

A New Challenge to Federalism: Regionalism

After the war, **regionalism**, or the concern of the various regions of the country with their own local problems became more pronounced in Canadian politics.

The Maritimes

During the 1920s, the Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) found that their influence in national politics was declining. The population in the Maritimes was small, which meant it had fewer seats in Parliament. Some businesses and banks moved to Ontario and Québec, while others suffered because their products (such as coal) were no longer in demand. Prominent business and political leaders formed the Maritime Rights movement and urged politicians to promote policies that would benefit the Maritimes.

The Prairies and Rural Ontario

Other regional challenges came from farmers on the Prairies and in rural Ontario. They were frustrated by the National Policy of 1878 that placed tariffs or duties on foreign goods imported into Canada. These tariffs made foreign goods more expensive, encouraging people to buy goods produced in Canada. Western farmers felt alienated by this policy because they had no such protection. They were forced to buy Canadian-made machinery, but their agricultural products were sold on the open world market. Farmers wanted **free trade**, abolishing tariffs and allowing them to buy cheaper American-made machinery. They also wanted lower freight rates and storage fees.

When neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives met their demands, farmers formed their own political parties. By the early 1920s, Ontario and the Prairie provinces had all elected members of United Farmers' parties to their legislatures. In some provinces, these parties formed the government. In 1920, the federal Progressive Party was created, led by Thomas Crerar, a former Minister of Agriculture in Robert Borden's Union Government. The Progressive Party wanted a new National Policy based on free trade and public ownership of the railways.

● What is regionalism, and how was it expressed in the 1920s?

KEY TERMS

federalism a political system that divides power between federal and provincial legislatures

regionalism a concern for the affairs of one's own region over those of one's country

free trade trade between countries without tariffs, export subsidies, or other government intervention



FIGURE 3-15 In 2001, Manitoban farmers demanded more financial aid from the government by driving their vehicles to the legislature in a national day of protest.

Thinking Critically How effective do you think this protest was in getting support for the farmers? In what ways was this protest the same as and different from protests of the 1920s?

KEY TERMS

nationalize move from private to government ownership

minority government a government in which the ruling party has less than half the total number of seats in the legislature

Old Age Pension Act an Act passed in 1927 to provide social assistance to people over 70

Québec

The economic boom in the 1920s, and Québec's proximity to the United States, led to rapid growth in many Québec industries. Cheap labour and vast forests resulted in the expansion of the province's pulp and paper industry to feed the U.S.'s demand for newsprint. Increased manufacturing in Canada and the U.S. during this decade helped to expand Québec's mining industries. To provide power to its growing industries, Québec took advantage of the hydroelectric potential of its many rivers. The abundant hydroelectric resources attracted the aluminum industry, and the Aluminum Company of Canada opened several plants.

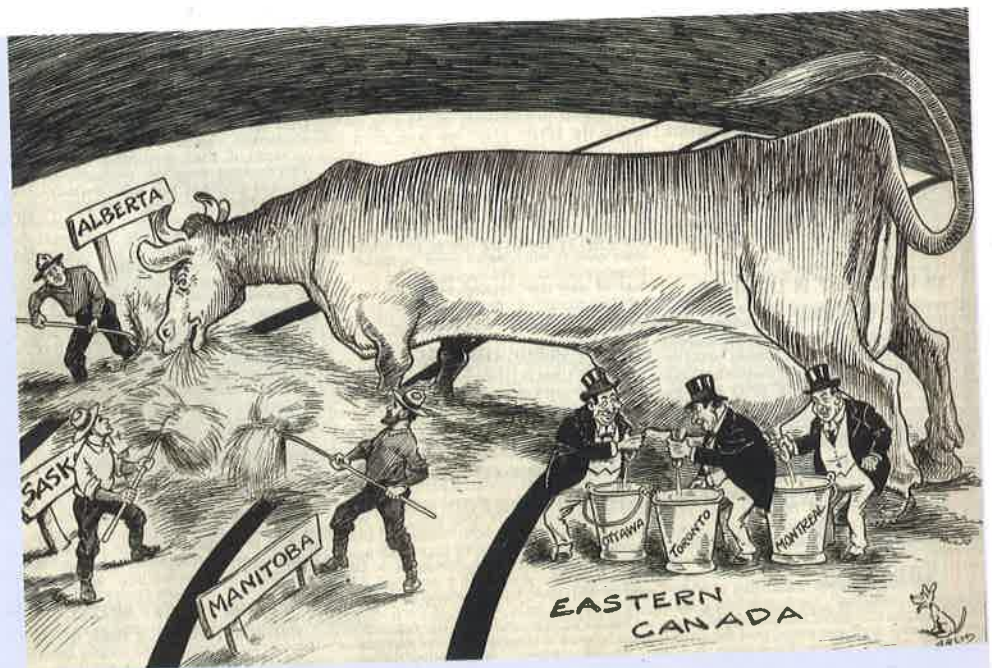
As Québec's industries expanded, so did its desire to protect its own interests. Hostility to the Conservative Party because of conscription and language rights helped the Liberals sweep all 65 seats in Québec in the 1921 federal election. Provincial politics were dominated from 1920 to 1936 by Premier Louis-Alexandre Taschereau's Liberal Party.

Western Interests

For most of the 1920s, British Columbia was led by Liberal John Oliver, who often attacked the federal government for favouring the interests of Eastern Canada. B.C.'s growing economic strength during the 1920s meant its politicians had a stronger voice in federal politics. The products of B.C.'s forests and mines were in demand. Communities grew around the new pulp and paper mills and mines. After the war, the port of Vancouver began to benefit from the Panama Canal that had opened in 1914. More importantly, Pacific Coast ports could challenge Eastern Canada's dominance in shipping Western grain. Premier Oliver went to Ottawa three times to demand railway freight rates be reduced, a fight he won each time. As a result, annual shipments of grain from B.C. ports increased throughout the 1920s. By the end of the decade, 40 percent of Canada's grain was exported through B.C.

FIGURE 3-16 Cow East and West

Interpreting a Cartoon What point is being made by the cartoon? How effective is the cartoon in explaining its message? Why?



Canadians Choose a New Government

Regionalism and the Progressive Party greatly influenced the results of the 1921 federal election, effectively upsetting the balance of power between the Liberals and Conservatives.

In the 1921 election, both the Liberals and the Conservatives had new leaders. William Lyon Mackenzie King was chosen to lead the Liberals in 1919. He had a reputation as a reformer and was an authority on social and economic issues. Arthur Meighen, a brilliant debater and long-standing Member of Parliament, was chosen to replace Borden as the leader of the Conservatives. While King always tried to find the middle path that would offend the fewest people, Meighen believed in principles over compromise and did not care who might be offended by his stand on issues. Meighen's hard line alienated many groups before the election. His involvement in creating the Conscription Act and the new electoral laws of 1917 meant he had little support in Québec. His harsh treatment of the leaders of the Winnipeg General Strike also provoked the hostility of the labour movement.

The Progressive Party's election platform was based on their proposed National Policy, calling for free trade and to **nationalize** the railways. In the election, the Progressives managed to win an astonishing 64 seats, mostly in Western Canada. This made it the second largest party in Parliament, giving the Liberals a **minority government**. Because they were not the majority, the Liberals needed the support of some of the opposition members to pass legislation.

Despite its initial success, the Progressive Party did not last very long. However, it was influential in bringing about changes to Canada's social policy. In 1926, for example, King was challenged by the Progressives to set up an old age pension. The **Old Age Pension Act** was passed in 1927. The Act was an acknowledgement that government had a role to play in providing a network of social services for its citizens. The Progressive Party lost public support in the 1925 and 1926 elections, and it eventually dissolved. But it did manage to change Canadian politics by helping to create Canada's first minority government.



FIGURE 3-17 In a 1920 speech, Arthur Meighen said, "Thousands of people are mentally chasing rainbows, striving for the unattainable, anxious to better their lot and seemingly unwilling to do it in the old-fashioned way by honest intelligent effort. Dangerous doctrines taught by dangerous men, enemies of the State, poison and pollute the air..."

Using Evidence What groups was Meighen referring to? How would they have reacted to his speech?

Prime Minister

Arthur Meighen

- born 1874, Anderson, Ontario
- lawyer
- first elected to Commons in 1908
- prime minister 1920–1921, June–September 1926

Domestic Record

- helped write and pass the Military Service Act and Wartime Elections Act
- created the Canadian National Railways in 1919 by nationalizing several transportation companies
- played a prominent role in ending the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919
- formed a minority government during the King-Byng Crisis in 1926

International Record

- successfully argued against an Anglo-Japanese alliance at the 1921 Imperial Conference

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. List the concerns expressed by each region during the 1920s: Maritimes; Québec; Prairies and rural Ontario; Western Canada. To what extent were the concerns resolved?
2. Why was the Progressive Party so successful during the 1921 election? What impact did this have on the federal government from 1921 to 1926?

✦ What measures has Canada taken to promote a distinct Canadian identity?

● What factors contributed to Canada's emerging autonomy?

KEY TERMS

populist someone who appeals to the concerns of ordinary citizens

referendum the process of referring a political question to the people for a direct vote

New Times, New Leadership

Canada's leadership changed little during the early post-war years. Mackenzie King, who had guided the country through the war, retired and his successor, Louis St. Laurent, pursued very similar policies. The Liberals were finally put out of office when the Progressive Conservatives formed a minority government headed by John Diefenbaker in 1957. Diefenbaker called a snap election in 1958 and won the largest majority government in Canadian history.

The Changing Face of Federal Politics

When Mackenzie King retired in 1948 at the age of 73, he had been in power longer than any Canadian prime minister before him. He was succeeded by Louis St. Laurent as a new age of politics was born. King had governed in the days before television. Today's television commentators would probably have focused on his personal life or pompous speeches, but during his years in power such things were not considered important. By the early 1950s, however, the media was playing a much larger role in Canadian life.

St. Laurent entered politics late in life and during the 1949 election campaign, the Liberal Party election organizers worried about how they could sell this rather shy, reserved, elderly man to the Canadian public. Then, during a campaign stop at a railway station, a reporter noticed

St. Laurent, who was a father of five and grandfather of twelve, chatting with a group of children. Newspapers soon began referring to St. Laurent as "Uncle Louis." The media thus created the image of St. Laurent as a kindly relative. The Liberal advertising agency made sure the nickname stuck. From that time on, the media has played an influential part in Canadian politics.



FIGURE 6-14 St. Laurent on the campaign trail
Expressing Ideas What impression does this photograph give of St. Laurent? What elements in the photograph suggest that it was carefully posed?

Louis St. Laurent and Canadian Autonomy

Louis St. Laurent was born in Compton, Québec, to an English-speaking mother and a French-speaking father. He was nearing retirement after a successful law career when he was approached by Mackenzie King to become Minister of Justice in his government. St. Laurent was elected to the Commons in 1942 and provided key support to King during the conscription crisis of the Second World War. When King retired, St. Laurent seemed to be the right man to take over as prime minister.

St. Laurent led a progressive government that expanded federal social welfare programs, such as old-age pensions and family allowances. He also brought in hospital insurance, another important step on Canada's road to universal health care. His other major domestic contributions were in the areas of protecting Canadian culture (see page 176) and gaining Canada more autonomy from Britain. Measures St. Laurent took as prime minister to increase Canadian autonomy included

- appointing the first Canadian-born Governor General, Vincent Massey
- making the Supreme Court of Canada the highest court of appeal for Canadian cases rather than the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, a British legal body
- negotiating with Britain to give the Canadian Parliament the power to amend portions of its own constitution without appealing to the British Parliament. This resulted in the British North America (No. 2) Act, 1949

St. Laurent also played a leading role in Canadian post-war peace and defence initiatives, as you will see later in the chapter.

Election Defeat

Louis St. Laurent fought and won election campaigns in 1949 and 1953. When the next election rolled around in 1957, the 75-year-old St. Laurent was looking tired and depressed. By comparison, the new Progressive Conservative leader, John Diefenbaker, seemed energetic. Used to public speaking as a defence attorney in Saskatchewan, “Dief” proved to be a great campaigner and a witty orator. Television carried his image across the nation, and he led his party to a narrow election victory. Diefenbaker was the first Westerner to become prime minister. St. Laurent resigned and the defeated Liberals chose a new leader, the diplomat Lester “Mike” Pearson.

Of German extraction, Diefenbaker was the first Canadian prime minister whose father was of neither English nor French background. He saw himself as a Prairie **populist**, one who spoke for and listened to ordinary people. Ordinary people, in turn, responded to him. A colleague recalled the 1958 campaign: “I saw people kneel and kiss his coat. Not one, but many. People were in tears. People were delirious.”

The Nation Expands

Prime Minister St. Laurent was part of the negotiations that resulted in Newfoundland joining Canada. The process of expanding Canada from sea to sea had been set in motion by Prime Minister King at the end of the Second World War. Until 1932, Newfoundland had been an independent, self-governing dominion within the British Empire. During the Depression, however, the island had suffered so badly that its government had gone bankrupt. Democracy was temporarily suspended and Britain set up a special commission to govern Newfoundland.

In 1948, the islanders were given the opportunity to vote on their political future in a **referendum**. They were offered three options: to continue to be governed by special commission, to be a self-governing dominion within the British Empire, or to join Canada. J.R. “Joey” Smallwood, a skillful Newfoundland politician, argued that union with Canada would bring modernization to the province. Yet, many Newfoundlanders believed the benefits could not make up for the higher taxes and loss of identity that Confederation would bring. Some preferred economic union with the United States.

Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent

- born 1882, Compton, Québec
- lawyer
- first elected to Commons, 1942
- prime minister 1948–1957

Domestic Record

- negotiated entry of Newfoundland into Confederation
- made Supreme Court of Canada highest court of appeal
- negotiated changes to BNA Act, giving Canadian Parliament authority to amend portions of the Act
- appointed Vincent Massey, first Canadian-born Governor General
- established Massey Commission investigation into protecting Canadian culture
- expanded social welfare programs
- initiated megaprojects such as the Trans-Canada Highway

International Record

- defined Canada as middle power
- supported NATO and UN
- sent forces to UN in Korea
- sent Lester Pearson to defuse the Suez crisis



FIGURE 6–15 Governor General Vincent Massey shakes hands with the newly elected Prime Minister John Diefenbaker.

In a referendum in June 1948, only 41 percent of Newfoundlanders favoured Confederation. A larger number, 44.6 percent, voted in favour of returning to the self-governing dominion status, while 14 percent preferred government by commission. As no option won a clear majority, another vote was scheduled for late July. This time, the commission option was dropped, and the Confederation option won 52 percent of the vote.

The Terms of Union were negotiated with the federal government under Prime Minister St. Laurent, and on March 31, 1949, Newfoundland became part of Canada. That same year, Joey Smallwood was elected premier of the new province, a job he held for more than two decades.

Resettlement in Newfoundland

Newfoundlanders had joined Canada in the hope that Confederation would bring better health care, education, and employment opportunities. It was difficult, however, to provide these services in Newfoundland's outports— isolated fishing settlements connected to the outside world only by occasional ferry service. In 1954, the provincial government introduced a “centralization” program that offered compensation to people who wanted to move to larger centres. Families were paid an average of \$301, which is about \$2430 in today's dollars. By 1959, about 2400 people from 29 communities had been resettled. Unfortunately, prosperity did not follow relocation. In fact, Newfoundland's unemployment rate climbed. The social impact of losing homes, traditions, and a unique way of life in the outports could not be measured. Some Newfoundlanders still feel grief and resentment over the resettlement.



FIGURE 6–16 Resettlement continued in Newfoundland throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. This house was towed across Inner Tickle of Newtown to its new location.

Thinking Critically How does the resettlement in Newfoundland show the tensions that sometimes exist between progress on the one hand, and cultural and lifestyle traditions on the other?

● How was Québec nationalism expressed in the 1950s?

Duplessis and the Roots of Québec Nationalism

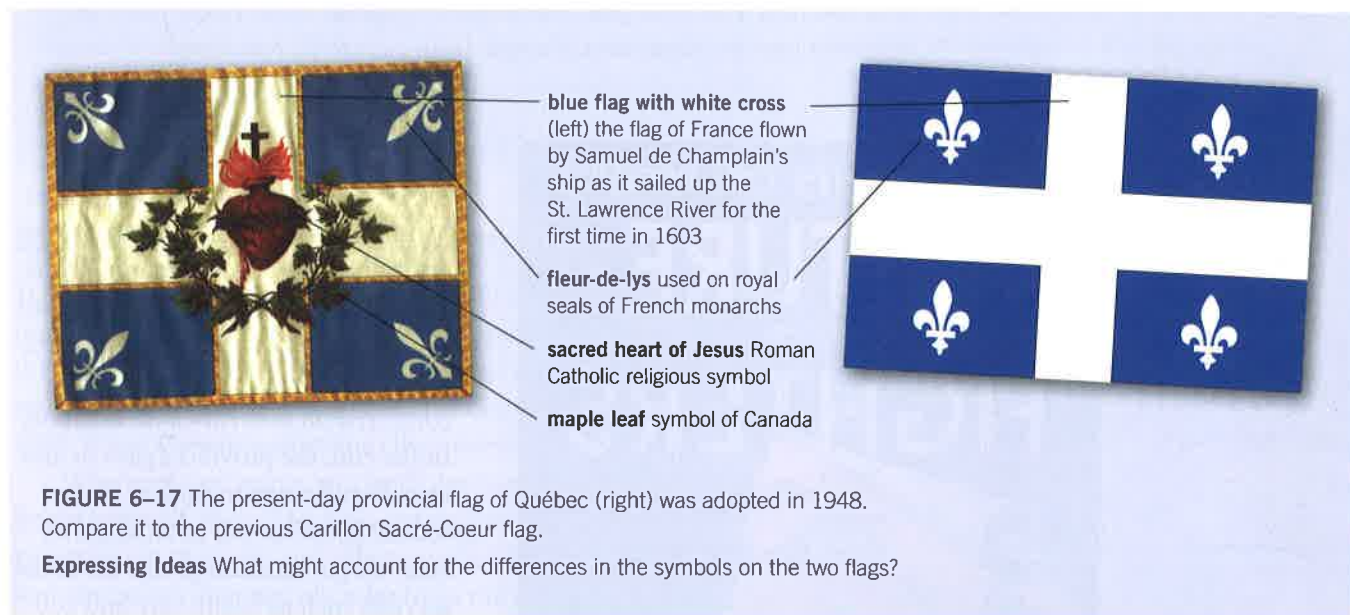
From 1936 to 1939, and again from 1944 to 1959, Québec was controlled by Premier Maurice Duplessis and his party, the Union Nationale. Duplessis was a strong Québec nationalist who promoted the idea of Québec as a distinctive society, a “nation” rather than just another Canadian province. To emphasize his province's difference from English-speaking Canada, Duplessis introduced a new flag for Québec bearing the French symbol, the fleur-de-lys. He fiercely opposed the growing powers of the federal government in the post-war years.

Under Duplessis, the Roman Catholic Church was the main defender of Québec culture. Priests urged people in Québec to turn their backs on the materialism of English-speaking North America. The Church praised the old Québec traditions of farm, faith, and family. It ran Québec's hospitals and schools. Religion played a role in every part of the curriculum, and the schools taught children to accept authority. The elite few who attended high

school and university received a fine education, but the emphasis was on traditional subjects such as classical languages and philosophy. As a result, Québec produced many priests, lawyers, and politicians, but few scientists, engineers, or business people.

While Duplessis tried to keep out the influence of foreign culture, he encouraged foreign investment in Québec. The province guaranteed cheap labour, since union activity was either discouraged or banned. It also promised low taxes. Québec would benefit from the new investment, but so would Duplessis. In return for favourable business conditions, companies were expected to contribute generously to the Union Nationale.

Bribery and corruption became the trademarks of the Duplessis regime. One of the worst of these was the case of the “Duplessis Orphans.” Thousands of children housed in orphanages financed by the province were falsely certified as mentally ill and moved into insane asylums, which were funded by the federal government. For many Québécois, the Duplessis era is *La Grande Noirceur*, the Great Darkness.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- a)** Why was Confederation so hotly debated in Newfoundland in 1949?

b) Only 52 percent of Newfoundlanders voted to join Canada. Do you think this was enough of a margin to warrant such a huge political change? Should it have been necessary for a greater percentage to support the change? Give reasons for your view.
- a)** Explain how the media was important in creating the image of politicians in this period.

b) How is the current prime minister presented in the media? Use pictures from different sources to compare the images created. Include editorial cartoons.
- Create a web diagram summarizing Québec society and politics under Maurice Duplessis.

Politics and Government

As the first of the baby boomer generation reached maturity, politicians faced new priorities and demands from Canadians. John Diefenbaker and Lester “Mike” Pearson dominated Canadian politics in the early 1960s. But by 1967, Canada’s centennial year, both Diefenbaker and Pearson seemed out of touch with the times. Diefenbaker was defeated in a leadership convention in September 1967, and Pearson announced his intention to retire in December of the same year. Many Canadians wanted a leader who could appeal to a new generation of voters. The answer was the charismatic Pierre Trudeau who came to power on the strength of “Trudeaumania” and the youth vote.

Diefenbaker Versus Pearson

Diefenbaker and Pearson had different styles and visions of Canada. They were bitter rivals, fighting four national elections in 10 years. Diefenbaker was passionately committed to what he called “unhyphenated Canadianism”—a belief in the equality of all Canadians, whatever their heritage. A staunch nationalist, he also believed in preserving Canada’s British connections and standing up to the Americans. Diefenbaker championed human rights, introducing the Canadian Bill of Rights. In addition, he was the first prime minister to include a woman in his Cabinet and to appoint an Aboriginal senator. In 1960, his government gave Canada’s status Indians living on reserves the right to vote in federal elections. While Diefenbaker’s beliefs made him popular among many Canadians, they were also the source of his problems. In particular, French Canadians, who saw their culture as distinct, did not appreciate Diefenbaker’s version of “unhyphenated Canadianism.”

By contrast, Pearson and his Liberals appealed to younger, urban voters, especially in Central Canada. Pearson’s vision of Canada was based on two founding peoples: French and English. He believed that Canadians should sever their British connections and that Canada needed an identity that would be meaningful to all Canadians. Pearson won the election of 1963; Diefenbaker never again led the country. Pearson was responsible for modernizing Canada. His government introduced a trial abolition of capital punishment and easier divorce laws. Above all, he is remembered for introducing Canada’s flag in 1965.

The Flag Debate

For some Canadians, the Red Ensign was too British to be the symbol of modern Canada. Still, many opposed a new flag both for reasons of tradition and because they felt that Pearson was giving in to pressure from Québec. An emotional debate split the country. In general, English Canadians wanted to keep the Red Ensign; French Canada wanted a new flag. Finally, after hundreds of suggestions from across Canada, the red-and-white maple leaf design was chosen. On February 15, 1965, Canada’s new flag was raised on Parliament Hill for the first time. Ironically, English Canadians have come to regard the flag with pride and affection, while people from Québec, disillusioned by the bitter debate, continue to fly primarily the fleur-de-lys.

- How did Canadian voters signal a change in political and social values in the 1960s?

KEY TERMS

lobby to try to influence the opinions and votes of public officials for or against a cause

Aboriginal Pipeline Group a group formed in 2000 to represent the interests of the Aboriginal peoples of the North in the proposed pipeline

WEB LINK

Read more about the flag debate on the Pearson Web site.



FIGURE 7-12 Diefenbaker and the Conservatives wanted to keep the Red Ensign (top) with its traditional links to Britain, while the Liberals wanted a new design, favouring the three maple leaf flag (centre). A multi-party committee selected the maple leaf flag we use today, recognized around the world as the symbol of Canada.

Expressing Ideas What do you think might have motivated Pearson to initiate the change of flags in the 1960s?

● How did Canadian social programs evolve?

Social Welfare

Pearson's government continued to build on the social welfare programs started by Mackenzie King. During the war, King was looking for a way to keep the support of voters who remembered the hardships of the Depression and were attracted by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the political party that stood for social benefits. As a result, he introduced unemployment insurance in 1940 and family allowance, or the "baby bonus," in 1944. In 1966, Pearson's government began the Canada Pension Plan, which improved on existing pension schemes. It also introduced the Canada Assistance Plan to help the provinces finance social assistance programs for people in need. In the same year, Pearson introduced Canada's system of universal health care, the **Medical Care Act**.

up close
and personal

Tommy Douglas: What Makes Him the Greatest Canadian?



Significance

Before 1966, most Canadians who fell seriously ill could spend their life savings on medical care. Many had to depend on charity, or face debt or bankruptcy to pay medical bills. Despite bitter opposition from doctors, Saskatchewan Premier T.C. "Tommy" Douglas introduced a complete medicare program that allowed all people in the province to seek medical treatment without paying out of their own pockets. When the bill was finally passed in Saskatchewan in 1962, it illustrated to the rest of Canada that a medicare system was possible.

In the same year, Tommy Douglas left provincial politics to become leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP), which grew out of the CCF. Fearing that the NDP might capture votes with a campaign for national medicare, the Liberals added health care to their party platform. As a result, the national Medical Care Act was passed in 1966. This Act meant that federal and provincial governments would now share the cost of medical care by doctors and hospitals for all Canadians, with funding coming from taxes. Today,

Canadians identify medicare as the social program they value most.



FIGURE 7-13 Tommy Douglas with supporters after winning the New Democratic Party leadership in August 1961

Thinking Critically In 2004, Tommy Douglas was voted the Greatest Canadian of all Time in a nationwide CBC contest. Why might Canadians have such high regard for him?

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. List three social changes made by Diefenbaker and three social changes made by Pearson.
2. **a)** Why did Prime Minister Pearson believe a new flag was necessary?
b) How important do you think a flag is in asserting identity? Should it be a criminal act to show disrespect to a flag? Discuss your views with the class.

Trudeau: A New-Style Politician

Pierre Elliott Trudeau was a French Canadian who was also a strong federalist. He appealed to many young Canadians. Previous leaders had seemed formal and serious; Trudeau was relaxed and witty. He drove a flashy sports car and was a “hip” dresser. A bachelor until 1971, he dated celebrities, went to New York nightclubs, hung out with the rich and famous, and eventually became an international celebrity himself. He delighted in joking with reporters. Crowds of admirers swarmed him at his public appearances. Young people responded to him as though he were a rock star, and “Trudeaumania” gripped the nation. He succeeded Lester Pearson as prime minister in 1968, just as radical separatists were becoming increasingly violent.

Trudeau also had a clear vision of what he thought Canada should be: a “just society” for all Canadians. He believed that government had a duty to protect the rights and freedoms of people and to foster their economic and social well-being. He also supported individual freedom and thought that governments should not interfere with personal liberties.




FIGURE 7-14 Pierre Trudeau stands before a crowd during a visit to Newfoundland in 1971. Trudeau had charisma and used the media very well. Media coverage is a “two-edged sword.” The media can bring down a politician as easily as it can raise him or her up.

Expressing Ideas What qualities do you think help politicians to “sell” themselves to a mass audience? Do any contemporary politicians have the mass appeal that Trudeau had?

Québec Nationalism

In 1960, after Duplessis’ death in 1959, Jean Lesage and the Liberals came to power with an election slogan that announced it was “Time for a Change.” Once in power, Lesage’s first step was to stamp out corruption. Government jobs and contracts were now to be awarded according to merit. Wages and pensions were raised, and restrictions on trade unionism were removed.

The government also began to modernize the province’s economy, politics, education, and culture. This wave of change became known as the **Quiet Revolution**, and it transformed the face of Québec. It took control of social services and the education system. Students were now required to take more science and technology courses to prepare for the new Québec. Above all, Québécois were encouraged to think of themselves as citizens of the 20th century. As new attitudes began to take hold, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church declined.

 What was the impact of Québec nationalism on Canadian identity?

KEY TERMS

FLQ (*Front de libération du Québec*) a revolutionary movement founded to work for an independent, socialist Québec

Parti Québécois (PQ) a Québec provincial party that advocates separation from Canada

Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism a commission created by the federal government to recommend ways of enhancing and promoting the historically bilingual nature of Canada

Official Languages Act the Act that states that French and English are Canada's official languages, and that all federal institutions must provide services in English and French

WEB LINK

Read more about René Lévesque on the Pearson Web site.

In the 1962 election, the Liberals went one step further. They campaigned, and won, with the motto *Maîtres chez nous*—"Masters in our own house"—with the aim of strengthening Québec's control of its own economy. Among other things, the government bought several hydro companies and turned them into a provincially owned power monopoly, Hydro-Québec.

The Birth of Separatism

Québec nationalism and the separatist movement grew in the 1960s and 1970s. Québécois resented what they perceived as injustices at the hands of English-speaking Canadians. Why was Ottawa, the national capital, so overwhelmingly English speaking? Why did federal politicians from Québec seldom hold key Cabinet posts? Why did Francophones not have the right to their own schools and hospitals in the rest of Canada, even though Anglophones enjoyed those rights in Québec? Why was Québec's Francophone majority expected to speak English in stores and at work?

For some, the only solution lay in a Québec controlled entirely by Québécois—a new country independent of Canada. Some extremists joined terrorist groups such as the FLQ (*Front de libération du Québec*) in the name of *le Québec libre*—"a free Québec." The FLQ blew up mailboxes and attacked symbols of English-Canadian power in Québec. Many Québécois supported the aims of the terrorists, if not their methods.

In 1967, Québec Cabinet minister René Lévesque left the Liberal Party and, a year later, formed the **Parti Québécois (PQ)**. Lévesque believed that Québec and Canada would do better to "divorce" peacefully than to continue a "marriage" of two cultures that seemed imposed and unworkable.

FIGURE 7-15 A Canadian army engineer lies injured after an FLQ bomb, which he had removed from a mailbox, exploded in his hands. On May 17, 1963, a total of 13 bombs were placed in mailboxes in the Montréal suburb of Westmount.

Expressing Ideas How might Canadians across the country have responded to images such as these?



A Bilingual Nation

Lester Pearson, who had become prime minister during Québec's Quiet Revolution, was convinced that Canada would face a grave crisis unless French Canadians felt more at home in Canada. In 1963, he appointed the **Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism** (the "Bi and Bi Commission") to investigate solutions. The Commission's report called for Canada to become bilingual, with English and French as its two official languages. Perhaps more importantly, it recommended that Canada adopt a bilingual strategy that would promote both languages across the nation, including the protection of French and English linguistic minorities. For example, parents would be able to have their children attend schools in the language of their choice in regions where there was sufficient demand.

When Pierre Trudeau succeeded Pearson in 1968, he was determined to do more to persuade people from Québec that their future lay with Canada. In 1969, his government passed the **Official Languages Act**, making Canada officially bilingual. All federal government agencies were now required to provide services in both languages, and more Francophones were appointed to senior government positions. Trudeau also called on French and English Canadians, especially young people, to increase their understanding of each other's cultures—and provided money to help make this happen.

These tactics were met with mixed reviews. Some loved them, some hated them. Some Canadians embraced the idea of bilingualism with enthusiasm. For example, many parents enrolled their children in French immersion classes. Others, especially Western Canadians, felt that the federal government was forcing French on them. They believed that Ottawa was focusing too much attention on Québec, while the West and its concerns were largely ignored. Francophones in Québec were also unimpressed. They wanted "special status" for Québec in Confederation. Trudeau, however, insisted that Québec was a province just like any other.



FIGURE 7-16 This 1976 cartoon shows then B.C. Minister of Human Resources, Bill Vander Zalm, Prime Minister Trudeau, and Québec Premier René Lévesque. Many people in British Columbia, farthest from Québec geographically, opposed the Official Languages Act.

Interpreting a Cartoon What is happening in the cartoon? What is the cartoonist saying about Western Canada's reaction to bilingualism? About regionalism in Canada? About Pierre Trudeau's views?

Prime Minister Lester Bowles Pearson

- born 1897, Newtonbrook, Ontario
- professor, author, diplomat
- first elected to Commons in 1948
- prime minister 1963–1968

Domestic Record

- served in the Canadian Army Medical Corps and Royal Flying Corps during the First World War
- introduced maple leaf flag in 1964
- established the Canada Pension Plan, universal medicare, and Canada Student Loans Plan

International Record

- Canadian ambassador to the U.S. in 1945 and attended the first conference of the UN
- saw Canada join NATO in 1949
- president of the UN General Assembly (1952–1953)
- won the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize for his part in creating the UN peacekeeping force

● What effect did the War Measures Act have on the legal rights of Canadians?



FIGURE 7-17 Soldiers patrol the streets of Montréal during the October Crisis.

Expressing Ideas Do you think it was wise to put on a show of force during the Crisis? Explain.

What If . . .

Imagine there was a terrorist threat in your community and the government imposed the War Measures Act. What civil rights would you be prepared to give up? What rights do you think are too important to give up, even in an emergency?

The October Crisis

Trudeau disliked the very idea of separatism and took a forceful stand against Québec nationalists. In October 1970, members of the FLQ kidnapped British diplomat James Cross. In exchange for Cross's safe release, they demanded the release of FLQ members serving prison sentences and a public reading of the FLQ manifesto. Québec Premier Robert Bourassa agreed to most of the demands but refused to release any FLQ prisoners. In response, the FLQ kidnapped Québec Labour Minister Pierre Laporte.

Alarmed by the deteriorating situation in Québec, Trudeau took drastic action. At the urging of Bourassa and Montréal Mayor Jean Drapeau, he imposed the **War Measures Act**. Until then, the Act had only been used in wartime. The Act suspended Canadians' civil rights—anyone could be arrested and detained without being charged with an offence. Membership in the FLQ became a crime. When asked how far he would go to defeat the FLQ, Trudeau replied, "Just watch me."

On October 16, 1970, federal troops patrolled the streets of Ottawa and Montréal, and armouries across the country were locked down. Hundreds of pro-separatist Québécois were arrested and held without charge. Imposition of the War Measures Act was fiercely criticized, but Trudeau was undeterred. After all the rights legislation that had been passed by the Liberals under Trudeau, many people were shocked by this hardline approach.

One day later, police found the body of Pierre Laporte in the trunk of a car. His murder increased pressure on the government to crack down on the FLQ and find the remaining hostage, James Cross. Montréal police located Cross after he was held in captivity for 60 days. His kidnappers negotiated safe passage to Cuba in exchange for Cross's release. The October Crisis was over. Of the 450 people detained under the Act, most were released and only a small number were ever charged.

FIGURE 7-18 On October 16, 1970, several thousand Montréal students protested the imposition of the War Measures Act and showed support for the FLQ.



Robert Bourassa and Bill 22

Premier Robert Bourassa had taken office just months before the October Crisis in 1970. Although most people in Québec did not support radical separatist movements, it was clear Trudeau's Official Languages Act had not gone far enough to satisfy the Francophone majority in the province. In 1974, Bourassa responded with **Bill 22**, the first provincial legislation passed

in Québec aimed at protecting the status of the French language. Bill 22 made French the sole official language of Québec. It was to be the language of civic administration and services, and of the workplace.

Bill 22 forced hundreds of thousands of business and professional people in Québec who were not proficient in French to move out of the province. Toronto eventually surpassed Montréal as the business capital of Canada. Many Anglophones were angered by what they saw as the loss of their language rights. Many Francophones, however, did not think that Bourassa had gone far enough. In the next election, Bourassa and the Liberals lost to the Parti Québécois.

The PQ in Power

In 1976, the Parti Québécois won the provincial election. It was a stunning victory for René Lévesque and his party, which had won only seven seats in the 1970 election. Lévesque had reassured voters that a PQ win would not automatically mean separation. He promised that he would hold a province-wide referendum on the issue, and Quebecers voted in a party dedicated to the goal of separation from Canada.

The separatists had no interest in official bilingualism—their priority was to strengthen the French language. Shortly after taking office, the PQ government passed **Bill 101**, sometimes referred to as the “Charter of the French Language.” Its terms specified that

- French was the only official language of the province and government employees had to work in French
- commercial outdoor signs would be in French only
- children of immigrants would be required to attend French schools

The Québécois welcomed the new language law. Many felt that their culture and language were endangered. The birth rate in Québec had fallen, and most new immigrants were educating their children in English. To non-Francophones, however, Bill 101 was a symbol of oppression. Many people in the rest of Canada felt that the PQ’s policies were extreme. They looked to the federal government to stand up to the separatists.

KEY TERMS

War Measures Act an Act passed during the First World War giving the government emergency powers in the event of a national crisis

Bill 22 provincial legislation that made French the sole official language of Québec

Bill 101 also called the “Charter of the French Language,” Bill 101 strengthened the position of the French language in Québec



FIGURE 7-19 Québec Premier René Lévesque at a PQ rally after his party’s victory in the 1976 provincial election

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What did Pearson and Trudeau do to address rising Québec nationalism?
2. Do you think the Official Languages Act was an effective way to address dissatisfaction in Québec?
3. a) What motivated the FLQ? What tactics did they use?
b) Had you lived in Québec in the 1960s, how do you think you would have reacted to the FLQ? Write a letter to the editor explaining your view.
4. Make a timeline of events during the October Crisis. Identify events that you think were most significant. Give reasons for your choices.
5. In Québec elections, the Parti Québécois won 23.5 percent of votes in 1970, more than 30 percent in 1973, and 41 percent in 1976. What do you think accounted for these results in each case?