valued reward for promoting culture, language and economic interests.

Part of the issue is a trickle of nominations and the cumbersome nature of the Advisory Council's existing structure. There is no reason why the various Canadian Heads of Mission abroad should not draw up a list of potential candidates on an annual basis. Similarly Canadian organizations abroad should be encouraged to do the same. Another way to remedy this situation would be to establish a sub-committee of the Advisory Council of the Order of Canada to consider honorary appointments. Such a sub-committee could be composed of those active in the international field. Similarly the civil division of the MSDs could be used quite successfully to recognize the service of non-citizens. The military division of the MSDs has used successfully in this way.

Our national honours system continues to do a poor job of recognizing exemplary volunteers. While there was a long tradition of 20-25 appointments to the Order of Canada per-annum in recognition of voluntary services (period 1997-2007), this has plummeted to a mere twelve appointments in 2008-09 and a paltry four appointments in 2009-10. Of course there is the Caring Canadian Award, but this is not a national honour; it is a lapel pin with a certificate.

In the realm of recognizing volunteers only Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan^{xx} have been active. This is an area in which the various provincial honours systems or indeed the national system could expand, especially given the high value that Canadians place on voluntary service. The civil division of the MSDs were intended, in part, to recognize voluntary service that did not meet the bar for admission to the Order of Canada, yet as we have seen the program is dormant.

Many retired members of the Canadian Forces and various protective services often complain that they and their comrades are never considered for the Order of Canada in recognition of their service. Since the early 1980s the Military and protective services have been almost entirely shut out of the Order of Canada. Over the past thirty years there have been only twenty-six appointments in this area, the most recent one in 2006 when Major-General Lewis MacKenzie was appointed a CM. Certainly members of the CF and Police Forces are eligible for the Order of Military Merit and the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, but this is often given part way through an individual's career. Why are more members of the CF and protective services not appointed to the Order of

Canada at the conclusion of their career – it is not as though we are lacking worthy candidates.

Over the past decade there has been a proliferation of what can euphemistically be termed unofficial or “fake medals.” These are honours created by individual organizations or government offices that end up being worn with official national and official provincial honours. Numerous police forces, provincial fire marshal’s offices and provincial departments have fallen into this habit, as have some Canadian veterans associations. Most of these unofficial awards duplicate existing honours, whether it is for meritorious service or long service. All of this is in violation of federal Order-in-Council P.C. 1998-591. The federal government has done almost nothing to enforce the rules, so the rules are ignored. Quite simply if you wear an unapproved insignia (order, decoration or medal) you should be sanctioned, either through a fine or through the revocation of your national honours. Only the Canadian Forces and RCMP have enforced the rules in this regard. The proliferation of unofficial medals that are worn with official provincial and national honours diminish the importance of official honours and make the entire system look like a farce where anyone can wear anything.

On the topic of enforcement, section 419 of the Criminal Code is in desperate need of updating. This is the section that prohibits individuals from wearing war medals they are not entitled to. The section does not extend to the Order of Canada, service medals for time in Afghanistan or other Canadian honours. Some provinces have penalties for wearing their provincial Orders, but this is not universal. Thus, anyone can legally buy an Order of Canada replica and a Star of Military Valour and General Campaign Star and wear them without any penalty – aside from the potential of public ridicule. Australia has a comprehensive and short section in their Defence Act that we could well duplicate to prevent this sort of honours-related offence.^{xxi}

In the realm of foreign honours Canada has one of the most restrictive and cumbersome policies in the world. The existing policy, which grew out of the 1956 foreign honours policy, makes the presentation of even low-level decorations into an exercise of diplomatic gymnastics. The general phobia of Commonwealth and foreign honours ties directly back to the Nickle Resolution and a fear that foreign governments would bestow honours on Canadians in an effort to enlist their support in causes that were not necessarily sympathetic to the government of the day. When a foreign government wishes to honour a Canadian, they have to apply through the Department of Foreign Affairs, the request is then sent to the Canadian Honours Policy Sub-Committee, which makes a decision based on a set of criteria that are widely open to interpretation.

Again we could learn much from the policies used in, France and New Zealand. In these jurisdictions citizens are permitted to accept an order, decoration or medal from a foreign government. It is then up to the recipient to apply through their own honours system for permission to wear the insignia. The Canadian system for approving foreign honours is best explained with this analogy;

A friend has helped me move into a new house and I want to give him a gift. However, before I can give him the gift I have to check with his landlord to make sure it is ok for me to give him the gift. The landlord then sends my request to a Byzantine committee and after many forms are completed and considered, they make a decision. Only after the landlord and committee have given their approval am I allowed to present the gift.

This process is antiquated and widely ridiculed amongst our allies for its draconian structure. Many Canadians who would otherwise be recognized by foreign government go unrewarded because of this highly restrictive process. More frequently however, foreign governments ignore entirely the Canadian regulations and simply bestow whatever honours they wish.

Finally there are ongoing issues with what can politely be referred to as the “details” of an honours system. The quality of the insignia of the Order of Canada, Order of Military Merit, some provincial Orders, the Meritorious Service Decorations, the Star and Medal of Military Valour and the Star of Courage and the Medal of Bravery, is below the standard of what we should be allowing the Crown to bestow upon exemplary citizens. Poor enamel quality and poor detail on struck items make it seem as though we do not take the honours business seriously. Over the past six years the Department of National Defence has made very significant advances in the quality of service medals and the Canadian Forces’ Decoration and they have escaped the mugs game of “low cost bidders.” When you consider that these honours are for a lifetime of achievement, is it too much to ask that attention be paid to the details that goes into the lasting record of recognition?

C O N C L U S I O N

Two factors give the Canadian honours system its legitimacy; the Crown and the caliber of the recipients of our national and provincial honours. Without the Crown, honours would lack the mystique and symbolic capital that they imbue the recipient with. Our honours system is a resilient and durable institution, a living and evolving institution. However, the myriad of past successes are increasingly being overshadowed by serious challenges, gaps and issues that have gone ignored for the past decade. Radical change is not necessary, but a balanced approach to reform and review of the Canadian honours system would serve to strengthen and better secure the future of the Crown’s honours and the pride Canada has in those who have been recognized for their exemplary citizenship in many different fields. The position of the Crown as the fount of all official honours is not something that is often challenged, strangely however, over the past thirty years there has been a penchant, at the federal level, for marginalizing the role of the Sovereign as the giver of honours. A key element of reforming our honours system must be to acknowledge and explain the role of our Head of State in the honours system.

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END NOTES

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- ⁱ Arthur Berridale Keith, *The Sovereignty of the British Dominions* (London: Macmillan, 1939), p. 267.
- ⁱⁱ *The Register of Canadian Honours*, p. 12.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See *The Canadian Forces Decoration; A History and Maintiens le Droit; Recognizing Service; A History of the RCMP Long Service Medal*, both to be released by the fall of 2010.
- ^{iv} RCMP Long Service Medal Files, Sir James MacBrien to Thomas Mulvey, Under Secretary of State 29 November 1932.
- ^v Harold Nicholson, *King George the Fifth; His Life and Reign*, (London: Constable Press, 1953), p. 514.
- ^{vi} LAC RG 18 Vol 1481 File 19-N, Sir Frederick Ponsonby to the Earl of Bessborough, 6 March 1934.
- ^{vii} Of course this should have been signed prior to the King signifying his approval.
- ^{viii} McCreery, *The Canadian Honours System*, (Toronto: Dunrudn Press, 2005), p. 48.
- ^{ix} David Bercuson, *True Patriot: The Life of Brooke Claxton, 1898-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 150.
- ^x LAC RG 24 Vol 24634, Letter from Sir Alan Lascelles to William Lyon Mackenzie King, 7 August 1947, quoted in a letter from A.D.P. Heeney to Brooke Claxton, 30 December 1947.
- ^{xi} LAC RG 24 Vol 24634, Colin Gibson to Brooke Claxton, 18 March 1949
- ^{xii} On 15 December 1949 Lord Alexander signed Order-in-Council 6335 establishing the Canadian Forces' Decoration.
- ^{xiii} The name of the Member of the Order of Canada is Mr. Ian Vorres.
- ^{xiv} Published in the *Canada Gazette* on 20 March 2010. Until recently an honour was not presented until it had been gazetted.
- ^{xv} McCreery, *The Order of Canada; Its Origins, History and Development*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 201.
- ^{xvi} Ipsos Reid Poll 1 April 2009.
- ^{xvii} *The Order of Canada: Its Origins, History and Development*, p. 74.
- ^{xviii} Since 2000, 288 military division MSDs have been awarded.
- ^{xix} In New Zealand this is achieved with the Queen's Service Order, Queen's Service Medal and membership in the most junior level of the New Zealand Order of Merit; Australia uses the Medal of the Order of Australia; Britain uses the most junior level of the Order of the British Empire; France uses the chevalier level of the Ordre des arts et lettres, the Ordre national du merit and the Legion d'honneur.
- ^{xx} In Quebec appointments as the Chevalier level of the Ordre national du Quebec are often for volunteer services, Ontario awards the Ontario Medal for Good Citizneship and Saskatchewan awards the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.
- ^{xxi} Section 80B(3) of the Defence Act, 1903 (Australia).