Canada 1900-1914 Nationalism, International Events, French / English Relations

Canadian History 1201
Topic 1.4
October 2013
During Laurier’s tenure, a sense of Canadian identity was emerging.

Canada had now expanded to 9 provinces, with the inclusion of recent immigrants adding to the mix.

Some citizens still identified strongly with Britain, while others (namely French Canadians), felt they should be more independent of Britain.
While still only a relatively young country, Canada faced many challenges during Laurier’s time in office.

In addition to shedding light on problems between French-English Canada, these challenges also impacted Canadian – British and Canadian - USA relations on the international scene.
Overview

- **Manitoba Schools Question** (negatively impacted French-English relations)

- **Boer War & the Naval Crisis** (showed different perspectives of French / English Canada & our relationship in the British Empire)

- **Alaska Boundary Dispute** (Caused many Canadians to question our British connection)

- **Reciprocity with the USA** (Led to Laurier’s defeat & idea of USA annexing Canada)
1. The Manitoba Schools Question
When Manitoba joined Confederation in 1870, its population was divided almost equally between French-speaking Catholics and English-speaking Protestants.

Two provincially funded school systems appeared at this time — one French Roman Catholic & the other English Protestant.
Within 20 yrs, however, there was a major influx of English-speaking Protestants into Manitoba causing the French there to become a minority.

In 1890, the provincial government passed the Manitoba Schools Act which replaced the two school systems with an English-speaking one.

A non-denominational school system
While English – Canadians in Manitoba supported this, French-Canadians felt that the removal of schools teaching their language and cultural values was extremely unfair.

They French population there eventually took the provincial government to court to challenge the authority of the Manitoba School Act.
Upon coming to power in 1896, Laurier devised a compromise to settle the issue.

While there would be no more publicly-funded Roman Catholic schools, Roman Catholic instruction would be provided at the end of the school day.

French language instruction would be provided for classes with more than 10 French students.

Catholic teachers could be employed in schools with forty or more Catholic children.
Manitoba Schools Question: Aftermath

- This compromise was **accepted** by the majority of Manitobans, and contributed to the general favour of Laurier.
- As French was no longer an official language, its use **declined** greatly & was eventually **removed** from instruction by 1916.
- The event is still remembered as one of the most important fights, and losses, for French-language rights in Canada.
2. Canada & Britain
1896-1911
Canada's relationship with the mother country was a key issue during Laurier's tenure.

In 1899, young Canadian men marched off to war in South Africa in aid of Britain.

A few years later, Britain came calling again for assistance prompting the creation of the Canadian navy.

Both of these issues also illustrated problems between French & English Canadians.
Canada’s relationship with Britain

- At the beginning of the 20th century, Great Britain controlled the largest empire in the world ruled by Queen Victoria.
At the beginning of the 20th century, Canada was a Dominion in the British Empire.

- Canada controlled internal affairs.
- Britain controlled defence and external affairs.

Great Britain controlled the largest empire in the world & was one of the world’s most powerful countries.
http://www.cbc.ca/history/SECTIONSE1EP11CH2LE.html
Canada’s relationship with Britain

- Within Canada at this time, most anglophones (English speaking Canadians) proud of British heritage, wanted to maintain strong ties to Britain.
- The francophones (French speaking Canadians), on the other hand, wanted fewer ties to Britain and more focus placed on Canadian nationalism (pride in one’s country).
• Canada’s relationship with Britain in the early 20th century caused conflicts between Francophones and Anglophones.

• The two main issues which caused this division included:
  • The South African (Boer) War
  • The Naval Crisis
The South African (Boer) War

- South Africa was a British colony
- Colony: a region that is “owned” by a foreign power
The Transvaal and Orange Free State were controlled by “Boers” (white Africans of Dutch descent)

When gold was discovered there, the British tried to take over the two Boer states
In 1899 the Boers declared war on Great Britain in protest of the number of British settlers that were moving into South Africa. The Boers were particularly concerned about those that were moving into lands that held gold & diamonds. When the Boers declared war, Britain reacted swiftly and sent troops.
1899-1902

- It also called on the other members of the Commonwealth to do likewise as a show of solidarity in times of trouble.
- As a part of the empire, Britain asked Canada to contribute
Laurier’s Dilemma

- When war broke out in October 1899, English & French Canadians were divided over Canada’s role.
  - English Canadians wanted to support Britain; not sending troops would anger them.
  - French Canadians wanted distance from Britain; sending troops would anger them.
Laurier’s Compromise

- Concerned with maintaining national stability & political popularity, Laurier developed a compromise to appease both English & French.
  - To please the French, Laurier officially refused the request for sending the troops of our regular army.
  - To please the British, Laurier allowed for volunteers to serve in the British army.
Laurier’s Compromise

- In addition, Canada would equip & transport the volunteer soldiers to South Africa where the British would take care of their expenses upon arrival

- This compromise pleased no one
Laurier’s Compromise

- The anglophones who wanted to help Britain & support the Empire, were upset that Laurier was not doing more for Britain.

- The francophones had little enthusiasm for the war & wanted all Canadians, French & English speaking alike, to work together to build a strong Canada, independent of the British Empire.
Fighting & Results

- Between 1899-1902, more than 7,000 Canadians, including 12 women nurses, served overseas.
- After launching guerilla warfare against the British, the Boers were denied food, water and shelter.
- The British also burned Boer houses & farms, and moved civilians to internment camps, where thousands died from disease.
- It was this controversial strategy that eventually defeated the Boers.
- Britain ended up controlling the Transvaal and Orange Free State.
French-English Relations and the Boer War

- English Canadians felt wave of patriotism and were disappointed by Laurier’s “lukewarm” reaction
- French Canadians felt opposed to the war & wanted all Canadians to focus on Canada

The Boer War emphasized French-English divisions when it came to imperial ties
Who were the Boers?

A) Descendants of Dutch colonists in South Africa
B) Aboriginal warriors
C) Arab traders
D) German guerrillas
Why did the Boers declare war on Britain?

A) Britain had restricted trade in Africa.
B) Britain had been forcing them to pay duty.
C) British settlers were moving into areas where gold and diamonds had been discovered.
D) British troops had pushed into the Sahara desert.
How did Laurier compromise between French Canadians who did want to become involved in the Boer War and English Canadians who wanted to directly support England?

A ) He agreed to put the matter to a public vote
B ) He raised the money needed in English Canada only.
C ) He sent volunteers only.
D ) He allowed the provinces to make the decision.
What was it about the Boer War that caused French Canadians not to want to get involved?

- A) The war was imperialistic in nature
- B) The Boers had traditional ties with France
- C) They were afraid of retaliation from the United States.
- D) French Canadians did not believe in going to war for any reason.
Why did Britain ask Canada to send soldiers to the Boer War?

A ) Most of Britain's military was tied up in Europe.
B ) Britain was worried about the number of Boer warriors.
C ) Britain could not afford to send more support.
D ) Britain wanted to show that the British Commonwealth stood together in times of war.
How many soldiers did Canada equip and transport initially?

- A ) 500
- B ) 1000
- C ) 1500
- D ) 2000
• How many soldiers did Canada send eventually to South Africa?

• A ) 5600
• B ) 7200
• C ) 12100
• D ) 18400
2. The Naval Crisis

- At the turn of the century, Canada had no naval presence and relied upon the Royal Navy for the protection of its coastline, enforcement of national boundaries and the performance of specific missions.
2. The Naval Crisis

- In 1910, there was another bitter division between English & French Canadians surrounding our connection with Great Britain.

- This issue centered on the Laurier’s plan to play a greater role within the British Empire by developing a navy for Canada.
Britain vs. Germany

- By 1909, tensions were high between Britain & Germany as they were engaged in a **naval arms race** for command of the sea
- Britain had the world’s largest navy but the Germans were building ships at an alarming rate that threatened British dominance
- Fearing to falling behind, Britain turned to the Empire & Canada for help by funding the Royal Navy
• Since Canada’s defense depended on Britain, Laurier felt obliged to help

• As in the case of South African War, it brought divisions between French & English Canada which Laurier had to deal with

• His compromise this time was the Naval Service Bill
• Canada would not contribute to the British navy

• Instead, Laurier proposed that Canada would create its own navy to protect our coasts thereby easing the burden on the British

• In time of war, the Canadian navy would be placed under British command
Laurier ordered 11 ships to be built & naval stations to be built in both B.C. & Nova Scotia

A lot of opposition to Laurier’s bill from both English & French Canadians
Laurier's new navy found little support in the country. English Canada accused him of skimping on the plan and creating a "tin pot navy" that would be out-of-date before it was launched. And French Canada saw it as another example of the Dominion bowing to its imperial mother country.
**French Reaction**

- Opposed the Bill because it meant Canada would get dragged into British wars

**English reaction**

- Opposed the Bill because it showed very limited support for their beloved Britain
- Opposition dubbed it “tin pot navy” that would be out-of-date before it was launched
Results

- The Naval Service Bill created political turmoil & was one of the reasons which contributed to Laurier’s defeat in the 1911 federal election which brought the Conservatives to power in Canada.

Sigh... You know, you’re damned if you do, damned if you don’t...
These show 2 examples of how Canada’s relationship with Britain caused problems between English and French Canadians (the Boer War and Naval Issue)
Why did Britain want Canada's help in increasing its navy in 1909?

A ) It was in a naval arms race with Germany.

B ) Britain was unable to continue naval protection of Canada

C ) Britain did not have the steel necessary to construct more ships.

D ) Canada owed Britain great amounts of money and this was the only way Britain would get it back.
What did Laurier do instead of helping build more ships for the British navy?

A) Introduced the Naval Service Bill which would give Canada its own navy.
B) Offered support for its merchant marine.
C) Offered to repay its debt.
D) Offered to supply Britain with iron ore.
3. Canada’s relationship with the USA
Overview

• Relations were tense at the beginning of the 20th century due to:
  
  • **Unresolved disputes** over fishing and sealing rights
  
  • Fear of American **imperialism**: domination of one country over another
  
  • The US believed in “**manifest destiny**”: American belief that it was their destiny to take over the whole North American continent
Despite these tensions, there were two main events which shaped Canada – USA relations during Laurier’s rule:

- Alaska Boundary Dispute
- Reciprocity
Alaska Boundary Dispute

- When the **USA** bought Alaska from **Russia** in 1867, the boundary between Canada and Alaska had been left unclear.
- The deal included “the panhandle”, the strip of coastline extending south from Alaska as far as Prince of Wales Island off the BC Coast.
Initially, the ‘panhandle’ boundary here was not an issue. This changed in 1898 when gold was discovered in the Yukon & thousands of miners poured into the area.
During the gold rush to this region in 1898, ownership of the land became very important.

Gold seekers to the region needed outfits & supplies and both Canadian & American merchants wanted to take advantage of the new business.
Both countries claimed different boundaries which included the ports of Skagway, Dyea, & Juneau. The Canadians argued that the boundary should be measured from the mountains nearest to the ocean, which would give Canada access to the Pacific by deep inlets. This would allow for Yukon gold to be shipped out & supplies brought into the area without passing through American ports.
Alaska Boundary Dispute

- Both claimed different boundaries
- Together with the British they agreed to a tribunal of impartial jurists in 1903
- *tribunal—a court which makes a judgement based on facts presented
The tribunal:

- Made up of 6 representatives:
  - 3 Americans who supported the American case
  - 2 Canadians
  - 1 British...Lord Alverstone (Britain wanted to gain the US as an ally at the time)

Guess who the final agreement favoured...?
The Aftermath

• Britain was facing growing problems with Germany in Europe & knew that U.S. Support would be needed if war ever occurred.

• Britain was not willing to lose American friendship at this time so it sided with the Americans over Canada in this dispute

• Many Canadians felt bitter & that Britain had let them down
Impact of the Dispute

- Canadians became suspicious of American expansionism (-)

- Canadians felt betrayed by Britain for supporting the Americans (-)

- Organizations such as the International Joint Commission soon formed to handle such disagreements in the future (+)
2. The Reciprocity Debate

- **Reciprocity**—an agreement between two countries to trade certain products without tariffs (no taxes)

- **Tariffs**—taxes placed on foreign goods imported to a country

Countries place tariffs on foreign goods to protect their own industries by keeping costs lower on domestic products.
2. The Reciprocity Debate

- In 1911, Laurier worked out a reciprocity agreement with the USA
- Canadian farm, forest, fishery, & mining products would enter the US tariff free
- In return, taxes on American manufactured products entering our country would be lowered
- This agreement proved to be the main issue in the 1911 federal election
Reciprocity

- Laurier agreed to reciprocity (special trade privileges) for natural resource products like lumber.
- The move, he calculated, would please farmers, but not threaten Canadian business leaders who opposed free trade of manufactured goods.
Canada had placed tariffs on American goods since 1878

Laurier wanted reciprocity with the US and made it an election issue in 1911
Reciprocity Supporters

- The US also supported reciprocity
- Farmers in Ontario and West supported it as high tariffs were causing high prices for farm products & materials
Reciprocity Opponents

- The compromise failed.
- Business leaders, manufacturers, & bankers of both parties were afraid that cheaper American goods in Canada would hurt Canadian industries & put them out of business.
- Canadian nationalists argued that our products should stay in our country & not shipped across the border.
- Canadian railway builders feared their business would be ruined if trade went from East – West across Canada to North – South between Canada & the USA.
Reciprocity Opponents

- The agreement also raised old fears among some Canadians of economic and finally political absorption by the United States.
PHOTO: Captioned "Helping Sam", this anti-reciprocity cartoon, published shortly before the 1911 election, portrays Laurier reigning in Canadian resources to the benefit of the Americans. "Sir Wilfrid-'Whoa now; Sam wants to milk you.'"

The Province
“Uncle Sam: ‘I’ll get that Canadian raw material if I have to wreck the whole damned wall!’” [ca. 1911]
Result and Impact

- Laurier lost the election to Robert Borden and the Conservatives
- Canada and the US **did not** adopt reciprocity
- Lack of support for free trade further indicated Canadians’ suspicions of their southern neighbour

*This ended the “Laurier era”*
THE GOVERNMENT GOES DOWN TO DEFEAT

Conservatives Win; Ontario is Swept

Seven Members of the Cabinet Are Among the Beaten.

Quebec Showed Faith in Laurier.


RESULT BY PROVINCES.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Conservatives</th>
<th>Nationalists</th>
<th>Liberals</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
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Thunder Bay and Rainy River—Re-nominated October 3, polling October 23.

The Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canada's Grand Old Man, who goes out of office in his seventeenth year, on a question of principle.

The Globe, September 22, 1911.
Some free trade deals to date


Some talks underway:
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- Morocco
- Korea
- Singapore
- India (economic partnership)
- European Union
- Central America 4
- Dominican Republic
- Caribbean Community
- Andean Community Centres
- Free Trade Area of the Americas

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA): came into force Oct. 12, 1987 and was superseded by NAFTA

Canada-Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement: signed Nov. 1, 2002

Canada-Panama Free Trade Agreement: signed May 14, 2010

Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement: signed Nov. 21, 2008

Canada-Peru Free Trade Agreement: Aug. 1, 2009

Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement: July 5, 1997

Canada-European Free Trade Association: July 1, 2009

Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement: Jan. 1, 1997

Canada-Jordan Free Trade Agreement: June 28, 2009

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

ANTHONY GREEN/QMI AGENCY