A Different Canada

GUARDING QUESTIONS

Society & Identity
- How did women influence Canadian society in the early 1900s?
- Why were the attitudes of English- and French-speaking Canadians different regarding Britain?
- What attitudes did many Canadians have toward minorities?
- What steps did the government take to control immigration to Canada?
- What challenges did Aboriginal peoples face in the early 1900s?

Economy & Human Geography
- How did technology impact Canada’s economy during this period?
- What impact did industrial development have on the natural environment?

Autonomy & World Presence
- What was Canada’s relationship to Britain at the turn of the century?

TIMELINE

1896
Wilfrid Laurier becomes prime minister of Canada
Klondike gold rush begins

1899
Canadian volunteers fight in the Boer War in South Africa

1903
Alaska boundary dispute settled between the United States and Canada

1905
Alberta and Saskatchewan become provinces

1906
B.C. First Nations leaders take their land claim to King Edward VII of England
On a cool October evening in 1904, a tall, dignified man stood in front of a crowd in Toronto’s Massey Hall. He was Wilfrid Laurier, Canada’s prime minister. Laurier stepped to the podium that night and presented a bold vision of Canada for the new century:

Let me tell you, my fellow countrymen, that the twentieth century shall be the century of Canada and of Canadian development. For the next seventy-five years, nay for the next one hundred years, Canada shall be the star towards which all men who love progress and freedom shall come.

–Wilfrid Laurier, Toronto Globe, October 15, 1904

What was Canada like at the beginning of the 20th century when Laurier made his bold prediction? Manitoba, Ontario, and Québec were much smaller than they are today. Newfoundland was still a self-governing colony, and the territory of Nunavut had not yet been created. The census of 1911 reveals that Canada’s population was only 7.2 million, less than a quarter of what it was by the end of the century.

People’s attitudes about good manners and behaviour in general, the role of women, national identity, minorities, and Aboriginal peoples were also different then. In this regard, Canada fit the claim that “the past is like a foreign country; they do things differently there.” In our study of history, it is important to try to see the world through the eyes of Canadians at that time if we want to understand why they took the actions that they did.
By the early 20th century, most Canadians lived on farms or in small villages, yet morals and manners of the day were set by a minority of middle- and upper-class Anglophones. These people were greatly influenced by the attitudes of Victorian England. This period—named after Queen Victoria, who was the British monarch from 1837 to 1901—was known for its appearance of moral strictness. Families were expected to attend church regularly; they supported Britain and the monarchy; and they believed in honour, virtue, and duty. It was an age in which right and wrong, good and evil, seemed clear; they were not seen as issues that needed discussion or debate.

There was little tolerance for those who did not obey the law, and the application of the law could be quite harsh. At the time, the death penalty was the sentence for murder. Most convictions, however, were for crimes against people’s property. Drunkenness was a close second.

Women of the Era

In the early 1900s, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, founded in the 1870s, was still actively campaigning for prohibition. These women saw alcohol as the cause of many of society’s problems. They also supported women’s right to vote. With the vote, women believed they could influence the government to address social problems of the day, such as child labour, pollution, and poverty. Nellie McClung was a well-known suffragist who, together with other women, campaigned for women’s rights (see Chapter 3).

Since moral codes of behaviour were strict and well-defined, the courtship of young, middle-class ladies was a formal affair under the watchful eyes of their families and community. Once married, women had few rights over property or children, and divorce was rare. Women were not considered persons under the law—unless they committed a crime. Even a woman’s salary was legally the property of her husband. Women who worked outside the home, usually before marriage, were employed mainly as servants or factory workers. Some women were teachers and nurses; a few even became doctors.
Arts and Leisure

As Canada started to become more urbanized, its literature and art became more sentimental, expressing a preference for rural life, simple values, and happy endings. In 1908, Lucy Maud Montgomery published the much-loved novel *Anne of Green Gables*, a rural romance set in Prince Edward Island. Stephen Leacock gently mocked small-town Ontario life in his humorous *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912). Ernest Thompson Seton wrote moving stories about animals. Pauline Johnson, daughter of a Mohawk chief and his English wife, read poems about her Mohawk heritage to packed halls. Ontario painter Homer Watson gained international recognition with his farm scenes. In Québec, Ozias Leduc painted religious works and landscapes filled with a sense of spirituality. In British Columbia, Emily Carr explored the landscapes and peoples of the West Coast through painting and writing.

For leisure, Canadians enjoyed outdoor activities, such as running, cycling, and rowing. In the summer, trips to the beach were popular despite confining “bathing costumes.” In the winter, tobogganing was a must.

Still a British Nation

At the beginning of the 20th century, some of Britain’s colonies, including Canada, had their own governments but still depended on Britain to resolve disputes with other countries. The British government often made decisions that did not have Canada’s best interests in mind.

The Alaska Boundary Dispute

The dispute was over the exact border of the Alaskan “pan-handle,” a strip of land running down the Pacific Coast between British Columbia and Alaska. Of particular concern was the question of ownership of a fjord called the Lynn Canal. This waterway provided access to the Yukon, where gold had been discovered in 1896. In a speech, Prime Minister Laurier reflected on the relations between Canada and the United States:

“I have often regretted… that we are living beside a great neighbour who, I believe I can say without being deemed unfriendly to them, are very grasping in their national actions and who are determined on every occasion to get the best in any agreement....

– Wilfrid Laurier, October 23, 1903

In 1903, the matter was finally settled. The British, weary from fighting the Boer War in South Africa and unwilling to become involved in another international conflict, determined that the Lynn Canal was part of Alaska, not B.C. Many Canadians were angered by this decision, believing Britain had sold out Canada’s interests to keep peace with the U.S.
French-Canadian Nationalists

While unhappy with Britain's decision regarding the Alaska boundary, most English-speaking Canadians were proud to be British subjects, and they shared Britain's dreams of expanding the British Empire. These imperialists had eagerly supported Britain in the Boer War in 1899.

French-speaking Canadians, however, did not share this enthusiasm for the British Empire. They were the descendants of people who had settled New France more than 200 years earlier, and they saw themselves as Canadiens rather than British subjects. French Canadians tended to be nationalists, believing that Canada should have autonomy and be totally independent from Britain. For example, nationalist leader Henri Bourassa resigned from Laurier's Cabinet when Laurier agreed to send volunteers to fight with the British in South Africa during the Boer War. Bourassa's stand against Canada's involvement in Britain's wars became an even bigger issue during the First World War.

Language rights was another issue that divided French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians. After a bitter dispute, French Canadians first lost the right to French-language instruction in Catholic schools in Manitoba, then in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Henri Bourassa voiced the concerns of many French Canadians when he suggested that Canadiens might not have any reason to stay in Canada if their rights as a minority were not protected, as the people of Québec had believed they would be at the time of Confederation.
Canada’s Changing Population

After becoming prime minister in 1896, Laurier realized that for Canada to prosper, it needed more people, especially in the West. His government launched an advertising campaign to attract immigrants to Canada. It circulated posters in the United States and northern and eastern Europe promoting the Prairies as the “Last Best West” to distinguish it from the American West, where land was becoming limited and more expensive. These efforts resulted in a significant increase in immigration.

Entry into Canada was easy if you were reasonably healthy and had funds to establish yourself. The federal government offered immigrants willing to farm the Prairies 65 hectares of land for only $10. These homesteaders, as they were called, had three years to build a house and begin cultivating the land. The loneliness and harsh conditions of life on the Prairies prompted some to move to urban centres.

Not Everyone Is Welcomed

Some Canadians did not welcome changes to Canada’s ethnic composition. Many French-speaking Canadians were concerned that the new immigrants would outnumber the Francophone population. Most Canadians were ethnocentric, believing their own race or group was superior, and therefore they disliked “outsiders.” As a result, many newcomers to Canada experienced discrimination.

Eastern Europeans, particularly the Ukrainians and Polish people who settled the Prairies, were targets of ethnic prejudice. Their language and customs were unfamiliar to Canadians, who often ridiculed these people.

Many Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants settled in British Columbia. They, too, suffered from discrimination and racism. R.B. Bennett, a future prime minister, reflected popular prejudice when he declared in 1907, “British Columbia must remain a white man’s country.” As long as Asian immigrants did work that other Canadians considered too unpleasant—such as hauling coal, packing fish, and washing dishes—their cheap labour was generally accepted. But when Canadian workers began to fear that Asian immigrants would compete against them for other jobs, they joined in denouncing them.

The federal government tried to limit immigration from Asia in 1885 by introducing the Chinese Immigration Act. Under this Act, every Chinese immigrant to Canada had to pay a head tax of $50 upon arrival. In 1907, an angry mob of 9000 people smashed windows and destroyed signs on stores owned by Chinese and Japanese immigrants in Vancouver. This race riot resulted in severe restrictions on Japanese immigration. A year later, there was a virtual ban on East Indian immigration.

Thinking Critically

How does Canada benefit from its ethnic diversity? In what ways is the immigrant experience different today?
Is today’s government responsible for injustices of the past?

In the early 1980s, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau refused to apologize for past injustices committed by Canadian governments. He claimed that we cannot rewrite history; we can only try to be just in our time. Those calling for apologies say it is not about rewriting history. They feel acknowledging that the government and its institutions took wrong turns in the past shows that we are on the right road today.

Since 1988, federal and provincial governments have recognized and tried to compensate for past wrongs by issuing official apologies. In 1988, the Conservative government apologized to Japanese Canadians for their internment during the Second World War (see Chapter 5) and again in 1990 to Italian Canadians for similar reasons. Perhaps the most significant event to date has been Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2008 formal apology to Canada’s Aboriginal peoples, acknowledging that “...the treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history” (see Chapter 8). Supporters of this approach hope that such apologies offer closure to a hurtful past. Opponents say that no matter how sincere an apology, it cannot undo what has been done.

The following Canadian immigration case studies examine two apologies and corresponding responses.

The Chinese

As you read earlier, the federal government tried to discourage Chinese people from coming to Canada by imposing a head tax in 1885. The tax was increased from $50 to $100 in 1900, and to $500 in 1903. On July 1, 1923, the federal government introduced the Chinese Exclusion Act—an Act that tried to halt Chinese immigration altogether. Chinese Canadians refer to this day as Humiliation Day. The Act was in place for more than 20 years; it was repealed in 1947.

In 1984, the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) began a campaign for an apology from the federal government. They also asked for a repayment of $23 million, the amount collected from 81,000 Chinese immigrants who were forced to pay the tax.

In 1993, the Canadian government rejected the redress claim stating that it was more important to erase inequality in the future than to compensate people for past mistakes. Dr. Alan Li, the then-president of the CCNC, disagreed. He stated:

Returning the money is only basic justice. It is a strong statement of principle that a government cannot, and should not, and must not, benefit from racism.

–Alan Li, Speech, 1994
In 1995, the CCNC approached the United Nations Human Rights Commission to ask for their help with this issue. In 2006, the Canadian government agreed to address the claim and offered a parliamentary apology for the head tax and exclusion of Chinese immigrants from 1923 to 1947. The federal government promised financial redress of $20,000 to each of the surviving head tax payers or their spouses.

For over six decades, these malicious measures, aimed solely at the Chinese were implemented with deliberation by the Canadian state. This was a grave injustice, and one we are morally obligated to acknowledge.

–Prime Minister Stephen Harper, June 22, 2006

For Sid Chow Tan, national chairperson of the CCNC and president of the Head Tax Families Society of Canada, the apologies must not distract us from present-day problems. He stated:

The historical injustices of the Chinese Head Tax are being replicated today through Canada’s exploitative guest-worker programs and restrictive immigration policies. The descendants of these policies will be demanding apologies in future decades. We should deal with this present reality and not just dwell on the past, especially if a history that we are supposed to have learnt from is repeating itself.

–Sid Chow Tan

The Komagata Maru

In 1908, the federal government passed the Continuous Passage Act, a law requiring all immigrants to come to Canada by a non-stop route. This effectively made immigration from countries such as India impossible, since there were not any steamship companies that offered direct routes to Canada. This law was challenged in 1914, when the passengers on the Komagata Maru, a steamer chartered to carry Sikh immigrants from Hong Kong to Vancouver, were refused entry to Canada.

In May 2008, the British Columbia legislature extended an apology for the Komagata Maru incident. A few months later, at a Sikh festival in B.C., Prime Minister Harper also offered an apology for the incident. Sikh organizations have rejected the prime minister’s apology, comparing it to the formal apology to Chinese Canadians in 2006. The Sikh community requested a formal apology in the House of Commons, which would grant this issue the respect and dignity they feel it deserves. The Conservative government has since said there will be no further apology.

Analyzing the Issue

1. Compare the responses of Prime Minister Trudeau to those of Prime Minister Harper. What might explain the differences in their opinions?

2. Official apologies for past wrongs have accelerated since 1988. Why do you think that has happened? Would you support treating all claims for redress for past wrongs equally? Why or why not?

3. Organize a debate on the topic: Should we try to right the wrongs of past generations?
Cultural Extinction?

As thousands of immigrants settled into the western provinces, Aboriginal peoples found themselves more and more displaced. Their lives were regulated by the Indian Act passed in 1876. By the 1880s, most Aboriginal peoples of the Prairies were living on reserves. The main purpose of reserves was to free up land for settlers and immigrants from Europe, and to avoid the violent clashes that had taken place between Aboriginal peoples and settlers in the United States.

On the reserves, Aboriginal people were encouraged to take up farming instead of traditional hunting. But their attempts to adapt to farming were hindered by several factors: the soil on the reserves was often unsuitable for crops. They traded their land for equipment and livestock, but were given hand tools and animals ill-suited for plowing. Even when Aboriginal farmers managed to harvest crops, efforts to sell them were often hindered by government agents who would deny them the passes they needed to leave the reserve and market their crops. As a result, many Aboriginal people experienced hunger.

Loss of land was not the only problem Aboriginal peoples faced. The Canadian government established residential schools in an attempt to force Aboriginal children to set aside their identity and traditions and become part of the dominant culture. Children were taken from their communities by Indian agents, police, or priests and sent to schools hundreds of kilometres away. The overcrowded dormitories, unsanitary conditions, and lack of medical care caused tuberculosis and other diseases to spread quickly. Many students were physically and sexually abused. They were punished for speaking their language, forbidden to practise their culture, and denied contact with their families.

Residential schools, reserves, and enforced farming were all part of the federal government’s policy of assimilation, which was intended to make Aboriginal peoples abandon their traditions and adopt a European way of life. This policy had been in place since 1871, and by the early 1900s the populations of Aboriginal peoples were declining. By 1913, an article in Maclean’s magazine claimed that “the white man of Canada... is slowly, steadily and surely absorbing his red brother.” Aboriginal peoples did not agree. Their struggle to establish land claims and reclaim their culture was just beginning.

**KEY TERMS**

Indian Act an Act created to regulate the lives of the First Nations of Canada
reserves land set aside by the government for the use of First Nations
residential schools government-authorized schools, run by the churches, in which Aboriginal children lived apart from their families and were educated in Canadian culture
assimilation adoption of the customs and language of another cultural group so that the original culture disappears

**WEB LINK**
The last residential school closed in 1996. Find out more about Canada’s residential schools on the Pearson Web site.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Despite their poor treatment in Canada, immigrants kept coming. Explain the factors that attracted immigrants to Canada.

2. Why were many English- and French-Canadian people upset by the changes to Canada’s ethnic composition?

3. Describe the steps taken in British Columbia to restrict Asian immigration.

4. Describe the policies of the federal government that were designed to assimilate Canada’s Aboriginal peoples.
Millions of immigrants came to Canada in the 20th century. They were lured by the promise of freedom, land, and a better quality of life. As new people came to Canada, the original inhabitants of the country were forced off their land. First Nations peoples in British Columbia reacted by asserting their rights to Aboriginal land and self-government. Squamish Chief Joe Capilano, a respected and talented speaker, played a major role in championing this cause.

On August 14, 1906, delegates led by Chief Capilano met with King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace. They brought with them a petition expressing their dissatisfaction with the Canadian government and their claim to land. Although they could not present the petition directly to the king because of protocol, they discussed these issues with him during the audience.

The delegates were enthusiastically received when they returned to Canada. Chief Capilano toured B.C., speaking to First Nations peoples throughout the province. He told his audiences that the king supported them in their dispute with the Canadian government. The effectiveness of his speeches was clear in The Victoria Daily Colonist headline on May 8, 1907. It claimed, “Cowichan Indians in Restless Mood: Alleged That Tribal Discontent Is Aroused Through Oratory of Joe Capilano.”

But Canadian authorities disputed the royal promise of King Edward because there was no written record supporting the chief’s claim. This highlighted one of the key differences between European and Aboriginal cultures: Europeans relied on written records while Aboriginals trusted verbal promises.

The more active Capilano became in the cause, the more the Canadian government threatened him with prosecution and labelled him a troublemaker. Until his death in 1910, Capilano continued his struggle for Aboriginal rights. It was not until the latter half of the 20th century that the Supreme Court of Canada began to recognize Aboriginal rights.

1. Describe what the delegates might have hoped to achieve in going directly to King Edward VII.

2. List the differences between the activism of First Nations in the early 20th century and that of First Nations today. How would you relate the early struggles to those of today?

3. During his journey to speak with the king, Chief Capilano wore a blanket crafted to give spiritual protection. In 2009, the Squamish Nation celebrated the historic return of the blanket to Salish traditional territory at the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre. Where should an important artifact like Capilano’s blanket be kept?

What If...

Imagine that the king had convinced the Canadian government to acknowledge the grievances presented in the petition. How might this have changed the attitude of Canadians and the government toward Canada’s Aboriginal peoples?
Throughout this textbook, you will be presented with many points of view concerning issues in history, government, and geography. You are not expected to agree with these points of view, but to use them to come to your own conclusions. The following guidelines will help you in analyzing historical information.

**Dealing with Evidence**

There are two main categories of evidence: primary and secondary. Primary sources are created at the time of an event. Eyewitness accounts are the most obvious primary sources. These are often found in diaries, government documents, photographs, newspaper articles, and political cartoons. Secondary sources are created after the event, often describing or analyzing it. The perspective of time may provide a more balanced analysis in these sources.

**Understanding Bias**

When you interpret evidence, you cannot help but see it through personal biases. Similarly, primary and secondary sources carry the authors’ personal views. Having a bias is not necessarily wrong. It is important, however, to be aware of biases when you analyze evidence. These might include political, racial, religious, ethnic, gender, or economic biases.

**Reliability and Credibility**

When you read a document, it is important to determine how reliable it is as a source of information. Ask yourself questions such as:

- Who is the author? Was he or she close to the event?
- Why might the author have recorded the event?
- What were the author’s information sources?
- What are the author’s biases or points of view?
- What was the purpose of the document, and who was the intended audience?

Photographs should also be examined closely when they are used as a historical piece of information. The reader should ask: Who took the photograph? How was the photograph to be used? Sources of information must also be credible, that is, they must be accurate and record the truth. One way to determine the accuracy of a source is to see whether the information is supported by other sources. The following sources offer information about immigrants to Canada in the years before the First World War.

**Source 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>% of Total Immigration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>150 542</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>139 009</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>18 623</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>17 420</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>16 601</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>9 945</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>7 445</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>7 387</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>4 938</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>4 616</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25 903</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>402 429</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 1–10 Immigrants to Canada in 1913**

**Source 2**

A historian describes the attraction Canada had for farmers from Eastern Europe:

*In the mountain trenches of Galicia... the furrows of the strip farms ran to the very edges of houses. No wonder that... pamphlets (promoting Canada) were so successful. Across the oceans lay a promised land where 160 acres [65 hectares] of fertile soil could be had for the asking. Thus was initiated a great emigration of Poles and Ukrainians from Austria-Hungary.*

---Pierre Berton, The Promised Land---
Source 3

FIGURE 1–11 Galicians at an immigration shed in Québec City

Source 4

Conditions in the slums as described by J.S. Woodsworth, a minister and social activist, in a letter to a Winnipeg newspaper in 1913:

*Let me tell you of one little foreign girl. She lives in a room.... Her father has no work.... The place is incredibly filthy. The little girl has been ill for months—all that time living on the bed in which three or four persons must sleep and which also serves the purpose of table and chairs. For weeks this little girl has had an itch which has spread to the children of the surrounding rooms. She has torn the flesh on her arms and legs into great sores which have become poisoned.*

—J.S. Woodsworth

Applying the Skill

1. Classify each of the sources as primary or secondary. Explain your choices.

2. How reliable might the statistics in Source 1 be? What are some possible reasons for inaccuracies in population statistics?

3. Make a list of information about immigrants that can be found by examining Source 3. What questions would you ask to determine how reliable this photograph is as a historical source? Given the advances in digital technology, are photographs today more or less reliable than those taken 100 years ago? Explain.

4. How reliable is Source 4? What does it tell us about Winnipeg in 1913?

5. Use all four sources to create a picture of Canadian immigration at this time. List some additional sources that might help you to get a more complete picture of the subject.
While thousands of immigrants were settling farms on the Prairies, thousands more were moving to towns and cities. Some immigrant groups, particularly Jewish people, who were not allowed to own land in Europe, chose urban life, which was more familiar to them. For others, living in large communities without having to do back-breaking farm work was appealing. Canada's economy was in transition and the rise in manufacturing meant more job opportunities in urban centres. The population of Canada's western cities exploded in the early 1900s. For example, Winnipeg expanded from 42,340 people in 1901 to 136,035 people in 1911. It optimistically called itself the “Chicago of the North.”

The growing cities were filled with contrasts between the wealthy and the poor. The rich lived in luxury. They usually had servants; their houses were lit by electricity, warmed by central hot water heating, and had running water. Across town, the working class lived in shacks and overcrowded tenements. Low wages forced women and children to take jobs and work long hours to support their families. Restrictions on child labour were few and seldom enforced. Lack of clean water and proper sewers, together with pollution from neighbouring industries, caused widespread health problems. Pneumonia, diphtheria, tuberculosis, and typhoid were common in poorer districts. Still, people flocked to the cities, attracted by jobs as well as by cultural and social opportunities unavailable in rural Canada.

**Urbanization**

**KEY TERM**

*urbanization* the process by which an area changes from rural to urban

*Using Evidence* Find evidence in these photographs of the contrasts between rich and poor as described in the text. Which photograph do you think most people would associate with the time period? Why?
Innovations

Farther and Faster

While not exactly an information highway by today’s standards, the pace of change in communications in Canada in the years before the First World War seemed amazing. Radio messages could be sent over oceans, telephones connected people in cities, and Canadians were experimenting with new and faster ways to travel from place to place.

**The telephone** Invented in the 1870s, the telephone was increasingly popular in the early 1900s. People had to share lines and go through an operator to make a call.

**The Father of Radio** Quebec-born inventor Reginald Fessenden has been called Canada’s greatest forgotten inventor. He made the first broadcast of music and voice in 1906. Fessenden was later called the Father of Radio.

**Wireless communication** Italian-born Guglielmo Marconi invented the wireless telegraph, receiving the first wireless radio message sent across the ocean in 1901, at Signal Hill in Newfoundland.

**The bicycle craze** Bicycles were the new craze at the turn of the century, when one in 12 people owned a bicycle. Bicycles liberated women from restrictive clothing and from chaperones, even though they were often criticized for riding.

**Air travel** The Wright Brothers made the first airplane flight in the United States in 1903. In Canada, Alexander Graham Bell and Douglas McCurdy developed the Silver Dart, a gasoline-powered biplane.
An Economy Transformed

From its earliest days as a young British colony, Canada was known for its abundance of natural resources. The export of timber, wheat, and minerals was an important part of Canada’s economy. Canada’s export industries also benefited from cheap shipping costs across the Atlantic Ocean. As well, the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 created a shorter shipping route for Canadian products from the West Coast en route to Europe. Mining also contributed to the economic boom in the early 1900s. Prospectors and investors flocked to the Yukon and British Columbia after gold was discovered near the Klondike River in 1896.

The Manufacturing Industry

In the late 1800s, electric power was becoming more widely available with wood- and coal-burning steam engines. In the early 1900s, hydroelectric power stations were built to provide power to Canada’s factories. The arrival of electricity in factories was an enormous boost to Canada’s industrial growth. With electric power, bigger and better machines could be used to produce many more goods. This industrialization created more jobs in manufacturing. Much of the small manufacturing sector was tied to processing resources or providing tools and equipment for farms and homes. Few people could foresee that the rising popularity of automobiles would change the economy of southern Ontario and the way in which Canadians lived and worked.

With jobs came an increase in the demand for consumer goods. Canada Dry, Shredded Wheat, Palmolive soap, Heinz ketchup, and other brands became familiar to Canadian shoppers, along with the first five-cent chocolate bar. In 1913, more than 300 000 telephones were in use in Canada, and more and more automobiles were appearing on Canadian streets. By 1914, wireless radios were used on board many ships, following their much-publicized role in the rescue of passengers on the ill-fated RMS Titanic in 1912.
Corporate Giants

Corporations grew larger during this period of industrial expansion. Huge companies, such as Maple Leaf Milling, Massey-Harris, and Imperial Oil controlled much of industry. With little competition, employers could set high prices for the goods they produced and pay low wages to their workers. Some workers began to form trade unions to press for better pay, reduced hours of work, and better safety conditions. When employers refused to give in to union demands, some unions went on strike. Most employers opposed union demands. As a result, strikes could get violent and, in some cases, the police and military were called in to break up the protests. For example, in 1913, coal miners in Nanaimo were involved in a bitter strike that lasted more than two years. The miners were striking over unsafe working conditions and low pay, while the Western Fuel Company, to keep wages low, was trying to stop the workers from forming a union. Eventually, the Canadian government sent in troops to bring the situation under control. They arrested 39 people.

Financial speculation caused by the boom of the previous two decades saw many businesses expand quickly, but by 1910, a series of bank failures led to a collapse in the stock market. By 1914, Canada was in a recession after almost two decades of rapid growth. Industries cut back on production, and many workers became unemployed. On the Prairies, most farmers were planting a new, higher-yielding wheat, but the boom was over—the international demand for wheat was down.
Resources and the Environment

From the early days of exploration, Canada was seen as a land of plenty with an endless supply of natural resources, such as fur, water, timber, and minerals. For most Canadians in the early 1900s, protecting the environment was not the issue it is today. In 1914, however, residents of British Columbia saw how human interference could seriously damage an important natural resource. Workers for the Grand Trunk Railway were blasting a new railway line in the Fraser Canyon when an explosion caused a rockslide at Hell’s Gate Canyon. This rockslide had disastrous effects on the spawning beds of the sockeye salmon. The fallen rocks were massive and partially blocked the river. This blockage increased the river’s current, which prevented many salmon from swimming upstream to spawn. The rocks remained in place for about 30 years before a fish ladder was constructed to allow the spawning fish to swim up the rapids. But catches of Fraser River salmon would never again equal the pre-war numbers of 20 to 30 million fish.

The rockslide posed a particular hardship for the Stó:lo First Nation whose culture and livelihood were founded on fishing in the Fraser River. They worked for days to save the fish, carrying them one at a time over the fallen rocks. As stocks improved, commercial fishers were given a monopoly on fishing to help compensate for their financial losses. The Stó:lo, however, were never given back the allocations they had before the Hell’s Gate rockslide.

Incidents like this rockslide demonstrated that our actions could have lasting, negative effects on the environment. Since the first national park was established in Banff in 1885, the federal and provincial governments had been setting aside land to ensure some of Canada’s natural landscape was protected. By 1914, British Columbia had three national parks: Mount Revelstoke, Yoho, and Glacier. The B.C. government had already designated Strathcona and Mount Robson as provincial parks. Today, there are nearly 1000 provincial parks and protected areas in British Columbia.
The Athabasca Oil Sands

Canada’s landscape still holds a wealth of resources, but today people are more aware of the impact that exploiting these resources has on the environment. One current example is the Athabasca oil sands in northeastern Alberta. The oil sands hold the world’s largest reserve of crude bitumen, a sticky, tar-like form of petroleum. About 1.3 million barrels of oil are produced from the oil sands each day. One method used to extract the oil is open-pit mining, in which the oil sand is dug out of the ground and then mixed with hot water to separate the oil from the sand.

Extracting the oil has an environmental impact. Open-pit mining scars the land. Separating the oil from the sand requires large amounts of water, which is diverted from the Athabasca River. The water needs to be heated, and burning natural gas produces greenhouse gases. The Alberta government has programs in place to try to offset environmental effects. However, debate continues over how to best use this resource while minimizing the negative impact on the environment.

War and Change

When Laurier predicted the 20th century would be the century of Canadian development, he could not have predicted that Canada would play a role in a devastating war involving many countries throughout the world. He also could not have predicted the events and issues that have shaped Canada’s identity during the past century. In the following chapters, you will learn about these events. You can be the judge as to whether the 20th century really became “Canada’s century.”

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Describe the contrasts between rich and poor in cities during this period.
2. What technological changes were taking place in Canada prior to the First World War?
3. Explain why employers and unions had stormy relations in these years.
4. Imagine you are a reporter sent to cover the Hell’s Gate Canyon rockslide. Send a telegram to your newspaper describing the tragedy. Include a headline.
In the two decades before the First World War, Canada experienced remarkable changes. Wilfrid Laurier skilfully guided Canada through 15 years of prosperity, as well as political and social upheaval. Immigration transformed Canada into a truly transcontinental nation with growing cities and industries. Agriculture and manufacturing prospered. New technologies changed social and cultural habits. However, not all Canadians were part of the new positive outlook. Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, women, and workers struggled for their rights. By 1914, Canada was beginning to resemble the country we live in today.

CHAPTER REVIEW

CHAPTER FOCUS QUESTION
What defined Canada in the early 1900s, and what attitudes and expectations did Canadians have for the century ahead?

In the two decades before the First World War, Canada experienced remarkable changes. Wilfrid Laurier skilfully guided Canada through 15 years of prosperity, as well as political and social upheaval. Immigration transformed Canada into a truly transcontinental nation with growing cities and industries. Agriculture and manufacturing prospered. New technologies changed social and cultural habits. However, not all Canadians were part of the new positive outlook. Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, women, and workers struggled for their rights. By 1914, Canada was beginning to resemble the country we live in today.

1. Perspectives

a) People living in Canada in the two decades before the First World War had many different perspectives. Use the organizer to summarize how people in each of the groups might have viewed their place in Canada. Include one or more reasons why they would have had that perspective.

b) Many factors affect a person’s perspective. The boxed list includes those that generally have a significant influence on one’s perspective. Add any factors not included that you feel are relevant to your situation. Rank the factors in the chart according to the importance they have in determining your perspective (one being the greatest influence).

c) What effect do you think your background has on the way you view Canada today?

d) Your perspective will determine how you view the past as well as the future. Do you have a mostly positive or negative view of Canada’s future? Give reasons for your choice.

Factors Determining One’s Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religious or philosophical beliefs</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Family income/parents’ occupations</th>
<th>Place of residence</th>
<th>Places you have visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Vocabulary Focus

2. Review the Key Terms listed on page 5. Form small groups. Each member of the group selects five terms from the list and writes each term and its definition on an index card. Collect and shuffle all the cards. Each player selects one of the cards, reads the definition, and asks another member of the group to identify the term. Alternatively, each player reads the term and asks for the definition. Continue this process until all the cards have been used.

Knowledge and Understanding

3. From what you know of Canadian history before 1913 and from what you have learned in this chapter, how was the French-Canadian view of Canada different from the English-Canadian view? What issues were viewed differently by these two groups?
4. Use information in this chapter to discuss the interactions between the Canadian government and immigrants such as Chinese people.

5. Public hearings on the testimony of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples about their treatment in residential schools are underway. What should be the goal of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? Would you recommend the same process for other groups? Why or why not?

6. Historians look for turning points in history, marking the change from one era to another. Many see the First World War as the end of an era and the beginning of the modern age. What recent event would you choose as a turning point in Canadian or world history? Explain your choice.

Critical Thinking

7. Using the groups from the organizer, list both the positive and the negative impacts of the various changes that were taking place in Canada at the start of the 20th century. Write a paragraph stating which group gained the most and which group lost the most as a result of these changes.

8. Choose three new technologies from today that you think will have as great an impact as did those described in this chapter. Support your choices with at least two reasons.

9. Examine the following quotation from Olga Pawluk, who was 18 years old when her family moved to Canada from Ukraine. What does this document say about some immigrants’ perception of Canada at that time? How accurate was Olga in her description of Canada? Upon what was she basing her opinion?

   I didn’t want to go to Canada… I didn’t know where Canada was really, so I looked at the map. There were hardly any cities there. It looked so wild and isolated somehow and I felt that it would be very difficult to live there…. I felt I was going to a very wild place.

   —Quoted in Living Histories Series, 2000

Document Analysis

10. Read through the statistics and information about Canada in the table below. Select the four changes that you think were most significant to Canada’s emerging autonomy and explain your choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>8 million</td>
<td>33.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Anthem</td>
<td>God Save the King</td>
<td>O Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag</td>
<td>Union Jack</td>
<td>Maple Leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor General</td>
<td>Duke of Connaught (British)</td>
<td>Rt. Hon. Michaëlle Jean (Canadian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>British Foreign Office</td>
<td>Canadian Dept. of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Court of Appeal</td>
<td>Judicial Committee of the Privy Council</td>
<td>Supreme Court of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Commons</td>
<td>221 MPs (all male)</td>
<td>308 MPs (69 women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>133 Conservative</td>
<td>77 Liberal Party of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86 Liberal</td>
<td>49 Bloc Québécois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>87 Senators (all male)</td>
<td>105 Senators (35 women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Voters</td>
<td>1 820 742</td>
<td>23 677 639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>Robert Borden, Conservative</td>
<td>Stephen Harper, Conservative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 1–7 Canada’s population and government in 1914 and 2009