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(2001)

CANADA A COUNTRY DIVIDED

*The Times of London and Canada
1908-1922*

Un document produit en version numérique par Jean-Marie Tremblay, bénévole,
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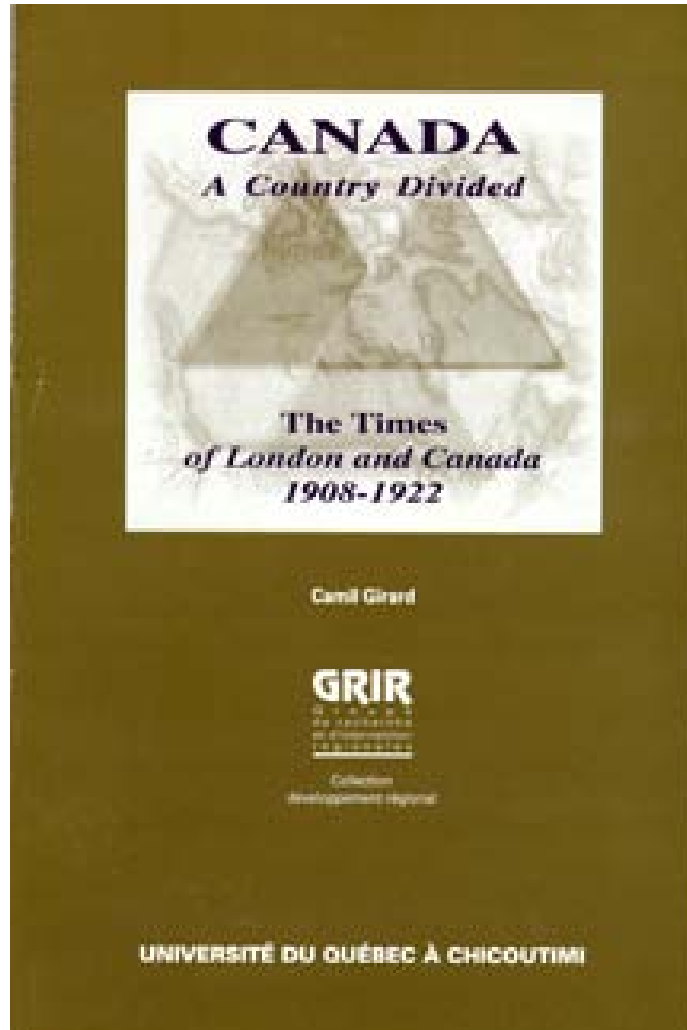
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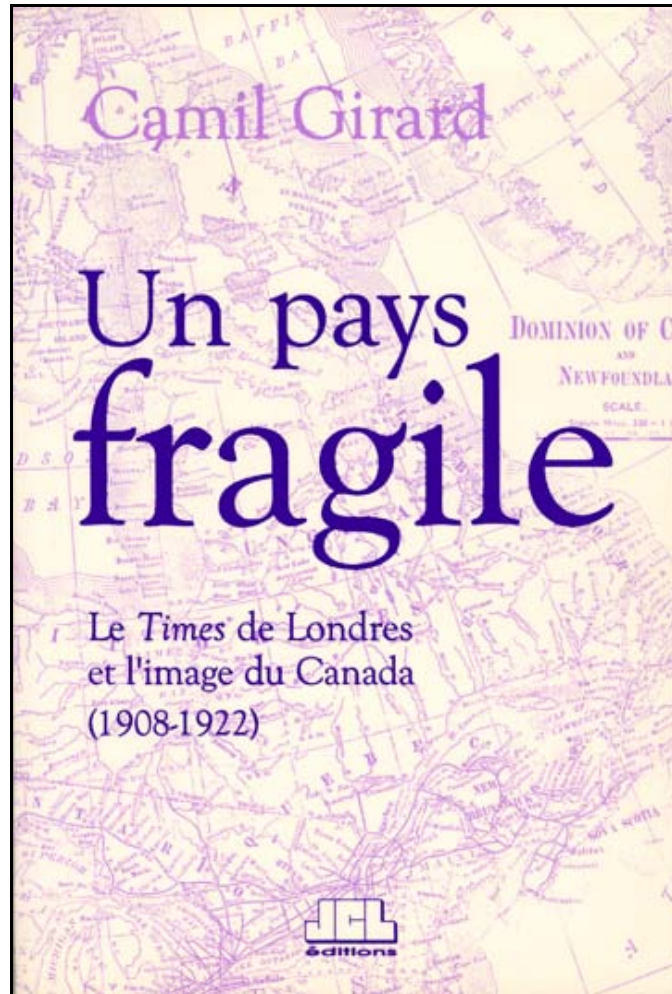
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[7]

To Wendy
and Daniel

[9]

Table of contents

[TOC](#)

[List of tables](#)

[List of illustrations](#)

[Back cover](#)

[Preface](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Introduction](#)

- a) [Bases for analysis](#)
- b) [Elements of research](#)
- c) [Sources](#)
- d) [The Importance accorded to Canada by *The Times*](#)

[Chapter I](#). Canada at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

- 1.1. [The economy](#)
- 1.2. [Population](#)
- 1.3. [Politics](#)

[Chapter 2](#). The *Times* and Canada, 1908-1914: preparation for war

- 2.1. [The Times strengthens its ties with Canada](#)
- 2.2. [Politics](#)
 - 2.2.1. [Foreign Policy](#)
 - 2.2.2. [Domestic Policy](#)
- 2.3. [The economy](#)
 - 2.3.1. [Receprocity](#)
 - 2.3.2. [American Imperialism](#)
 - 2.3.3. [The Railways](#)
 - 2.3.4. [Reasons for protecting industry: the forestry sector and the wool industry](#)
 - 2.3.5. [Canadian Banks](#)
 - 2.3.6. [The Beginning of the Economic Crisis](#)

2.4. [Society](#)

2.4.1. [Immigration](#)

2.4.2. [The French-Canadians](#)

2.4.3. [Labour](#)

[Chapter 3. The War of 1914-1918: Unity and Adversity](#)

3.1. [The Function and Limits of the Press in Time of War](#)

3.2. [Foreign Policy: Canada's Status in the Empire \(1914-1918\)](#)

3.3. [Domestic Affairs](#)

3.3.1. [A Fragile Consensus in Canada \(1914-1918\)](#)

3.3.2. [The Crisis \(1917\)](#)

3.3.3. [The Impossible Rupture \(1918\)](#)

[Chapter 4. The Return to Peace \(1919-1922\)](#)

4.1. [The Times and Canada \(1919-1922\)](#)

4.2. [Politics](#)

4.2.1. [External politics: Canada acquires autonomy](#)

4.2.2. [Domestic Politics: National Unity and the end of the Conservatives](#)

4.3. [The economy](#)

4.3.1. [A Balance Sheet and Perspectives for the Future](#)

4.3.2. [The Railways](#)

4.3.3. [The Pulp and Paper Industry](#)

4.4. [Society](#)

4.4.1. [The Revolt of the Working Class](#)

4.4.2. [Immigration](#)

4.4.3. [Reconciliation of French and English Canadians](#)

General conclusion

- a) [A general world-view](#)
- b) [The Times, an imperialist and conservative newspaper](#)
- c) [Sir John Willison](#)
- d) [The British Empire and Canada: an Analysis based on The Times, 1908-1922](#)

- d-1) External affairs: Acquisition of independent status on the international scene
- d-2) Internal politics: One state or two nations?
- d-3) The Economy: A choice for development
- d-4) Society: Social groups with unequal powers

Bibliography

Appendixes

- [Appendix I.](#) *Times* Correspondants in Canada
- [Appendix II.](#) Prices and Circulation of the *Times* (1785 to 1922)

Index

[229]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

LIST OF TABLES

[TOC](#)

Introduction

- [Table I.](#) The London Times 1908-1922. Importance accorded by paper to Canada, Australia and India

Chapter I

- [Table I.](#) Proportion of exports from Canada to the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries (selected years 1901-1926)
- [Table II.](#) Proportion of Canadian imports to the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries (selected years 1901-1926)
- [Table III.](#) Proportion of exports and imports with the United Kingdom and the United States, by type of merchandise (1914-1917)
- [Table IV.](#) Estimates of Foreign capital invested in Canada 1901-1926 (selected years)
- [Table V.](#) Indexed prices of exports and imports from 1913 to 1922 and 1926 (1913 = 100)
- [Table VI.](#) Cost of living index (1913 to 1922, 1926) (1935 to 1939 = 100)

- [Table VII.](#) General indexed of average wages in principal industries (1901-1926, (selected years) 1949 = 100
- [Table VIII.](#) Total population and urban and rural population of Canada 1901-1931 (%)
- [Table IX.](#) Immigrants of British origin and immigrants from the United States (selected years 1901-1926)
- [Table X.](#) Population by Province (%) 1901-1931
- [Table XI.](#) Origin of the Canadian population 1901-1931 (%)
- [Table XII.](#) Governments in power, Canada and England 1908-1922)
- [Table XIII.](#) Results of Canadian Federal Elections 1908-1921)

Chapter 2

- [Table I.](#) Growth of main track by 10 year periods (1863-1913)
- [Table II.](#) Railway completed and under construction by province (Canada, 1913)

List of illustrations

[TOC](#)

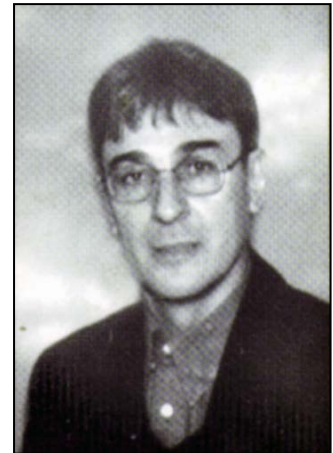
- [Figure 1.](#) Sir John Willison, Chief Times correspondent in Canada from 1910 to 1927 (National Archives of Canada) [45]
- [Figure 2.](#) Sir Wilfrid Laurier at a political rally in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. During the 1911 campaign. (National Archives of Canada) [53]
- [Figure 3.](#) War in the trenches (National Archives of Canada) [95]
- [Figure 4.](#) Anti-German propaganda approved by the censor (Private archives) (Postcard: The tale of the tanks) [97]
- [Figure 5.](#) Soldiers of the 22nd Battalion perform a soldier's commonest task: waiting. (National Archives of Canada) [102]
- [Figure 6.](#) Founder of *Le Devoir* newspaper, Henri Bourassa, 1912. (National Archives of Canada) [108]
- [Figure 7.](#) Newspaper act: *Le Soleil*, Quebec, Tuesday 2 avril 1918. *Le Devoir*, Montreal, Tuesday, 2 avril 1918 [144]
- [Figure 8.](#) The 163rd Battalion was one of the few successful recruiting efforts in Quebec after 1914. [145]
- [Figure 9.](#) A hard-headed argument for Quebeckers to buy War Saving Stamps. [146]
- [Figure 10.](#) Election propaganda in 1917 was as unrestrained as in any campaign in Canadian history. [147]
- [Figure 11.](#) A poster from the Canada Food Board, 1918. [148]
- [Figure 12.](#) David Lloyd George. (National Archives of Canada) [149]
- [Figure 13.](#) William Lyon Mackenzie King leader of the Canadian Liberal party, 1919. (National Archives of Canada) [150]
- [Figure 14.](#) Lord Northcliffe, owner of The London Times, 1908-1922. (Lord Northcliffe, At the War) [151]
- [Figure 15.](#) Crowds celebrating the Armistice in Vancouver on November 9. [153]
- [Figure 16.](#) Sir Wilfrid Laurier (O.D. Skelton, The Days of Sir Wilfrid Laurier Part VIII of Chronicles of Canada, Toronto, 1916. [159]
- [Figure 17.](#) A last Victory Loan was designed to pay the cost of soldiers's re-establishment. (National Archives of Canada) [182]
- [Figure 18.](#) Returned men, out of work during the 1921 depression. (Merton, 1989.) [191]

CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.

Back Cover

[TOC](#)

"... it is essential to point out the originality of the author's bases for study. With the help of archival documents, correspondence and administrative reports, Mr. Girard tackled the analysis of a newspaper. The paper was none other than the indestructible, some may say uncompromising, *Times* of London, the paper which, as its champion and propagandist, best personified British 'imperialism. The newspaper was in a class by itself: it was founded at the end of the eighteenth century and became famous in the following century for its defence of British expansionism. It was most influential among the ruling class but was barely read by a public which preferred popular publications." (Claude Fohlen : Preface)



Camil Girard has a doctorate in Contemporary History from the Sorbonne. He has taught at the *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi* since 1977. He also taught at the *Université du Québec à Rimouski* from 1982-1983. From 1986 until 1990, Mr. Girard worked for the *Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture* (IQRC) which led to the publication of *L'Histoire du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean*. In

1993, he contributed to the work of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Mr. Girard has been guest professor at the *Institut national de recherche scientifique* (Culture et Société) since 1995.

[13]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

PREFACE

[TOC](#)

This work which Camil Girard offers to the public is the result of a doctoral thesis defended at the Sorbonne (Université de Paris I). It is important that this study is now available to readers who are interested in the image of Canada abroad, in particular in Great Britain, the heart of the British Empire.

In this respect, it is essential to point out the originality of the author's bases for study. With the help of archival documents, correspondence and administrative reports, Mr. Girard tackled the analysis of a newspaper. The paper was none other than the indestructible, some may say uncompromising, *Times* of London, the paper which, as its champion and propagandist, best personified British imperialism. The newspaper was in a class by itself: it was founded at the end of the eighteenth century and became famous in the following century for its defense of British expansion. It was most influential among the ruling class but was barely read by a public which preferred popular publications.

As numerous studies and publications in this field have demonstrated during the last decades, the analysis of newspaper material can be of extreme interest to the historian. The newspaper plays a double ro-

le. It is firstly the reflection of a specific mentality, of a specific mood, of specific opinions and even of specific prejudices. Thus the newspaper is better able than any other document to translate the tendencies, the perceptions, the reactions and even the subconscious of a nation's citizens at any given moment. The newspaper also plays a second role, the exact opposite of the first, which consists of forming, influencing and leading public opinion, of giving credence to specific ideas in order to make them palatable to a less-than-receptive or even hostile public.

There are numerous examples of the deforming role of the press, or to use the current expression, of the disinformation of opinion, often with unexpected consequences. One has only to recall the grand exploitation the Hearst syndicated press made of the 1898 Havana Bay explosion of the battleship *Maine* which led the United States into "a splendid little war" against Spain.

Because *The Times* was an elitist newspaper, the risk of deformation was limited but it was present nevertheless, owing to the fact that the editor-in-chief was a protégé of Lord Milner, whose imperialist beliefs were well-known. We must congratulate Camil Girard for having completed his study with circumspection and a critical view of his sources. He has not been led into controversy with regards to imperialism but has preferred to centre his analysis on two points which are essential to Canada and Canadians - language and conscription.

French-Canadians who constituted almost 30% of the Canadian population struggled to maintain and impose language rights in those provinces where they formed the minority, Ontario and Manitoba. It was an uphill battle due to the massive anglophone and allophone immigration in the West. The British government, whose opinions were often reflected in *The Times*, adopted a cautious attitude. English was most definitely the language of the Empire, which did not exclude the use of other languages such as Afrikaans in South Africa, but the British North America Act of 1867 did not authorize the use of French (outside Quebec) except in Parliament. In other words, it was not yet time for official bilingualism, which would be imposed only a half-century later. *The Times* lagged behind certain leading Canadian groups on this question.

Conscription was the second burning issue. Understandably, French-Canadians did not flock to recruiting offices, for of what importance was the defense of an empire to which they did not seem to belong? Concerning this question, Camil Girard carefully observes the divergences between the Canadian correspondant and the London editors. The latter had a more conciliatory attitude towards francophones since conscription had not been adopted in all the dominions, and it was essential in the face of a common enemy to emphasize imperial unity and not stir up tension.

These two examples clearly demonstrate the care, skill and *esprit critique* of Mr. Girard's intellectual process. His work represents an important contribution to the history of both French Canada and Canada and to the place of these elements in the British Empire during a critical period. It must not be forgotten that following its participation in the First World War, Canada became aware of its identity as an autonomous nation in the British Empire, was admitted to the League of Nations and assumed control of its own destiny. Mr. Girard's work is indispensable; it allows a better understanding of the background for this metamorphosis which allowed Canada to take its place among the leading nations.

Claude Fohlen,

Professor of North American History at the Sorbonne (Paris I)

[15]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

FOREWORD

[TOC](#)

I wish to thank all those who have helped in the preparation of this book.

I am most grateful to Professors Claude Fohlen, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle and Marcel Merle, members of the Université de Paris I - Panthéon - Sorbonne.

Our sincere gratitude also to Jacques Portes (Paris 1), for his invaluable advice.

Thank you to Carman Miller, Director of Canadian History at McGill University and Richard Collins, professor at the University of London, both of whom offered helpful suggestions for the English translation.

We are also indebted to Gordon Phillips, director of *The Times* Archives in London; to Victorin Chabot of the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa; to Louis Côté of les Archives nationales du Québec in Chicoutimi; to Camille Simard from the Computer Sciences Department of l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi.

Lastly, thank you to two women who contributed to the advancement of my work, Wendy and Emma.

Camil Girard, GRH

Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

[17]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

INTRODUCTION

a) Bases for analysis

TOC

An analysis of the British Empire and Canada based on a publication such as *The Times* of London may lead the reader to believe that the important subject is the English perception of Canada. That is the case but this study is more complex. Starting in 1910, *The Times* made a policy of leaving Canadian affairs in the hands of Canadian journalists. Consequently the image of Canada reflected in the newspaper was what Canadians themselves promoted. Of course these correspondents were selected on the basis of specific criteria, one of which was their ability to defend the interests of the British Empire in North America. There was also the English conception of Canada, their North American Dominion, both as they perceived it and as they wished it to be. In this context, one may question the importance accorded to French Canada and Quebec and the position of the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in relation to the rest of the country.

Canada emerges from the pages of *The Times* as a political, economic and social reality. In the realm of politics, more attention was focused on the federal government than on the provincial legislatures. As for the economy, the paper concentrated on potential development and investment within the country. Notions of a political economy

appeared: politicians were responsible for creating favourable conditions for development, which was in turn ensured by the business sector. Social upheavals such as strikes were seen as an imbalance able to affect both politics and the economy. This point of view determined the paper's treatment of social issues.

Lastly it is important to emphasize that it is the image of English Canada which dominated the pages of *The Times*. It is time to analyze and understand how English Canadians perceived both themselves and French Canadians if we wish to understand our respective interpretations of history and explain certain prejudices that prevail in the two founding communities.

The period in question (1908 - 1922) is rich for historical research. At this time Canada enjoyed unprecedented economic development and acquired the status of nationhood, independent of the Mother country. However the conjuncture of war had disastrous effects: English and French Canadians were deeply divided on the question of participation in a European conflict. The labour situation worsened after the war as worker disputes escalated. Canada had to rebuild its national unity.

[18]

In England British imperialist ideology was revived owing to the preparations for war. It was essential that the British present a united imperial front in time of war. However the conflict had serious repercussions on the relationships between the Mother country and its Dominions.

This study has certain parameters. The ideological aspect of Canadian history is analyzed through a study of opinion in the the written press. Ideology implies that certain interest groups, by the mediation of the press, describe, interpret, justify or alter reality in order to orient public opinion in a given direction. The more a group's prerogatives are implicated by events which mirror structural or conjunctural change, the more the ideology of the group in question asserts itself. ¹

In this respect, the First World War - its preparation, course of the conflict and the return to peace - constitutes a period favourable to the

¹ Georges Gurvitch, *La Sociologie de Marx, la vocation actuelle de la sociologie*, vol. II, P.U.F., Paris, 1963, pp. 285-288.

development of various ideologies. Through ideology it is possible to enter the rich and complex world of cultures, in this case those of Canada.²

In this research, study goes beyond the official declarations of the paper itself. Unpublished documents from *The Times* archives in London have been consulted in an effort to grasp the true preoccupations of the actors and the institutions with which they are associated. This measure allows the journalist to be seen as an integral part of the various systems.³ Several factors exert an influence on the individual - his personal choices, his role and the society of which he is both a member and a representative.

We also wish to understand better the workings of the press. This medium informs and analyzes, offers opinions and entertains. It may influence or be influenced. In summary, the press is both active and passive. It participates in history while reflecting it.⁴ This thesis is intended to be a case study.

As certain images of Canada become apparent, it is possible to distinguish an ideology. Ultimately, one must search for ideology "*au point de jonction de l'individuel et du collectif, du temps long et du quotidien, de [19] l'inconscient et de l'intentionnel, du structurel et du conjoncturel, du marginal et du général,*" as put forward by Jacques Le Goff.⁵ This is the task we hope to accomplish in this study.

² Fernand Dumont considers that ideological rationalisation is the principal means of access to the implicit universe of cultures. Fernand Dumont, "Notes sur l'analyse des idéologies", *Recherches sociographiques*, Québec, vol. IV, no 2, May - August 1963, p. 157. See also Fernand Dumont, *Les idéologies*, P.U.F., Paris, 1974.

³ Alain Touraine, *Production de la société*, Edition Seuil, Paris, 1973, p. 524.

⁴ On the role of the press, see Pierre Albert, *La Presse*, Que sais-je, 1976, no. 414 and Jean Stoetzel, *Etudes de Presse*, Paris, 1951.

⁵ Jacques Le Goff, director, *La Nouvelle Histoire*, Retz, C.E.P.L., Paris, 1978, p. 388.

b) Elements of research

TOC

Two repertoires are available with the newspaper articles filed in alphabetical order: *The Palmer's Index to the Times* and *The Official Index to the Times*. The latter is by far superior. This official *Times* repertory contains several hundred pages of subjects directly or indirectly related to Canada during the period under scrutiny (1908-1922). Research was carried out with the help of this source.

The impressive number of articles written about Canada proved to be an obstacle. The official index of *The Times*, under the heading "Canada", from 1908 to 1922, contains 249 pages. With the addition of related subjects such as the Great War, the British Empire, the economy, elections and editorials, to name but a few, there is a grand total of some 500 pages which pertain directly or indirectly to Canada.

It became necessary to develop a method which would respect certain basic principles of random sampling while avoiding the loss of articles such as editorials and analyses of private papers, which are essential to a study of the press.

Sample selections were made at two or three month intervals. If the subject generated material encompassing several columns or pages, the sample was retained. However all editorials were systematically selected. Moreover, on occasions when analyses or commentaries were found dealing with events that seemed to preoccupy the newspaper, certain articles were kept (imperial conferences, elections, the declaration of war, Canadian prime ministers' visits to England, etc.).

If one estimates that each page of the index contains 70 entries, there is a maximum of 35,000 documents concerning Canada. This total is obtained assuming that important articles are filed under several headings. Our final sampling allowed consultation of more than 4,000 articles.

Three distinct phases emerge in the fifteen-year period under study. While political opposition was evident in the pre-war years (1908-1914), limited consensus was obtained for the duration of the conflict

(1914-1918). During the course of the war, English Canadians alienated [20] French Canadians. After the war (1919-1922), Canadians had to rebuild national unity and also take their place on the international scene. The British Empire was considerably weakened by the war while American imperialism continued to extend its influence. This context, where the dictates of internal and external politics are intertwined, is fertile ground for the affirmation of ideology.

c) Sources

[TOC](#)

The Times was founded by John Walter in 1785. During the first half of the nineteenth century, it acquired a prestigious reputation. Governed by the same family since its inception, the publication had difficulty in adapting to the popular press movement which developed in the latter half of the eighteenth century; this problem became more pronounced at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Walter family was obliged to sell the majority of its holdings in 1908 when the paper encountered serious financial difficulties. Northcliffe, the press magnate, bought a substantial quantity of shares and took control of *The Times*. The paper remained under Northcliffe's direction until his death in 1922. His reputation was well-established: in 1896 Northcliffe had started publication of a newspaper aimed at the working classes and priced at a penny. By 1900, *The Daily Mail*, as it was called, reached a circulation of 1,000,000 copies per day.

The staff of the newspaper was very important. Upper management positions were occupied by university graduates from such esteemed institutions as Cambridge or Oxford.⁶ *The Times* prided itself on maintaining a team of foreign correspondents, principally in France, Germany, the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa.⁷ The role of these journalists was:

⁶ Hamilton Fyfe, *An Intimate Biography*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1930, pp. 232-233.

⁷ *History of the Times*, Stanley Morison, director, vol. 3, pp. 787-788.

*"...the maintenance of the political prestige of The Times on which our national reputation so much depends, and the maintenance and increase of the large circulation which under present conditions is essential to our financial prosperity."*⁸

The Canadian team of correspondents was reorganized as Northcliffe consolidated his hold on the newspaper. John Willison, a Toronto journalist, was the pivotal member of the new team. Between 1908 and 1922, the Ottawa [21] desk was occupied successively by Fred Cook, A. Ford and G. O'Leary.⁹ In Montreal, Morgan Powell contributed occasionally in 1914, 1915 and also in 1920. A.E. Blow, R.C. Dafoe and W.F. Payne were the principal correspondents from Winnipeg and R.H. Brown, R.C. Rawling and E.H.C. Johnston were the Vancouver-based members of the group. The majority of these men were employed at local newspapers in their respective cities. Their names never appeared on the articles they produced; instead the traditional "From our own correspondent" could be read under the title, and often the city of origin was mentioned. This last detail enables us to identify the correspondent in question.

During the period under analysis, the newspaper generally contained approximately 20 pages, varying from a minimum of 16 pages to a maximum of 24. It was printed over six columns, exceptionally seven. There were frequent special editions, particularly during the war. We have limited our consultation to regular editions, with the exception of supplements celebrating the anniversary of the Empire, which began to appear May 24, 1909.

The target reader was well-identified. It was of prime importance to influence those who held the reins of power. Consequently the pa-

⁸ National Archives of Canada, *The Willison Papers*, document 30507, "Imperial and Foreign News Editor's Memorandum", 7 January 1920.

⁹ This list is by no means exhaustive. These are but a few of the principal correspondents. *Times Archives*, London, manuscripts prepared by Gordon Phillips, archivist. See also *The Willison Papers*, National Archives of Canada, correspondence from the "Times Foreign Desk" to Willison, 7 January 1920. For more details: Appendix I - *Times Correspondents in Canada*, London.

per sought the readership of politicians, administrators and professionals, those men whose education and dominance were determining factors in the destiny of Great Britain. ¹⁰

Circulation was at its lowest in 1908 when only 38,000 copies were published. As early as 1868, *The Times* had printed 60,000 papers on a daily basis. Improved services and a lower sale price strengthened its position in 1914 when circulation reached 183,196 copies. The year 1918 saw a marked decrease, this time to 143,295 copies. The sale price went from three pence in 1908 to a penny in March of 1914. Higher production costs and difficulties in newsprint supply necessitated a raise in price to three pence in 1918. This tariff was lowered once again in 1922 before reaching two pence in 1923. ¹¹

The daily edition did not meet with much success in Canada. For this reason, C.R.E.W. Smith, an Ottawa company, was able to sell only twelve subscriptions from July [22] 1920 to April 1921, for a total of 69 pounds sterling.¹² Sale of the newspaper was difficult in the Dominion; there was strong competition from the United States and Canadian tastes differed from those of the Mother country:

"The whole of North America is bad ground for us. Canada itself is flooded with current U.S.A. publications of attractive make-up, and of an atmosphere to which they are accustomed, whereas English papers take two weeks or more to arrive in many parts, whilst they are distinctly British in tone, style and appearance." ¹³

¹⁰ *History of the Times*, vol. 3, p. 586. See also Henry Borzo, *The Times (London) and Anglo-Canadian Relations*, Doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 1955, p. 177; Clarigny Cuheval, *Histoire de la Presse en Angleterre et aux Etats-Unis*, Amyot, Ed. Oeuvres de Napoléon III, Paris, 1857, pp. 113 à 115.

¹¹ *Times* publication, *Facts about the Times, 1785-1962*, Times Newspapers Ltd., 1977, pp. 26 and 27 and *History of the Times*. See Appendix II - Prices and *Times* circulation, 1785-1976.

¹² *Times* Archives, London, Memorandum from Mr. Hopkins to Sir Campbell Stuart, April 21, 1921.

¹³ *Ibid.*

However the newspaper did manage to sell advertising. Banks, governments and railway companies bought commercial space from time to time, either to attract investment or draw immigrant. In spite of this, the publication did not meet its costs. Moreover *The Times* did not seem to strengthen its ties with Canada in 1910, for economic reasons.

In addition, archives are an important source in this research. Not only have we consulted documents left by eminent officials, but we have also attempted to show the importance of the archives of the men of the press. John Willison, *Times* correspondent in Canada from 1910 to 1927, left an imposing collection of private papers. These documents may be found at the National Archives of Canada (N.A.C.). Moreover, the *Times* Archives in London are now open to researchers. Several of the documents found in these collections are unpublished and allow valuable insight into the role of *The Times* during the First World War.

d) The Importance accorded to Canada by The Times

[TOC](#)

After American independence, many Canadians quickly became the defenders of the British Empire on North American soil. As late as 1830 *The Times* considered Canada "The most important of our colonial possessions." ¹⁴

After the unrest of 1837 which affected both Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Durham was sent to analyze the situation. *The Times* achieved a master-stroke when, on February 8, 1839, it announced to its readers that it was publishing an exclusive report, before even the politicians had seen it:

¹⁴ *The Times*, 26 March and 15 May 1829.

*"We have received a printed copy of the Report on the Affairs of British North America, from the Earl of Durham, her Majesty's [23] High commissioner etc., etc., etc., presented by her Majesty's Command. It has not, we believe, been yet delivered to the members of either House of Parliament."*¹⁵

This *coup* showed the importance and influence of the newspaper at the time. It was also indicative of the interest shown by the Mother country in its North American colonies.

More generally speaking, *The Times* was always a staunch defender of the British Empire. It favoured the continuation of the Empire but in no way supported a specific political party concerning the means to achieve this end. In his research, the historian Henry Borzo affirms:

"It was a dispute over means, not ends; how to affect a better empire was the question, rather than should it or should it not be dismantled. (...) In so far as it frequently stressed the need of a better system, be it for emigration or colonial government, it contributed in the long run to many reforms; meanwhile keeping its eye on the larger picture, it too, like responsible government, contributed to the preservation of the Empire. It paved the way for the new concept of Empire... the Commonwealth, not by its unusually early adherence to or defense of responsible government, but rather by its long term broad appreciation of the Empire, frequently expressed as a cultural, linguistic, religious or social project, in contradiction to the older concept of the exertion of political, military and commercial dominance." ¹⁶

¹⁵ *History of the Times*, vol. I, pp. 372-373 and *The Times*, 8 February 1839.

¹⁶ Henry Borzo, *The Times (London) and Anglo-Canadian Relations*, Ph. D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1955, pp. 184-185.

What was the image of Canada in England at the beginning of the twentieth century? Canada was still considered the "senior Dominion", the best and most righteous defender of the British Empire. It remains to be seen whether Canada's importance was manifest other than the space accorded to the Dominion and the manner in which it was treated in the articles.

It has been possible to determine the relative importance of Canada in the newspaper by consulting *The Official Index to the Times*. By comparing the number of articles concerning the North American Dominion, India and Australia, it may be concluded that Canada was at least as significant as the other members of the Empire. (Table I: *The London Times, 1908-1922, Importance accorded by the newspaper to Canada, Australia and India*).

Before 1908, Canada rarely occupied more than 1% of the publication's [24] pages. Northcliffe's arrival in 1909 and the reorganization of the Canadian correspondents around John Willison allowed better coverage of the Canadian scene, especially in 1910 and 1911. As war approached and particularly during the conflict, Canada's share of attention diminished noticeably to reach its lowest level in 1915 with a mere 0.37%. Europe was the focus of interest in war-time. In 1919, after the hostilities, there was a marked increase with 1.04% of the total space devoted to Canada. This proportion represented 32 pages of text. Between 1919 and 1922 the number of pages in the inventories decreased from 3,063 to 2,013, a decline of 33%. The drop in the number of articles published may be attributed to internal change at the newspaper and difficulties in the pulp and paper sector. Moreover circulation at *The Times* fell off after the war.

In summary, *The Times'* coverage of Canadian affairs improved in the years just preceding the war, 1910 and 1911. This was not the case for India and Australia. It may be concluded that Canada was of greater importance in the eyes of the British.

During the war, the paper centred its interest on Europe. Afterwards, *The Times* immediately reestablished its contacts and allotted more space to events in the British Empire. India occupied a greater

place than Australia and overtook Canada in 1908-1909 and in 1921-1922.

In the following pages we will outline the evolution of Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century with the help of quantitative statistics. The second chapter contains an analysis of the newspaper's discussion of politics, the economy and society before the conflict. War is the subject of the third chapter, as it became the dominant theme of the period. Lastly, the fourth chapter deals with the post-war era and continues the analysis initiated in the preceding chapters.

Table I

The London Times 1908-1922.
Importance accorded by paper to Canada, Australia and India.

[TOC](#)

	Nombre total pages	Canada	Australia	India
1908	1232	0,73 %	0,32 %	0,89 %
1909	1396	0,85	0,28	0,93
1910	1499	1,00	0,30	0,80
1911	1831	1,03	0,32	0,60
1912	1845	0,81	0,27	0,56
1913	1897	0,68	0,31	0,57
1914	1905	0,68	0,26	0,41
1915	2123	0,37	0,23	0,37
1916	2259	0,48	0,35	0,39
1917	2430	0,61	0,37	0,57
1918	2791	0,71	0,50	0,57
1919	3063	1,04	0,52	0,78
1920	2885	1,14	0,65	0,79
1921	2324	0,94	0,73	1,03
1922	2013	0,74	0,64	0,84

Source: *The Official Index to the Times*, 1908-1922

*

Number of pages that the Index devotes
to Canada

_____ x 100 = %

Total number of pages in the Index

Established according to *The Official Index to the Times*, 1908-1922.

[27]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

Chapter 1

Canada at the Beginning of the 20th Century

[TOC](#)

In the following pages we do not claim to provide an exhaustive account of Canadian history. It is instead an attempt to identify certain tendencies in the economic, social and political evolution of Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century. This overview is intended to facilitate the understanding of the themes which will be discussed later.

1.1 The Economy

Canada experienced unprecedented economic growth at the start of the century. International markets were in urgent need of new products derived from the greater exploitation of natural resources. Thanks to its vast forests, rich agricultural lands, mineral resources and potential hydro-electric power, Canada enjoyed a favourable position at the world level.

The economic crisis which began in 1913 lasted until 1915. The arrival of war provided opportunity for economic development and Canada was among the first to benefit from the situation. It has even been said that the Dominion began its "take-off" in 1914.¹⁷ This artificial prosperity ended when the war was over and the crisis continued in 1920 and 1921. There was growth in both the industrial and agricultural sectors. Canada was dominated by its British interests during the nineteenth century but later came under the influence of the huge expansion of its American neighbours.

Through a brief statistical analysis, it is possible to clarify this slow movement which persisted at the beginning of the twentieth century. The economic structures became more entrenched in the North American continent. Foreign trade reflected this disposition. During the war, the Dominion temporarily stepped up exports to the United Kingdom. With the hostilities over, the pre-war structural tendencies became apparent once again. Slowly the United States became the largest importers of Canadian goods.

Between 1901 and 1914, the value of exports from Canada to the United [28] Kingdom decreased, from 60.5% to 44.5%. The figures are 27.4% for 1901 and 40.9% for 1914 concerning trade with the United States. From 1916 on, the situation was reversed: 65.7% of Canadian exports were destined for the United Kingdom (See Table I at the end of the chapter: *Proportion of Canadian exports to the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries - selected years, 1901-1926*). After the war, Canada resumed greater trade with its neighbour to the south. By 1920, 44.7% of all exports resulted from trade with the United States while only 26.4% could be attributed to exchange with the United Kingdom.

At the beginning of the century, Canada was already excessively dependent on the United States; in fact, American imports even increased during the war. The proportion of imports which Canada received from the United States was at its lowest level in 1901 with 60% and reached its highest point in 1917, with 82.2% (See Table II - *Proportion of imports to Canada from the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries - selected years 1901-1926*). It may be noted here that Canada relied mainly, if not exclusively, on two busi-

¹⁷ W.W. Rostow, *Les étapes de la croissance économique*, Seuil, Paris, 1963.

ness partners for its foreign trade: the United Kingdom and the United States.

The country's development was based on natural resources which underwent little or no transformation before leaving the country. This type of production formed the major portion of Canada's exports. The majority of imports consisted of manufactured products or processed goods. Canada was first and foremost a supplier of natural resources which were then exchanged for transformed products destined for its own consumption. (See Table III - *Proportions of imports and exports to the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries - 1914-1917*).

Foreign capital is another important factor in understanding Canadian economic development. Once again the Americans competed for the coveted position occupied by the corporations of the United Kingdom. In 1900, 14% of investments made by non-residents came from the United States and 85% originated in the United Kingdom. During the war, from 1914 to 1918, the United Kingdom maintained its lead (60% in 1918) in spite of slow but steady progress on the part of the United States (36%). The Americans moved into first place during the 1920's (50% in 1922 and 53% in 1926). (See Table IV - *Estimates of Foreign Capital invested in Canada 1901-1926, selected years*).

On one hand, price increases in foreign markets, particularly during the war, were advantageous for Canadian industry. Export prices climbed more quickly than import rates (Table V - *Indexed prices for exports and imports, 1913 to 1922 and 1926*). On the other hand, on the domestic scene, salaries did not rise proportionally to offset the rapidly rising cost of living. (Table VI - *Cost of living index, 1913 to 1922 and 1926*; Table VII - *General index of average wages paid in principal industries, 1901-1926, selected years*). This explains a strained [29] social situation as evidenced by the attempts of labour movements to recuperate their lost buying power. In 1914 Canada experienced 58 strikes or lock-outs. In 1918 the total rose to 230 and reached 336 in 1919. ¹⁸

¹⁸ Urquhart and Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Toronto, 1965, p. 107.

It must be recognized however that development was irregular and spasmodic. The country was vast and its wealth was not equally shared. Moreover, the population was concentrated in a few provinces: Ontario was the most highly industrialized and by far the richest. Although Quebec was a close second, the French Canadians were not active participants in their own development. It was already evident that the Maritimes, where the principal spheres of activity were coal, steel, fisheries and pulp and paper, lagged behind central Canada. The Canadian West at this era was identified as the new frontier, attractive to both investment and immigration. This region remained basically agricultural and rural. Population was already more heterogeneous than in central Canada. British Columbia, too, had its particularities. Its development was based on the extraction of natural resources and agriculture, confined to fruit farming, was less important than in the Western provinces.¹⁹ It is essential to understand regional disparity in Canada; it is a factor that profoundly affected the country's history.

1.2 Population

[TOC](#)

Urbanization shaped the country. In 1901, 37% of the population was concentrated in urban areas; this figure rose to 48.4% in 1921 and 53.7% in 1931. (Table VIII - *Population of Canada, Urban and rural population - 1901-1931*). Ontario and Quebec were the most highly urbanized provinces, with cities such as Toronto and Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec. However the comparison may go no further. If the analysis is pursued, it becomes evident that Ontario was more urbanized than Quebec, in spite of official statistics. The Quebec birth rate was higher than that in Ontario and the educational system in Quebec

¹⁹ On the history of Canada see W.T. Easterbrook and H. Aitken, *Canadian Economic History*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1963; R. Durocher and R.-A. Lin-teau, *Le retard du Québec et l'infériorité des Canadiens français*, Boréal Express, Trois-Rivières, Québec, 1971; D. F. Putnam and R. G. Putnam, *Canada: A Regional Analysis*, J. M. Dent and Sons, Canada, 1970.

was inferior to the Ontario system. Indicators of wealth show that the standard of living was lower in Quebec than in Ontario. ²⁰

Presented with a favourable economic conjuncture, governments opened [30] their doors to immigration. This phenomenon changed the composition of the Canadian population. The demographic weight of the West began to make itself evident, a cause for hope in the West and apprehension in the East.

During the decade from 1901 to 1911, the Canadian population increased from 5.3 million to 7.2 million. In 1921 it reached 8.7 million and in 1931, 10.3 million. (Table VIII - *Population of Canada, 1901-1931*). The population almost doubled in thirty years. Immigration alone did not account for this expansion, but it did play a part. (Table IX - *Immigrants of British extraction and immigrants from the United States, 1901-1926*). Natural growth continued to be important, but there was also a certain tendency to emigrate to the United States.²¹ In 1901 the Maritimes made up 16.5% of the Canadian population. Quebec and Ontario with 30.6% and 40.6% respectively constituted 71.2% of the national total. British Columbia and the West formed only 10.9% of the population. (Table X - *Population by province (%) 1901-1931*). Twenty years later, the Maritimes represented a mere 11.5% of the country's population, the central provinces 60.1% and the West (including British Columbia), 28%. It became increasingly necessary for Canadians to take these changes into consideration.

The massive influx of immigrants created a more heterogeneous population. The 1901 census shows that 57% of all Canadians were of British extraction. A decade later the proportion dropped to 55.5%. This total remained stable in 1921 and decreased to 51.8% in 1931. Those of French origin maintained a figure between 28% and 30% during the same period. Those persons who were neither of British or French background formed only 12.3% of the population in 1901. This number rose to 20% in 1931. (Table XI - *Origins of the Cana-*

²⁰ Between 1901 and 1931, official statistics show that urbanisation in Quebec was more rapid than in Ontario. In 1931, Quebec took the lead. However, these figures do not withstand further analysis. See Camil Girard, *Société et comportement électoral, l'élection provinciale québécoise de 1935*, Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1975, pp. 40 to 79.

²¹ Urquhart and Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Toronto, 1965, p. 22.

dian population, 1901-1931). In spite of these facts, immigrants of British origin remained in the majority. The English formed the main contingent from the United Kingdom followed far behind by the Irish, the Scottish and the Welsh, in that order.

1.3 Politics

[TOC](#)

On the political scene, Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberals were in power from 1896 until 1911. Robert Borden succeeded Laurier and led the Conservatives for the duration of the war. He was obliged to resign in 1920 for health reasons. His successor, Arthur Meighen failed to win the election of 1921: the Liberals under their new leader Mackenzie King swept into power (Tables XII and XIII).

What were the main preoccupations of this period? As a rule, foreign policy considerably influenced domestic affairs. In 1909 Liberals and [31] Conservatives had already reached a consensus: the Mother country must be helped in time of war. Debate centred on the means chosen to contribute to this war effort. Defense of the Empire and trade reciprocity with the United States were contested in the election of 1911. The issue of conscription was hotly disputed in the 1917 election, with overwhelming support from all provinces except Quebec, where there was strong opposition.. Between 1908 and 1922, both Liberal and Conservative governments sought greater autonomy for Canada in international relations. The Liberals urged London to allow them to negotiate their own treaties in 1908 and 1909. After the war, Borden demanded that Canada be represented at the League of Nations. When the Treaty of Versailles was signed, he insisted that Canada act as an autonomous party. In the spring of 1920, Borden planned to name an ambassador to the United States. In 1923 the Liberal government created a precedent by negotiating the Halibut Treaty with the Americans. This was the first time a Canadian had signed solely for Canada; in the past, Great Britain had always ratified treaties concerning Canadian interests.

However we must not misjudge the situation; Canada was a difficult nation to govern. The federal governments were not representati-

ve of the major regions and this had already presented serious difficulties. The interests of Quebec, Ontario, the Maritimes and the West differed widely. Politicians were unable to find national issues to rally the constituents of all regions. One menace was ever-present: the "consensus" between Anglophones and Francophones was fragile at best. The conflict in Europe, an external element, brought Canada to the brink of civil war in 1917. The eternal polarization between English and French Canada in times of crisis demonstrates a structural weakness in the Canadian nation.

This, then, is the general context of the period in question. The preceding pages by no means present an exhaustive view of Canadian history at the beginning of the twentieth century. Rather we have only provided certain points of reference to facilitate the understanding of themes which will be discussed later.

[32]

Table I

Proportion of exports from Canada to the United States,
the United Kingdom and other countries (selected years 1901-1926).

[TOC](#)

EXPORTS				
	All countries (thousands of \$)	% to the United States	% to the Uni- ted Kingdom	% to other countries
1901	177 502	27,4 %	60,5 %	12,1 %
1908	257 318	31,1	54,8	13,9
1909	282 887	35,6	51,5	12,9
1910	289 844	37,3	48,4	14,2
1911	289 055	34,8	50,9	14,3
1912	352 948	36,6	50,0	13,4
1913	447 699	37,5	50,1	12,4
1914	413 067	40,9	44,5	14,6
1915	629 841	28,7	57,4	13,9
1916	1 094 062	22,9	65,7	11,4
1917	1 577 567	25,7	56,5	17,8
1918	1 233 689	35,7	47,5	16,8
1919	1 289 792	37,8	41,7	20,5
1920	1 298 162	44,7	26,4	28,9
1921	814 144	41,1	38,0	20,9
1922	894 224	38,8	42,0	19,2
1926	1 276 599	36,8	36,3	26,9

Source: Established according to Urquhart et Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Toronto, 1965, p. 183.

[33]

Table II

Proportion of Canadian imports to the United States, the United Kingdom
and other countries (selected years 1901-1926).

[TOC](#)

IMPORTS				
	All countries (thousands of \$)	% to the United States	% to the Uni- ted Kingdom	% to other countries
1901	184 740	60,0 %	23,1 %	16,9 %
1908	282 707	58,7	25,1	16,1
1909	347 067	58,3	25,8	15,8
1910	435 251	60,2	24,7	15,0
1911	503 542	63,5	22,5	14,0
1912	636 790	64,4	20,9	14,7
1913	659 993	64,8	21,2	14,0
1914	482 076	64,0	20,4	15,6
1915	450 960	70,2	16,5	13,3
1916	767 410	77,5	15,3	7,2
1917	1 006 056	82,2	7,6	10,2
1918	910 171	81,4	8,0	10,6
1919	941 014	78,6	9,3	12,1
1920	1 336 921	68,9	17,3	13,8
1921	799 478	69,4	15,4	15,2
1922	762 409	66,8	17,9	15,3
1926	1 008 342	66,3	16,3	17,4

Established according to Urquhart and Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Toronto, 1965, p. 183.

[34]

Table III

Proportion of exports and imports with the United Kingdom and the United States, by type of merchandise (1914-1917).

[TOC](#)

EXPORTS. Percentage of each category

	1914			1915			1916			1917		
	U.K.	USA	Others	U.K.	USA	Others	U.K.	USA	Others	U.K.	USA	Others
Agricultural products	67,92	19,90	45,92	51,34	11,20	32,91	43,39	9,26	33,66	35,87	16,09	32,43
Animals and their products	12,42	15,14	12,36	20,48	19,72	18,17	15,01	14,45	13,87	12,57	10,18	11,10
Fishery products	3,26	4,19	4,78	2,92	4,92	4,81	1,49	4,41	3,02	0,99	3,82	2,16
Forestry products	4,95	17,94	9,92	5,31	17,90	10,42	3,13	17,20	6,91	2,00	13,15	4,86
Products of manufacturing industries	3,99	18,60	13,31	13,31	24,33	20,89	32,86	28,95	32,64	45,68	32,78	41,46
Mining products	7,45	24,17	13,68	6,55	21,67	12,64	2,75	25,57	8,98	2,09	23,87	7,46
Miscellaneous products	,01	,06	,03	,09	,26	,16	1,37	,16	,92	,80	,11	,55
Total	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00

IMPORTS. Percentage of each category

Agricultural products	2,00	10,63	8,66	2,16	14,56	11,52	1,71	12,91	10,64	1,46	9,37	8,25
Animals and their products	2,71	3,92	4,83	3,19	5,17	6,12	6,20	6,12	7,40	3,88	6,55	6,50
Fishery products	,19	,21	,38	,23	,20	,41	,16	,15	,31	,10	,15	,29
Forestry products	,96	4,20	2,71	,02	3,22	2,11	,01	1,41	1,03	-	1,04	,82
Products of manufacturing industries	87,51	61,19	67,52	85,25	56,11	62,84	82,72	55,49	60,15	85,36	48,89	55,42
Mining products	1,49	16,84	11,59	2,04	17,22	11,89	1,48	12,27	9,46	1,91	9,91	8,25
Miscellaneous products	6,04	3,01	4,31	7,11	3,52	5,11	7,72	11,65	11,01	7,29	24,09	20,47
Total	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00

Source: *Canada Year Book*, 1918, p. 294 et 295.

[35]

Table IV

Estimates of Foreign capital invested in Canada 1901-1926
(selected years).

[TOC](#)

Percentage of investments by non-residents			
	United States	United Kingdom	Others countries
1900	14 %	85 %	1 %
1905	19	79	2
1910	19	77	4
1912	-	-	-
1913	-	-	-
1914	23	72	5
1915	-	-	-
1916	30	66	4
1917	-	-	-
1918	36	60	4
1919	-	-	-
1920	44	53	3
1921	-	-	-
1922	50	47	3
1926	53	44	3

Source: Urquhart et Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 1965, p. 169.

[36]

Table V

Indexed prices of exports and imports
from 1913 to 1922 and 1926 (1913 = 100).

[TOC](#)

	Exports	Imports
1913	100,0	100,0
1914	103,4	92,7
1915	111,2	92,7
1916	125,4	114,7
1917	178,1	143,3
1918	195,9	166,4
1919	205,1	179,9
1920	229,7	220,2
1921	164,8	160,6
1922	137,8	135,3
1926	147,0	131,2

Urquhart et Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 1965, p. 301-302.

[37]

Table VI

Cost of living index (1913 to 1922, 1926) (1935 to 1939 = 100).

[TOC](#)

Année	Indice
1913	79,5
1914	80,0
1915	81,4
1916	88,1
1917	104,3
1918	118,1
1919	129,8
1920	150,4
1921	132,3
1922	121,1
1926	121,7

Urquhart et Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 1965, p. 304.

[38]

Table VII

General index of average wages in principal industries
(1901-1926, selected years) 1949 = 100.

[TOC](#)

	General Index
1901	18,6
1908	23,2
1909	23,6
1910	24,4
1911	24,0
1912	24,8
1913	25,5
1914	25,8
1915	26,0
1916	27,8
1917	31,9
1918	37,4
1919	44,0
1920	52,3
1921	47,7
1922	44,5
1926	46,1

Urquhart et Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 1965, p. 84.

[39]

Table VIII
Population

Total population and urban and rural population of Canada 1901-1931 (%).

[TOC](#)

	Total population	Urban population	Rural population
1901	5 371 315	37,0 %	63,0 %
1911	7 206 643	43,6	56,4
1921	8 787 949	48,4	51,6
1931	10 376 786	53,7	46,3

Established according to Urquhart and Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, p. 14 (according to the definition of 1956).

[40]

Table IX
Immigrants of British origin and immigrants from the United States
(selected years 1901-1926).

[TOC](#)

	Number of arrivals	Of British origin ²²	From United States ²³
1901	55 747	11 813	-
1908	143 326	58 512	51 750
1909	173 694	56 148	80 409
1910	286 839	115 853	108 300
1911	331 288	147 770	112 028
1912	375 756	147 619	120 095
1913	400 870	158 398	97 712
1914	150 484	50 755	50 213
1915	36 665	9 907	24 297
1916	55 914	10 140	41 779
1917	72 910	4 114	65 737
1918	41 845	5 396	31 769
1919	107 698	57 929	42 129
1920	138 824	77 160	40 188
1921	91 728	44 367	23 888
1922	64 224	32 604	17 534
1926	135 982	59 925	20 944

Established according to Urquhart and Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, pp. 23, 27, 28 and 29.

²² Before 1925, immigrants of British origin included those coming from overseas; after 1925, immigrants of British origin from the United States were included.

²³ Immigrants from the United States were not identified as to their origin.

[41]

Table X
Population by Province (%) 1901-1931 *

[TOC](#)

MARITIMES					
Total population	Prince Edouard Island	Nova Scotia	New-Brunswick	Total	
5 371 315 (1901)	1,9 %	8,5 %	6,1 %	16,5 %	
7 206 643 (1911)	1,2	6,8	4,8	12,8	
8 787 949 (1921)	1,0	5,9	4,4	11,3	
10 376 786 (1931)	0,8	4,9	3,9	9,6	
CENTRAL PROVINCES					
Total population	Quebec	Ontario	Total		
5 371 315 (1901)	30,6 %	40,6 %	71,2 %		
7 206 643 (1911)	27,8	35,0	62,8		
8 787 949 (1921)	26,8	33,3	60,1		
10 376 786 (1931)	27,6	33,0	60,6		
WEST					
Total population	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Total
5 371 315 (1901)	4,7 %	1,6 %	1,3 %	3,3 %	10,9 %
7 206 643 (1911)	6,3	6,8	5,1	5,4	23,6
8 787 949 (1921)	6,9	8,6	6,6	5,9	28,0
10 376 786 (1931)	6,7	8,8	7,0	6,6	29,1

Established according to Urquhart et Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 1965, p. 14.

[42]

Table XI
Origin of the Canadian population 1901-1931 (%).

[TOC](#)

	Total Population	Of British Origin	O French Origin	Other origins
1901	5 371 315	57,0 %	30,7 %	12,3 %
1911	7 206 643	55,5	28,6	15,9
1921	8 787 949	55,4	27,9	16,7
1931	10 376 786	51,8	28,2	20,0

Established according to Urquhart et Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 1965, p. 18.

[43]

Table XII

Governments in power, Canada and England 1908-1922.

[TOC](#)**CANADA****ENGLAND**

1896-1911 W. Laurier (Liberal)	1910 H. H. Asquith (Liberal)
1911 R. L. Borden (Conservative)	1915 H. H. Asquith (coalition)
1916 Government reinstated	1916 (December) Lloyd George (libéral) formed a coalition government
1917 R. L. Borden (Union Government)	1919 Lloyd George (coalition)
1920 Resignation of Borden (July), replaced by A. Meighen	
1921 W. L. MacKenzie King (Liberal)	1922 Bonar Law (Conservative)

For Canada, see: J.M. Beck, *Pendulum of Power*, Prentice-Hall, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, 1968.

For England, see: D. Butler and J. Freeman, *British Political Facts, 1900-1960*, MacMillan & Co. Ltd, New York, 1963.

[44]

Table XIII
Results of Canadian Federal Elections 1908-1921.

[TOC](#)

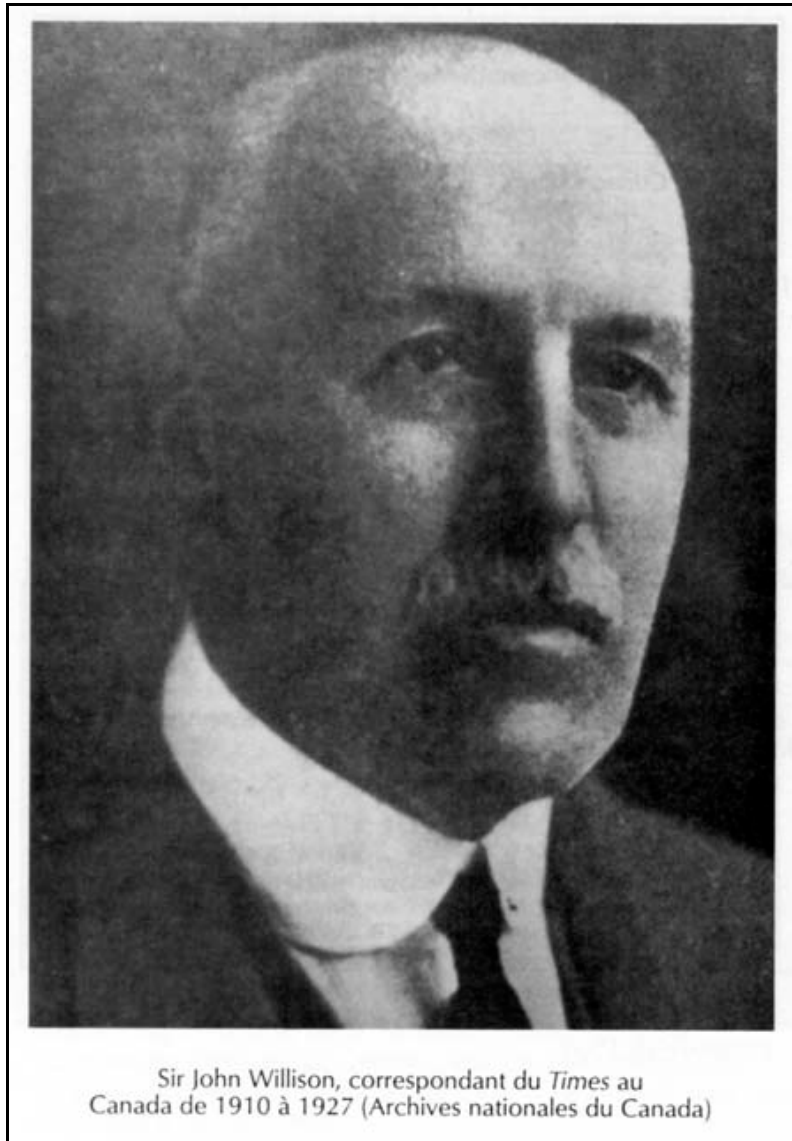
	Conservatives		Liberals	
1908	Seats (N)	85	135	
	% of the popular vote	46,9%	50,4%	
1911	Sièges (N)	134	87	
	% of the popular vote	50,9%	47,7%	
	(Union Government)		(Liberal Opposition)	
1917	Sièges (N)	153	82	
	% of the popular vote	57%	39,9%	
				(Progressives)
1921		50	116	64
		21,3%	49,4%	27,2%

J. M. Beck, *Pendulum of Power*, Scarborough, Ontario, Prentice-Hall, 1968.

[45]

Figure 1

[TOC](#)



Sir John Willison,
Chief *Times* correspondent in Canada from 1910 to 1927
(National Archives of Canada)

[45]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

Chapter 2

The *Times* and Canada,
1908-1914:

Preparation for war

[TOC](#)

[46]

2.1 The *Times* strengthens its ties with Canada

[TOC](#)

When Northcliffe took over as the new owner of *The Times*, he considered that the newspaper did not devote enough effort to the defense of the Empire. For this reason, on May 24, 1909, he initiated the publication of a sixty-page special edition marking Empire Day. This supplement addressed the state of the Empire. The new chief of Imperial affairs, Edward Grigg prepared this edition with the help of the architects of British imperialism, Lord Milner and Joseph Chamberlain. ²⁴

Fred Cook, originally a British subject and the former mayor of Ottawa, was chief correspondent in Canada until 1910. He was replaced by a newcomer, John Willison. According to documents left by Willison, it appears that the Governor-General of Canada, Lord Grey contributed to his nomination as *Times* correspondent. Grey sent Northcliffe an article written by Willison while he was editor at the *Toronto News*. ²⁵ The article pleased Northcliffe and he published it in his most prestigious acquisition, *The Times*.

In January of 1909, a year before he was officially hired, Willison was solicited by the London paper for his commentaries on Canada. ²⁶ Thus began an association that was to last 18 years. In January

²⁴ Grigg was a graduate of Oxford University. He was knighted as Lord Altrincham and succeeded L.S. Amery who was assigned to prepare "*The Times History of the South African War*" for the newspaper; see *History of "The Times"*, vol. 3, pp. 660 and 742 and vol. 4-1, p. 16.

²⁵ National Archives of Canada (N.A.C.), *Willison Papers*, MG 30-D29, vol. 54, document 40364.

²⁶ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, document 29375. In February 1909, Willison received 30.41 pounds sterling (including an adjustment of 2.41 pounds for January). In March, *The Times* sent Willison 28 pounds, in May 35, in June 28, in July 35 and in August 28.

1910, Willison was called to Paris. There he met Northcliffe and negotiated the terms of his employment with *The Times*. He then went on to London where he met his future colleagues. On January 24, John Willison officially became a correspondent for *The Times*. He had entire responsibility for operations in Canada. These were the terms of his contract:

"You will act as our correspondent in Canada with your headquarters at Toronto with sub-correspondents appointed and paid for by yourself wherever necessary and undertaking to travel when expedient through and to any part of the Dominion."

"Your remuneration will be 1200 pounds sterling a year to include all [47] expenses incurred except telegraphy, and you will be at liberty to do other work for newspapers outside of the United Kingdom."²⁷

It was this last provision which allowed Willison to keep his position with *The News* in Toronto. On the same day, January 24, Grigg sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, wherein he explained the reasons that had motivated Willison's nomination as the head of Canadian affairs: "His reputation as the ablest and most influential of Canadian journalists was, of course, already well known to the Editor, and the work he has done for us in the past year assures us that we could look nowhere for a more balanced, authoritative and judicial account of Canadian affairs than he will supply."²⁸

Grigg went on to suggest that the newspaper's management was aware that Willison had not always been sympathetic to Laurier. However Willison's political sympathies were counterbalanced by his journalistic acumen, since *The Times* management was of the opinion that only a Canadian could supply information which required a good knowledge of the conditions which prevailed in Canada and a deep understanding of the country :

²⁷ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, Moberly Bell to Willison, 24 January 1910.

²⁸ *Times Archives, Willison Papers*, letter from Grigg to Laurier, 24 January 1910.

"He (the owner of The Times) recognizes, however, that no journalist could be found for the task who would be free of all political connexion in Canada unless we sent one from England, and that no Englishman on the other hand, could possibly have the thorough knowledge of Canadian conditions and the intimate comprehension of Canadian views which we most particularly desire in the Canadian correspondence of The Times. Both of these qualities being unfortunately impossible of combination in one man, the Editor is perfectly assured, not merely by Mr. Willison's standing in Canada but by the acknowledged justice and impartiality of the articles he has written for us in the past year that no one will go closer to combining them than he." 29

Willison was not the only journalist to contribute to *The Times*, but he rapidly became the chief correspondent in Canada. It is important at this point to trace Willison's early career in order to understand the man at the moment when he became associated with the newspaper.

John Stephen Willison was born in 1856 in a working-class family in Hills Green, a small town situated a few kilometres north of London, Ontario.

[48]

His parents were originally from England. ³⁰ After a short academic career, he joined the staff of *The Advertiser*, a Liberal paper and rival of *The Free Press* in London, Ontario. In 1883 he joined the Toronto *Globe* where he occupied the posts of parliamentary correspondent, editorialist and editor-in-chief. He built his reputation in the 1890's, associating himself with the rise of Wilfrid Laurier on the Canadian federal political scene. Between 1890 and 1903, the two men

²⁹ *Times Archives*, Grigg to Laurier, 24 January 1910.

³⁰ A.H.U. Colquhoun, *Press, Politics and People: The Life and Letters of Sir John Willison*, typed version conserved in the N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, documents 40609 -40610.

maintained an active correspondence.³¹ They preserved a relationship of mutual respect and admiration. Laurier attained the summit of his political career when he became the first French Canadian to assume the post of Prime Minister of Canada. Willison was seen as a contributing factor to the Liberal victory of 1896. Laurier remained in power until 1911.

Laurier called Willison the "Delane of Canadian politics"; he judged that under Willison's direction, *The Globe* became the country's foremost newspaper.³² For his part, Willison wrote a biography of Laurier in 1903 (*Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal Party - A Political History*). Willison greatly admired what he called Laurier's "unconditional liberalism" which followed the lines of such ardent defenders of British liberalism as Gladstone and Fox.³³

³¹ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*.. Over 130 documents may be found including letters from Laurier and copies of letters Willison sent to Laurier

³² N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, correspondence from Laurier to Willison, 7 January 1895 (document 39838). Delane was one of the leading journalists in nineteenth-century England. He was associated with *The Times* of London from 1841 to 1877.

³³ John Willison, *Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal Party - A Political History*, vol. 2, Toronto, George N. Morang and Co. Ltd., 1903, p. 367. In an appendix, Willison published an important speech made by Laurier at the Canadian Club in Quebec City on June 26, 1877 which demonstrated Laurier's philosophy concerning political "liberalism" and "conservatism": "There exists everywhere a class of men who are tied with love to all that is old and who consent regretfully and reluctantly to change only when they are convinced by peremptory arguments that such change is advantageous. There may also be found a second class of men, brimming with hope, possessed with bold ideas and ever-advancing, who are ready to discern imperfections in all that exists, underestimating the risks and inconveniences that always accompany these improvements and disposed to see any change as improvement. The former are conservatives and the latter are liberals." ("Partout il existe une classe d'hommes qui s'attache avec amour à tout ce qui est ancien, et lorsqu'ils sont convaincus par des arguments péremptoires qu'un changement serait avantageux, n'y consentent qu'avec regret et répugnance. Il se trouve aussi partout une autre classe d'hommes exhubérants d'espérance, hardis dans leurs idées, allant toujours de l'avant, prompts à discerner les imperfections de tout ce qui existe, estimant peu les risques et les inconvénients qui accompagnent toujours les améliorations, et disposés à regarder tout changement comme une amélioration. Les premiers sont les conservateurs et les seconds sont les libéraux.") (p. 410)

Willison left *The Globe* in 1902. With the collaboration of Toronto businessman, Joseph Flavelle, he acquired *The News*, another Toronto daily newspaper. After several years with this paper, Willison's positions on protectionism and imperialism were so pronounced that it became impossible for Laurier and the Liberals to rely on his support. His writing was aimed at a specific elite group of Ontario and he defended the interests of the province:

"The society he knew and for which he wrote was comfortably, [49] contentedly middle-class, committed, by and large, to private enterprise and normally sublimely confident that it was fixed firmly in an age of progress." ³⁴

The split between Laurier and Willison was decisive after 1905. The former friends could not agree on the status that should be accorded to the two new provinces that had joined Confederation, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Laurier wished to guarantee a certain protection for the schools of minority groups and Willison vigorously opposed this view. ³⁵

In correspondence dealing with this topic, the Prime Minister invited Willison to respect the spirit of the confederative system and to avoid unnecessary tensions between the two founding peoples. ³⁶ Willison, however, believed that the programme of protection for minority education in the Eastern provinces was sufficient and that there was no valid reason to extend the arrangement in the West. ³⁷ His arguments favoured provincial rights and local majorities, thus serving the Anglo-Protestant interests:

³⁴ Richard T.G. Clippingdale, *J.S. Willison, Political journalist: From Liberalism to Independence 1881 - 1905*, Doctoral thesis, History, University of Toronto, 1970, pp. 605 and 606.

³⁵ See Edward McCartney, "The Interest of the Central Canadian Press, particularly the Toronto Press, in the Autonomy Bill, 1905", in Bruce Hodgins and Robert Page, *Canadian History Since Confederation*, second edition, Irwin-Dorsey Ltd., Georgetown, Ontario, 1979, p. 338 and following.

³⁶ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, correspondence from Laurier to Willison: 9, 11 and 14 June 1904.

³⁷ *The News*, 7 November 1903.

"The more ultra-Protestant dailies (Author's note: The News was one of these) charged that the Liberal government was abetting with the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the interests of the French-Catholic minority in the N.W.T. As a consequence, the demand in these papers for provincial rights and local majoritarianism served as a cover for their appeals to English-Protestant prejudices against French-Catholicism." ³⁸

The News remained independent until 1906, when a group of Conservatives provided the capital necessary to continue publishing the paper which faced serious difficulties. Willison echoed the Conservative party's ideas more and more frequently for, in his opinion, the Liberal party no longer respected its philosophy and did not deserve to be maintained in power. ³⁹

[50]

In summary, Willison was a Liberal during the 1890's. From 1903 to approximately 1907, he was in a transitional period only to become a loyal defender of the Conservative party. In 1907, Willison believed that as Laurier grew older, he increasingly devoted his efforts to the interests of his province of Quebec and its Catholic hierarchy. ⁴⁰ Borden emerged as the new leader, the only man capable of guiding the country's destiny. ⁴¹

Concerning the evolution of Willison and *The Times* after 1905, Harris affirms:

³⁸ Edward McCartney, "The Interest of the Central Canadian Press, particularly the Toronto Press, in the Autonomy Bill, 1905" in Bruce Hodgins and Robert Page, *Canadian History since Confederation*, second edition, Irwin-Dorsey Ltd., Georgetown, Ontario, 1979, p. 338.

³⁹ J.W. Harris, *A Study of the Politics of "The News" under the Editorship of Sir John S. Willison*, Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1952, pp. ix and 86.

⁴⁰ *The News*, 26 August 1907.

⁴¹ *The News*, 24 October 1908.

"After that date The Times became a conservative journal in all but name, and later on the word "independent" was dropped from its mast head. (sic) Criticism of Laurier grew in intensity after 1905, largely over the questions of patronage and violation of traditional Liberal principles. By 1911 Willison was devoted to the single object of defeating Laurier and he was recognized as having been instrumental in bringing about the Conservative victory of 1911. After Borden's accession to Office the paper became little more (sic) an echo of the government." ⁴²

One thing is certain: the type of journalism practised by Willison made him a prime candidate for the overseas staff of *The Times*. He favoured political analysis, he was pro-Empire and he maintained a close relationship with influential politicians. His affiliation with the British daily marked the summit of his journalistic career. He considered that *The Times* was the greatest newspaper in the world and was convinced that a foreign correspondent with this publication held a certain ambassadorial power. ⁴³ Willison kept both his position as editor at *The News* and chief correspondent in Canada for *The Times* until 1917. From this date up to his death in 1927, Willison devoted himself almost exclusively to *The Times*. ⁴⁴

It is important here to emphasize the fact that Willison's appointment to *The Times* was part of a larger movement. After 1908, it was vital that British imperialists reorganize the press throughout the Empire. During this period, Geoffrey Dawson, a *Times* employee since 1906 and former secretary to Milner in South Africa, recommended the establishment of a news agency for the British Empire, more specifically between the Dominions and the [51] United Kingdom. His project attracted the interest of Lord Milner, Lord Grey, the Governor-

⁴² Harris, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

⁴³ *The News*, Toronto, 2 December 1908.

⁴⁴ In 1925 Willison published a monthly magazine with his son's collaboration: *The Willison's Monthly*.

General of Canada and Lord Northcliffe.⁴⁵ Before 1910, Northcliffe tried to improve the news service in Canada by offering the Canadian press the free services of *The Times* foreign news desk.⁴⁶

On June 7, 1909, the first Imperial Press Conference was inaugurated at the Foreign Office in London. Canada sent one of the largest delegations, numbering 15 members. *Le Canada* was represented by G. Langlois and *Le Soleil* by H. d'Hellencourt. Australia sent 14 delegates, New Zealand 11 and India 8.⁴⁷

Following this conference the Empire Press Union was formed. The goal of the new association was to promote the interests of the written press throughout the British Empire.⁴⁸ The owner of *The Daily Telegraph*, Lord Burnham, was chosen president of the organization and Lord Northcliffe was selected as treasurer.⁴⁹ In response to criticisms made by the francophone newspaper *La Presse* regarding his nomination, Northcliffe sent a letter to Fred Cook, his Ottawa correspondent, in which he specified that he accepted the position in answer to the urgent pleas of the promoters. He added that his action was in no way intended against the French-Canadians, as *La Presse* claimed:

"I am sorry for the attacks in 'La Presse' especially as they are unfounded. My only connection with the Imperial Press Conference is that, at the urgent wish of the promoters, I accepted nominally the post of treasurer. If you knew M. Dansereau, of 'La Presse' you might tell him how wrong he is in the matter and how particular I have always been to cultivate the friend-

⁴⁵ J. S. Mills, "The Press and Communication of the Empire", in H. Gunn, editor, *The British Empire*, vol. VI, Collins, London, 1924, p. 106. See also *History of The Times*, vol. 4-1, p. 12.

⁴⁶ *History of The Times*, vol. 4-1, p. 12.

⁴⁷ T. H. Hardman, *A Parliament of the Press, the first Imperial Press Conference*, Horace Marshall, London, 1909, p. 4. In the long list of representatives from Canada, Couclough from *La Presse* does not appear.

⁴⁸ Mills, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-111.

⁴⁹ *Times*, 11 May 1922, p. 13.

ship of the French Canadians. Sir Wilfrid Laurier knows this well enough." ⁵⁰

During this conference, overseas affiliates in Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and the British Antilles were organized to assure the coordination of activities in the far-flung reaches of the Empire. In Canada, J. S. Brierley of the Montreal *Herald* was named president. ⁵¹

[52]

La Presse had a bone to pick with the organizers of the conference. The newspaper's representative was refused the right to participate in the deliberations of the "Convention of Journalists assembled by Lord Northcliffe". In an editorial, the Montreal daily saw this refusal as proof of the intentions of the British imperialists:

"Voilà la preuve que nous avons heurté une ruche où il ne doit se faire que du miel impérialiste. Un journal comme "La Presse" ne peut qu'y jouer le rôle de frelon. Nous n'en sommes ni surpris, ni marré.

La conspiration jingoïste, encouragé par ses succès en Australie, se prépare maintenant, à frapper le grand coup pour le Canada. Parce qu'elle a détruit un premier ministre là-bas, elle se suppose irrésistible partout. Grand bien lui fasse. Elle ne sait pas à quoi elle a affaire.

Dans toute l'histoire de l'Empire britannique, nous n'avons jamais assisté à une telle indécence que cette convocation en cabinet particulier d'une presse que l'Angleterre n'a jamais connue qu'elle ne comprendra jamais et qu'elle est censée, par d'extravagantes réceptions, pouvoir enlever au contrôle de chaque gouvernement colonial et même au génie colonial. On veut que nos journaux échappent à leur entourage, à leurs attachements. Quelle prétention." (La Presse, 9 June 1909, p. 4)

⁵⁰ Northcliffe Papers, British Archives, London, # 4890, vol. cxlix, letter addressed to Fred Cook, 24 March 1909, p. 7.

⁵¹ T. H. Hardman, *A Parliament of the Press*, London, 1909, p. 7.

The editorialist concluded with a prediction:

"Nous savons que la prochaine lutte va se faire, en Canada, contre Laurier, mauvais serviteur de l'impérialisme militaire. Il va se produire une immense scission dans la population de notre pays. Laurier va subir personnellement tout le poids de la prochaine bataille. Telle est la conspiration en marche. La convention des journalistes à Londres n'en est que l'acte préliminaire. Tout y est si bien agencé qu'on refuse l'entrée à un trouble-fête comme 'La Presse' Notre pays n'a pas vu la fin de ces obsessions devenues insupportables." (La Presse, 9 June 1909, p. 4)

From a different perspective, Lord Milner believed that the 1909 conference encouraged the consolidation of unified action among the Dominions: *"It would have been impossible to have secured so united an effort from the Over-seas Dominions, with all that it meant of sorrow and sacrifice, had it not been for the Imperial Press Conference of 1909..."* ⁵²

[53]

The written press throughout the Empire reinforced its connections chiefly for political reasons:

"But for political reasons it is desirable that British ideas and ideals should have a fair chance of circulation through British Dominions, and with this object some efforts may well be made to correct the estranging or isolating effects of geographical distance." ⁵³

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵³ Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

Figure 2.

[TOC](#)



Sir Wilfrid Laurier dans un discours prononcé à Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. Campagne électorale, 20 septembre 1911
(Photo, L. P. Picard, Archives nationales du Canada)

Sir Wilfrid Laurier at a political rally in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. During the 1911 campaign. (National Archives of Canada)

[54]

2.2 Politics

2.2.1 Foreign Policy

Canada's Status on the International Scene

[TOC](#)

Between 1908 and 1909 Canada negotiated several treaties with foreign powers. One of these dealt with the division of fishing rights with the United States. (*The Times*, 13 March 1908, p. 5) Another concerned the establishment of trade links with France. (9 May 1908, p. 9) In both cases Canada did not act alone since it did not have the judicial power to sign treaties. Thus, when the United States and France signed these agreements, the treaties were officially with the British monarch, advised by his government, and not Canada.

During this period Canada wished to take its place on the international scene, as evidenced by the creation of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1909. The Prime Minister was the first to head the new department.

In his first contributions to *The Times*, Willison wrote that Canadian statesmen showed a desire to break with tradition in their demands for greater participation in the preparation of treaties involving Canada. Canadians believed that the past British diplomats who negotiated with the United States concerning Canada sacrificed the interests of the North American Dominion. (*The Times*, 24 May 1909, p. 38.)

The *Times* articles referred primarily to two agreements: the Ashburton Treaty and the Alaska Border Treaty. The authors of the articles alluded to these treaties without supplying background information; it may be helpful, therefore, to provide a brief history relevant to the question in order to understand the effects of these agreements on Canada.

The Ashburton Treaty was signed in 1842. It defined the borders between the American state of Maine and New Brunswick and Quebec. Two diplomats from the world of business were chosen to settle the question: Lord Ashburton was Britain's representative and Daniel Webster negotiated for the United States. Ashburton, a manager of the Baring Brothers Bank, went so far as to pay Webster sums of money for his role as intermediary between British investors and American debtors. Lord Palmerston renamed the treaty "Ashburton's Capitulation".⁵⁴

[55]

The Alaska border decision was made in 1903. A six-member tribunal was set up to resolve the issue. Two Canadians and one Englishman represented Great Britain: Allen Aylesworth, a prominent lawyer from Ontario, Amable Jetté, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec and Lord Alverstone.⁵⁵ The United States also had three delegates. To the Canadians' great dismay, their British colleague tipped the balance in favour of an American decision. The Canadians demonstrated their opposition by refusing to sign the document and presenting a minority report.⁵⁶

Articles published in *The Times* between 1908 and 1909 aimed to show by their tone and content that Canadian reproaches of the Mother country were no longer justified. (*The Times*, 5 January 1909, p. 6 and 9 April 1909, p. 5) Canadian imperialists supported this argument. Professor Stephen Leacock of McGill University raised his voice against rumour and hearsay: "*That treaty (Ashburton) turned upon the*

⁵⁴ For more details see Richard Current, "Webster Propaganda and the Ashburton Treaty", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 34, no 2, 1947-1948, pp. 187-200.

⁵⁵ Aylesworth reappeared in 1909 in negotiations dealing with fishing rights between Canada and Newfoundland. He was elected to the House of Commons as a Liberal in 1905 and occupied several Cabinet positions from 1905 to 1911 (Ministries of Post, Labour and Justice).

⁵⁶ For more details on this subject, see Charles S. Campbell, *Canada's Alaskan Dismemberment: an Analytical Examination of the fallacies underlying the tribunal Award, Niagara-on-the-Lake*, 1904; F. W. Gibson, "The Alaskan Boundary Dispute", *Canadian Historical Association Report*, 1945, pp. 25-40; J. A. Munro, editor, *The Alaska Boundary Dispute*, Toronto, Copp Clark, 1970.

interpretation of exact and legal rights, and if those rights had been literally interpreted, Canada would have got less territory..." Concerning the Alaska Border Treaty, Leacock esteemed that the man in the street condemned the British diplomats through pure ignorance. As for Willison, he considered it useless to rehash historical arguments. If Canadians found that the signatures on certain treaties were questionable, they should look after their own negotiations from this point forward, although they would continue to do so with the aid of a delegate from His Majesty. (*The Times*, 27 February 1909, 24 May 1909, p. 38.)

Laurier took a pragmatic approach to this subject. He was forced to acknowledge that the Dominion was not yet a sovereign state. Its negotiating powers were consequently limited even though Canadians were consulted and listened to more and more when their interests were involved:

"The treaty-making power must remain with the British Crown, as Canada was not a sovereign Power. Canadians should reflect that in the present condition of things they were consulted by Great Britain in the making of her foreign treaties and were not included in any treaty affecting their interests without their consent. Besides, in the matter of commercial treaties Canadians were allowed to make them themselves." (The Times, 29 February 1908, p. 5)

[56]

For true imperialists like Milner, however, the preparation of a commercial treaty between Canada and France posed a threat to the whole imperial order. This was very dangerous:

"The gravest feature of the case is that every engagement of this kind into which any of the Dominions may enter with a foreign power ties the hands of that Dominion and renders the establishment of a satisfactory system of reciprocal preference with other parts of the Empire difficult." (The Times, 24 May 1909, p. 48)

2.2.2 Domestic Policy

[TOC](#)

It is interesting to analyze the change in attitude of *The Times* towards Canada between the Canadian election of 1908 and that of 1911. In 1908, the newspaper was non-partisan concerning Canada and held a moderate imperialist position. In 1911, the publication supported the Canadian Conservatives, the only true defenders of jeopardized British Imperialism.

Following the 1908 ballot, the editorialists reiterated that Laurier was still the leading figure in Canadian politics. Even though Borden did not win the right to govern the country, he gained popularity. It was conceded that Borden also was the leader of a large political party, but it was smaller than Laurier's organization. Since both leaders opted to defend the interest of the Empire, *The Times'* conclusion was "May the best man win".

"The interest of the Empire does not lie exclusively with either side. For it is safe with both. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's service to the cause of Imperial union are such that no one in this country doubts where, on the great issue, his party stands. On the other hand, Mr. Borden leads the party which first established policy of national development on individual, self-reliant, and British lines: and should the verdict of the polls on Monday carry him to power, he will, we doubt not, worthily maintain the ruling principle which Sir John Macdonald, his great predecessor laid down." (The Times, 24 October 1908, p. 13)

Laurier's victory was well-received. The Canadian nation experienced great development owing to the character and ability of its people and the initiative and foresight of the Liberal government.

A change of attitude towards Laurier's party became clear in Willison's first articles for *The Times*, at the beginning of 1909. He claimed

that imperialist policy would be better served by Borden and the Conservatives :

"Imperialist sentiment probably is stronger in the Conservative than in [57] the Liberal party of Canada. The Conservative party goes back to the Family Compact. It cherishes the traditions of the United Empire Loyalists.(...) If tradition and heredity and sentiment count for anything it will be sympathetic towards all practical proposals for closer alliance with Great Britain and inhospitable towards any suggestion of a future for Canada outside the Empire. This beyond doubt, is the faith and the conviction of Mr. Borden, and he has the solid ability, the resolution of character, and the sense for historical continuity which should give adequate assurance that he will hold the Conservative party to the traditions of Cartier and Macdonald and Tupper."(The Times, 3 April 1909, p. 5)

It was still premature to speak of a change in attitude of the newspaper as a whole. It is useful here to trace the course of certain events of 1909, the results of which convinced *The Times'* management that Borden and his Conservatives were better suited to defend British interests in Canada than Laurier and the Liberals.

On March 29, 1909, to the great satisfaction of the British, the two main Canadian parties came to an agreement on the difficult question of Canada's naval contribution to the defense of the Empire. (*The Times*, 24 May 1909, p. 40) The House of Commons adopted a resolution recognizing the right of the Canadian people to assume a greater share of responsibility for national defense in proportion to increases in population and wealth. The same assembly was of the opinion that constitutional relations between the Mother country and its self-governing Dominions did not allow for the payment of regular contributions to the Imperial treasury for naval or military purposes. It did approve however the necessary expenditures to promote the rapid organization of a Canadian naval force in cooperation with the Imperial navy. The House thus respected the suggestions put forward by the Admiralty at the Imperial Conference of 1907 and continued to endorse the position that British naval supremacy was essential to commer-

ce, the Empire and world peace. Lastly, the politicians expressed their firm conviction that the Canadian people were ready and able to make the necessary sacrifices to provide loyal and sincere assistance to maintain the integrity and the honour of the Empire. ⁵⁷ (*The Times*, 24 May 1909, p. 40)

The consensus was clear and unequivocal. On June 17, Willison inveighed against the French-Canadian press for failing to inform its readers adequately and for its lack of imperialist sentiment. *La Patrie*, because it upheld responsible and non-partisan views, was excluded from this criticism. ⁵⁸ Its good sense and patriotism were demonstrated by its view that Canada should have its [58] own navy, the first duty of which would be to defend its shores and coastal trade. In case of an emergency, the Canadian navy would help maintain British supremacy, which after all, guaranteed Canada's security. (*The Times*, 1 July 1909, p. 14, article dated 12 June)

At the Imperial Conference of July 1909, the Admiralty had repeated its wish to have one Imperial Navy. It would accept aid from the Dominions, even though the latter wished to form their own naval units. ⁵⁹ In the July 29 editorial, *The Times* favoured the creation of national navies overseen by the colonies. *La Presse* from Montreal welcomed this change of attitude:

"Mais! Le Times de Londres lui-même n'est-il pas revenu à des sentiments meilleurs, à un raisonnement plus pondéré et surtout plus en harmonie avec la direction toute de sagesse et de prudence qui le guidait naguère." (La Presse, 29 July 1909, editorial, p. 4)

⁵⁷ Lord Grey, Governor-General of Canada, initiated this motion, according to Henri Bourassa, *Que devons-nous à l'Angleterre*, Montreal, 1915, p. 190.

⁵⁸ This paper was considered a Conservative publication at the time.

⁵⁹ Robert Borden, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 253 and Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens français*, vol. II, Cercle du Livre de France, 1963, p. 611.

At *The News* in Toronto, the Conservative policy seemed clear :

"Que va maintenant dire du grand journal anglais, le "News" de Toronto? Va-t-il l'accuser de déloyauté à l'Empire pour maintenant prêcher la même politique que celle de la 'Presse'? (La Presse, 29 July 1909, p. 4)

The preceding example illustrates that although Willison contributed periodically to *The Times*, he did not yet exert a strong influence on the newspaper's policies.

During the summer and autumn of 1909, Borden's Conservative party clarified its strategy and sought to differentiate itself from the Liberals. During the same period, Willison's position became more clearly defined: he was unquestionably pro-Conservative.

The Times was aware of this evolution. *The Toronto News* was the mouthpiece for Conservative policy in Canada and its influence, according to Fred Cook, its Ottawa correspondent, was steadily growing. (*The Times*, October 1, 1909, p. 3) During the latter part of 1909, Willison made several references to the problems experienced by the Conservative party of Canada.

The Toronto correspondent first emphasized that Borden's party, if it wished to take power, should accord more importance to Quebec. The leader of the Quebec Conservatives in Ottawa, F. D. Monk, was a francophone and [59] friend of Henri Bourassa. His opposition to any project of military aid to the Mother country was cause for worry in the elaboration of party strategy.

"The action of Mr. Monk places Mr. Borden in a difficult position. The French leader of the party has taken ground squarely opposed to that occupied by Mr. Borden himself, and in direct conflict with that taken by the whole party in Parliament. If Mr. Monk is allowed to retain his official relation with the Conservative party its prospects in the English constituencies may be seriously affected, while if he is removed by 'saluta-

ry neglect' or the compulsion of caucus every French Conservative member from Quebec is likely to separate himself from Mr. Borden on the naval issue." (The Times, 4 December 1909, p. 5)

The difficulties with the francophone province were not resolved. The Conservatives did not manage to rally the Quebec nationalists until 1910 and 1911.

Willison then went on to explain how the Conservative party succeeded, not without difficulty, in defining its policy on the defense question. It was necessary to settle the Borden affair first, as he had supported the Liberal government in its proposal to create a Canadian navy. The Conservative party had to oppose the Liberals concerning the means of contribution to Imperial defense, whether by favouring direct aid or by promoting the construction of "Dreadnoughts".

How can Borden's acceptance of this game be explained? According to Willison, it would seem that the possibility of his replacement sufficed. The Conservative leader was fifty-five years old in 1909 and had led the party since 1901. The party suffered two defeats under his leadership, in the elections of 1904 and 1908.

"Furthermore, while Mr. Monk opposes the naval project other leading Conservatives in Parliament, supported by influential newspapers, are insisting upon immediate and direct assistance to the Admiralty, ridiculing the government's "tin-pot navy" and incidentally challenging Mr. Borden's whole position. Indeed the divisions and dissensions within the party had become so acute that there was serious talk of Mr. Borden's resignation when Parliament opened. An element within the party believes that Mr. Borden is not aggressive enough or partisan enough, and though a tremendous mistake was made when the Opposition instead of demanding an immediate contribution to the Admiralty in money or Dreadnoughts united with the government in favour of the organization of a Canadian navy, this element or at least some of its more active spirits would bring Mr. McBride, now Premier of British Columbia to Ottawa and

make him the Conservative leader."(The Times, 4 December 1909, p. 5, article dated 18 November, the day that Willison [60] recommended contributing to imperial defense with the purchase of Dreadnoughts.)

On January 24, 1910, Willison was officially hired by *The Times*. Newspaper management saw this as a decisive manoeuvre against Laurier. The Liberal leader exceeded the limits when he asserted that Canadian participation in an Imperial war would not be assured without the consent of Parliament. The Empire was in peril. Grigg, Willison's superior in London, was sure of his correspondent's approval when, in a private letter dated May 10, 1910, he wrote:

"From this distance it seems to threaten Imperial consolidation in more ways than one. I hope you agreed with the leading article I wrote on 'Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Imperial Defense'. His speeches about the necessity of an Order in Council precedent to Canadian participation in any Imperial war went much further in the direction of absolute independence than anything of his that I remember. I am sure you will agree that the talk about autonomy is all nonsense. There is no possible menace to Canadian autonomy in the aims and aspirations of English imperialists today; but I do not see how we are to prevent unsympathetic statesmen from misrepresenting them in the way that Laurier always does." ⁶⁰

Having said this, Grigg counselled Willison to use all the means at his disposal to defeat Laurier in the following election. The Toronto journalist was to avoid criticism but instead to show, in a detached manner, where Laurier's arguments could lead, that is to the destruction of the British Empire:

⁶⁰ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, correspondence from Grigg to Willison, 13 May 1910, documents 29593 and 29594.

"It seems to me that our only possible policy in "The Times" is to call attention to the real significance of each delusive argument that Laurier presents. To speak in any tone that could be construed as unduly critical or denunciatory would simply enable him, I fear, to appeal as usual against the 'dictatorial' spirit of the British Imperialists; but I hope that the simple process of pointing out dispassionately to what end his arguments must inevitably lead may do something to encourage his own followers of British race to think them out more clearly, and also, perhaps, to help the Opposition in defeating them." ⁶¹

With this missive Willison received the unconditional support of his superiors [61] in London. He could continue without disturbance the campaign initiated at *The News*, that is to bring down, using whatever means necessary, this new enemy of the Empire. ⁶²

The opposition campaign of the Conservative Party was defined in the early months of 1910. The Navy Bill was adopted by Laurier's government, giving Canada a navy which would come to the aid of the Empire in case of war.

The Conservatives opposed the bill and suggested that the Dominion provide direct aid in the form of a contribution of \$25 million. The creation of an independent navy was too expensive. The Conservatives stressed the fact that, proportionately, Canada supplied less than Australia and New Zealand. Lastly, the opposition party declared that the Dominion had not given sufficient guarantee that, in time of war, Canadian warships would join the fleet of the Admiralty.

The Liberals believed that a direct contribution would weaken Canada's autonomy at a time when the country wished to be perceived as an equal partner in the Empire. Laurier's party proudly affirmed that their plan was approved by the British Admiralty itself. (*The Times*, 12 February, p. 7 and 26 February 1910, p. 5)

⁶¹ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, letter from Grigg to Willison, 13 May 1910, documents 29593 and 29594.

⁶² Harris, *A Study of the Politics of "The News"...*, p. 94.

It became more evident from an imperialist point of view that the Mother country was no longer able to assure the defense of its Empire which reached the far corners of the globe. At the Imperial Conference of 1907, the military correspondent for *The Times*, Repington, asserted that defense spending per capita in the United Kingdom amounted to 29 shillings 3 pence while in the Dominions the rate varied from 2 shillings to 5 shillings and 1/4 pence. Repington stated that the British Isles alone were no longer able to assume the defense of the Empire and the Mother country should welcome the idea of military forces from the Dominions. These armies and navies would be reinforced by whatever means necessary and in time of war would be united under a single leader.

"The time has come for us to admit with all its consequences, the self-evident proposition that the British Isles are not the only cradle of sea-power or land-power in an Empire whose flag floats on every sea and whose sons govern in every continent. The time has come for us to announce that we accept with enthusiasm the principle of Dominion navies as of Dominion armies, and that we are ready and willing to promote their growth by every means in our power, convinced that the vital principle of unity of command in a great war, whether on land or [62] on sea, will appeal to the common sense of every man worthy of the name in the wide Dominions of the Crown." (The Times, 24 May 1909, p. 43)

The Quebec nationalists, Bourassa (founder of the nationalist newspaper *Le Devoir* in 1910) and F. D. Monk in particular were against aid in any form to Imperial wars. While recognizing their links with the Empire, they suggested a plebiscite to resolve the question. They denounced the expenditures that would only serve the centralized interests of London and criticized both Laurier and Borden for having engaged Canada in this vortex of militarism. Millions of dollars were spent on war when the funds could be put to better use in agricultural development and improvements in the transportation system. (*The Times*, 18 July 1910, p. 5) In the 1911 election, the nationalists waged an anti-imperialist campaign with the objective of forming

a core of independent members who would hold the balance of power in Parliament.

For Willison, reciprocity was the main issue of the 1911 election. When he raised the question of Quebec, it was to demonstrate that the nationalists had a single goal, that is to obtain the balance of power in Ottawa. It was for this reason, continued Willison, that the nationalists strove to convince the French-Canadians that their government had forgotten them, that they were the victims of militarism and imperialism, that their rights and freedom were in danger and that they would gradually be drowned in waves of immigration. (*The Times*, 26 August 1911, p. 3)

The Quebec nationalists had one stipulation concerning the matter of defense: whatever policy was adopted, the final decision was to be left to the people by means of a plebiscite in which a majority decision would be faithfully accepted. The Conservatives, with Borden at their head, supported this idea of an appeal to the population. (*The Times*, 24 October 1911, p. 5)

It must be stated at this point that in the Canadian system, federal election results were largely dependent on Ontario and Quebec, with 86 and 65 seats respectively. Together the two provinces accounted for 68% of the members of Parliament. Laurier, who was in power since 1896, usually obtained from 49 to 56 representatives from Quebec.⁶³ A split between nationalist anti-imperialists and Laurier supporters could only benefit Borden's Conservatives.

Borden and the Conservative Party were voted into office in the election of September 21, 1911. They obtained a majority government with 124 [63] seats out of 221. The Liberals held only 87 seats. The Maritimes were divided between 12 Liberals and 16 Conservatives. Quebec elected 38 Liberals, 17 Conservatives and 10 nationalist members. Ontario assured Borden of victory with 73 Conservatives out of a total of 86 seats. Manitoba and British Columbia supported Borden (15 Conservatives and 2 Liberals) while Saskatchewan and

⁶³ J. M. Beck, *Pendulum of Power*, Prentice-Hall, Scarborough, Ontario, 1968, p. 135 and *The Times*, September 23, 1911.

Alberta gave their votes to Laurier (15 Liberals and 2 Conservatives).⁶⁴

Borden concluded that his victory expressed the wish of the Canadian people that he continue: "... in the old path of Canadian unity, Canadian nationhood, and the British connexion." (*The Times*, 23 September 1911, p. 6) He insisted that his party's success did not result from anti-American sentiment. His triumph at the polls was to be interpreted as a national and not a party victory. For the new Prime Minister, Canada's development since 1867 was best typified by the emergence of this strong nationalist sentiment. (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 13)

For the editorialists at *The Times*, the young country of Canada was the place where the British nation and the American republic could meet. As the defender of the British tradition on North American soil, Canada was instrumental in maintaining and strengthening ties between the Mother country and the United States. The British paper concluded that reciprocity imperilled Anglo-American relations in such a way that the results of a Canadian election had international repercussions:

"The two peoples are joint pioneers of the democratic movement, but their institutions are widely dissimilar and they envisage the problems of the hour in very different ways. Where one system felt to be encroaching upon the other, however gradual the steps, their common influence in the world would suffer irreparably from the breach that would ensue. Such a breach last year might have begun but Canada has willed it otherwise. She takes her place more firmly than ever as the warden of British traditions on North American soil, and in that capacity she stands between the Old World and the New, a pledge of what their common influence, with mutual respect, may bring to human progress and the cause of peace." (The Times, 24 May 1912, p. 13)

⁶⁴ J. M. Beck, *Ibid.*

Willison believed the Liberal defeat was due to the reciprocity issue. Had not Macdonald promoted a form of protectionism to save the Dominion's interests during the difficult period of the 1890's? His goals had been to encourage local industry, protect Canadian agriculture, assure employment to [64] Canadians and to stimulate inter-provincial trade. The Liberals had been able to take power in 1896 through compromise in their free exchange policy. (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 25) It was clear that reciprocity would jeopardize the east-west direction of trade, the basis of Canadian Confederation and, according to Willison, the recipient of over 900 million dollars of commercial investment.

Lastly, Canada, with its population of 8 million, could not hope to compete with 80 million Americans: "All these considerations explain the cooperation of manufacturers, workmen, farmers, bankers, and railways in the general Election and the decisive defeat of the government..." (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 25) Despite Willison's opinion, the farmers of Saskatchewan and Alberta did not contribute to the fall of Laurier's government; they had elected 15 Liberals out of a total of 17 seats. Moreover, it was well-known that the federal campaign in Quebec hinged on the naval question and not reciprocity, and Willison did not mention this fact. For him the election was the culmination of a project launched several years before at *The News*. His *Times* appointment gave him the opportunity to pursue his campaign to discredit the Liberals and their Imperial defense policy with renewed fervour. ⁶⁵

During the electoral campaign, the Conservatives stressed that direct aid was necessary to support the Empire. Once in power, Borden was more conciliatory on defense issues. In the middle of 1912, he presented a three point strategy. It was first necessary to question Imperial authorities concerning the gravity of the crisis facing Europe. With this information in hand, it was then possible to elaborate a firm policy on the topic of the navy; the idea of a plebiscite on this issue was retained. In exchange for aid, Canada would demand more direct

⁶⁵ On Willison and *The News*, see Harris, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-153, 186, 198.

representation on Imperial councils. In time of emergency, Canada would be consulted on whether or not to embark upon war.

"It still was necessary, however, to have a naval programme, and out of the complexities of the situation Mr. Borden evolved practical and logical proposals. His positions as stated in speeches which I have often quoted, was that if a Conservative government came into office there would be consultation with the Imperial authorities to ascertain whether there was such a crisis in the affairs of the Empire as required assistance from Canada. If he believed that such a condition existed, Parliament would be asked for prompt action in discharge of the obligation of Canada to the Empire. There would follow further consultation to devise a permanent Naval policy for the Dominion upon which the Canadian people would be asked to pronounce judgement. A condition, however, of such assistance in Naval defence would be a more direct representation of the Dominion in the councils of the [65] Empire and a voice in settling any emergency whether peace should continue or war be declared. Thus Mr. Borden's policy has three distinct aspects: - First, an emergency contribution by Canada: secondly, submission of a permanent policy for the approval of the Canadian people: thirdly, authoritative representation in Imperial councils." (The Times, 4 July 1912, p. 9)

The election remained important for the Conservatives who wished to appease nationalist Quebec; it was an important element in Borden's Conservative platform. However, the Prime Minister borrowed an item from his predecessor's policy when he stated that Canada would supply aid to the Mother country in return for the right to participate in decisions affecting it.

When Borden travelled to England in July 1912, Willison came to his aid with the publication of several articles praising the new leader and his devotion to the Empire. During the first months of office, said Willison, the new head of government had demonstrated all the characteristics of a great Prime Minister. He had been able to eradicate the negative powers of the Quebec nationalists. With Monk and cer-

tain members from Quebec forming part of his Cabinet, Borden had established representation from the entire country. (*The Times*, 4 July 1912, p. 9 and 10) ⁶⁶

Willison reported that the entire British nation welcomed Borden with great enthusiasm. Canada's ties to the Empire did not allow for half-measures. Canada would go to any lengths to help the Mother country maintain its superiority on the high seas: "There is a further feeling that if the naval proposals of Canada are adequate, the Empire will be impressed and British sentiment touched in as great a degree as when preference in favour of British goods was announced, or when the Canadian contingents were dispatched to South Africa." (*The Times*, 5 July 1912, p. 8) Willison predicted that Borden would offer the Admiralty two or three Dreadnoughts.

Borden reiterated his support for the Crown in his official speeches: "Our ideal has been one King, one flag, one Empire, one Navy." (*The Times*, 11 July 1912, p. 8) But the Canadian leader specified that no military aid would be given if it in any way proved detrimental to a hard-won autonomy: "I do not wish you for one moment to understand that I propose in that regard that any portion of the autonomy we have won in the past shall be sacrificed."

The *Times* editorialists realized that it was incumbent on the Imperial [66] government to accept Canada's demands, that is to link the defense burden with participation in decision-making. Nevertheless the editorialists conceded that it was Borden's duty to reconcile the desire for national autonomy with the question of Canadian participation in Imperial defense.

"What she is seeking now is a policy which at the same time will satisfy her own self-respect as a nation and relieve in the most effective manner the pressing needs of the Empire. (...) The difficulty which men like Mr. Borden have to face in their own country at the present moment is their constituents' inevitable ignorance of the facts which dictate our foreign policy, and that difficulty will never be overcome until the people of the

⁶⁶ Monk was the Minister of Public Works, L.-P. Pelletier was Post-master General and W. M. Nantel was Minister of Internal Revenue.

Dominion are satisfied that their own representatives have a constant hand in the game. A temporary remedy, we think, is to some extent in their own hands." (The Times, editorial, 17 July 1912, p. 9)

Back in Canada, Borden decided to pursue his policy of direct aid. Monk, one of his Cabinet ministers from Quebec, resigned in October because Borden failed to keep his promise of a plebiscite. ⁶⁷

The recommendations of the British Admiralty were brought to the attention of Canadians at the beginning of 1913. The first Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Winston Churchill, in documents sent to Borden on January 24, proposed that Canada allot 35 million dollars for the construction of naval warships in Britain in view of the emergency situation in Europe. These vessels would form the basis of the Canadian navy. (*The Times*, 12 March 1913, p. 8) Churchill's intervention created havoc in Canada. The Liberal party saw it as direct interference in national affairs with Churchill as a vestige of the English colonial system. ⁶⁸

The Times considered that the Admiralty had put forward a policy which was dictated by the urgency of the situation. It had no choice but to ensure the safety of the Empire; the development of local navies would waste valuable time. Direct aid such as Mr. Borden suggested was imperative:

"If Canada desires to add immediately to the fighting strength of the Naval forces of the Empire she can do so only in Mr. Borden's way. She cannot as yet build or manship herself, and we can only help her to do so by gradual degrees. In view of these conditions Mr. Borden's is a practical as well as a patriotic plan. It offers three splendid ships to the [67] Empire to meet a pressing need, and offers them on terms which the Admiralty, with a clear eye to all its responsibilities, can whole-heartedly accept. The Admiralty policy is dictated by necessity; there is

⁶⁷ Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de la Province de Québec, Les Ecoles de Keewatin*, vol. xvii, Montréal-Éditions, undated, pp. 165 to 170.

⁶⁸ *Canadian Annual Review*, 1913, p. 134 and following.

no room for choice. If the proposed Canadian ships were not to be made available in the manner which Mr. Borden suggests, the Admiralty, with the best will in the world to foster the alternative point, might still be compelled at the present juncture to keep its skilled and trained 'personnel' for other available ships." (The Times, editorial, 7 February 1913)

Borden attempted to have the budget of 35 million dollars for the construction of three warships approved by the government. The Senate which was predominantly Liberal at the time, aborted the project to the great dismay of the Conservatives who discovered the limits of their power despite a majority in the House of Commons.

The Senate reminded Borden that he had asked Laurier in 1910 and 1911 to submit his naval plan for approval to the Canadian electorate.⁶⁹ Had Borden himself not promised a plebiscite on his naval policy? The Prime Minister was asked to respect his promises. He preferred to disregard them in the hope that they would eventually be forgotten.

In his final analysis, Willison stated that the Liberals and the partisan press criticized the government's proposals because they saw in them a conspiracy to rob the Canadian Parliament of its sovereignty. It became a question of principle. The journalist wrote that the only valid outlook was to assume that both leaders, Borden and Laurier, were sincere and that the entire nation remained loyal to the Empire. On one hand, those who supported a strictly Canadian navy believed that it was the best means for Canada to evolve while defending the Empire. On the other hand, certain Canadians believed that colonial autonomy could be pushed to extremes, leading to complete separation. The latter considered that Imperial security could only be guaranteed by consolidation of the Empire. In conclusion, Willison demonstrated that on this issue Canadian interests won out over international obligations.

⁶⁹ Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens Français*, Cercle du livre de France, 1963, vol. I, p. 623, vol. II, pp. 35-36.

"We know our people, our conditions, and our history. Here the relative values of charges and countercharges are understood. But Canadians are jealous for their legitimate political authority in the Empire and are animated by an intense domestic patriotism. More and more this domestic patriotism accommodates itself to actual and practical identification with the Empire. But it must develop freely. There must be no suggestion that devotion to Canada, the expression of political opinion, or the [68] direction of national policy are restrained or obstructed by pressure from the Admiralty or dictation from Westminster. All this is said because the quarrel over naval policy is bitter and acute and because it is vital that British visitors should not involve themselves in favour of one party or the other in the controversy." (The Times, 22 July 1913)

The Liberals succeeded in presenting the defense of the Empire as a question of principle while the Conservatives made the issue a partisan debate. This may explain why Borden chose to forget his promises and bow to public opinion. The Prime Minister rose above party politics. The requirements of domestic policy prevailed over the demands of foreign policy. In 1910 the Naval question was debated along party lines; in 1913 the issue went beyond partisan politics. Canadian interests won out over Imperial obligations.

Willison's support of the Conservatives brought certain accolades. On Borden's recommendation, the journalist was knighted in 1913.⁷⁰ (Borden received the same honour in 1914.)

But *The Times'* Canadian correspondent also drew severe criticism, particularly from the Liberals. In the spring of 1913, a member of the Opposition, Rodolphe Lemieux, former Naval Minister in Laurier's Cabinet, rose in the House to denounce this ardent defender of the Conservative party. Lemieux claimed that Willison did not tolerate opposition :

⁷⁰ Stewart Wallace, editor, *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 4th edition, Toronto, 1978, p. 893.

"Sir John Willison, a new convert, cannot stand for one moment the opposition, the honest and sincere opposition, of a Liberal or radical to any proposition from his new friends on the Tory side, and when he is face to face with the opposition, being unable or rather unwilling to discuss the merits of the issue, he brands that opposition as a compact of foreigners and French-Canadians inimical to the gerat (sic, doubtless for 'great') interests of the British Empire." ⁷¹

Willison assured his superiors at *The Times* that there was no reason to apologize and that Lemieux should have been the last to complain, as he was always treated fairly in his articles.

[69]

2.3 The Economy

2.3.1 Reciprocity

[TOC](#)

The main concern of the economic debate which arose in 1910 was reciprocity with the United States. Laurier and the Liberals were its ardent defenders, supporting the principles of a *laisser-faire* economy adapted to the North American context. Borden and the Conservatives advocated a protectionist policy, which was more favourable to the British Empire.

Laurier's decision to champion reciprocity was influenced by lobbying from Western grain growers and Americans close to the White House. At the end of 1910, the administration of President W.H. Taft (Republican, 1909-1913) submitted an agreement to the Canadian go-

⁷¹ *Times* Archives, London, newspaper clipping sent from Willison to Grigg with a letter. The incident took place on May 7 in the House, the article was dated May 8 and the letter May 13, 1913.

vernment which would allow free exchange of certain goods between Canada and the United States. The President wanted to halt the rising cost of living in his country. Laurier saw the accord as a way to satisfy the demands of the Western farmers as well as achieving his ideal of economic liberalism.

Both leaders hoped the agreement would help avert a dilemma. Laurier faced strong opposition to his Naval Plan; Quebec nationalists and Conservatives attacked him from all quarters. In the United States, Taft wished to calm those who believed the 1909 tariffs (Payne-Aldrich Act) caused the inflationary rise in prices. He also sought to placate the American press which demanded lower prices on newsprint imported from Canada.

The Prime Minister maintained that reciprocity with the United States would not prevent Canada from continuing a policy of tariff preference with England. If Canada wished to have access to the American market, it was best to proceed one step at a time. (*The Times*, 13 August 1910, p. 5) The aim of the treaty, presumably advantageous for both sides, was to open the American market to Canadian producers, in order to promote greater prosperity in the country. (*The Times*, 12 October 1910)

Laurier faced opposition from his own party on the reciprocity question. Clifford Sifton, with the support of 18 influential Liberal members from the Toronto financial sector, came out publicly against the project.⁷² According to Sifton, the United States had taken little notice of Canada for much too long. Now that their northern neighbour was becoming more prosperous, the Americans looked to Canada with a view to annexation:

"During the whole of the last 30 or 40 years Canada has been ignored by the United States, which had turned a deaf ear to desire for better [70] trade relations. While that had been going on Canada had been protected by the strong arm of Great Britain, and thus enabled us to work out her destiny in peace and security. Now that she had arrived at a period in her history in which she was commercially independent, and able to

⁷² M. Wade, *op. cit.*, I, p. 641.

be of some use to the Empire which had protected her, a proposition was made that she should be turned from the way which led to the capital of the Empire into the path which led to Washington. This was the avowed motive of the President of the United States in presenting the Agreement...He went further, and said that he was supporting the arrangement because it led to annexation." (The Times, 1 March 1911)

Borden, as leader of the Opposition, reiterated that one of the goals of Confederation was to develop a strategy to encourage domestic trade along an east-west axis, as evidenced by railway construction linking the country. The Canadian rail network covered 3,584 kilometres in 1869 (2,240 miles) and extended over 39,609 kilometres in 1911 (24,731 miles). Did not British Columbia join Confederation under the express condition that the railway connection be made to the markets of the East? Reciprocity would favour north-south trade and consequently undermine all that union had accomplished. Protectionism was doubly advantageous for Borden: the traditional ties with England would be maintained and at the same time, the Americans would have to establish north of the border if they wished to benefit from protectionism. This would ensure development of the entire Canadian nation. (*The Times*, 15 February 1911, p. 17) The Conservative leader thought it evident that the United States desired reciprocity in order to destroy the preferential policy elaborated among the members of the British Empire. (*The Times*, 8 May 1911)

Let us note here that whatever policy was upheld, either reciprocity or protectionism, American economic imperialism would not be halted. It is surprising to observe that while protectionism with Great Britain was favoured, the influx of American capital to Canada was welcomed.

Several articles concerning reciprocity exposed points of view which varied according to class or region. In a commentary entitled "Canada and the Agreement: a Western view" (*The Times*, 4 May 1911, p. 5), the grain producers explained their policy. It was true that they defended reciprocity but at the same time they recommended an increase of 50% in tariff protection favouring England. They were convinced that opposition came from financial, commercial and in-

dustrial interests in Toronto and Montreal. The grain producers judged that they were better organized than ever before and able to make their opinions heard. Had they not led an entire nation to consider reciprocity?

A few weeks later the Winnipeg correspondent presented another view of the situation. (*The Times*, 20 May 1911, p. 7) He believed that the movement against reciprocity started not only in the west but throughout the country. It was false to claim that pro-American feeling had increased in the last decades. [71] The only distinct tendencies, according to this journalist, were stronger nationalist sentiments and closer ties with the Mother country. In this context, Canada demonstrated that it needed manpower and capital before it tried to broaden its markets.

The newspaper also reported on the opinions of industrialists who represented Ontario interests and to a lesser degree those of Quebec and the other provinces.⁷³ The members of the Canadian Association of Manufacturers vigorously opposed the plan for reciprocity. Faith in protectionism was renewed. W. H. Rowley, president of the Eddy Company of Ottawa, outlined the problem in a speech before the members of the Association:

"Let us stick to the British Preference and to Imperial Union (...) I have always believed in Protection, have always advocated it, and will always continue to do so. I have no politics other than Protection: and hope none of you have. If you have them, I think you should sink them for the good of the Association, for Protection is the only politics that the Association should recognize." (The Times, 24 August 1911, p. 11)

⁷³ In 1910, the Canadian Association of Manufacturers numbered 2,608 members. 1,602 were from Ontario, 635 were from Quebec, 113 were from British Columbia, 102 from Manitoba, 88 from Nova Scotia, 50 from New Brunswick, 16 from Saskatchewan and Alberta and 2 from Prince Edward Island. (*The Times*, 24 May 1911, p.11)

As far as Willison was concerned, he found it legitimate to claim that closer commercial links with the United States could indirectly and insidiously weaken the ties between the Dominion and the Mother country. (*The Times*, 31 July 1911, p. 5) By endorsing protectionism, Canadians simultaneously favoured an independent Canadian nationality and the conservation of close relations with the Empire. (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 25)

A true imperialist, Willison believed that consolidation of the Empire could be achieved by protectionism among its members. The journalist demonstrated his faith in protectionist policy at the beginning of 1913 in an incident at *The Times*.

Lord Grey, former Governor-General of Canada, sent a letter which *The Times* published in its edition of 15 January 1913. In it he stated that reciprocity as recommended by Laurier: "...might have brought about a nearer approximation to that ideal of inter-Imperial Free Trade which is so dear to the heart of Mr. Austen Chamberlain." He admitted that Laurier's project had not been aimed against the Empire. (*The Times*, 15 January 1913, p. 7)

These statements angered Willison. Several weeks later he wrote a [72] lengthy letter to Grigg, in which he denounced the fact that Grey offered his opinion on a topic which had been hotly contested during the last federal elections and which still divided political parties. Grey even went so far as to suggest that had the agreement been signed, there would have been an increase in British trade preference. If such was the case, Willison added, Grey was privy to confidential information that he himself lacked. He stated that this information was not true. Grey's pronouncements were foolish and unacceptable, concluded Willison:

"He (Lord Grey) declared himself on an issue on which we had just fought a keen general election and which is still a question dividing parties in Canada. He even intimated that if the trade agreement had gone into effect there would have been an increase in the British preference. If this be true, it never has been so declared by any Liberal leader in Canada and Lord

Grey could have such information only through confidential relations with his former ministers. For my part I do not believe the statement to be true. In my own judgement Lord Grey's action was foolish and intolerable to the last degree. He never had much steadiness nor much judgment." ⁷⁴

According to what appeared in *The Times*, the Liberal party leaders did not, as Willison stated, specify that reciprocity with the United States would coincide with increased tariff preference with the Mother country. The grain producers, however, publicly asserted that they advocated increased protection with England and, at the same time, favoured reciprocity with the United States. (*The Times*, 4 May 1911, p. 5) In his desire to oppose the Liberals, Willison saw only the negative aspects of their policy. One thing is certain: the incident showed that Willison was an ardent protectionist. This was not the case for all British or Canadian imperialists. ⁷⁵

What was the newspaper's official policy on this question? The editorialists believed that reciprocity could not be in Canada's interest. (*The Times*, 1 February 1, 1911). The Americans wished to facilitate the entry of raw materials into their country in order to increase their capacity to export finished products. An agreement between the two nations appeared equitable but the United States possessed a stronger domestic market, a larger mass of active capital and a superior commercial network. They would have the upper hand, no matter what the transaction. The editorial went on to say that both Canada's internal affairs and its ties with the Empire were at risk. Reciprocity [73] could precipitate an Imperial crisis. It was urgent to find ways to bolster the Imperial relationship instead of weaken it.

A second editorial declared that the lowering of tariffs on wheat and other comestibles between the United States and Canada would cause the price of these products to rise in Great Britain. The newspaper was anxious to make its position clear: between wheat and the Empire, the choice was clear :

⁷⁴ *Times* Archives, London, letter from Willison to Grigg, 14 February 1913.

⁷⁵ Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*, Toronto, 1970.

"We do not grudge the Canadian farmers the chance of getting more for their wheat, which they have a perfect to do if they can; but, then, we are not prepared to sacrifice the Empire for cheap wheat. Those who are would be in a curious position if their policy were to result in dearer wheat." (The Times, editorial, 3 February 1911)

This was the newspaper's official policy. However, Willison's superior at *The Times* Foreign Department, Edward Grigg, privately asked his Canadian correspondent to exploit all his experience and knowledge to offer arguments against free trade in his contributions to the paper: "Your article on reciprocity was most interesting and timely. It is extraordinary how much effect has been produced by the activities of the Free Trade Union and other organizations in proclaiming the coming conversion of Canada to Free Trade. You cannot give us too much argument and evidence on the other side: I am sure we ought to keep hammering the real facts into the British public relentlessly." ⁷⁶

The newspaper's Washington correspondent reported that the Americans believed the Canadians had been led into error (*The Times*, 6 October 1911, p. 3) and they regretted this fact. Investments proved that Americans were aware of Canada's potential. Canada was no longer even considered a foreign country. The American attitude towards Canada was similar to that of a big brother watching the foolish behaviour of his younger sibling. The United States wanted to remain on friendly terms with their Canadian neighbours.

After the election, it became clear to the British newspaper that as long as the central provinces remained the most populous, their interests would be imposed on the rest of the country. This fact explained the victory of protectionism over reciprocity and the victory of the central provinces over the West.

⁷⁶ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, letter from Grigg to Willison, 14 October 1910, document 29660.

"Free trade, therefore, is the interest of the western farmers, just as it was the interest of the English manufacturers at the time of the [74] repeal of the Corn Laws. But the manufacturing establishments of Ontario and Quebec need a tariff in order to hold the Canadian markets against American competition. Hence there is a division of opinion between east and west. At present the manufacturing and protective provinces of the east are far more populous than the farming provinces of the west, and are therefore likely to have their own way in the Dominion Parliament for some time to come."(The Times. 15 August 1913, p. 14)

The reciprocity issue, as analysed in *The Times*, emerges as a struggle among several groups to control public opinion. The newspaper campaigned against the Canada - United States agreement because it saw a serious threat to the economic association between the Dominion and the Empire. The interests of central Canada dominated the rest of the country and Willison was the unconditional defender of these interests. Through continued effort, he succeeded in influencing *The Times*.

The reciprocity issue illustrated to what extent Canada was dominated either by the central provinces within its borders, or by the external interests of the United States and England. England effectively allied herself with the nationalists of Ontario, who saw, in the strengthening of the Empire, the realization of their affective and economic interests which were the bases of what they believed to be the one true nationalism in Canada. The failure of reciprocity did not signify, as some claimed, Canadian independence; in one way or another, Canada remained subject to external influence on its economy.⁷⁷ Both protectionism and reciprocity revealed the influence of these factors on the country's domestic policy. In this aspect, Canadian economic structure reflected either interdependence according to liberal ideology, or dependence, based on a conservative interpretation.

⁷⁷ D. J. Creighton, *Dominion of the North*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1972, p. 435.

2.3.2 American Imperialism

[TOC](#)

As we have already mentioned, Canada's industry developed with the contribution of foreign capital which came mainly from the United Kingdom and the United States. Were Canadians aware at this time of the fact that American imperialism was ineluctably replacing British imperialism? How did one system differ from the other?

For several Canadian analysts, there was a marked difference between investors from Great Britain and the United States. (*The Times*, 4 January 1911, p. 5) The Americans were much more aggressive: they invested capital in avant-garde sectors such as pulp and paper and mines. The English, on the [75] other side, continued to invest in the infrastructure (railways, canals) or finance (banks, insurance companies). Certainly the British invested a great deal more than the Americans, but the long-term outlook was uncertain.

The United States had more than 76 business agents scattered throughout the Dominion, who worked unceasingly to drive trade towards their country. The English had only a few agents covering the same territory. (*The Times*, 4 January 1911, p. 5)

Other factors such as the distance from markets and the distinct tastes of North Americans put the Mother country at a further disadvantage. It took between eight and twelve days to deliver goods from Liverpool to Halifax. The same merchandise could be sent in one day from New York to Montreal or Toronto. The cost of transport added another handicap. In 1908, it cost 63.25 cents to ship 100 pounds of merchandise from South Wales to Winnipeg. The rate rose to 70.5 cents in 1909 and 74.25 cents in 1910. (*The Times*, 14 March 1910, p. 5; 28 May 1910, p. 7 and 2 January 1911, p. 7)

For certain British businessmen it was difficult to break into the Canadian market because of American innovations in packaging: sales were helped by the attractive appearance of a product. Moreover, the inhabitants of the New World seemed to prefer esthetics over quality.

"On the New World citizen it can be said that he is often contended with less substantial goods than the Englishman: he thinks much of neat appearance and loves change. (...) The stress of competition, the desire to catch the consumer's eye, and to extend sales drive the American manufacturer on." (The Times, 1 February 1911, p. 10)

The Americans analyzed their position from a different angle. Several industrialists, once they had covered the national market, saw Canada as a means to broaden their clientele. (Remarks made by Mr. Foss, Governor of Massachusetts, as reported in *The Times*, 8 August 1913, p. 17) Moreover, when the Americans decided to invest north of the border, they were able to benefit from the preferential tariffs which allowed them access to the markets of the British Empire. A report prepared for the American government in the middle of 1913 noted the increased growth of commercial ties between Canada and the United States, in spite of the failure of reciprocity in 1911.

"The report will show that the United States are making more rapid progress in the Canadian markets than any other country. Its figures would seem to tend to prove, especially when taken in conjunction with the export of American manufacturing plants to Canada (described in a recent article), that Great Britain will have to bestir herself if the Empire is to reap such commercial advantages as ought to have accrued from the defeat of reciprocity between the Dominion and her southern [76] neighbour. The report shows that whereas in 1902 the United States supplied 58.4 per cent of Canadian imports they last year supplied 63 per cent." (The Times, 25 August 1913, p. 16)

The question remains: Did protectionism benefit the Canadian Dominion? During the nineteenth century, according to *The Times*, tariff protection allowed gradual settlement of Canadian territory and ensured the country's development. Macdonald's national policy in 1879 reflected this view: "Plainly stated, the British market became

Canada's salvation; and it is very largely still. Coming as it did at this stage the preferential tariff fitted in with the natural course of evolution, and it gained additional support from the outburst of Imperial sentiment at the time of the South African War and subsequently." (*The Times*, 29 December 1910, p. 3)

Despite these analyses, it must be noted that, with or without reciprocity, the Americans superseded the British in Canada. For example, Canadian imports of American steel rails increased from 45,818 tons in 1908 to 90,810 tons in 1912. Farm machinery imported in 1908 reached a value of \$1,715,795; in 1911-1912 the amount rose to over \$4,181,842. (*The Times*, 11 December, 1912, p. 17)

The Times, ever sensitive to the concerns of the business sector, took a particular interest in economic analysis. Subjects other than reciprocity were dealt with in *The Times*. They reflected the diverse aspects of the development of a liberal economy in the Canadian milieu. Thus the central government played a fundamental role in the construction of the rail network. In the pulp and paper sector, which traversed a period of tremendous growth, it became clear that the provinces retained important control over their natural resources. According to the Canadian constitution, each level of government, by its jurisdictions, had a role to play.

2.3.3 *The Railways*

[TOC](#)

The development of the Canadian railway system was an important subject for the governments of Canada and also for local and foreign investors. The national economy was based on east-west trade; the train augmented traffic between industrial centres and consumers.

Public funds financed the construction of the railway network. In 1913 direct government subsidies totalled \$9.75 million, \$9.17 million of which came from the federal level. (*The Times*, 3 February 1914, p. 18) The remainder was contributed by provincial and municipal governments.

The year 1913 marked the end of an exceptional period in this sector. Several *Times* analysts maintained that the goal of Canadian Confederation was to pool resources to ensure the development of infrastructures. From 1863 [77] to 1913, the Canadian rail system increased from 3,502 kilometres to 46,886 kilometres. In the single decade 1903-1913, the railways grew by 60%. (Table I: *Principal Railway Systems in Canada, 1863 to 1913*)

A more detailed analysis shows that the provinces had an uneven share in this development. (Table II: *Principal routes of Railways, by province, Canada 1913*) Quebec had fewer routes in its system than Ontario. Provinces such as Manitoba (6,388 km) and Saskatchewan (7,441 km) soon outstripped Quebec.

The analysts of the period were not preoccupied with such details. Their principal interest was to inform the public concerning the railway's expansion in the new provinces. It was these new provinces, moreover, that denounced the injustice of the Canadian Pacific Railway: transport rates were higher in the West than in the East. (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 26)

In the following studies which deal with specific economic sectors, our goal is to understand better the manifestations of tariff protectionism. In the pulp and paper sector, the governments took a firm stand. As for the wool industry, protectionism appeared essential to protect the young industry. However certain paradoxes existed in Canada. In spite of its tariff policy, the Dominion did not protect its industry as well as the United States. Banks invested in the United States rather than in Canada. Lastly, the economic crisis of 1913 proved that the Dominion was indeed linked to the world economy.

[78]

Table I

Growth of main track by 10 year periods (1863-1913).

[TOC](#)

	Km	Miles
1863	3 502	2 189
1873	6 115	3 822
1883	15 323	9 577
1893	24 008	15 005
1903	30 380	18 988
1913	46 886	29 304

(Times, 3 February 1914, p. 18).

Table II

Railway completed and under construction by province (Canada, 1913).

	Completed		Under construction	
	Km	Miles	Km	Miles
Nova Scotia	2 176	1 360	179	112
Prince Edward Island	446	279	-	-
New Brunswick	2 472	1 545	870	544
Quebec	6 377	3 986	2 428	1 518
Ontario	14 400	9 000	4 763	2 977
Manitoba	6 388	3 993	1 395	872
Saskatchewan	7 441	4 651	6 411	4 007
Alberta	3 539	2 212	7 572	4 733
British Columbia	3 121	1 951	6 214	3 884
Yukon	163	102	-	-

(Times, 3 February 1914, p. 8).

2.3.4 Reasons for protecting industry: the forestry sector and the wool industry

[TOC](#)

In 1910, the Quebec provincial government, led by Lomer Gouin and the Liberal party, passed a law obliging investors, especially Americans, to process within provincial boundaries the wood that was cut on Crown territory. (*The Times*, 4 May 1910, p. 5) In doing so, the province of Quebec followed Ontario's example; this province had succeeded in imposing its rights ten years previously. (*The Times*, 13 October 1911, p. 13) Because natural resources were a provincial jurisdiction, Ontario wished to encourage local industrial employment with its legislation. Of course the Americans opposed this measure and appealed to the courts. They declared the law *ultra vires*, since it circumvented the federal government which had jurisdiction over external trade. (*The Times*, 6 November 1911, p. 20)

Judge Osler, of the Court of Appeal, thought otherwise. In his decision he stated that the law concerned only provincial property and the province had the right to sell or not to sell this property as it pleased. This law could not be voted on by the Dominion and was thus *intra vires* of the province in question. This decision was rendered in 1900. (*The Times*, 9 November 1911, p. 23)

The way was clear for the other provinces. Quebec passed a similar law in 1910; Nova Scotia and New Brunswick followed suit in 1911. With such legislation, the provinces wished to ensure that a portion of their natural resources would be used in local economic development.

One of the reasons motivating Canada's protectionist economic policy was the newness of the industrial sector. This fact was often mentioned in *The Times*. The provinces enjoyed an advantageous position in the case of pulp and paper, but the situation was exceptional. More often Canada had to apply a protectionist tariff policy because of its economic weakness. The country's economic strength lay in the abundance of natural resources and its weakness was evident in the manufacturing sector.

An analysis of the wool industry shows the disadvantages that Canada experienced compared to its competitors and the necessity to protect its national market. What were the advantages of the English wool industry? (*The Times*, 27 June 1913) Salaries were lower in England, it was easier to hire qualified personnel and less capital was required (50% less than in Canada), according to the newspaper. London, a great international trade centre, was the gateway to wide and diverse markets. Coal was 50% cheaper in England and distances were smaller, which facilitated both supply and sales in local markets. Lastly the interest rates were lower in England. For all these reasons, Canadians could not hope to compete with the English and it was essential that their products be protected in Canada. Thanks to this protection, the entire textile industry [80] showed a marked increase in production value between 1890 and 1910, jumping from \$10.9 million to \$27.1 million.

Protective tariffs also allowed the United States to establish its industry. When it became one of the most highly-industrialized nations in the world, the tariffs were no longer necessary. For this reason industrialists believed that tariffs would favour Canadian interests. To do so, preference should be given to the Mother country and to any other part of the British Empire where trade agreements could be signed. It was deemed beneficial to maintain a minimum tariff, thus ensuring adequate protection of Canadian industries. (*The Times*, 17 September 1913, p. 13)

When Canada's protectionist policy is analyzed in this fashion, there is little place for ambiguity. However, studies based on reality reveal certain contradictions in the Dominion's economic policy. The United States prevented the entry of manufactured goods. Canada had little choice but to export raw materials and protect its domestic market with tariffs. While the United States levied a 44% tax on 40 staples found in both countries, Canada maintained its rate at 24%. The author of an article dealing with this subject considered that the opposite situation could have been expected, because a young industry has greater need of protection. (*The Times*, 2 January 1911, p. 7) How can such a situation be explained? The author, a Canadian, supplied no answer. He built his argument by opposing reciprocity with the United States. The neighbours to the south asked Canadians to lower their

tariffs; in return, they would not raise theirs. He concluded that such a situation was unfair.

2.3.5 Canadian Banks

[TOC](#)

It may be concluded from the preceding paragraphs that a government would obtain several advantages by protecting specific industries, especially if these industries had difficulty competing in international markets. Conversely, if an industry became very competitive in external trade, the benefits of free trade were evident.

In Canada's economy, the governments exercised a *laissez-faire* policy. It is not surprising then to discover that Canadian banks made foreign loans, especially to the United States, Mexico or South America. The bankers justified their actions by the necessity to increase their investors' holdings:

"It is represented that Canada necessarily is an enormous borrower of British and foreign capital, and that the Canadian banks are under a peculiar obligation to use their funds, consisting mainly of the savings of the Canadian people, in assisting home enterprises, and in developing the resources of the country. The answer of the banks is that they are bound in all justice to their shareholders and to use their capital to the best advantage, and that by the system of call loans in New York and [81] elsewhere they have what is practically liquid capital available for use in any emergency in Canada." (The Times, 24 May 1912, p. 28)

2.3.6 *The Beginning of the Economic Crisis*

[TOC](#)

The newspaper, prompted by difficulties on the international economic scene, explored the Canadian situation. Was it necessary for the Dominion to continue its substantial borrowing from international markets to maintain its expansion? (*The Times*, 29 July, p. 17, 7 August, p. 20, 8 August, p. 22, 16 August, p. 13, 20 August, p. 13, 1913) A series of articles in *The Times* attempted to answer this question. With a population of 8 million and an annual immigration rate estimated at half a million, Canada had few options. Federal and provincial governments, municipalities, industrialists and railway builders were all forced to borrow. As a rule the loans were well-managed and the borrowers were justified in their demands. According to the newspaper's experts, these loans were beneficial. Municipalities, however, should have exercised more restraint. In 1912, Canada's debt to England was over \$2 billion. Such a high rate of borrowing was tolerated because of Canada's extraordinary natural resources.

By 1913, however, the lack of capital began to be felt and caused concern, not only in Canada but throughout the world. Warnings of a prolonged crisis came to an end in the first year of the war.

In conclusion, it must be recognized that the defeat of reciprocity did not prevent the continental integration of the Canadian economy. Secondly, protectionism with Britain did not halt the rise of American imperialism in Canada, but instead seemed to favour it. Consequently it appeared that debate on the reciprocity question centred on political preoccupations. The British were well advised to maintain their traditional ties: in time of war they were assured of production centres. For Canadian businessmen, trade protection guaranteed control over the national market and in time of war, they would produce goods for the Empire. Politicians like Borden saw a means of ensuring Canadian development, one way or the other, and this development would continue in harmony with the nationalist sentiments of English-Canadians. This nationalism advocated the maintenance and strengthening of ties with the Mother country, the ancestral homeland. If

this nationalism was too strongly attached to external foundations, it could easily be swayed by happenings outside the country. Secondly, this movement left no place for French-Canadian nationalism, which had a more continental character.

[82]

2.4 Society

2.4.1 Immigration

[TOC](#)

Because of its historical, economic and cultural links with the Mother country, Canada traditionally favoured immigration from the British Isles to settle its vast territory. The accelerated growth of development at the beginning of the twentieth century created a pressing need for manpower. The demand was such that the United Kingdom alone could not send enough immigrants to Canada so the doors were opened to newcomers from Central Europe (Germany, Austria, the Balkan States, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland), Eastern Europe (U.S.S.R, Poland and the Baltic States), Southern Europe (Italy and Greece), and to a lesser degree, Northwest Europe (France, Belgium and Holland). There were also numerous American immigrants. The arrival of these varied nationalities preoccupied Canadian imperialists who perceived a threat to the integrity and the controlling power of the English in Canada. Of course immigration had its economic advantages but to English Canada, these benefits were also political. Would not the newcomer keep his allegiance to his country of origin?

"immigration has an important bearing upon this market, because British new-comers to Canada will give a preference to British as against American goods, all other things being equal; and the more British people who come to Canada, the less strenuous the fight of British firms for Canadian trade may become." (The Times, 12 February 1910, p. 7)

Consequently the United Kingdom benefitted twofold from the emigration of its citizens. This movement helped to ease over-population problems in Great Britain and also served to strengthen pro-imperialist sentiment in the welcoming country. However a problem arose because the British were no longer emigrating in numbers sufficient to meet the Canadian demand. Willison stated that the Dominion accepted 1,250,000 immigrants between 1900 and 1910, over 50% of which were from the United States.⁷⁸ What attachment could these immigrants have to Great Britain? What interest could they have to favour the Empire in Canada? The correspondent concluded that this new "melting pot" augured very badly for the Empire:

"No one apprehends that they will fail in loyalty to Canada: but how are they to be attached to Great Britain and interested in the fortunes of the Empire (...) For without Canada the Colonial Empire of Britain would dwindle immeasurably in power and dignity." (The Times, 24 May 1910, p. 40)

[83]

The majority of the new arrivals settled in the West. Willison predicted that fortunately the Western provinces would remain loyal to the Mother country since the ruling classes were of English-Canadian stock:

"Besides the British Canadian, like the stock from which he springs, has an easy confidence in his own capacity and virtue, and takes it for granted that alien peoples must regard it as a blessing and a privilege to live under British institutions. As yet

⁷⁸ M.C. Urquhart, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1965, pp. 23 and 29. According to this guide, there was a total of 1,685,808 immigrants between 1900 and 1910. American immigrants numbered 431,321 between 1904 and 1910. It would appear that *The Times* underestimated the total number of immigrants and overestimated the proportion of immigrants from the United States

the West is governed mainly by English-speaking Canadians who were born and educated in Older Canada. The chief commercial houses, the banks, and the railways are managed by Canadians from the older provinces. The medical and legal professions, the Judges, the clergy of all denominations, the teachers in the schools and Universities are from the East or from the Old Country. The Premier of Manitoba was born in Ontario, so was the Premier of Saskatchewan, and also the Premier of Alberta, while the Premier of British Columbia was educated in Nova Scotia. Naturally, therefore, the institutions of the West express the spirit of Older Canada and are fashioned in loyalty to the Mother Country. But can we be so sure that this is a permanent condition as to be indifferent to the future and careless of the means which make for national unity and Imperial consolidation." (The Times, 26 November 1910, p. 7)

To attract more British immigrants and counter-balance the massive influx of "foreigners", several Canadian organizations, in particular the various governments, mounted publicity campaigns. Canadian advertisers chose several means to transmit their messages. They bought space in newspapers and opened offices throughout the United Kingdom to help potential emigrants. According to advertisements published in *The Times*, Canada had immigration agencies operating in numerous cities: Liverpool, Birmingham, Exeter, York, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Belfast and Dublin. (*The Times*, 25 May 1914, p. 3) Canada was presented as a promised land with an abundance of wealth. The farmer could become his own master; Canada was proud to be known as the breadbasket to the Empire. Agriculture flourished in all the provinces and the Canadian government guaranteed a job to anyone who wanted to work. These were not the only attractions: the system of communications was sufficiently developed to permit prosperous growth in industry. Fisheries, the forests and the potential for hydro-electric power offered enormous economic possibilities. As a rule, however, farmers were the most sought-after candidates for immigration. (*The Times*, 24 May 1909, p. 26; 24 May 1912, p. 3)

How can the relatively small numbers of immigrants from the Mother country be explained? Repeated appeals from the promoters made issue of the urgent need for competent farmers, able to adapt to the

country's climate, vast spaces and culture. The possibilities of Britain providing such immigrants were limited. Americans were able to fill the gap as they were more competitive and better adapted to the North American context.

[84]

In a conference given before the Royal Colonial Institute in 1913, J. S. Dennis, representative of the Canadian Pacific Railway, reminded his audience that there were actually few farmers in England. At the most, 240,000 families were engaged in agricultural activity. (*The Times*, 17 January 1913, p. 37) The speaker explained that his company had evolved a system of "ready-made farms" to promote immigration from the Mother country. In this programme, a house and barn were built, a well was dug and a portion of the land was prepared for agriculture. These preparations facilitated the newcomers' arrival on the land. The company also wished to limit sales of the land which the government had granted in order to restrain speculation. The president of the conference, Lord Grey, wished to clarify the details of the C.P.R. spokesman's project. *The Times* wrote: "Lord Grey said that Mr. Dennis, through an oversight, had omitted to say that the Canadian Pacific limited the ownership of the ready-made farms to men from the motherland." (*The Times*, 17 January 1913, p. 37)

It was clear that the Mother country could no longer answer the immigration needs of Canada, despite the special treatment offered by the C.P.R. In the 1911 census, the English, Irish and Scottish numbered 3.8 million, the French-Canadians, 2.05 million and other nationalities 1.4 million out of a total population of 7.2 million. The French and "foreign" portions of the population almost reached the total of the population of British origin. The imperialists were puzzled by this fact. Willison considered that the francophones no longer posed a threat in the west ⁷⁹ and they continued to be passive loyalists and de-

⁷⁹ According to the article, out of 455,614 Manitobans, 39,665 were Austro-Hungarians and 30,944 were French. Alberta's population included 36,862 Germans, 26,427 Austro-Hungarians and 19,825 French out of a total of 374,663. Saskatchewan's total of 492,432 inhabitants comprised 68,628 Germans, 41,651 Austro-Hungarians and 23,251 French. *The Times*, 9 May 1914, p. 7.

voted Canadians, but they were not in favour of increasing political cooperation with England. (*The Times*, 9 May 1914, p. 7)

Willison's preoccupations were evident in his private correspondence with his superiors in London: "*What will be the situation ten years from now when the foreign born population and the French clearly outnumber the Canadian and British born elements?*"⁸⁰ The journalist demonstrated his tendency to consider Anglo-Saxons the only "true" Canadians, whether they were born in Canada or in Great Britain: French-Canadians were identified with the foreign elements in the country.

Let us summarize certain details concerning immigration to Canada at this period. Immigration to Canada took place for economic and political reasons. Despite the preoccupations and efforts of Canadian imperialists to encourage [85] the entry of British immigrants, their numbers were inadequate. Firstly, the Dominion required agricultural manpower but the United Kingdom had few farmers. Adaptation to the climate and agriculture was difficult for the British. Such was not the case for the Americans who also brought capital to the country. Consequently the Mother country was at a disadvantage in that her farmers could not compete with their American counterparts. The government had to open the doors. National development won out over that of the Empire; economic interests prevailed over political sentiments. The Dominion continued its North American integration and became ever more closely linked to its neighbour: "*Canada and the United States have common traditions and common institutions, a common language and a common faith. They are separated for hundreds of miles by an invisible boundary.*" (*The Times*, 9 May 1914, p. 7)

In spite of this absence of a border between the two countries, Canadians felt the need to be seen as a distinct nation.

⁸⁰ *Times* Archives, London, letter from Willison to Dawson, 27 February 1913.

"Do the British people understand or reflect upon the complexity of the Imperial problem in Canada? (...) There will never be another Britain, and Canada could not reproduce any other land without treason to her own great opportunity to express herself." (The Times, 9 May 1914, p. 7)

2.4.2 The French-Canadians

[83]

In his very first contributions to *The Times*, Willison declared that Quebec was bound to lose its influence in Confederation as the West became more populous; of course the French-Canadian element would continue to be of importance in the country's policies, but that would be due to the sympathetic, generous and tolerant attitudes of English-Canadians.

"Quebec unquestionably will lose influence in the Confederation as the Western provinces fill with settlers; but the compact French Canadian (sic) will continue to be powerful in the politics of the country, and it is to the credit of English-speaking Canadians that their general attitude towards Quebec is sympathetic, generous and tolerant." (The Times, 4 December 1909, p. 5)

English-Canadians dominated Canada in 1910 and Willison believed they should continue to do so. Out of 221 seats in the House of Commons, were not 89 from ridings where the French-Canadian population was predominant? He reiterated that England was not the [86] homeland of these citizens. Willison also confirmed that Canada was not a bilingual country like the South African Confederation (Afrikaans and English) The Dominion was composed of many races, and the English and French were the dominant elements. (*The Times*, 24 May 1910, p. 40)

In 1912, the Ontario Legislative Assembly gave its approval to Rule XVII which in effect, prohibited the teaching of French in the province. This led Willison to deal with the bilingualism issue, this time in the field of education. In the first place, the correspondent stated that there were several opinions on the question. For example, at the Eucharist Congress held in Montreal in 1910, the archbishop of Westminster, Monsignor Bourne, told his francophone audience that English was the "inevitable" language of the North American continent. (*The Times*, 6 February 1912, p. 5)

At the 1911 Imperial Conference on Education, it had been recognized that a child should receive instruction in his native language, especially during his first years of study. These conclusions were the results of studies conducted in Wales, Scotland, South Africa and Canada. For ardent imperialists, other languages could be tolerated but it was the duty of each citizen to speak English, the dominant language of the Empire:

"That as we like to have one language spoken in our home, so in the bigger house called the British Empire everyone ought to make it not only his privilege but his pronounced duty to speak the language which is the language of the Empire. Of course other languages must be tolerated; but the dominant and pervading language, without any question at all, must be English." (*The Times*, 6 February 1912, p. 5)

As for the situation in Ontario, Willison believed that the Irish Catholics, under the leadership of Bishop Fallon of London, Ontario, had stirred up the debate. They aggravated the rivalities between Catholics, whether of French or Irish origin.

The official policy of Ontario's leaders, James Whitney the Conservative Premier and N.W. Rowell, leader of the Liberal party, was based on the principle that English was the language of instruction except in francophone and German communities where the number of students warranted otherwise. Protestant extremists, especially the Orangemen, wanted all instruction in French to be banned from the programme. French-Canadian associations demanded that French

share equal status with English. The Ontarian legislators were forced to act in this tense situation. They bowed to pressure by unanimously adopting a resolution making English the first but not the only language of instruction: "The English language shall be the language of instruction and of communication with the pupils in the public and separate schools in the province, except where in the opinion of the Department of Education, it is impracticable by reason of pupils understanding English." (*The Times*, 6 February 1912, p. 5)

[87]

Once this principle was established, the rule was applied. French and German were on the same footing, which exasperated the 225,000 francophones of Ontario.

"In school sections where the French or German language prevails, the trustees may, in addition to the course of study prescribed for public schools, require instruction to be given in reading, grammar, and composition to such pupils as are directed by their parents or guardians to study either of these languages; and in all such cases the authorized text-books in French or German shall be used; but nothing herein contained shall be construed to mean that any of the text-books prescribed for public schools shall be set aside because of the use of the authorized text-books in French or German." (The Times, 6 February 1912, p. 5)

Following the passage of this law, the government opened an inquiry in 330 public and separate (Catholic) schools in Ontario. Even before this inquiry began, it was evident to Willison that the Catholic clergy in Quebec wished to maintain its hold on the education of francophones in Ontario. Several teachers did not have a teaching certificate from the Ontario Ministry of Education. They used French text books from Quebec, in direct violation of the directives of Rule XVII.

Willison feared that Quebec, confronted with Ontario's measures concerning the language of instruction, would treat its linguistic minority unjustly. He added that it was imperative that the Protestant major-

rity continue to dominate in Ontario in order to keep its power of reprisal in case of Québécois injustice towards its anglophone minority.

"As to the guarantee of educational rights to the protestant minority in Quebec and the Catholic minority in Ontario it must be remembered that the best guarantee of fair treatment to the protestant minority in Quebec is to dominate the protestant majority in Ontario with the power of reprisal in the case of unjust dealing in the neighbouring province." (The Times, 9 February 1912, p. 9)

Thus a degree of bilingualism was tolerated outside Quebec as long as the anglophone minority in that province was assured of its rights. Willison was scandalized at what Quebec could do to its anglophone minority, without considering how Ontario actually behaved towards its francophone minority.

The report of the Ontario commission was made public in 1913 and called for immediate government intervention. The precepts of Ruling XVII were contravened in over 30 schools because of the teaching of catechism. Several teachers in the bilingual schools were not legally qualified. The majority of teachers had no mastery of the English language. Often French was subordinate to English. Lastly the teachers were very poorly paid. New [88] directives were issued following the recommendations of the Commission. The first and primary goal was to improve the quality of instruction in English. The teachers in the bilingual sector were to have better schools for teacher-training. More frequent inspections would guarantee the application of the new regulations. Government subsidies would be available only where the teaching personnel was able to instruct in English. The use of rudimentary French was allowed for communication and didactic purposes in the case of young children who did not understand English well enough: "That instruction in English shall begin when the pupil enters school and that only in the first form shall the use of French as the language of instruction and communication be permitted." (*The Times*, 17 January 1913, p. 37)

Ontario, under the camouflage of bilingualism, sought to assimilate its francophone minority. For this reason, the francophone Catholic clergy of Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec protested these discriminatory measures. Fervent nationalists like Henri Bourassa supported the movement. Willison reported that at the *Congrès sur la langue française* it was agreed to increase the immigration of francophones to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. On the subject of language the participants at the congress reiterated their stand that French should have equal status with English throughout Canada.

In his commentaries sent to the London newspaper, Willison opposed Bourassa's affirmation that the rights of the French language were granted through a non-written tradition in the country. By law the Quebec Act of 1774 guaranteed only the practise of religion and not the use of language. In fact, article 133 of the British North America Act recognized equal rights of the French language only in the Federal Chamber and the Quebec legislature:

"Dans les Chambres du Parlement du Canada et de la législature du Québec, chacun pourra dans les débats, faire usage de la langue anglaise ou de la langue française; mais les registres et les procès-verbaux des Chambres sus-dites devront être tenus dans ces deux langues. Dans tout procès porté devant un tribunal du Canada établi en vertu de la présente loi ou devant un tribunal du Québec, chacun pourra faire usage de l'une ou de l'autre de ces langues dans les procédures et les plaidoyers qui y seront faits ou dans les actes de procédures qui en émaneront."

This article forced Quebec to submit to obligations that did not apply to the other provinces. Willison continued his commentary stating that from this moment on, it could not be said that French held equal status to English in Ontario or the rest of the Dominion. Although French had no official status outside of Quebec, certain "privileges" were granted which were extending to the other provinces. Willison added that the francophones, like the American southerners in the Civil War, were demanding a re-reading of the Constitution. Even though the situation could never lead to civil war, Willison maintained

that vigilance was necessary. Had not D'Alton McCarthy often proclaimed that [89] French-Canadian influence in Canada should be halted by ballots in order to avoid the use of bayonets later on? ("if extension of French influence were not resisted by ballots in this generation it would be necessary to use bayonets in the next.") (*The Times*, 17 January 1913, p. 37) After all it was the francophone leaders themselves who had demanded a federal constitution instead of a legislative union in order to avoid federal interference in provincial affairs.

"But the leaders of the French element in Canada are active and aggressive, and, like the Southern politicians of the United States before the Civil War, have been peculiarly influential in shaping legislation to their race interests and prejudices. It was the desire of Sir John Macdonald at Confederation to establish a legislative union, but Quebec demanded a Federal Constitution in order to guard against future interference with the institutions of the French and Catholic province by an English-speaking majority in the Federal Parliament." (The Times, 17 January 1913, p. 37)

Willison believed that Confederation ensured the survival of Quebec's francophone and Catholic character. In exchange however, the English dominated in the rest of Canada. The Toronto journalist was convinced that useless concessions had been made to minorities concerning their rights in the matter of education, especially if one adhered to the letter of the Constitution. Neither the federal nor the provincial governments had seriously tried to annul these concessions or to modify these guarantees, whether by direct or indirect intervention:

"On the other hand, there have been material concessions unnecessary under the strict letter of the Constitution and in extension of the educational privileges of the minority. Under the Constitution and by virtue of Imperial Acts substantial rights and privileges were guaranteed to the French and to the Roman Catholic Church in Canada. There has been no serious attempt

to cancel these concessions or to modify these guarantees by direct or indirect action in the Dominion or in any of the provinces." (The Times, 17 January 1913, p. 37)

Religious rights were assured. French had equal status to English in the House and certain federal institutions as well as in the Quebec assembly. Concerning education in French outside the province of Quebec, Willison believed that French-Canadians enjoyed certain privileges but did not have any rights.⁸¹ French-Canadians were to consider themselves [90] fortunate to have been granted these privileges and concessions. Willison had a legalistic view of bilingualism: the Constitution ensured the supremacy of English-Canadians in Canada with the exception of Quebec. This province had received guarantees on the linguistic question within its borders but these same measures weakened its ability to intervene on behalf of francophones outside Quebec. Each province had complete jurisdiction over education.

This concept of bilingualism gave both English and French-Canadians the illusion that they lived in a tolerant nation. Concessions from English-Canadians were merely privileges and ultimately the constitution prevailed over these privileges. French-Canadians had to respect the laws; if they committed any injustices, the tolerant attitude of the English-Canadians could alter. Willison issued frequent warnings to this effect.

For the most part, French-Canadians used political arguments to convey their point of view. Their interpretation of the law favoured the non-written tradition, typical of British law. They resorted to historic and sociological arguments to demand the equality of French with English. For it was the dream of several members of the clergy and nationalists like Bourassa that the West be settled by a francophone population, in spite of the fact that limited French immigration and marked population growth in these provinces made such an idea a remote possibility.

⁸¹ In Quebec, anglophones acquired their right to instruction in English in the first provincial legislatures. On this subject, see Marcel Hamelin, *Les premières années de parlementarisme québécois, 1867-1878*, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974, pp. 50-60.

It is of interest to note that the tolerant attitude outside Quebec seemed closely connected to the fear of reprisal by Quebec towards its anglophone minority. The notion of bilingualism appeared outside Quebec but it was of little significance. It was of use to appease Quebec and avoid injustice towards that province's linguistic minority. Willison considered that Quebec francophones were under house surveillance. It was one matter to speak of concessions, privileges and tolerance but it must be admitted that the bilingualism applied in Ontario was a sham. The directives of January 1913 were clear: English instruction was to begin as soon as a child entered school. The use of French as the language of instruction and communication was permitted only in a very basic form. (*The Times*, 17 January 1913, p, 37)

In conclusion, let us remember that educational matters in Canada were under provincial jurisdiction. This may explain why the term "bilingualism" was applied to so many varied manifestations across the country. Bilingualism in Quebec guaranteed English as the language of instruction to the anglophone minority. In Ontario, as the preceding pages illustrate, the term was illusory. It soothed the collective social conscience but its goal was assimilation. On the federal level, bilingualism as defined in Article 133 was limited to federal institutions. The central government did not have the power to intervene directly in educational issues. Thus when Canada was presented as a "bilingual" country, the respective powers of the federal and provincial governments in the matter must be taken into account. Moreover, most anglophones and francophones were [91] diametrically opposed on the subject. The question of bilingualism remains, to this day, a complex question in Canada. However, certain legal, political and social aspects of the Ontario example allow us to point out exactly what was at stake in the language debate.

2.4.3 Labour

[TOC](#)

Few articles examined the social problems in Canada during this period of rapid development. Phenomena such as urbanization and unemployment to name but two were dealt with only occasionally. By choosing Willison as its chief correspondent in Canada, *The Times*

opted for an excellent political or economic analyst. Willison's centres of interest followed newspaper policy, as *The Times* never claimed to defend the cause of the common people or the working classes. The newspaper was not necessarily opposed to the working classes, but very little mention was made of them. *The Times* took an interest in the labour movement insofar as it threatened to affect political or economic stability.

Canadian urbanization accelerated between 1901 and 1911 (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 24) The populations of Toronto and Montreal increased inordinately. Montreal jumped from 266,730 inhabitants in 1901 to 466,197 a decade later. As for Toronto, the population at the beginning of the century was situated at 208,048 and it reached 376,240 in 1911. The rural exodus was the main cause of the excessive increase in urban populations. Unemployment in the cities soared and the lack of housing added to the problems of the new urban residents. The economic crisis of 1913 made people fear the worst. In this context the labour organizations stepped up their activities. *The Times* took a particular interest in two types of associations: agricultural cooperatives and labour unions in general.

The cooperative movements pursued the objectives of joint purchase, sales and credit. (*The Times*, 24 May 1914, p. 17) Several variations of the movement were found in the different provinces but the Western farmers had the best organization. They were influenced by American and Ontarian associations and took their demands into the political forum. Already in 1894, over a third of the members in the Ontario legislature were cooperatists. It would appear that these members contributed to the Conservative defeat in the federal election of 1896. (*The Times*, 5 November 1913, p. 18)

Despite the odd strike, notably in the mines of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, then in Alberta and British Columbia, it would seem that social peace was ensured. (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 28) The Lemieux Law, prepared at the instigation of Mackenzie King, improved labour-management relations. This law obliged both parties to come before a conciliatory committee before a strike could be declared. Labour unions in Canada as in the United States were not politically represented in government. In the Commons, a single member [92] defended the labour cause. In British Columbia two socialist members sat in the legislature.

The lack of representation did not prevent the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress from advocating some surprising measures for the time. Some of their demands were free schooling, the eight-hour work-day and the six-day work-week. It recommended that the system of allocation of government contracts be abolished. The Congress favoured public ownership of railways, the telegraph, the telephone and water works. Taxes were to be lowered for industry while land value taxes would be raised. Some other demands were the abolition of the Senate, abolition of child labour under 14 years of age as well as an end to women working in mines, workshops and factories.

Quebec presented a particular case in this context. The clergy opposed secular unions as well as Masonic movements and benevolent societies which had secret rituals. (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 29) However the poorly-educated French-Canadian worker could only occupy low-paying positions requiring little expertise: "Undoubtedly the long neglect of education in Quebec has operated to the great disadvantage of its people, confining French Canadians to the rougher and cheaper forms of labour, and reserving the chief places in factories, in counting-houses and in commercial and industrial vocations generally to the English population." (*The Times*, 24 May 1912, p. 29)

Labour organizations in Quebec were not as well-structured as their Ontario counterparts. They were more docile and easier to lead. These factors explain the arrival of certain industries in the province.

Conclusion

The strengthening of Imperial ties may be explained by two phenomena. Most importantly, the clouds of war were gathering in Europe. Canadian businessmen saw immediate financial benefits.

Imperialist ideology resided in the deep Loyalist tradition. The Canadian nation, especially the British element, saw in this their *raison d'être*. Imperialist sentiment counter-balanced increasing American influence. But such nationalism was not without risk. It was in direct opposition to French Canada, which represented almost 28% of the country's population. It was based on influences outside the country.

The influence of British imperialism on Canadian nationalism shows the country's incapacity to develop an original nationalism, which may also explain the impact of external events on the political and economic life in the country.

Willison believed that reinforcing Imperial relations strengthened Canada as a whole. The country was controlled by the English, more especially the English of Ontario and francophones appeared as the dominated element. So much the [93] better, concluded the Toronto correspondent, since the French-Canadians disrupted the harmony of the Dominion and seemed to be the cause of most of the problems in Canada. Willison was thus able to create the image of a strong and unified Canada.

The Times' journalists in England were of the opinion that the British Empire ought to take a greater role in the world, especially with war imminent. Preparations had to be made at any cost. It was important, then, for the newspaper to associate itself in Canada with those who enjoyed a certain influence and who favoured the improvement of relations with the Mother country. The British press hired Willison to fill this role. Both he and *The Times* considered Borden and the Conservatives to be the best defenders of the Empire and for this reason, they supported his party between 1910 and 1914.

Certain realities prevailed in spite of the image the journalists and editorialists projected of Canada and the choices they made in their articles. Thus when Borden abandoned his Naval Plan, Willison backed him to the very end. At the last minute, Borden and his party decided against a plebiscite. This decision by the Conservatives showed the priority of national interests. During the war Canadians discovered to what extent imperialism, as an element of their own nationalism and pushed to extremes, could imperil the very existence of Canada as a nation.

The Canadian contributors to *The Times* conveyed an image of Canada comprising three objectives. First they wished to maintain and reinforce ties with the Empire. Second, they wanted to ensure development in the country, even if that meant increased integration in the

North American economy. Last, they knew that it was necessary to defend better the interests of Canada, a young nation within the British Empire.

[94]

[95]

Figure 3

[TOC](#)



Une guerre de tranchée (Archives nationales du Canada)

War in the trenches (National Archives of Canada)

[95]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

Chapter 3

The War of 1914 - 1918:

Unity and Adversity

[TOC](#)

[96]

The war incited the different members of the Empire to unite and provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate their goodwill as well as their financial and material capacity to come to the aid of the beleaguered Mother country. In Canada the apprehensions which arose during the economic crisis of 1913 faded with the arrival of hostilities. Canadian industry geared up to support the allied forces. The federal government repeatedly appealed to farmers to increase production. The war was the cause of renewed economic expansion in Canada. But this period was not without problems. Inflation greatly reduced the workers' buying power and salaries did not increase proportionately, resulting in social problems. Efforts for economic recovery were not made until after the war.

The conflict also had tremendous political repercussions in Canada. The anglophone and francophone communities were deeply divided on the question of conscription (compulsory military service). As the war started, however, both communities followed their leaders; a fragile consensus was in place. Canadians were ready to roll up their sleeves and make the necessary sacrifices. But as the war went on, the need for soldiers became more urgent and the number of volunteer recruits was insufficient. England voted for compulsory military service in 1916 to remedy the situation. Canada followed suit in 1917.

In spite of numerous efforts to rally Laurier's Liberals, the Conservative Prime Minister, Robert Borden failed in his attempt to impose conscription with the unanimous support of the federal parties. He did, however, succeed in attracting several anglophone Liberals with offers of a position in the Union Cabinet. The election of 1917 clearly showed how the lines were drawn. English-Canadians for the most part supported conscription and voted for the Unionists under Borden; French-Canadians opposed compulsory military service and continued their support of the veteran Liberal chief, Laurier. In this crisis situation the very foundations of Confederation were challenged. The catastrophe was averted with the end of the war. Strong external pressures had imperilled the very survival of the country. Canada benefitted economically from the war but it paid a high price, both politically and socially, for its participation in the conflict. There were other consequences besides the tragic loss of life. In its efforts to aid the Empire, Canada as a nation came close to rupture.

In the first part of this chapter, we will deal briefly with the limits imposed on the press in time of war: censorship was a necessary evil. The evolution of Canada's status in the Empire will be the subject of the second portion, with the accent on foreign policy. In the third section, which will deal especially with domestic politics, a chronology of events forms a valuable background to trace the course of the debate. Three periods form the basis for this chronology: 1914-1916, when a fragile consensus was maintained, 1917, when the crisis arose and 1918, when violence erupted in Quebec and many conscripts throughout the country refused to answer the call.

[97]

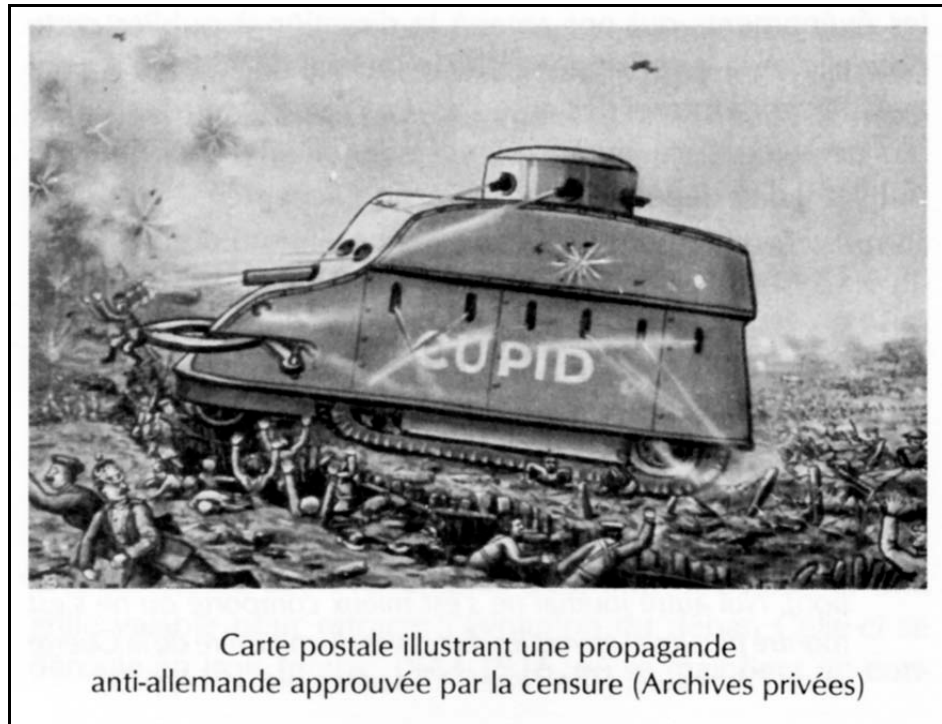
3.1 The Function and Limits of the Press in Time of War

[TOC](#)

With the onset of war, *The Times* became embroiled in a controversy with English political leaders concerning the publication of war news likely to upset and affect the morale of the country's population.

Figure 4

[TOC](#)



Anti-German propaganda approved by the censor
(Private archives) (Postcard: The tale of the tanks)

[98]

On August 30, 1914, *The Times* reported that the British had suffered considerable losses in combat at Amiens. The article made mention of a crushing defeat and the retreat of British forces. (*The Times*, 1 September 1914, p. 10) Several members of the English government, supported by the majority of important newspapers, took issue with the publication of such irresponsible remarks. *The Times* formally apologized but gave an account of the events which had led the management to publish the article. To everyone's surprise, the paper declared that it had acted with the formal consent of the authorities. The Press Bureau, the organization responsible for censorship, had

even begged *The Times* to publish the dispatch in its approved version.

The responsibility of the censors was clearly impugned. F.E. Smith, head of the censorship office, implicitly admitted his error. *The Times* reported his comments:

"Mr. Smith declared that The Times and The Daily Mail had been very hardly dealt with (Earlier in the sitting the Prime Minister had spoken severely on the matter). No two papers had behaved better or more loyally to the wishes of the War Office and the Admiralty." (The Times, 1 September 1914, p. 9.)

The incident was costly for Smith who was forced to resign some weeks later. Buchmaster, his successor, developed a policy based on three basic principles. First, the censors were to prevent the publication of any news that could prejudice the naval or military operations of the Empire. Second, it was the censors' duty to block the publication of any information susceptible to alarm the civil population. Third, it was necessary to eliminate news that could damage relations among the allies.⁸²

The government took court action against recalcitrant publications. Thus in June of 1915 *The Times* was prosecuted for having revealed information which suggested that France had suffered great losses. The magistrate, as in many other similar situations, dismissed the case.

In Canada, Willison chastized the censors for their lack of discernment. He thought that governments should have faith in journalists, who knew as well as anyone else what was and what was not suitable for publication: "The trained journalist knows almost as well as the commander in the field or the man in the Cabinet what ought to be sent from the front."⁸³ Willison's superior in London shared his

⁸² Colin Lovelace, "British Press Censorship during the First World War", in Jeremy Tunstall (editor) *et al.*, *Newspaper History, from 17th Century to the Present Day*, Constable, London, 1978, p. 312.

⁸³ *Times* Archives, London, *Willison Papers*, letter from Willison to Dawson, 22 September 1914.

opinion. To attain their objectives, he said, the [99] censors ought to allow the newspaper directors to assume their share of responsibility :

"Your sufferings from the censorship are nothing to ours. Of course, I agree entirely with what you say in your letter of September 22nd. If I had time, I could write you reams about the follies which have been committed here to the great detriment of the national interests. I have told members of the Government again and again that the only proper way to deal with the Press is to tell it the whole truth frankly, to explain exactly the kind of thing which should not be published, to make the editors responsible, to warn them that on the first appearance of any blunder they will be dropped on heavily if they ignore the warning. However they will have to learn by experience." ⁸⁴

Willison had to comply with the demands of Canadian censors on several occasions. For this reason he maintained complete silence when the Australian Prime Minister visited Canada at the beginning of 1916: "The injunction seems foolish," he reported to his superiors in London, "but I have thought it necessary to obey." ⁸⁵

Generally speaking, it must be admitted that censorship was successful. The journalists and the press demonstrated a certain pragmatism and practised self-censorship. ⁸⁶ Of course the restrictions were a nuisance. In spite of this reticence, the press bowed to certain rules to satisfy the higher national interests. Lord Burnham, president of the Empire Press Union, reiterated this fact to the delegates attending the Imperial Conference of 1917 :

⁸⁴ National Archives of Canada (N.A.C), *Willison Papers*, private correspondence, from Robinson to Willison, 5 October 5,1914, document 30218. "Robinson" started to use the name "Dawson" towards 1917. To avoid confusion, we use only the name "Dawson" in this text. Researchers should be aware that before 1917 Geoffrey Dawson used the name Geoffrey Robinson.

⁸⁵ *Times* Archives, London, *Willison Papers*, letter from Willison to Robinson (Dawson), 21 February 1916.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Lovelace, "British Press Censorship...", pp. 312-319.

"...the Empire had, on the whole, a good Press, a straight Press and an honourable Press. He did not believe any Empire, bound or free, could be run without a powerful Press. Democracy required an efficient Press and an independent Press. It might be said that the British Press worked under the Censor. So it did for the war, and censorship was necessary for military purposes, but it would be a bright day for the Press and the country when they saw the last of the unlucky figure of the [100] Censor disappearing down the Thames Embankment, and when the various Departments of State were able to give up competing propaganda work." (The Times, 26 April 1917, p. 5.)

The Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Robert Borden, adding to Burnham's comments, said that the press had considerable influence on public opinion. Consequently it carried a heavy responsibility within the Empire. Because the press had been able to assume this responsibility in the past, it would continue to do so in the future.

[101]

3.2 Foreign Policy: Canada's Status in the Empire (1914 - 1918)

[TOC](#)

On August 4, 1914 England declared war on Germany. Due to its Dominion status, Canada also found itself at war. The situation brought about a *rapprochement* of the Imperial members who sought to consolidate their military power. It was a propitious occasion for Imperialists who wished to reinforce the ties of the Empire based on new structures. The idea of an Imperial government was revived.

As the war began, fervent appeals were made asking that class struggles and partisan differences cease. It was essential to show the world a unified Empire and not its individual interests. "...to prove to

the world at large that the British Empire is one and indivisible." (*The Times*, 15 August 1914, p. 8)

Canada's loyalty was assured during the first months of the conflict. In an article entitled "The Voice of Canada. A wave of passionate Loyalty. United support for Motherland", Willison reported that Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party unequivocally supported Sir Robert Borden and his government. The Liberals would second all the measures deemed necessary by the Canadian government to help the Mother country, insofar as these measures expressed the sentiments of the country. Willison stated that the anglophone and francophone press, more particularly *Le Canada*, a Liberal paper and *L'Événement*, a Conservative publication, promoted the union of all the parties in order to help England. (*The Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 5) *The Times* also entered the debate, reminding its readers of the necessity to forget less important conflicts in order to give the war their undivided attention. The call of patriotism rose above all others:

"At the breath of war and the higher call of patriotism in the hour of national danger the voices of party and faction have sunk into silence. The artificial conflicts they represent are dispersed at the touch of a real one. (The Times, editorial, 10 August 1914.)"

Observers agreed that the war would change the relationships between the Mother country and the members of the Empire. Willison admitted that the situation favoured increased Imperial unity. He acknowledged that each country was deeply absorbed in its own activities; this was an obstacle to productive thinking and concrete action. (*The Times*, 17 January 1915, p. 7) He did not consider this handicap insurmountable. Willison believed Canadians were pursuing a great goal. They demanded more often to be consulted; the Mother country would no longer be able to commit the Dominions without their permission. It was likely that the North American Dominion would wish to participate in peace negotiations when the time came. (*The Times*, 25 January 1915, p. 7) In August 1915, Willison stated his firm conviction, as evidenced in his private correspondence, that the most suitable way to strengthen Imperial ties was to create a federated Em-

pire. [102] Failing that, the correspondent felt that disintegration was inevitable. He rebuked Laurier for his negative attitude towards anything concerning the possibility of a federated Empire. Willison recalled Laurier's deep attachment to his home province, which led him to conceptualize everything in terms of the Canadian nation and to systematically oppose any theory aimed at uniting the members of the British Empire in a federation.

Figure 5

[TOC](#)



Soldiers of the 22nd Battalion perform a soldier's commonest task : waiting. (National Arvhives of Canada)

"Sir Wilfrid Laurier knows his Quebec. Indeed it is somewhat as he made it and desires to keep it. I am certain that as he grows older he believes less and less in the Empire. He looks unequivocally to a Canadian nation and is squarely opposed to every theory of a federated [103] Empire. This is logical enough and I suppose one ought not to complain. My own view as strengthened by this war is that we must have a federated Empire or separation." ⁸⁷

During a trip to England in the summer of 1915, Prime Minister Borden told a *Times* reporter that Canada cooperated very closely with the United Kingdom and spared no expense. By asking the Dominions for their help, he added, it was possible at the same time to establish their courage, their capacity for self-government and their patriotism: in a word, their effectiveness as autonomous states. The Canadian leader was convinced that the status of the Dominions would be reconsidered after the war. Borden emphasized however that at present it was essential to focus all effort on a single cause: the war.

"Since the outbreak of war it has been the constant and earnest purpose of the Canadian Government to cooperate in the closest manner and by the most effective means with the Government of the United Kingdom in the united endeavour to bring this conflict to a successful and honourable conclusion. (...) Great questions touching the status of the Dominions of the Empire and their constitutional relation to each other will arise after the war. Upon such questions it would be idle and undesirable to dwell at present. We do not doubt that a satisfactory solution will be found; but in the meantime, the supreme issue of the war must be our only concern." (Speech given by Borden in London, reported by The Times, 10 July 1915)

⁸⁷ *Times* Archives, London, *Willison Papers*, confidential letter, from Willison to Geoffrey Robinson (Dawson), 4 August 1915.

In England, some politicians began to consider that a change was desirable in the nature of the relations between the members of the Empire. The Dominions deserved the right to participate in peace negotiations after the war in recognition of their important contribution. Such was the view of Bonar Law, Secretary of the Colonies and a Canadian by birth:

"Already, by an arrangement between the Mother Country and the self-governing Dominions, it was understood that when the time came for peace negotiations the Dominion Governments were to have a say in those negotiations. That marked a great step onwards, but it was only a step. It has long been his hope, and now was his belief, that as a result of this war the time would come when the whole of the self-governing Dominions, in proportion to their population and resources, would share with the Mother Country in the duty and honour of governing the British Empire." (Bonar Law, comments reported by The Times, 5 August 1915, p.8)

[104]

The idea of an Imperial Conference gained momentum as the war continued. The Toronto Empire Club, which included both Liberals and Conservatives, made a declaration in favour of a meeting to reorganize the Empire. (*The Times*, 4 May 1916, p. 4) Willison realized that there were still many who opposed any plans for a federated Empire. Eminent Canadian newspapers such as *The Globe* and *The Daily Star* supported their views. Did these publications express the sentiments of the population that backed the Liberal party? Willison stated that this could not be confirmed. Though several Liberals still opposed the creation of a federation, the majority understood the necessity of consolidating the Empire. The *Times* correspondent believed that such a reorganization would not affect the autonomy of the Dominions; indeed it would guarantee autonomy for all parts of the Empire. (*The Times*, 4 May 1916, p. 7)

The Empire Day edition of May 24, 1916 accentuated the campaign for federation already initiated by several correspondents, notably those in Canada. As a Dominion, Canada enjoyed all the rights of a sovereign nation, with the exclusion of the right to declare war or peace and the right to decide its foreign policy. *The Times* promoted the creation of an Imperial parliament of its sovereign members, as the existing situation was untenable. The Dominions did not have the power of decision on Imperial policy. In spite of this, they supplied essential aid in the war effort: "A way must be found to put an end to a contrast so little creditable to the political genius of our race, so galling to their legitimate national pride." (*The Times*, editorial, 24 May 1916, p. 17)

The proposals of Lionel Curtis, one of the leaders of the Round Table Movement, provided the basis for *The Times*' crusade. In his book, *Problem of the Commonwealth*, Curtis unveiled a plan for an Imperial Parliament. The Imperialists intended to use the Conference as the foundation for the restructuring of the British Empire. The Imperialists' plan included the creation of a Parliament to represent the electorates of all the self-governing countries in the Empire. The functions of this Parliament and its executive were to be specified at a later date. The new Empire would also have to adopt a constitution. In this respect the precedents that had allowed the creation of the Dominions would prove useful.

"The simple fact is that the British Empire must prepare, even in this time of war, to maintain with the whole strength of its constituent nations and loyal people the ideals and principles of government for which it now fights. The time calls all patriotic men, not only to the sacrifice of life or money, but also to the duty of earnest thought. Unless we bring ourselves to know the weakness of the Imperial system, unless we compell ourselves to reflect upon the best means of developing its huge latent strength - of structure, of resource, of moral influence - we [105] shall fail in that duty. There is no room here for prejudice, or obstinate prepossession, or rooted convention. The one test is necessity. We shall do well for once to beware of compromise on such matters of vital principles." (The Times, 24 May 1916, p. 17.)

Analysts at *The Times* reproached British politicians, charging that they were slow to act. A change in attitude was called for, since the imperial family was now made up of grown men.

"It reminds us that Great Britain is no longer, in anything but sentiment and tradition, the 'Mother country' of the Empire. The household of the British Dominions is a household of grown men. They have their own part to play in the world; they are conscious of their strength; they have shown that they are quite able to hold their own in the man's quarrel that is this war. Naturally, they are not too pleased when we persist in extolling their generosity to us, in reiterating our gratitude for their 'help' and generally in treating them with that combination of indulgence and surprised admiration which is characteristic of the mother of grown sons. In the individual people of this country this kind of view of the Dominions is more or less excusable. (...) But in the government nothing excuses the old spirit of mingled patronage and surprise." (The Times, editorial, 28 November 1916, p. 11.)

At the end of the summer of 1916, *The Times*, inspired once again by the Round Table Movement which was becoming an authority on the subject, recommended that an Imperial Conference be held as soon as possible. The newspaper believed that it was urgent to create an organization that would allow the members of the Empire to act as a common body.

"A Conference of Imperial Ministers is the only way of laying the foundations of common Imperial action on these lines. Such a meeting would have immense influence upon the whole population of the Empire. We notice that 'The Round Table', which has won for itself a special title to speak on these questions, has in its December number a strong plea for the calling of an Imperial Conference in the first half of 1917. The-

re is everything indeed, to be said for it."(*The Times*, editorial, 28 November 1916.)

The new English Prime Minister, Lloyd George, in a strong position thanks to his recently-formed coalition government, called an Imperial Conference for the spring of 1917. However the situation was difficult in Canada. The new session of Parliament was scheduled to begin in February and Borden realized that the summons was poorly timed. At the end of 1916, Borden's government had had its mandate extended for twelve months. The parliamentary agenda was heavy and the parties would soon have to prepare for elections.

[106]

Canada's domestic worries notwithstanding, the Conference took place in London in May 1917. In spite of great effort, the representatives of the Dominions were unable to agree on the creation of the united government that the Imperialists so desired. Borden played an important role in these debates. *The Times* reported that it was he who submitted a resolution calling for a discussion of future relations between the Empire and its members at the end of the war. The effect of such a resolution postponing discussion until after the war was clear. The idea of an Imperial Parliament joined with a specific executive power was rejected.

"Here we are ... a group of nations spread over the whole world, speaking different languages, belonging to different races, with entirely different economic circumstances, and to attempt to run even the common concerns of that group of nations by means of Central Parliament and Central Executive is, to my mind, absolutely to court disaster." (Quote from General Smuts at the Imperial Conference, *The Times*, 25 May 1917, p. 5.)

The dream of several Imperialists was shattered. They had believed that the war presented a real opportunity to consolidate the British Empire and provide it with a new political structure of Imperial government. Canadian and English Imperialists did not press the issue. War was, after all, the main preoccupation. Willison was deeply di-

sappointed by Borden, but kept silent. *The Times* also avoided criticism of the Canadian leader: though they did not share his point of view, they could understand his reasoning. The war which dragged on in Europe forced the Allies to steer clear of any misunderstandings.

Eager to exonerate himself and avert useless criticism, Borden reaffirmed his support of the war. When he visited Canadian troupes in Europe on May 19, 1917, he officially announced his conviction that conscription was the only means to ensure the renewal of Canadian forces. (*The Times*, 21 May 1917, p. 9)

The debate which followed took place on Canadian soil. Borden was unyielding: Canada would continue to pursue its status of independent nationhood. The war provided a situation that was favourable to the affirmation of Canadian prerogatives. Canadian foreign policy, more particularly with regard to the country's status in the Empire, reflected opinions shared by the majority of politicians. In this light, it is correct to assert that there was consensus on the substance of foreign policy, but that divergences appeared as to the means of achieving the objectives of such policies. The war gave new impetus to the demands of citizens who wished to see Canada emerge on the international scene as an autonomous state.

[107]

3.3. Domestic Affairs

3.3.1 A Fragile Consensus in Canada (1914 - 1918)

[TOC](#)

From the beginning of the war, *The Times* presented the image of a united Canada, a country desirous of offering as much support as possible to the Allies. (*The Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 5; 6 August 1914, p. 5) Canadian enthusiasm was manifested not only in word but in deed: more than 50,000 tons of flour were provided free of charge to the United Kingdom, less than a week after war was declared. The Cana-

dian government also promised to send a contingent of 20,000 trained soldiers to Europe. (*The Times*, 10 August 1914, p. 5)

Laurier's repeated appeals to the people of Quebec showed that there was no doubt; all of Canada's communities were united and supported their government in its determination to help the Mother country. (*The Times*, 22 August 1914, p. 5) At the onset of war, Canada took inventory of its military forces. The country was able to supply between 50,000 and 100,000 men. It could also accept credit for between 20 and 40 million pounds. Willison concluded that Canadians were ready for any sacrifice.

"As it is we must suffer greatly in trade and manufacture, in hardship to many classes, in delay to municipal, provincial, and national undertakings. But we are thinking only of the organization of contingents, of what we can do to maintain the food supply of Great Britain, of what we can sacrifice to relieve distress at home and alleviate distress in the United Kingdom. Tested by a great emergency we are not thinking of material losses, but of the fleets on the sea and the armies in the field and the security of the great political organization to which we belong." (*The Times*, 22 August 1914, p. 5.)

It was impossible to imagine in August 1914 that Canada would enlist almost 600,000 soldiers and send a total of 400,000 soldiers overseas to defend the Empire. The first Canadian contingent numbering 32,000 men embarked for Europe at the end of September 1914. Willison estimated that only 20 to 30% of this total were native-born Canadians. (*The Times*, 23 September 1914, p. 7; 19 November 1914, p. 7)

The difficulty in recruiting French-Canadians was already the cause of some worry. However ambiguities and contradictory statements were evident because the recruits were classified in three categories from the beginning of the war: a) those who were born in the United Kingdom, b) those who were born in a foreign country and c) those who were born in Canada. No distinction was made between English

and French-Canadians.⁸⁸ Official government [108] representatives such as the Minister of the Militia and Defence, Sir Sam Hughes, declared in 1915 before the Commons that there were close to 3,000 French-Canadians in the first contingent. In 1917, the same Minister, frustrated because Borden asked for his resignation, stated that there were only 1,217 French Canadians in this first expeditionary force.⁸⁹

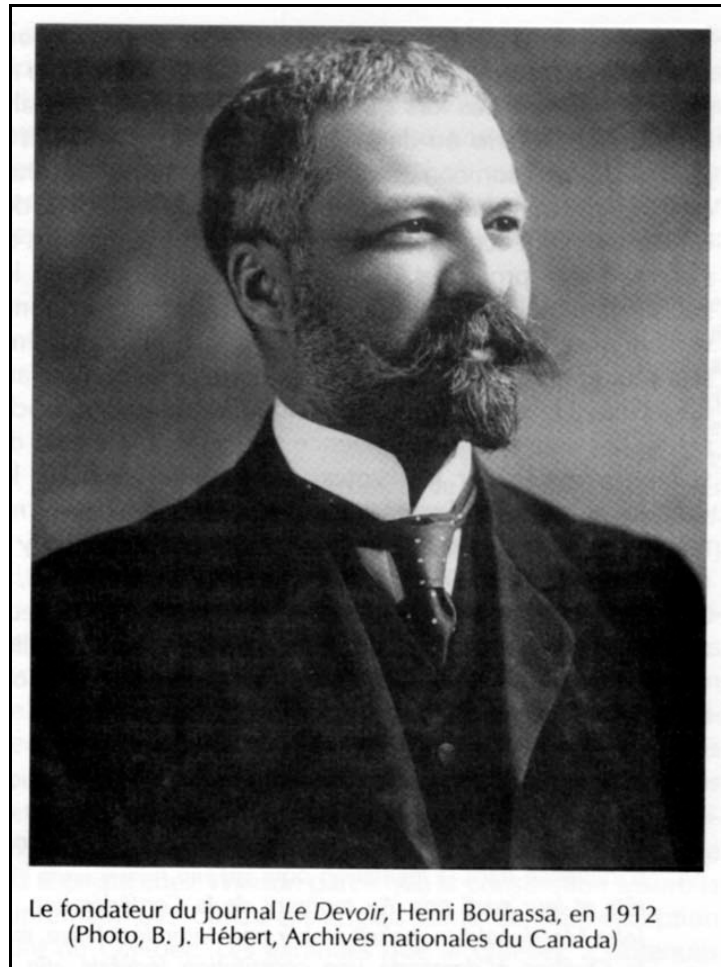
But the tone remained conciliatory during the first years of war and an atmosphere of cooperation reigned. Official information emphasized the fact that all classes of society participated. French-Canadian loyalty was ensured. The truth was hidden and the dispatches stressed the valour of all those recruits who wished to fight in defense of civilization.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-1918*, "Carleton Library", McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1974, p. 247.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Figure 6

[TOC](#)



Founder of *Le Devoir* newspaper, Henri Bourassa, 1912.
(National Archives of Canada)

[109]

"The Canadian contingents are on this occasion fully representative of all classes of the community, both English-speaking and French-speaking. The greatest sacrifices have been made by many of these Volunteers; flourishing businesses have been cheerfully abandoned... The honour of serving has been conferred without respect of persons; neither political nor social influence has counted in the slightest degree. Quebec is fully represented in the Canadian Expeditionary Force - not so much because of a feeling that France is the motherland as because of the certainty that the defeat of England would sooner or later mean a loss of Canada's dearly prized liberty to grow in accordance with Canadian ideas." (The Times, 9 October 1914, p. 5.)

As late as the spring of 1915, Willison stated in his commentaries to the London daily that recruiting progressed successfully throughout the country. Moreover, he added, the situation continued to improve in Quebec. Another new element concerning the volunteers, according to the correspondent, was that almost all of them were born in Canada.

According to official statements, in the first year following the declaration of war, Canada sent 75,000 soldiers overseas and more than 75,000 others were in training. (*The Times*, 14 July 1915, p. 6) There were numerous preoccupations behind the scenes however as evidenced by Willison's private correspondence with his superiors at *The Times*. He stressed the fact that French-Canadians simply did not want to participate in the war. French-Canadian leaders were reluctant to exhort their population to answer the call for recruits. Bourassa continued to oppose Imperial wars and the clergy wondered why their flock should be asked to fight side by side with a country which had persecuted the Church. Willison was resentful. His private correspondence attested to his growing indignation.

"As you know we do a good deal of lying about Quebec. There has been a very insignificant response in that province to the call of recruits. The leaders of both parties hesitate to make

a strong appeal to French Canadians. The Liberal organs continue to talk autonomy. Bourassa, his paper and his group argue that we should not engage in wars in Europe. Curés ask French Canadians why they should fight for old France which persecutes the Church. The result of all this is that almost every attempt to form French Canadian regiments has failed and that at most there will be a few thousand French Canadians under arms." ⁹⁰

[110]

As long as the number of recruits was sufficient to meet the demand, the limited French-Canadian participation was not the object of virulent criticism. Willison and *The Times* avoided dealing directly with the subject. It was evident that everyone thought the war would be brief. But as the conflict wore on, it became necessary to renew the demand for volunteers to replace the men who were lost in battle. Prime Minister Borden alarmed the country when, in the first days of 1916, he declared that though Canada had 250,000 men under arms, the number was insufficient. He planned to recruit another quarter of a million men, taking the Canadian contribution up to a grand total of 500,000 soldiers. (*The Times*, 4 January 1916, p. 7) The male population capable of bearing arms was estimated at 1.6 million; Borden wanted to enlist almost 30% of this population. (*The Times*, 15 February 1916, p. 7)

Willison came to Borden's rescue at this point. In a summary of Canadian politics, the correspondent praised the Conservative leader as the only true defender of Imperial interests on North American soil, even though the Prime Minister firmly believed that the British would be obliged to consider the Dominions when the time came to discuss peace. Laurier continued to support government policy, a cause for celebration since he had put aside party politics. But a shadow darkened the horizon: Bourassa's new position irritated his opponents. Willison could scarcely contain himself. Bourassa contributed to the alie-

⁹⁰ *Times Archives*, London, *Willison Papers*, private letter, Willison to Geoffrey Robinson (Dawson), 4 August 1915.

nation in Quebec where recruiting was so weak. The Toronto correspondent wanted the truth to be made known.

"Meanwhile, public feeling rises against Mr. Bourassa, who grows bolder in denouncing British policy and in opposing Canada's participation in the war in Europe. His mischievous utterances must affect recruiting in the French Province. As yet, however, he has escaped prosecution and his newspaper continues to circulate widely throughout Quebec and the French districts of Ontario." (The Times, 25 January 1916, p. 7.)

In Ottawa the consensus was maintained. The parties agreed to prolong the Government's mandate. Borden and the Conservatives were assured of power until the end of 1917. (*The Times*, 28 March 1916, p. 7) The House was forced to act in this manner due to the demands of war. Laurier still enjoyed wide appeal and he maintained the respect of his entourage. He was aging however and did not have the strength of his youth. Regardless of party considerations, the members of Parliament especially wished to avoid a war-time election.

Canadian politicians succeeded in closing ranks for the sake of higher interests. However animosity towards the French-Canadians increased in the summer of 1916. Willison embarked on a campaign to establish the "truth" concerning recruiting. In Canada, claimed the journalist, the appeals were more and more urgent. Conscription was necessary, whatever the obstacles or the consequences. Willison held Bourassa responsible for [111] the inadequate French-Canadian participation in military recruiting and, for the first time, attributed a portion of the blame to French-Canadian Catholic clergy :

"Mr. Bourassa and his fellow nationalists in the French Province continuously denounce the Government, and boldly counsel French Canadians against enlistment. The Ultramontane wing of the French clergy are behind the Nationalists. They disclaim sympathy with France and recall the treatment of the Church by the French Republic. Not a few priests and members of religious orders from France have found asylum in Quebec. These cherish the old quarrel, and regardless of the example of the Church in France, inflame the enmities and prejudices of a devoted Catholic people." (The Times, 26 June 1916, p. 7, an article written on June 9.)

Willison also believed that the controversy concerning the teaching of French in Ontario only served to deepen the rift that already existed between English and French-Canadians: "The masses of Quebec firmly believe that their language has been proscribed in these English provinces, and that solemn constitutional guarantees have been violated." (*The Times*, 26 June 1916, p. 7)

The publication of this article showed a marked change in the attitude of *The Times*; the newspaper had previously avoided taking a clear position and Willison was aware of this. This explains why, on June 9, when it came time to send his commentary to London, Willison included a confidential letter wherein he invited his superiors to choose their master. *The Times* also had to make some choices:

"My dear Robinson. Here is a letter which you may not want to print. It does not seem to me to be useless to ignore the situation in Quebec. The race quarrel in Canada is bound to become more serious. The English Provinces will not and ought not to submit to French demands. So far as I can find out the public men of Quebec of both parties are really united in support of these demands. Every French Canadian in the House of Commons would have voted with Laurier on the anti-Ontario resolution if Borden had not told his supporters in language that could not be misunderstood that if they did so he would dissolve

Parliament. Whatever may be said to the contrary there is practically no recruiting in Quebec. I have not, however, dwelt particularly on this phase of the situation. What The Times has to consider is whether or not it is necessary to ignore the actual situation in Canada. No one can write so as to please both French and English. Yours very truly, John Willison." ⁹¹

[112]

At the instigation of their chief correspondent, the *Times* editorialists took a stand and initiated a campaign against Bourassa and the Nationalists. On August 22, 1916, the paper published a letter from Captain Talbot Papineau, a cousin of Bourassa (p. 5). Papineau was educated at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship and was Canadian by birth. In an editorial, *The Times* stated that the Captain admirably defended Canada's participation in the war. At the same time the newspaper condemned Bourassa's attitude; the Nationalists wished to abandon both Britain and France. The paper came directly to the point in its conclusion: "For this he (Papineau) blames, and rightly blames, their leaders, M. Bourassa chief among them." (*The Times*, 22 August 1916, p. 5)

In spite of its official position, *The Times* kept a certain perspective. It published the French-Canadian leader's reply. Bourassa stated that Papineau was poorly qualified to speak of the situation in Canada. He had become an "American", since the few drops of French blood he possessed had been "de-nationalized". The francophone spokesman believed that *libre participation* of the nation and the individual were essential to Canada.

"But the Government, the whole of Parliament, the Press and politicians of both parties, all applied themselves systematically to obliterate the free character of Canada's intervention. Free enlistment is now carried on by means of blackmailing, intimidation, and threats of all sorts. " (*The Times*, 5 September 1916, p. 7.)

⁹¹ *Times* Archives, London, *Willison Papers*, confidential letter, Willison to Robinson (Dawson), 9 June 1916.

The Nationalist leader continued in the same vein. Emotion elicited by the war favoured the defense of the doctrine of Imperial solidarity. The acknowledged goal of this doctrine, which was first defined by Chamberlain, Rhodes and the British Imperialists, was to sweep the self-governing colonies up into the vortex of European militarism. This policy was defended with the greatest intolerance. (account of Bourassa's reply to Papineau, *The Times*, 5 September 1916, p. 7)

Cardinal Bégin, who became the spokesman for the Quebec high clergy, delivered a message to the Catholics of his province stating that enlistment did not give the expected results. The need for recruits was great and the interests at stake were so important that a German victory would mean disaster. The triumph of Pan-Germanism would spread the diabolical ideas that had already done such harm in Europe to the entire world. The Cardinal invited his clergy to cease their opposition and support enlistment. (*The Times*, 6 September 1916, p. 7)

The situation worsened during 1916. Sir Robert Borden was forced to ask for the resignation of his Minister of the Militia and Defence, Sir Sam Hughes. (*The Times*, 16 November 1916, p. 7) This move was to appease the French-Canadians. In fact, the Minister's behaviour had aggravated the apprehension and suspicion the French-Canadians felt since the beginning of the hostilities. Hughes had done his utmost to exclude them from the war :

[113]

"...par ses préjugés de méthodiste, d'orangiste et de franc-maçon à l'égard des catholiques français, par son refus de confier de hauts commandements aux officiers canadiens-français, par sa répugnance à exploiter pleinement l'enthousiasme du Canada français au début de la guerre et par sa collusion avec les profiteurs de guerre." ⁹²

⁹² Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens Français 1760 à nos jours*, vol. II, "Cercle du Livre de France", Montréal, 1963, p. 136. See also similar judgements in E. Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec, 1914 - 1918*, "Carleton Library", no. 74, McClelland and Stewart, 1974, pp. 107 - 127.

The Ottawa correspondent covered this event for *The Times*. He reported that the Prime Minister claimed Hughes had overstepped his constitutional authority by naming his own overseas Militia Council, contrary to previous instructions. Hughes indignantly proclaimed his innocence. His actions had been approved by the Prime Minister: "*He (Hughes) claimed that his actions had had Sir Robert Borden's approval, that the appointment of the proposed British Militia Council was tentative, and that there was no more need for a separate Militia Council in England than in the camps of British Columbia. He also declared that Sir Robert Borden had never been either frank or loyal to him.*" (*The Times*, 16 November 1916, p. 7)

During the first two years of war, a fragile consensus was maintained in Canada. Goodwill prevailed in spite of latent opposition between anglophone and francophone groups. Both the press and politicians avoided the issue. In the last months of 1916, however, the law of silence was slowly broken. Last-minute efforts were made by the high clergy to restore calm. No lesser a personage than Pope Benoît XV delivered an unequivocal message instructing the Catholics of Canada to unite. Firstly, he entreated the Catholic press to avoid all statements which could cause conflict. He reminded the clergy to set the example with their moderation, goodwill and obedience.

"En attendant, les journaux et les revues, qui se glorifient de l'appellation de catholiques, doivent s'abstenir d'alimenter la discorde parmi les fidèles ou de prévenir le jugement de l'Eglise; et si leurs rédacteurs gardent patiemment un modeste silence, s'ils appliquent même volontiers à calmer les esprits, ils auront bien mérité de leur profession. Les fidèles de leur côté doivent s'interdire de traiter cette question dans les réunions populaires, dans les assemblées, dans les congrès catholiques proprement dits; car il est presque impossible que les orateurs ne se laissent entraîner par l'esprit de parti et n'attisent par leurs discours la violence et l'incendie.

[114]

Ces prescriptions, que Nous dictent pour tous vos diocésains Notre affection paternelle, le clergé doit les considérer comme lui étant premièrement et principalement adressées. Les prêtres

*en effet, devant se faire de coeur les modèles du troupeau, il leur serait fort mal de se laisser emporter par ces luttes de rivalités et de jalousies. C'est pourquoi Nous leur recommandons très affectueusement d'être les premiers parmi leurs ouailles, pour la modération et la bienveillance, pour le respect et l'égard des évêques et enfin pour l'obéissance, principalement dans les matières qui appartiennent à la justice et à la discipline de l'Église et qui sont du domaine propre de sa juridiction."*⁹³

The Pope went on to make a pronouncement concerning the teaching of French in Ontario, acknowledging that the province was justified in demanding English as the language of instruction. What was of the utmost importance, he concluded, was that Catholic education exist in the schools of Ontario.

"Personne ne niera que le Gouvernement de l'Ontario est dans son droit en exigeant que la langue anglaise, qui est celle de la Province, soit enseignée aux enfants dans les écoles; de même les catholiques de l'Ontario demandent, avec raison, que dans les écoles séparées cet enseignement soit donné avec assez de perfection, pour que leurs enfants se trouvent dans les mêmes conditions, que ceux des non-catholiques qui fréquentent les écoles 'neutres' et ne soient pas moins en état soit d'aborder les écoles supérieures, soit d'arriver aux emplois civils. On ne saurait d'autre part refuser aux Franco-canadiens qui habitent cette province le droit de réclamer, quoique dans une proportion convenable, que dans les écoles, où leurs enfants sont en certain nombre, la langue française soit enseignée; et l'on ne peut assurément pas leur faire un reproche de défendre ce qui leur tient à coeur. Toutefois les catholiques de ce pays doivent se rappeler, que ce qui importe souverainement et avant tout,

⁹³ Copy published in *Les Mandements des évêques de Chicoutimi, 1913 - 1919*, vol. 4, Chicoutimi, 1919, pp. 182 - 197 and more particularly pp. 194-195; *Le Progrès du Saguenay*, 2 November 1916, p. 1.

c'est qu'il y ait des écoles catholiques, et qu'elles ne soient sous aucun prétexte mises en danger de disparaître." ⁹⁴

Following dictates such as this, the francophone Catholic clergy found itself in a difficult position, torn between the papal edicts and francophone demands in Canada. This did not prevent the situation from worsening in 1917. The issue of French instruction fell into the background as conscription became the dominant theme of the debate.

[115]

3.3.2 The Crisis (1917)

[TOC](#)

The war entered into its third year. The enthusiasm which marked the first period of the conflict gave way to anxiety and impatience. In Europe, for example, governments had difficulty in exercising power. The president of Italy ruled on a day-to-day basis. In Germany, Berhmann-Hollweg was forced to resign. In France, Paul Painlevé was replaced by Clémenceau, who received support from a large portion of the public. It would seem that only Lloyd George, the British prime minister, was able to weather the crisis with his authority intact. Though the Allies were relieved to see the Americans declare war against Germany (6 April 1917), the Russian Revolution was cause for fear and apprehension (October 1917).

Government instability also affected the social climate of the countries in question. Social problems intensified in Great Britain, Italy, Germany and other parts of Europe. Worker protests increased. In May 1917, more than 100,000 workers filled the streets of Paris in protest against the exaggerated rise in food prices. German workers demonstrated for the same reason. In England, 230,000 specialized workers went on strike to prevent the hiring of non-specialized personnel in their factories. In Canada, it was not until 1918 that workers demonstrated their discontent with the inflation which undermined

⁹⁴ Ibid.

their standard of living. In summary, the world was tormented by an interminable war. ⁹⁵

In 1917, Canada was divided by political issues rather than social questions. At the beginning of the year, events seemed to accelerate. Borden who was supposed to call an election before the end of the year, returned to London to attend an Imperial Conference in the spring. Borden departed reluctantly, aware that there was much to accomplish at home. It was at this conference that Borden refused to support the English imperialists in their plan for an Imperial Parliament. However, he reiterated his commitment to the war effort by announcing that conscription would be imposed in Canada as soon as he returned. (*The Times*, 21 May 1917, p. 9) In spite of repeated efforts, Borden could not convince Laurier to back his project for conscription. However, he did succeed in forming a coalition government which helped him win the election at the end of 1917. It was a bitter triumph; Borden emerged the victor only by alienating the francophone population who remained loyal to Laurier. This then, was the crisis situation in Canada in 1917; the nation was deeply divided. The members of the Quebec legislature even envisaged the separation of their province from the Canadian federation.

When Borden officially announced that conscription was necessary if [116] Canada wished to recruit soldiers in sufficient numbers, Willison applauded the leader's stand. The future of Borden's plan was dependent on one individual, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who opposed any form of compulsory service. The Liberal leader had to deal with the Western Liberals who favoured Borden's project. (*The Times*, 21 May 1917, p. 9 and 16 June 1917, p. 5)

In Quebec, demonstrations against the central government's plan quickly multiplied. *The Times* described the situation as "critical". Though both the high clergy and influential leaders in the province used all the resources available to maintain order and rally public opinion, their authority did not appear to sway the Nationalists:

⁹⁵ For more details on this period in European history, see Pierre Renouvain, *La Première Guerre Mondiale*, P.U.F., Paris, 1967.

"The higher clergy and the more responsible leaders in the province are doing their utmost to maintain order and allay public feeling, but for the time the Nationalist element is out of hand and mobs are being excited by inflammatory appeals against conscription and against further participation in the war. (..) Mgr. Bruchesi, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Montreal, has issued a statement to his people telling them that they are at a critical point in their national existence. The excitement among his people has caused him the greatest anxiety and he begs the faithful to avoid improper acts and demonstration." (The Times, 29 May 1917, p. 6.)

Henri Bourassa joined with the Archbishop in his appeal to restore calm and order. However, he continued to oppose conscription vigorously. As for *La Presse*, the newspaper called for a referendum to settle the question. (*The Times*, 31 May 1917, p. 6)

Borden attempted to bring the parties together to quell opposition. He invited Laurier to join a War Cabinet which was composed of an equal number of representatives from the two parties. The Liberal leader refused. He was unable to accept obligatory military service and Borden had made the approbation of conscription compulsory for a seat in the Cabinet. (*The Times*, 8 June 1917, p. 5)

Spokesmen for the labour movement also demonstrated their disapproval of the conscription project. The representatives of over 80 international labour unions which met in Ottawa, approved a resolution against compulsory military service. (*The Times*, 6 June 1917, p. 5) *The Times* did not report on the protests of a very large number of farmers in Canada.

With or without the support of Laurier and the Liberals and in spite of the protests of certain labour and agricultural groups, Borden decided to go ahead with his plan. The Liberal opposition reminded the Prime Minister that his government's mandate had been prolonged to ensure that harmony was maintained between the two races. Laurier [117] believed that a conscription law would widen the gap between English and French Canadians.. He concluded that the government

was overstepping its authority and ought to put the question to the people: "We are diverse races, but all British subjects. French-Canadians have not enlisted as they should have done, and no one regrets this more than I do; but in British countries there is only one way, and that is an appeal to the country." (*The Times*, 20 June 1917, p. 6)

Willison revealed to his readers that, according to the latest known figures, there were only 1,217 French-Canadian soldiers out of a total of 32,000 men in the first Canadian contingent sent to Europe. By July 20, 1917, in the province of Quebec, only 6,979 French-Canadians and 22,000 anglophones enlisted for overseas service. Though the anglophone population of the province represented only 15% of the population, it contributed 75% of the recruits. This was, of course, unacceptable. Once again, Willison saw the hand of the Quebec clergy, this time attempting to divert attention from the war. Had not *La Croix*, a newspaper which circulated especially among the francophone clergy, just declared that Confederation had been fatal for the French-Canadians during the last fifty years? The time, it said, had come for Upper and Lower Canada to separate; though the latter would remain a subject of the British Crown, it would be administered by the francophone majority. (*The Times*, 20 June 1917, p. 6)

Though exchanges became more and more acerbic and an election seemed imminent, Laurier planned to leave his post as head of the Liberal party. Willison reported that the Ontario and Western Liberals repudiated their leader who objected to conscription and who refused to join the coalition government. Liberal representatives from Toronto decided to throw their support behind Borden. (*The Times*, 9 June 1917, p. 6 and 11 June 1917, p. 8)

During the summer of 1917, supporters of the conscription project waged a strong campaign to discredit Laurier. He was an old man in poor health, they claimed, whose resignation would be welcomed. Willison believed it was increasingly difficult for the elderly francophone leader to remain at the head of his party. All the English provinces supported conscription and opposed the referendum. Two major newspapers, the *Toronto Globe* and the *Toronto Star* reflected this opinion. Even the *Winnipeg Free Press*, a Liberal organ with J. W. Dafoe as its editor and Sir Clifford Sifton as one of its principal owners, considered that conscription was essential and that it was not

necessary to consult the population on this issue. Willison claimed that if Dafoe and Sifton had the authority, Laurier would be deposed without delay. Besides, all those who believed that Laurier could sell conscription in Quebec were sadly mistaken; they forgot about Henri Bourassa and the Nationalists. Willison affirmed, and rightly so, that Laurier could not support Borden's plan. If he did, he would become, as in 1911, the target of attacks from Bourassa and would lose the support of a large portion of the population in [118] his province. It became clear that Laurier was in a position, as a French-Canadian, where his actions would be detrimental to the interests of the nation as a whole. In his innermost feelings, continued Willison, Laurier shared the views of the Nationalists. His assumed imperialism was aimed solely at winning votes in English Canada, for he relied mainly on Quebec to take power. While recognizing that the Liberal leader found himself in a difficult position, Willison harshly criticized Laurier, leaving no doubt as to his position. The correspondent described his former friend as a contemptible old man, a party politician who was ready to impose Quebec's interests over those of Canada. He had fallen into disgrace and was no longer fit to serve English Canada.

"There has never been much fibre in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Imperialism. He has not sought to separate Canada from the Mother country, but no doubt he expressed his deepest conviction years ago when he declared it was as natural that Canada should become an independant nation as the ripe fruit should fall from the parent tree. (...) Probably if his mind could be fully revealed it would be found that Sir Wilfrid Laurier still believes that Canada has no natural or necessary relation to the quarrels of Europe, and that, as he has said so often, we should not be involved in 'the vortex of European militarism.' Clearly the war has not altered any of his fundamental opinions. Beyond consenting to the participation of Canada in the conflict, he has said nothing to indicate a change of attitude towards Imperial problems. He is as averse as Mr. Bourassa from any closer organization of the Empire. He emphasizes autonomy in language very like that which the Nationalist leader employs. He has come to interpret the rights and privileges of French-Canadians

as strictly as does the Nationalist leader." (The Times, 6 July 1917, p. 5.)

Once he had outlined the narrowness of Laurier's imperialism, Willison equated Laurier's actions to the lowest form of party politics.

"Moreover, Sir Wilfrid Laurier is always a politician. He is an imperialist only so far as considerations of political safety require. His attitude towards the war is not unrelated to his political fortunes. He knows that Quebec is opposed to conscription, and that he must hold Quebec if he is to regain office. Probably he believes that under no conditions or circumstances can compulsion for a war in Europe be satisfactorily enforced in the French Province, and that sooner or later a modification of the Government's programme will justify his position. He knows also that the Province of Quebec cannot be excluded for long from adequate representation in the Federal cabinet. A compact mass of 2,000,000 people must receive decent consideration. There must be even a certain submission to prejudices which cannot be overcome. If we make civil war in Canada we shall not be in a better [119] position to strengthen the Canadian Army in Europe." (The Times, 6 July 1917, p. 5.)

While admitting that it would have been impossible for Laurier alone to bring Quebec around in favour of conscription and acknowledging the Liberal leader's difficult position, Willison nevertheless held the Liberal leader responsible for most of the government's ills and described him as a power-hungry politician. It is clear that Laurier, through his support of Borden's government, did not simply seek power. In 1916 he even accepted to prolong the Conservatives' mandate for one year. Concerning imperial politics, it was Borden who prevented the formation of an Imperial Parliament at the London conference. Willison blindly defended his friends in power and treated Laurier, who had been in the Opposition since 1911, as the scapegoat. The vehemence of Willison's criticisms would lead one to believe that it was Laurier and the Liberals who were in power. The *Times* corres-

ponent thought that Quebec wanted to impose its views on the rest of the Canadian majority. In this sense, Quebec and the French-Canadians wanted to acquire a power they did not have and which the English-Canadians did not wish to accord.

The war and more specifically the crisis of 1917 pointed out to Canadians the limits of their mutual tolerance. Faced with a common problem, two divergent nationalist manifestations emerged: one was led by French-Canadians, especially in Quebec and the other by English-Canadians.

During this turbulent period when the two distinct nations of Canada affirmed their identities, the Dominion celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Borden recalled the deep nationalist sentiment that the country had acquired since 1867 and which constituted the basis for this new nation of Canada. Did not this country's unity come from the: "...character of its people as exemplified in their ideals and by their capacity for sacrifice and devotion in fulfilling the national purpose." (*The Times*, 30 June 1917, p. 7)

Borden's government relentlessly pursued its goal to have the Conscription law approved before the summer. Violence broke out on Quebec. Pro-conscriptionist speeches provoked skirmishes in Montreal, Quebec and Hull. Newspapers that were in favour of Borden's plan, such as the *Quebec Chronicle* and *L'Événement* (Quebec) were attacked by protesters. In Hull, the president of the Dominion Labour Congress, Mr. Watters, denounced Borden for his failure to consult the workers before introducing the law. (*The Times*, 18 July 1917, p. 6)

Anti-French-Canadian sentiment mounted in the English provinces as the angry forces in Quebec united to oppose the bill. An election was to be held and Borden was pressured by a series of events. In an ultimate effort, [120] he tried to obtain a new one-year extension of Parliament. (*The Times*, 19 July 1917, p. 6) His resolution was supported by a majority of only 20 members. This number was insufficient since a vote required unanimity. Consequently the Conservative leader was forced to call an election within the next five months. All parties were apprehensive regarding the ballot; a general election could deepen the divisions in the country. Laurier reiterated his position, stating that it was impossible for him to support conscription wi-

thout a referendum. He added that Australia had gone into an election for the same reasons; the electorate had voted against conscription but this had not prevented the Dominion from continuing to contribute to the war effort. Despite his protests, the Military Service Bill which imposed conscription in Canada was voted into law on July 24, 1917. Of the 102 members who supported Borden, 22 were Liberals; 44 members opposed the bill, most of them francophones. (*The Times*, 26 July 1917; 6 August 1917, p. 5)

Dissent within the Liberal party proved advantageous to the Conservatives. Several Liberals continued to criticize their leader: Frederick Pardee, party whip, Dr. Michael Clark, member from Red Deer, Alberta and Hugh Guthrie, from the Ontario riding of Wellington-South figured among the detractors. Willison believed it was inconceivable that Laurier would be able to win back support in the English provinces. The Liberal party convention was scheduled before the general election and Willison predicted that Laurier would be rejected as leader of the Liberal party of Canada.

In preparation for the election, the Unionists focused their party strategy on the West. They knew that these provinces had elected several Liberals in 1911 so it was essential that Borden make certain concessions to attract Conservative votes. The outlook was positive for the Unionists because they knew they could recruit dissident Liberals. Willison stated that it was necessary to sacrifice the interests of the manufacturing sector in order to comply with certain demands of the West; national unity depended on it.

"The Dominion must control its own tariff but national unity will necessitate greater consideration for Western feelings. Although free trade for the Dominion is impossible, there are perhaps some 40-year-old 'infant industries' that we could afford to wean. The Canadian Manufacturers Association will be less influential at Ottawa in the future. It will always be legitimate to reserve our national resources primarily for the benefit of Canada and the Empire, but subject to that condition there is much room for tariff revision in the interests of the Western Provinces. Unless the conservatives of older Canada can agree to fiscal concessions, no permanent alliance between Sir Robert

Borden and Western Liberals is possible." (The Times, 9 August 1917, p. 5.)

Theoretically, alliance with the Liberal dissidents seemed quite easy, [121] especially since Laurier's leadership was seriously contested. However, a dramatic turn of events gave the lie to all predictions of Laurier's demise. At the Liberal Convention held in Winnipeg on the 8, 9 and 10 of August, Laurier held on to his post as Liberal chief. His re-election was cause for surprise in several quarters. The editorialists at *The Times* considered that Laurier's re-instatement and the ensuing debate would have repercussions beyond Canada's borders. For this reason, they chose to comment on the event. Following Willison's example, they declared that the Dominion's policy depended on Liberals who were in favour of conscription; these members had to understand that their future decisions would affect Canada, the Empire and the civilized world.

"We hesitate as we always hesitate at moments like this, to seem to interfere by comment, but the interest of this particular situation is not merely domestic. The war policy of Canada is in the hands of the pro-conscription Liberals, who are mainly the Western Liberals. 'There are,' our Canadian correspondent said yesterday, 'no more devoted patriots than English-speaking Liberals.' The question for them at the moment is not whether they will follow what they believe to be the path of patriotism - they are certain to do that - but how to decide rightly what the path of patriotism is. Their decision will be immensely important, not only for Canada, but for the Empire and the whole civilized world. It really resolves itself into a very simple issue. They are in favour of compulsory service." (The Times, editorial, 10 August 1917, p. 7.)

Like the Conservatives, these Liberals favoured compulsory military service. Consequently, it was their duty to join the Conservatives to ensure the victory of conscription supporters at the next election. A defeat would jeopardize Canada's entire war policy. Anglophone Li-

berals held a heavy responsibility, for as things stood, a Conservative defeat would delay the application of conscription. This would place the Dominion in a most deplorable position :

"The Compulsion Bill has passed the Canadian Parliament. There is to be a General Election not later than October. If a combined Government of Conservatives and pro-conscription Liberals can be formed soon, then the result of the elections is a foregone conclusion, and there can hardly be a doubt that conscription will be accepted by the country as inevitable. If such a government cannot be formed, what then? First, the Compulsion Bill will be law, but it can hardly have much effect till after the elections. The elections, too, will be bitter and hard-fought, with the Borden government in imminent risk of defeat (if recent Provincial elections are any guide), but in risk of defeat by a combination which must split at the moment of victory on the rock of conscription. All this is not only a possibility; if we are to judge by the information that we are receiving from Canada, it is more likely to happen than anything else. Frankly, it seems to us a most lamentable state of affairs. It means delaying conscription; it means snatching at the defeat of the [122] Conservatives - surely an unworthy score at such a moment; it means asking the electorate to vote on an issue which they will know to be a sham, certain of exposure as soon as the ballot-boxes are scaled up. We can hardly believe that English-speaking Liberals in Canada will take this risks." (The Times, editorial, 10 August 1917.)

Although Laurier was able to maintain his leadership, the Liberal party's troubles were evident and Willison never missed a chance to point them out. (*The Times*, 11 August 1917, p. 5; 13 August 1917, p. 5; 14 August 1917, p. 5; 23 August 1917, p. 5) The *Winnipeg Free Press*, headed by Liberal dissenters Sifton and Dafoe, followed suit. A dictator had just come to power in Russia to continue the war. In Canada, the election of a dictator such as Laurier would put an end to Canada's participation in the war. It was natural that the population of Quebec wished to elect Laurier to power; he could be counted on to

defend their interests. However Quebec needed the support of the other provinces and she did not have it, concluded the dissidents at the *Winnipeg Free Press*. (*The Times*, 13 August 1917, p. 5)

When the Conscription law was passed in Ottawa, opposition continued to mount in Quebec. The francophone press united to denounce the hostile attitude of the federal government. *Le Devoir* (independent nationalist) and *Le Soleil* (Liberal tendencies) were at the head of the movement. *Le Canada*, *La Presse* (Liberal), and even *La Patrie* (Conservative) joined the fray. The religious publication, *L'Action catholique* did not hide its disapproval. The high clergy which had previously urged calm and moderation, vigourously denounced the conscription bill. Archbishop Bruchesi felt that he had been duped and criticized the situation harshly.

"We have reached an exceedingly grave position. Divisions between the provinces and between the nationalities have been accentuated. We are nearing racial and religious war. Incontestable rights have been violated and laws passed of which even those who passed them seem to be afraid. Let us work for a good understanding. There was talk some time ago of a Bonne Entente. It was a right and Christian sentiment. But it is gone. Let us appeal to God and remember the days of persecution and courage and the men who suffered martyrdom." (The Times, commentary by Mgr Bruchesi, 11 August 1917, p. 5.)

The Montreal archbishop discovered that he had been the victim of deceit; he had been told that the government would not approve the conscription bill. Patenaude, the Secretary of State, had reminded Mgr Bruchesi on March 17 that the government had done nothing that would lead to the approval of the law; there was no cause for alarm.⁹⁶ As a last resort, the archbishop [123] expressed his disapproval of the law and his dismay at the rising violence that nobody seemed able to check :

⁹⁶ Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de la Province de Québec*, vol. XXII, pp. 42-43.

"Elle (votre loi) déchaînera dans notre pays une guerre désastreuse et dont nous ne prévoyons pas l'issue. Le peuple est amenté. Il peut se porter à tous les excès. Les bagarres se succèdent. Des tueries sont à craindre dans nos villes. Les gens de nos campagnes ne se rendront pas. Ils semblent décidés à tout. Et il n'y a personne capable de les calmer. (...) je suis vraiment dans l'angoisse." ⁹⁷

In Montreal the number of violent incidents increased during the month of August. Demonstrations were organized and there were several altercations between protesters and the police. The summer residence of Lord Atholstan, owner of the *Montreal Star*, was rocked by dynamite. (*The Times*, August 11, 1917, p. 6) Several people were arrested. Confessions were extracted from the accused, according to the September 6 edition of *The Times* (p. 6). Willison reported that those accused of dynamiting Lord Atholstan's home had planned to assassinate its owner along with Sir Robert Borden and Arthur Meighen. The plot was hatched, it appeared, with the help of the Germans.

At the beginning of September 1917, the suspects confessed all. They had also intended to assassinate Sir William Mackenzie and Sir Donald Mann, both of whom had made their fortunes in the railways, as well as Sir Joseph Flavell, who was responsible for the production of war munitions. The suspects mentioned the names of two Quebec Conservatives, Paul-Emile Blondin and Alfred Sévigny. The gravity of the statements shocked the public. Henri Bourassa claimed that the whole episode was a deliberate ploy: "Qu'on se persuade bien d'une chose, le jour où le gouvernement jugera que les actes de violence, suscités par des agents provocateurs, justifient l'application de la loi martiale, ce sera le triomphe complet des ennemis les plus haineux des

⁹⁷ National Archives of Canada (N.A.C.), *Robert Borden Collection*, Mgr. Bruchesi to Borden, 31 August 1917, quoted in Réal Bélanger, *Alfred Sévigny et le Parti conservateur, 1902-1918*, Doctoral thesis, Laval University, 1979, pp. 334-335.

Canadiens français." ⁹⁸ Gérard Filteau, in his book concerning Quebec and the First World War, shares this point of view.

"L'insignifiance de l'explosion et la facilité avec laquelle les inculpés avouaient leur crime, la gravité des projets qu'ils disaient avoir élaborés, semblèrent louches à beaucoup de gens sérieux. Le député Paul Emil Lamarche crut y discerner une manoeuvre pour discréditer le parti nationaliste. Il pria le gouvernement provincial d'ordonner à sa police une enquête sur cette question. Et la bombe éclate. La police provinciale [124] découvrit la participation active au complot d'un certain Charles dit Ti-Noir Desjardins, que la gendarmerie royale avait eu bien soin d'ignorer. Mais comme par hasard, ce Ti-Noir Desjardins était, paraît-il, un détective fédéral. D'après les témoignages recueillis, il avait été, de concert avec Lalumière, l'instigateur et l'organisateur de toute l'affaire." ⁹⁹

The scandal broke on September 11, 1917 when Desjardins confessed that he was a federal agent. He had infiltrated the group responsible for the dynamiting in order to inform his superiors concerning their activities. Moreover, he aided them with their projects. ¹⁰⁰

The trials of both Lalumière and Desjardins opened in Montreal in the fall of 1917, but had to be postponed due to the serious illness of one of the jurors. ¹⁰¹ The trial resumed during the spring session of the criminal assizes. Justice Louis-Philippe Pelletier, former Conservative member of Parliament and Cabinet minister, presided. ¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Le Devoir*, 1 September 1917, p. 1; Rumilly, *op. cit.*, pp. 115 and 150.

⁹⁹ Gérard Filteau, *Le Québec et la Guerre 1914-1918*, Ed. de l'Aurore, Montreal, 1977, pp. 118-119. (Filteau does not identify his sources.)

¹⁰⁰ See *Le Devoir*, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20 and 21 September 1917.

¹⁰¹ *Le Devoir*, 16, 19 and 20 September 1917; Rumilly, *op. cit.*, pp. 156 and following.

¹⁰² In spite of repeated research, it has been impossible to find this trial, as classification at the Montreal law courts exists only since 1923. All trials preceding this date are recorded, but have not been catalogued.

The Times did not give much follow-up to the confessions of 1917, except to mention that the trial of the individuals arrested for the 1917 dynamiting of Lord Atholstan's summer residence had resumed. (*The Times*, 26 March 1918, p. 5) The article stated that Lalumière and Desjardins had been selected to gather evidence against the anti-conscriptionists.

The incidents following this affair were not reported in *The Times*. Even in March, the press lost interest in the case. Events pertaining to this news item continued for several months and the initial impact of the story was lost. This demonstrates the weakness of the newspaper as a historical source: when a sensational event drags on for an extended period of time, it ceases to be considered as news. The newspaper, in its need to cover many and varied events, finds it difficult, indeed, impossible to follow a story to its eventual outcome.

It may be useful at this point in our study to outline certain changes which took place in the life and career of Sir John Willison towards the middle of the war. These details may help us to understand his attitude during the last years of the war. Firstly, in September 1916, his son, Lieutenant W. T. Willison of the Canadian Armed Forces, was killed while defending the Empire. During the [125] summer of 1917, the journalist left his position as manager of the *Toronto News* (18 June 1917) to devote himself entirely to his correspondence with *The Times* and the defense of Canadian and imperial interests.¹⁰³

Willison's resignation did not indicate that he intended to limit his activities. In the months that followed, Willison pursued difficult negotiations aimed at rallying a group of Liberals to support the union government that Borden was preparing to form. The journalist informed his friend and leader, the Prime Minister, of all the difficulties he encountered in this task. He did not find it easy to convince Rowell and Clark, two pro-conscription Liberals. Willison reiterated his fears concerning the industrialists who had developed the country over the past years. He denounced the selfishness and arrogance of this privileged class and stated that they should have less power in Ottawa in the future. Willison revealed his concern that the "foreigners" in the West usually voted Liberal, which could benefit Quebec. He believed

¹⁰³ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, letter from the *News* to Sir John Willison, 18 June 1917, document 41272.

that this presented a serious problem for the party to which he belonged.

"When all is said the National and British ideal is expressed in the Conservative party. (...) I doubt the wisdom of reckless and indiscriminate denunciation of the 'foreign elements' If Quebec and all the 'foreign elements' are consolidated behind the Liberal leader the future of the party you lead is doubtful at best. Unwise courses at the moment may have political effects for a generation. We must take all measures necessary to compel Quebec to live within the Constitution and to safeguard the connection with the Empire. In political domination by Quebec there will always be danger to the Imperial connection. This danger will be increased if all the foreign elements are forced into alliance with Quebec. The Western Liberal leaders have the confidence of these elements and therefore security for Canada and the Empire lies in a nation of Eastern Conservatives with Western Liberals. It does not need to be said that the party to which we belong is a Radical, not a Conservative party and I feel, too, that it is fast losing its regard for the 'Eastern Interests'. I know that any readjustment of programme must be gradual but it is possible to settle the direction in which we are going." ¹⁰⁴

[126]

When he was named president of the Unionist Party Publicity Committee, ¹⁰⁵ Willison began a zealous campaign in the Canadian press which stirred resentment towards the French-Canadians. Several items dealt with Bourassa and Laurier who claimed that French Canada had contributed its share to the war effort. The two French-Canadians had even encouraged recruits to desert. Canada's credibility with the Allies was destroyed and the honour of the Dominion was dragged in the mud before the entire world. Quebec avoided its duty

¹⁰⁴ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, letter from Willison to Sir Robert Borden, 22 July 1917, document 2512.

¹⁰⁵ John C. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review*.

and tried to force the rest of Canada to comply with its demands: "*The French-Canadians who have shirked their duty in this war will be the dominating force in the government of the country. Are the English-speaking people prepared to stand for that?*" ¹⁰⁶

Articles from the Publicity Committee appeared from Halifax to Vancouver. Newspapers were the principal means of reaching the population but pamphlets and leaflets were also employed, especially during election campaigns. The propaganda campaign seemed to have an impact on English-Canadian public opinion. ¹⁰⁷

The Conservatives voted two laws to avoid defeat at the polls: the "Military Voters Act" and the "War-Times Elections Act". The first law allowed soldiers to participate in the election; one of its clauses even permitted votes to be allotted to ridings other than the place of residence. The second gave the vote to the wives, widows, mothers and daughters of soldiers or veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces. It was the first time these women had the right to vote in a federal election. ¹⁰⁸

Immigrants who had been naturalized citizens since 1902 but who were originally from enemy nations were disenfranchised. The Prime Minister saw these measures as an equitable way to accord voting rights, in proportion with an individual's participation in the war effort. (*The Times*, 26 September 1917, p. 5; 30 October 1917, p. 5) Willison considered that these laws did not go beyond what the population was willing to accept under such circumstances.

During the debate, attention was focused on the split between [127] anglophones and francophones, between English Canada and Quebec. This did not prevent the Trades and Labour Congress from registering its disapproval once again. The resolutions adopted by this important labour organization showed that it was deeply opposed to

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens français*, vol. II, Cercle du Livre de France, Montreal, 1963, pp. 162-163; and *The Canadian Annual Review*, 1917, p. 610-611. The numerous documents left by Willison offer no information of interest on this subject. A. H. U. Colquhoun, *Press, Politics and People*, Toronto, 1935, does not analyze Willison's actions on this committee.

¹⁰⁸ Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens français*, vol. II, pp. 160-161.

the government's actions. While the Trade and Labour Congress did not intend to harm the government, neither did it wish to help it.

"While the Congress cannot stultify itself to the degree of either withdrawing or contradicting its firm and carefully thought out views on the question of conscription embodied in the resolution of 1915 and 1916, still, under the present form of government we do not deem it right, patriotic or in the interests of the Labour movement or of the Dominion of Canada to say or do anything that might prevent the Government from obtaining the result they anticipate in raising reinforcements for the Army by the enforcement of the law.

This Congress is emphatically opposed to any development in the enforcement of this legislation which will make for industrial conscription or interference with the trade union movement in taking care of the interests of the organized workers of the Dominion." (The Times, 22 September 1917, p. 5.)

Voluntary enlistment seemed to decrease as the factories re-organized to produce at full capacity in response to the demands of war. Farmers also needed manpower as they increased their yields. This may explain the lack of enthusiasm for conscription from these groups. This reality, however has been lost in a debate which focused on ethnic lines.

In summary, Borden pursued his negotiations for the creation of a Union government during the summer of 1917. He assured himself of victory by means of laws that were discriminatory towards certain portions of the electorate. The Labour movement registered its disapproval but the elite focused the campaign's attention on the single conflict between anglophones and francophones, which accentuated the division between the province of Quebec and the rest of Canada.

As the election campaign got under way, the Canadian press published several rumours concerning Laurier's resignation. These statements only a few months from the ballot demonstrated their ill-concealed desire to discredit the elderly leader. They also pointed out the deep internal divisions plaguing the Liberal party, which appeared

to be in total disarray. Willison reported all these rumours to his *Times* readers. The Liberal anglophone newspaper, *The Toronto Globe*, claimed that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was ready to offer his resignation of his own free will. He was getting older (75 years of age) and his health was rapidly declining, which explained his sudden wish to retire from public office. (*The Times*, 4, 5 and 6 October 1917)

[128]

It was clear that the majority of anglophone Liberals and of course the Conservatives wanted to get rid of Laurier, but with only two months before the elections, it would have been foolhardy for the Liberal party to try to find a new leader capable of bringing the nation together. Borden and his party were the only ones to benefit from disension in the Liberal ranks.

The Prime Minister introduced his Union Cabinet before embarking on the election campaign. (*The Times*, 15 October 1917, p. 9) It comprised thirteen Conservatives and ten Liberals. The former Premier of Alberta, Arthur Lewis Sifton became Minister of Customs and Excise. Newton W. Rowell, leader of the Ontario Liberal opposition, with whom Willison had negotiated during the summer, was named President of the Privy Council. T. A. Crerar, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Company held the portfolio for Agriculture. The few Quebec Conservatives were also rewarded. P.-E. Blondin and Albert Sévigny were named Post-master General and Minister of Revenue respectively, two positions of little importance. No Quebec Liberal was named to the Union Cabinet; Laurier had been able to maintain party unity in his province.

It would seem that Clifford Sifton, former Liberal member from Brandon, Manitoba until 1911 and brother of Arthur Lewis Sifton, the new Minister, was the major contributor to the formation of this union. The former member showed foresight when he commented on the creation of the coalition government:

"The meaning of this coalition government is that it will undoubtedly carry the country at the approaching election. That the Military Service Act will be vigorously enforced and that Canada has asserted its ability to put itself together in the face

of an emergency and assert its national will to stand by its allies in full strength to the end. This ought to be satisfactory news to Great Britain and her Allies." (The Times, comments made by C. Sifton, 15 October 1917, p. 9.)

During the campaign, Laurier attacked the law depriving foreigners of their right to vote, labelling it "vicieuse au plan des principes." (*The Times*, 6 November 1917, p. 5) He reiterated his belief in a system of voluntary recruiting. He promised that, should he come to power, conscription would not be enforced without a referendum. The Liberal leader advocated better management of the food situation and more controls on prices. He considered that industries engaged in the war effort should be subject to certain obligations. Beyond these concerns, Laurier asserted that the most important objective of the ballot was to maintain national unity and to avoid division and discord.

National unity was also the central issue of the Conservative campaign. Borden's party half-heartedly tried to assure the workers that salaries would improve, but the central theme was still conscription. The Conservative candidates endlessly repeated the same question: Would Canada apply the law [129] or abandon its allies? Borden proved by his actions preceding the election that he truly wanted Canada to continue its war effort and maintain its honour in the eyes of the world. ¹⁰⁹

Two weeks before the election, on December 4, *The Times* published an article entitled "Will Canada Quit? the issue of the general election." The Canadian soldiers' point of view, those who favoured conscription, was poignantly presented. The article regarded the Canadian pacifists with disdain; they had discovered the ultimate bait to attract the soldiers' votes. They promised the return of every soldier at the front if Borden was defeated.

¹⁰⁹ W. R. Graham, *Arthur Meighen: The Door of Opportunity*, vol. I, Clarke, Irwin, Toronto, 1960, p. 147; J. M. Beck, *Pendulum ...*, p. 139.

"And the Canadian pacifists, the deliberate pro-Germans, or their foolishly unsuspecting supporters who imagine they lead, where they are blindly being led, have baited their trap with fiendish ingenuity. The great bait they rely upon is this - that they, the Anti-Conscriptionists, have pledged themselves, if returned to power, to bring home every Canadian soldier in the field who wishes to return." (The Times, 4 December 1917, p. 4.)

The author refused to believe that the soldiers would vote against Borden. That would be letting down the Empire, the Allies and above all, Canada:

"But the question "Will Canada Quit?" is not mine. It is the question of as stout a soldier as ever heard a shell screech, a soldier who, I honestly believe, would pray for death rather than that his countrymen should dishonour Canada by a vote which they think will bring them safe to the shelter of their homes, and leave their comrades of many a tough fight to go on struggling to play out the game alone." (The Times, 4 December 1917, p. 7.)

The same day, *The Times* took an official stand on the Canadian situation. Borden had the backing of a coalition and sought a clear mandate to pursue the war and put the conscription law into effect. It was impossible for Canada to maintain its troops in Europe without compulsory military service. These were the "facts", according to the editorialists, and ought not to be forgotten despite the schemes of the Liberals and Nationalists who opposed the government. If certain individuals believed that the British press and population were not concerned by the Canadian problem, they were mistaken. Canada's decision would have major repercussions in Australia, where a second referendum on conscription was to be held on December 22, only five days after the [130] Canadian election. New Zealand had already accepted compulsory military service, but was faced with mounting in-

ternal opposition. How would Germany view the defeat of the Borden government? The editorialist concluded that such an outcome would only add to the anxiety in Europe. (*The Times*, 4 December 1917, p. 9)

The campaign did not proceed smoothly. In Quebec, several Borden supporters were unable to deliver their speeches due to the extreme agitation of the crowds. Willison noted that in the rest of the country there was a sort of consensus between Liberals and Conservatives to endorse the Union government. (*The Times*, 15 December 1917, p. 5) The election ultimately was seen as a safety valve; it provided a temporary release for the social tension which had accumulated over several months.

On the day of the election, December 17, the results were clear: there was a deep split between English and French-Canadians. The former massively supported Borden and the latter backed Laurier. Since the anglophone population was by far superior to the francophone population, power was in the hands of the pro-conscriptionist majority. Borden and the Conservatives won 57% of the popular vote and the opposition obtained 39,9%. The Union government held 153 seats and the Liberals 82. Quebec elected 62 Liberals out of a total of 65 in the province. In Ontario, 74 seats were occupied by Conservatives with the 8 remaining seats going to the Liberals. Results in the West exceeded the predictions. The four Western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) elected 54 Conservatives out of a total of 56 seats. Even in the defeat of 1911, the Liberals had succeeded in getting 17 members elected out of the 34 ridings then included in the West.

In Quebec, 72,7% of the electorate voted against Borden and the Conservatives. Prince Edward Island distributed its votes evenly: 49.8% for the Conservatives and 50.2% for the Opposition. The results were closer in Nova Scotia where 48.4% of the population supported Borden and 45.5% rejected him. With the exception of these three provinces, Quebec, Prince Edward and Nova Scotia, Canadian voters threw their support behind the Union government. In Ontario, 62.7% of the voters favoured conscription. The figure rose in British Columbia with 68.4% but the highest rate was 79.7% in Manitoba. ¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ J. M. Beck, *Pendulum of Power*, Prentice-Hall, Scarborough, Ontario, 1968, p. 148.

Almost all the ministers Borden had chosen for his union Cabinet were elected, except for Blondin and Sévigny, the only francophone Conservatives from Quebec.

Two days after the ballot, *The Times* decided it was an opportune moment to congratulate all Canadians. The headlines read "High-hearted Canada." (*The Times*, 19 December 1917, p. 7) The article emphasized the [131] unbelievable stress that Europe had experienced during 1917 and the relief that Canada's decision brought to the Allies. The editorialists restated that the election was not simply a Canadian affair, as the results of the vote had the potential to affect the Empire and consequently, all of civilization. Germany had expected the Dominions to decrease their aid to the Allies. In victory, the editorialists assumed a conciliatory and at times a complacent attitude. Before the election they had attacked Laurier, Bourassa and the anti-conscriptionists whenever they could. Their attitudes changed when the pro-conscriptionists triumphed.

"The Question was what would Canada do. Would she draw back and refuse to compel enlistment sufficient to fill the reinforcement drafts? That was what Sir Wilfrid Laurier recommended her to do. She might have done it; no one could have reproached her if she had done it, the reasons for doing it which were poured into the ears of her voters by the Opposition leaders and candidates were many and specious." (The Times, editorial, 19 December 1917, p. 7.)

The newspaper declared the results a victory for democracy. In these tragic hours, the Canadian Dominion was a guiding light for all English-speaking people.

"It is a great electoral verdict - momentous in its results; dramatic in its revelation of the high spirit that ennobles the Dominion; a beacon in dark hours to the English-speaking peoples; and a signal proof - at a moment when the lamp of democracy had seemed to burn low - of the heights to which

self-government can rise. " (The Times, 19 December 1917, p. 7.)

Sir Robert Borden remained the true leader of the Canadian nation. The French-Canadians were defeated: they were compelled to respect the democratic verdict and come to the aid of the majority. In conclusion, the editorialists stressed that the authorities should conduct themselves with the utmost caution and firmness:

"This is hardly the moment to speculate about the course that will commend itself to the French-Canadians and their leaders. They are still hot from the contest, and they have every right to ask for a suspension of judgment while they regain the calm in which they should make their final decision. Certainly Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues will have no wish to hurry them; but they, and Canada, and indeed the whole Empire, will hope, not without anxiety, that French Canada will not set itself against the judgment of the rest of the Dominion. Some time back Sir Lomer Gouin, Premier of Quebec, advised French-Canadians to accept the verdict of the electorate and to abandon their opposition to compulsion if that verdict were in its favour. Plainly the moment for [132] remembering this excellent advice has come." (The Times, 19 December 1917, p. 7)

Despite British efforts and Canada's support of conscription, Australia rejected compulsory military service on December 22, 1917. In Canada, the victors celebrated their success and commended the efforts of one and all. The day after the election, the Prime Minister wrote a long letter of thanks to his old friend and ally, Sir John Willison:

"My dear Sir John Willison,

Of the many messages of congratulation which have reached me I appreciate none as deeply as your own. I send my warmest thanks.

Let me thank you also for your untiring efforts on behalf of the cause which triumphed so magnificently. When one realises the enormous danger of enforcing Compulsory Military service in the midst of a General Election, one might well describe the result as 'incredible'. I do not think that any democracy has ever shown an equal spirit under so severe a test and the result will ever stand to the credit of Canada and of those who, like yourself, contributed to do it." 111

Willison's immediate superior in London, Geoffrey Dawson, also sent his congratulations:

"I feel that you too deserve as much credit for the result as any other living man. Of course the permanent features in the situation, as you point out, remain. One can only hope that the decisiveness of the victory, and the reaction after so violent a campaign, may produce rather a better atmosphere. The telegrams suggest that great tact and forbearance are being exercised towards Quebec." 112

In his election summary, Willison noted that there was a division between the two founding races in the country. He also quoted the campaign slogans used in English Canada: "Shall those who will not fight for Canada govern Canada?" "Shall one province which has done little in the war dominate the eight provinces that have done much in the war?" He admitted that Laurier would have had enormous diffi-

¹¹¹N.A.C., *Borden Collection*, Borden to Willison, document 40218.

¹¹²N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, Dawson to Willison, 30 December 1917, document 30404.

culty in governing, had he come to power, as his Liberal caucus was composed of several pro-conscriptionists. (*The Times*, 11 January 1918, p. 5) Women's suffrage was a determining factor in Borden's [133] victory. Willison estimated that 70% of the 400,000 female voters supported Unionist candidates. Revised figures seem to confirm this finding. 1,074,701 electors voted for the union government and 810,628 supported the Opposition which signified a majority of 264,073 votes for Borden.¹¹³ As if to minimize the import of the discriminatory voting laws, Willison asserted that, even though only partial statistics were available, the interpretation of the election results demonstrated that Borden would have carried the ballot regardless. (*The Times*, 11 January 1918, p. 5)

Quebec was caught in the manoeuvres of Canadian democracy which re-emphasized its minority position in the country. At the end of December, the Quebec Legislature prepared to debate the Francoeur Motion, (from Joseph-Napoléon Francoeur, a member in the Provincial Assembly) which questioned the merits of remaining in the Canadian Confederation.

3.3.3 The Impossible Rupture (1918)

[TOC](#)

Though the election calmed certain tensions, it did not eradicate them. Quebec grumbled and turned its attention inwards. Willison tried as best he could to report on events promoting a so-called return to harmony. In spite of his efforts, his spirit was lacking. Willison realized that public dissatisfaction would not subside. Violence erupted once again in the spring and signs of opposition to conscription, even in English Canada, forced the government to act cautiously. Canada would not return to normal until after the war.

In the first weeks of 1918, certain French-Canadian leaders attempted to restore relations with English Canada. Mgr. Bruchesi joined the leaders of the Protestant Churches asking for obedience of the King's call. (*The Times*, 19 January 1918, p. 7) However, the major preoccu-

¹¹³ Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

pation was still the Francoeur Motion which was on the agenda of the Quebec legislative assembly. The motion stated: "Que cette chambre est d'avis que la province de Québec serait disposée à accepter la rupture du pacte fédéral de 1867, si, dans les autres provinces, on croit qu'elle est un obstacle à l'union, au progrès et au développement du Canada." ¹¹⁴

In its editorial of January 7, *The Times* commented sympathetically on the motion, a surprising attitude considering the newspaper's strong bias towards Borden's Union government during the summer and fall of 1917. The editorialists asserted that they had always believed it necessary to try and understand the [134] French-Canadian point of view. Quebec's resistance to conscription had been strongly exaggerated by the majority of Canadians. It remained to be seen to what extent this attitude had affected the French-Canadians, concluded the editorial. (*The Times*, 7 January 1918, p. 8) In the course of the debate in the Legislative Assembly in Quebec, Francoeur used similar reasoning in his arguments. The systematic campaign to discredit Quebec was unjustified:

"Why has such a campaign been conducted against us? Has Quebec deserved to be thus treated? What ugly crime has Quebec committed? Is Quebec really an obstacle to the union, progress, and development of the country? Quebec's only crime is that she interpreted the Constitution in a manner different from her co-citizens of different origins." (The Times, 21 January 1918, p. 5.)

The Premier of Quebec, Sir Lomer Gouin (1905-1920), put an end to the debate by convincing Francoeur to withdraw his motion. No vote was taken on the question.

The politicians seemed to calm down more easily than the general public. Several conscripts hid instead of answering the call to arms, a situation which led federal troops to patrol cities and towns to gather information and capture the fugitives. At the end of March, tension

¹¹⁴ J. Lacoursière, J. Provencher, D. Vaugeois, *Canada - Québec*, Edition du Renouveau Pédagogique, Montreal, 1969, p. 484.

rose as riots broke out in the province of Quebec. On March 29, a federal police outpost was burned and the offices of the pro-conscriptionist newspapers, *L'Événement* and the *Chronicle* were ransacked.¹¹⁵ Quebec municipal authorities asked the federal government for reinforcements and a battalion was sent from Toronto. The soldiers and demonstrators came to blows.

On April 2, five days after the start of the trouble, *The Times* published an article with the surprising title "United Canada, Eager cooperation in the war. The Labour problem." (p. 5) On the same day, London received its first article concerning the confrontation in Quebec. First estimates reported 11 wounded soldiers, several wounded or killed civilians and over 65 arrests. Borden repeated that the law had to be enforced in the same manner throughout the country. Laurier entreated his countrymen to respect the law and Bourassa appealed to his compatriots for calm. (*The Times*, text written 2 April and published on 4 April, p. 5)

While the violence continued in Quebec City, Willison sent a long commentary on the resolutions that the Sons of Empire had just approved at a meeting in Montreal. These resolutions severely criticized the Quebec municipal authorities and demanded that the government decree martial law in the province. They condemned the thousands of young men who had hidden to avoid [135] joining the army. They recommended that these deserters be declared outlaws, deprived of their political and civil rights and subject to 25 year minimum sentences, without benefit of trial by jury. Lastly, the resolutions demanded that *Le Devoir* newspaper cease publication. (*The Times*, text written on April 3, published on April 5, p. 5)

Such proposals seemed to suggest that Quebec and the French-Canadians were guilty of all the wrongs committed in the country. However, in the rest of Canada, arrests of anti-conscriptionists increased; there were at least 818 arrests made in Quebec and 1,273 in Ontario. (*The Times*, 6 April 1918, p. 5)

A new commentary on the riots was published on April 10. *The Times* reported in an article entitled "*Causes of Quebec riots. Tampering with French Canadians. German agents at work*" that an inquest

¹¹⁵ Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens français...* vol. II, pp. 175-181.

was being held concerning the deaths of four civilians. Willison reported the incisive comments of the former Minister of the Militia and Defence, Sir Sam Hughes, who saw the hand of German infiltrators in the riots.

Considering the impact that these events had on Canada, we may wonder why Willison and *The Times* accorded so little attention to them. It is important to clarify one point: viewing the troubles as the work of German agents does not seem to correspond to any reality but a propaganda campaign initiated in England.

Northcliffe, the owner of *The Times*, returned to England at the end of 1917 after a trip to America, where he had acted in the name of the British government to coordinate war spending. When Northcliffe returned, Lloyd George asked for his help in organizing a propaganda campaign against the Germans. Several means were used to accomplish the task. On many occasions, the English even dropped leaflets from planes over German troops in an effort to undermine their spirit. ¹¹⁶ Thus in the beginning of April 1918, *The Times* focused on the misdeeds of German infiltrators who seemed to be everywhere. (10 April 1918, p. 3) The cruelty and brutality of the enemies of the Empire were emphasized at every opportunity. (12 April 1918, p. 7 and editorial)

But even if the newspaper wanted to participate in the campaign against Germany, this does not explain the poor coverage of the Canadian situation. Was it censorship or simply negligence? Once again, archives allow us to clarify this question. Evidence shows that Willison was unable to [136] meet his superiors' expectations. Authorities at the paper, for the first time, chastized Willison in no uncertain terms. B.K. Long, the new editor in charge of Colonial affairs, reminded Willison of Canada's importance to the Mother country. Firstly, he indicated that *The Times* was going through a serious crisis. There was a shortage of newsprint and the authorities preferred to counter this difficulty by raising the price of the newspaper to three pence, in

¹¹⁶ Campbell Stuart, *Secrets of Crewe House*, Hodder and Stoughton, 4th edition, 1921, pp. 106-107. Frank P. Chambers, *The War Behind the War 1914-1918*, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1939, p. 497. Tom Clarke, *Northcliffe in History, an intimate study of Press Power*, Hutchinson E Co. Ltd., 1950, pp. 121 and 135.

hopes that the demand would decrease. At the same time, they wished to maintain the same number of pages and preserve the quality of the publication. Consequently, the Canadian journalist was invited to continue his good work supplying complete information concerning Canada. The country was enforcing the conscription law. What problems did this pose? The British were particularly interested in the issue because they wished to convince Ireland of the necessity to impose its own form of compulsory military service.

"At the moment we are, of course, extremely interested in the Quebec situation, which so far is not entirely clear to us on this side. We have an article from you today, dated March 26, about the Unionist majority in your Parliament; and we are hoping that before long we shall get one from you on the Quebec riots. Borden seems to have acted with great resolution, and there is no doubt that what he has done in Quebec has helped to decide the Government here to take a strong line over conscription in Ireland. In fact, it is at least questionable whether, if they had not had Borden's example before them, they would not have shrunk from the disturbance which a strong line on Irish conscription will almost certainly involve. I do not know that I need go more into this side of your Canadian conscription difficulties, for you probably know a good deal from other sources about what is happening here.

At the moment all that we really have clear about the Quebec riots is that the Dominion Government has met them without any flinching, and that the Quebec people themselves say that they are due to agitators from outside and to the tactless way in which the officers are appointed by the Dominion government.

As to articles, the effect of recent messages from here is only just beginning to show itself; but here too you will, I am sure, keep in mind that we shall welcome frequent descriptive and analytical articles about the Canadian situation. If I may say so, the articles that you have been used to send us are exactly of the kind we want, and we must of course leave it to you to judge how many can be sent, knowing that you will have in mind the

special conditions of the moment in their relation to articles as much as to cabled news." ¹¹⁷

[137]

The Canadian correspondent-in-chief tried to justify himself in a letter addressed to Long some weeks later. Concerning the riots in Quebec, Willison had decided that since there was already sufficient mention of violence in the press dispatches, *The Times* would certainly not wish to receive more controversial material. He reproached the newspaper for its guarded coverage of the subject. Willison said that the truth must be known: the Church, the Liberal leaders and Bourassa were responsible for the weak enlistment in Quebec.

"Dear Mr. Long

Thank you for your letter. I will be glad if at any time I can give you information touching the affairs of Canada which it may not be well to put into print. Possibly I have not found it easy to get into the new relation. I deliberately did not mail any letter on the Quebec riots. My natural conclusion was that the dispatches were so heavy you would not want to be troubled with additional matter on the subject. Again I have found a delicacy in dealing in The Times with the Quebec situation. It is foolish to deny or evade the real facts. The Church, the Liberal leaders and Bourassa are (wholly) responsible for the failure of enlistment in the French Province. (The term 'wholly' was written then crossed out in the original letter. - author's note) Chiefly the blame lies upon the Church. Laurier's attitude has, of course, been very influential, and Bourassa has counted. But during the last year the Church and the Liberal politicians have counted for much more than Bourassa. I have just been at Montreal and have talked to all kinds of people, Liberal, Conservative, pro-French, and they all agree that the Church is to blame. No one in private conversation advances any other view. I have always tried to keep The Times out of undesirable contro-

¹¹⁷ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, letter from B. K. Long to Willison, 15 April 1918, documents 30420-30421 and 30422.

versy in Canada, and, therefore, have not stated the Quebec situation as strongly as I might have stated it. I am sending a letter to-day which may or may not suit The Times. I think it is in good temper. I know that what I say is true. I have quoted freely from Le Canada because it is regarded in Quebec as the official organ of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and certainly would not take a course of which he disapproved. In a day or so I may write you again." ¹¹⁸

Willison's position was contradictory: on one hand, he wanted the facts and the truth to be reported and on the other hand he justified his failure to send certain information to the newspaper, information which the publication strongly [138] wished to obtain. Willison seemed to confuse his duty as a journalist with his role as partisan.

After the riots, it was clear that several of the high French-Canadian clergy, including Mgr. Mathieu from the West and Mgr. Pelletier, rector of Laval University, sought to cultivate support for conscription among the clergy. (*The Times*, 13 May 1918, p. 7) As a whole, the French-Canadian clergy systematically opposed all forms of violence. Though the high clergy advocated reconciliation and sought the means to favour compulsory military service, the lower clergy advised passive resistance. Thus in a region like the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, the bishop asked his *curés* to oppose the vote for women and all the other irreverent laws which were the subject of popular contempt.

"Encore une fois, je vous exhorte à demander vous-mêmes, et à faire demander par les fidèles à Notre Seigneur, pour les chefs de peuples, et spécialement pour les chefs du peuple canadien, les lumières et les grâces dont ils ont besoin afin de remplir fidèlement leur mission, et d'éviter les aberrations de tant d'hommes publics qui, par des lois impies ou des mesures

¹¹⁸ *Times Archives*, London, *Willison Papers*, letter from Willison to Long, 8 May 1918

odieuses et usurpatrices, provoquent le courroux de Dieu et le mépris populaire." ¹¹⁹

Although the Canadian Parliament adopted the conscription law during the summer of 1917, it was not put into effect until several months later. Judicial battles ensued. This allowed deferments until the verdict of each trial. On July 11, 1918, the Supreme Court of Alberta declared that Norman Lewis did not have to enlist because, by a simple Order in Council, the government could not annul the exemptions made in the text of the original law (*The Times*, 13 and 15 July 1918) ¹²⁰ The Supreme Court of Canada reversed this decision a few days later. The Order in Council was judged valid. (*The Times*, 19 July 1918) This decision ended certain judicial ambiguities which prevented the effective application of the conscription law.

The increasing insecurity in the labour sector, which had not welcomed [139] the conscription law, added to the social and judicial problems. Accumulated frustration led to more pressing demands and intensified labour conflicts. In the spring of 1919, a dispute arose between the city of Winnipeg and its municipal employees. Analysts agreed that it could deteriorate into the worst strike in Canadian history. (*The Times*, 24 May 1919, p. 5) A total of 36 organizations decided to support the strikers. The workers demonstrated an extraordinary sense of solidarity and organization. Faced with a hostile local press, the workers founded their own newspaper. Other work stoppages began to affect important sectors such as the railways and the postal service. (*The Times*, 24 July 1919, p. 5)

¹¹⁹ *Mandements des Evêques de Chicoutimi*, a circular addressed to the clergy, 17 June 1918, p. 304. This difference in attitude between the high and low clergy has also been noted by Elizabeth Armstrong in *Crisis of Quebec, 1914-1918*, Carleton Library, no. 74, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1974, pp. 218-219.

¹²⁰ During the war, the Borden government made extensive use of the ministerial decree which allowed the Governor-General, assisted by the Cabinet (the executive body) to acquire certain powers generally belonging to the legislature (the legislative body). Elizabeth Armstrong considers that such a system replaces a democratic parliament with an oligarchy led only by a cabinet. (Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec ...*, p. 65.)

Since the government was unprepared and wished to avoid the worst, it issued a ministerial decree declaring the strikes and walk-outs illegal. The agitators who incited their colleagues to halt work would be pursued in court. (*The Times*, 25 July 1918)

In this tense atmosphere, the politicians appeared disconcerted. The head of Government was still in Europe and Canadians began to suggest to their Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden that there were important affairs to see to in Canada as well as overseas. In his commentary in *The Times*, Willison implored his leader to return to Canada without delay. Of course Borden enjoyed an overwhelming majority in Parliament, but this did not mean that he could ignore public opinion. Canada had pressing problems. The Canadian leader had been absent since May 24 and two months later, it was urgent that he return home. (*The Times*, 25 July 1918, p. 5) Borden returned to Canada on August 17 but his presence was not sufficient to calm the workers.

When Willison analyzed the workers' situation, he saw that the cost of living had risen considerably and this had exerted particular pressure on workers earning a fixed income. (*The Times*, 20 August 1918, p. 8) The scarcity of manpower allowed labour organizations to demand salary adjustments. Willison was convinced that the workers were moderate and reasonable and that they were inclined to cooperate with their employers. However, an active "Bolshevik" minority was creating confusion and disorder. Several union leaders were opposed to conscription and if they had been able, would have prevented Canada from contributing in any way to the war effort. Fortunately, concluded Willison, these "Bolsheviks" and "Liberals" did not represent the mass of workers in Canada. Nevertheless, they were directly responsible for the increasing agitation.

This phenomenon of labour tension and popular revolt was not unique to Canada. The war was dragging on indefinitely and a certain "désarroi moral" led people to expect the worst. Just as the final blow was about to be dealt, the United States announced on August 30, 1918 that an army of 5,000,000 men would be raised. (*The Times*, 30 August 1918, p. 6)

The war ended a few months later, to everyone's great relief. The [140] armistice was signed in early November. The task remained to draw up a balance sheet: the terrible losses and also the advantages the

war had brought. According to official figures, Canada enlisted close to 600,000. Of these, 400,000 went to Europe. Losses were numbered at 50,334 dead and 152,779 wounded. (*The Times*, 12 November 1918) Statistics at the time did not mention the proportion of French-Canadians. However it would appear that, according to the most probable data, approximately 5% of the expeditionary forces were comprised of French-Canadian soldiers (35,000 men). One third of the recruits were born in England (228,752). Native-born Canadians formed 50% of the Canadian Armed Forces. ¹²¹

Domestic War Loans totalled 151 million pounds sterling, an average of 20 pounds per capita at the beginning of November 1918 (the pound was worth \$4.82 at the time). Canada owed a considerable sum to the United States (61 million pounds sterling). The national debt quadrupled, rising from 67 to 240 million pounds between 1914 and 1918. (*The Times*, 12 November 1918 and *Le Devoir*, 13 November 1918)

Although the war was costly, both financially and in terms of human lives, it was also profitable in many ways. Industries specializing in military production employed between 200,000 and 300,000 Canadians. The contribution made by women was important. More than 30,000 women were hired in the munitions industry alone and many women joined the Air Force or the Public Service. Their presence was a determining factor in several sectors. (*The Times*, 23 September 1918, p. 6)

Canada's munitions industry grew rapidly. In 1914, the Dominion produced a negligible amount of war material but by the end of 1917, production was considerable, including more than 60 million shells and 100 million pounds of explosives. More than 1000 Canadian industries specialized in this type of production during the war. The Munition Board also trained between 3,000 and 4,000 pilots for Canadian Air Force. (*The Times*, 27 November 1918, p. 7)

In the agricultural sector, 7.75 million acres were sown with wheat in 1910, producing 166.7 million bushels. In the same year, the Do-

¹²¹ Armstrong, *The Quebec Crisis...*, pp. 247-250.

minion exported 67.8 bushels either as wheat or as flour.¹²² By 1916, the number of acres in wheat production had more than doubled (15.1 million acres), and yields had also doubled to reach 393.5 million bushels. Domestic consumption increased moderately from 99 to 124 million bushels. [141] The remainder was available for export. From 1917 to 1918, production decreased from 262.7 to 233.7 million bushels, but the portion destined for export was not necessarily affected. The United Kingdom was the primary beneficiary of this massive wheat production.

It must be acknowledged that *The Times* allotted very little space to economic issues during the war. In a study such as this, it becomes very difficult to analyze the evolution of the Canadian economy during the war. Other questions, such as immigration, were completely abandoned since the number of newcomers from the United Kingdom dropped from 150,00 in 1913 to less than 4,500 in 1918.¹²³ However, towards the middle of 1918, the newspaper devoted more space to the labour question. The headlines were filled with an increasing number of strikes and assorted disputes. One thing was certain: reconstruction following the war would be difficult.

Conclusion

As Willison had previously shown, Quebec was losing its influence in the Canadian Federation. If the French-Canadian bloc continued to maintain a certain political power, it was thanks to the goodwill of English-Canadians whose attitude towards Quebec remained sympathetic, generous and tolerant. (*The Times*, "French Canadians and the Empire", 4 September 1909, p. 5)

The struggles of war-time made certain inescapable realities of shared existence more apparent to both French and English-Canadians. The former constituted the minority, the latter the majority. Sir John Willison concluded that the French-Canadian fall from

¹²² M. C. Urquhart and K. A. H. Buckley, *Historical Statistics*, Macmillan Co., Canada, Toronto, 1967, pp. 363-364.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

grace in the eyes of English-Canada was due to their refusal to participate in the war. The correspondent was extremely antagonistic towards the Catholic Church, which, because of its control in educational matters, wished to promote French instruction and discourage education in English.

Willison became a propagandist blinded by British imperialist ideals. Borden was above reproach; Willison evangelized on behalf of the Conservative party and devoted himself, body and soul, to the cause. He supported conscription, the Unionist government and the discriminatory voting laws. He led a fervent campaign against Quebec and the French-Canadians. In his articles, his sworn enemies, Bourassa and especially Laurier, were depicted as traitors.

[142]

It is important to realize that several English-Canadians were opposed to conscription, especially in the labour movement. The English-Canadian bloc was not as monolithic as it appeared. However the campaign against French Canada made English-Canadians appear to speak as a single unified voice. Because they were opposed to conscription, Laurier was described as a despicable party politician and the French-Canadians figured as the enemy. The labour movement demonstrated its opposition to the law and there were many deserters throughout the country but little was made of this anglophone resistance; the emphasis was placed on Quebec's opposition. In this game, Quebec was both the cause and the victim of all evil.

The fragile consensus of the first years gave way to a crisis which seemed irremediable as the war continued. Borden's coalition finally broke the Liberals who had remained loyal to Laurier. The time for compromise and tolerance passed as the French-Canadians overstepped their limits. The war became a crusade for English-Canadians. French Canada was no longer capable of compromise. The French-Canadian people were deeply traumatized.

Though Borden's victory appeared decisive, it left the government in a difficult position. The election only served to demonstrate that behind an apparent victory, the two main communities of the nation experienced enormous difficulties. Intolerance took the place of tolerance and passion succeeded reason. Ultimately, the crisis made French-Canadians aware once again that the country was dominated

by the anglophone majority and the rest of Canada would not fail to remind them of this fact should they forget. Failure to collaborate caused English Canada to reject French Canada. In this light it becomes difficult to speak of a relationship between equal partners. Does not the Canadian federal system perpetuate and even reinforce inequality? The conscription crisis would lead us to believe so. Behind this idea of English Canada's tolerance towards its minority lies the notion of inequality which clearly separates its two main linguistic communities.

The Times officially favoured the majority, which is understandable. It is interesting however that the newspaper clearly discerned the situation which prevailed in Canada. The paper recommended that English-Canada's negative attitude towards French-Canadians not be pushed to extremes. The British paper attempted to bring Canadians back to a sense of reality, which was imperative because Canada was poised on the brink of civil war. Like Elizabeth Armstrong, we believe that the 1917 election, the Francoeur Motion and the riots served as safety valves. ¹²⁴ Québécois nationalism, in the Canadian reality dominated by the anglophone majority, seemed fundamentally condemned to passivity, negativism and introversion. Sooner or later it was destined to be assimilated into the mainstream of Canadian nationalism, dominated by British imperialist ideology.

[143]

Finally, external pressures, far from unifying the country, almost tore it apart. This may demonstrate the structural weakness of the Canadian nation itself. The nationalism of English Canada found its *raison d'être* outside the country, in the British Empire. French-Canadian nationalism was based on a specific culture and seemed to evolve within the Quebec territory.

¹²⁴ Armstrong, *The Quebec Crisis...*, p. 243.

[144]

Figure 7

[TOC](#)

**TO THE WOMEN
OF CANADA**

1. You have read what the Germans have done in Belgium. Have you thought what they would do if they invaded this Country ?
2. Do you realize that the safety of your home and children depends on our getting more men **NOW** ?
3. Do you realize that the one word "GO" from you may send another man to fight for our King and Country ?
4. When the War is over and someone asks your husband or your son what he did in the great War, is he to hang his head because you would not let him go ?

**WON'T YOU HELP
AND SEND A MAN TO
ENLIST TO-DAY ?**

Newspaper act: *Le Soleil*, Quebec, Tuesday 2 avril 1918.
Le Devoir, Montreal, Tuesday, 2 avril 1918.

Newspaper act : *Le Soleil*, Quebec, Tuesday 2 avril 1918.
Le Devoir, Montreal, Tuesday, 2 avril 1918

[145]

Figure 8

[TOC](#)

TOUS LES VRAIS
POIL-AUX-PATTES

S'enrôlent
au
163^e C.-F.

C' en chef:
HENRI Des ROSIERS
ci-devant du 14. F. E. C.

C' en second:
OLIVAR ASSELIN

Comprend aussi:
le major RODOLPHE De SERRES,
le capitaine ROBERT ROY,
le lieut. Alain de Lotbiniere Macdonald,
lons de retour du front:
le lieut. de JONGHE, Victoria Cross; etc.

VICTOIRE!
Les Poil-aux-Pattes
s'enrôlent.

Le tambour bat, le clairon sonne.
Qui reste en arriere?... Personne!
C'est un peuple qui se défend.
En avant!

QUARTIERS
GENERAUX **MONTREAL** RUES St DENIS
ET St CATHERINE

The 163rd Battalion was one of the few successful recruiting efforts in Quebec after 1914.

The 163rd Battalion was one of the few successful recruiting efforts in Quebec after 1914.

[146]

Figure 9

[TOC](#)



A hard-headed argument for Quebeckers to buy War Saving Stamps.

[147]

Figure 10

[TOC](#)



Election propoganda in 1917 was as unrestrained
as in any campaign in Canadian history.

[148]

Figure 11

[TOC](#)

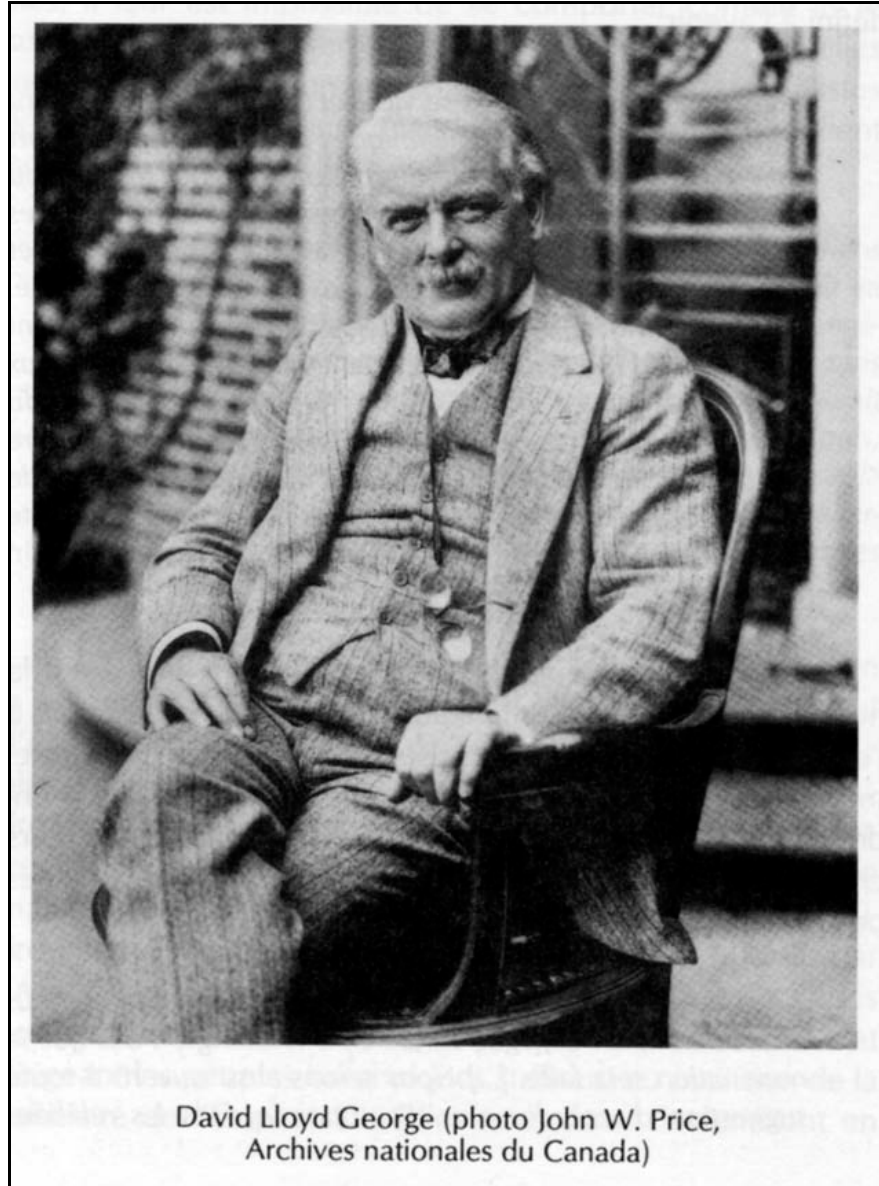


A poster from the Canada Food Board, 1918.

[149]

Figure 12

[TOC](#)



David Lloyd George. (National Archives of Canada)

[150]

Figure 13

[TOC](#)

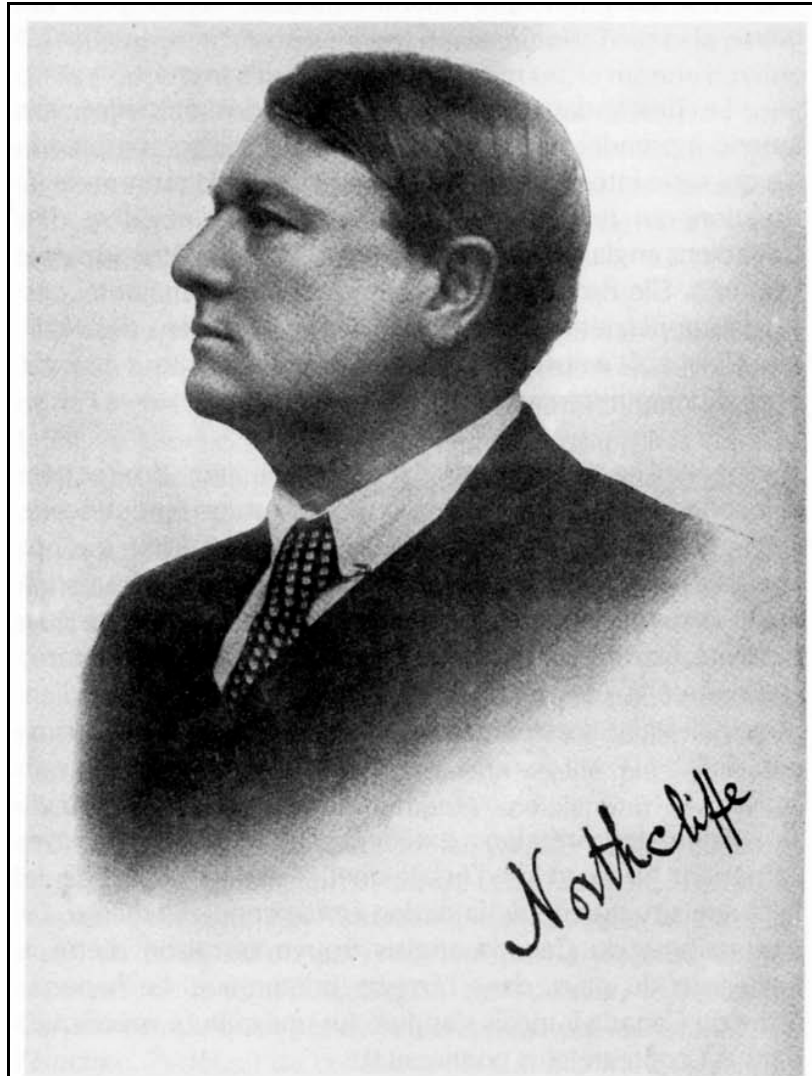


William Lyon Mackenzie King leader of the Canadian Liberal party, 1919.
(National Archives of Canada)

[151]

Figure 14

[TOC](#)



Lord Northcliffe, propriétaire du *Times* 1908-1922 (Lord Northcliffe, *At the War*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1916, Fonds privé)

Lord Northcliffe, owner of *The London Times*, 1908-1922.
(Lord Northcliffe, *At the War*)

[152]

[153]

Figure 15

[TOC](#)



Crowds celebrating the Armistice in Vancouver on November 9.

[153]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

Chapter 4

The Return to Peace

(1919-1922)

[TOC](#)

[154]

The war was won with little time to spare; the American intervention was critical to an Allied victory. Both the victors (except the United States) and the vanquished came out of the war financially devastated. The post-war years were spent healing wounds, reconstructing the economy, restoring social peace and stabilizing political life.

Through its war effort, Canada gained respect on the international scene. Canada's pre-war foreign policy was based on contingencies; politicians were constantly afraid of overstepping their prerogatives and offending the Mother country. At the end of the war, Canada participated in the preparation of the Treaty of Versailles, which it signed as an independent nation. Canada also became a member of the League of Nations and took measures to establish autonomous diplomatic relations with the United States.

On the domestic scene, the Union government did not weather the return of peacetime. Partisan dissent reappeared and new personalities entered the political arena. Following Laurier's death in 1919, Mackenzie King became the new Liberal leader. Borden resigned on his doctor's recommendation in 1920. Arthur Meighen was chosen to succeed him and lost in the election of 1921. The Liberals, strongly supported by Quebec, returned to power after ten years of anguish.

Certain adjustments were necessary to adapt the war industry to the needs of a peacetime economy. The change-over was not without problems. The governments wished to help the returning soldiers, but there was suddenly an excess of manpower. The labour movement which was fairly easily contained during the war, was prepared to fight fiercely to defend its rights and improve working conditions. Lastly, Canadian leaders tried to re-establish harmony between English and French-Canadians. But the wounds were deep: the fear and the anger on both sides remained for years afterwards.

[155]

4.1 *The Times* and Canada (1919-1922)

[TOC](#)

As the situation returned to normal, it is important to establish the state of relations between *The Times* and Canada. Since his arrival at the newspaper in 1910 and more particularly during the war, Willison made himself the champion of the Conservative party. The Liberals' return to Ottawa doubtless caused the correspondent certain problems.

The post-war period at *The Times* was marked by several changes. Northcliffe quarrelled with his entourage and Lloyd George became his new enemy. He did all that was in his power to hurt the Prime Minister's chances in the 1919 election, but to no avail. Northcliffe announced an economic reform programme to counter a deteriorating financial situation at *The Times*. He replaced the editor-in-chief, Geoffrey Dawson, with his old friend and an employee of the newspaper, H. Wickham Steed. Steed had a distinguished reputation in journalism, particularly in the European countries. Sir Campbell Stuart, a Canadian, was named as Steed's assistant. Stuart, a close friend of Northcliffe's, wished to return to Canada after the war but the owner of *The Times* convinced him to remain in England; he named Stuart vice-president of *The Times* and editor-in-chief of *The Daily Mail*. As well, Sir Campbell Stuart was to replace Steed when necessary.

How can this young Canadian's rapid rise to the higher echelons of a vast press empire be explained? The reasons were simple: he had Northcliffe's complete confidence and the owner saw the young man as the saviour of his troubled newspapers.

"It is my wish that when you (a. n. Steed) are away Campbell (Stuart) should not be away. (...) Campbell (Stuart) is the only person I have yet found who understands the harmonizing of my newspapers, that is to say chiefly stopping their pin pric-

king habits. Just as nothing is so easy as spending other people's money, so to certain people nothing is more pleasant than wasting somebody else's power and influence. The Evening News is the worst offender, and though it is essential that The Times be kept absolutely separate from the other newspapers with which I am concerned, it is impossible that the head evening newspaper in the whole world concentrated in London, can, in the mind of Government be dissociated with the policy of Printing House Square. Campbell (Stuart) is the one person who seems to have got this right in his head, perhaps because he has come on the scene later. Let him see this, I do not think he is subject to a swelled head." ¹²⁵

[156]

Northcliffe first met his protégé in 1917, when he visited the United States for the purpose of coordinating England's war spending in North America. He enlisted the service of the young anglophone soldier from Montreal and Campbell Stuart returned with Northcliffe to London in 1918. The two men organized the anti-German propaganda campaign proposed by the English government. They were under the authority of another Canadian, Lord Beaverbrook who was the British Minister of Information. Beaverbrook was also at the head of an immense press empire and possessed a solid reputation both as a successful businessman and a capable politician.

On his arrival at *The Times*, Campbell Stuart immediately began a private correspondence with Willison, who was rather disillusioned at this point. The Canadian bureau chief noted once again that politicians easily abandoned their ideals in favour of partisan interests. Willison considered that the British Empire was sacrificed for this very reason. Campbell Stuart demonstrated the pragmatism of a newcomer. He believed the Liberals possessed a valid policy. At any rate, as he was fond of reminding Willison, they were in power. Willison's close ties with Borden's Conservatives placed him in an extraordinarily difficult

¹²⁵ *The History of the Times*, vol. 4-1, pp. 487 to 534 and more especially p. 510. See also Tom Clarke, *Northcliffe in History an intimate study of Press Power*, Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., London, 1950, p. 120 and following.

position after Mackenzie King's victory. The Liberals could not trust Willison and he himself did not hide his reluctance to support them.

Although their exchanges remained cordial, the relationship between Willison and *The Times* continued to deteriorate after the war. Stuart reiterated his support for the policies of the Canadian government and he tried in vain to convince Willison to reconsider his point of view. For example, Willison judged that sending a Canadian representative to the United States was unacceptable; Stuart believed that it was in Canada's best interest to do so.

"I have written an article today on Canada, and I am afraid there is a certain point in it with which you will not agree - and that is the need for the appointment of a Canadian Minister to Washington. I had long talks with everyone in Canada and as you know I spent the last week-end in the Adirondack Mountains with Mr. Mackenzie King. (...) I have become a convert to the fact that Canada's interests will never be properly looked after in that great capital until a Canadian is sent there directly charged with the duty." ¹²⁶

[157]

Stuart continued, reminding Willison that it was the duty of every journalist to maintain a respectful attitude towards the Prime Minister, regardless of the political party he represented. The onus was on Canadians living abroad in particular to treat the Prime Minister of Canada with all the respect his office commanded.

¹²⁶ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, Sir Campbell Stuart to Willison, 4 September 1922, documents 30932-30933. In another letter sent 31 July 1922, Stuart mentioned that he had met King. He had tried to arrange things for Willison: "Mr. Mackenzie King spent the week-end with me in the Adirondack and I must confess I was more pleased with him than ever. I do hope that sometime you will get an opportunity of a good talk with him, as he is evidently very well-disposed towards you and wants to keep you posted." N.A.C., Stuart to Willison, 31 July 1922, document 30927.

"I have paid a tribute to Mr. Mackenzie King, not so much to the man as to the office. I do contend that we Canadians who live abroad should treat the Prime Minister of the day as the first citizen and not embroil ourselves in the domestic issue of politics at home. When we live there that is time enough, but over here our duty is to support the head of the Canadian government whoever he may be." ¹²⁷

Willison was a partisan journalist and a Conservative and had been for the preceding ten years. His alliances did not trouble *The Times* during the war because they were identified with the party in power. *The Times* felt the need to adjust to the prevailing ideology, regardless of the political party. Willison was unable in the space of a few months to deny all that he had fought for so strongly during the best years of his life, that is, the defense of the Empire on the North American continent. Until 1920, Borden's party offered the best means to defend his interests; after this date Willison believed himself to be the only true spokesman for Conservative philosophy in the country.

In Dawson's time, the newspaper had held Willison in high regard. The newcomers who occupied the management positions at *The Times* were less attached to the traditional imperialist principles espoused by Willison. The Canadian correspondent made no secret of his grievances towards the newspaper and the English press in general.

"The fault I have found with the Times and most British publications is that they have seemed to accept the views of the extreme autonomists as expressing the feeling of Canada. I disagree. I believe that Fielding, and not Sir Clifford Sifton or J. S. Ewart or Mackenzie King or Lapointe expresses the true attitude of this country towards Great Britain. I think there is danger in independent representation in the League of Nations and danger in a divided diplomacy at foreign capitals. The Empire, as I look at it, must act together or must fall apart. The irre-

¹²⁷ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, documents 30932-30933.

concilable autonomists are taking the direct road to disruption. (...)

You must not think that I am a wild-eyed Imperialist. If we had to go to the roots of things I am a Canadian first and if I could not see something [158] like an equal citizenship for Canadians in the British Empire it would go out for separation tomorrow. But I do think it possible to have such a citizenship and I honestly believe that the disruption of the Empire would be almost the greatest calamity that could come upon the world. (...) I am opposed to the group led by Sifton, Ewart, Dafoe of Winnipeg, Skelton of Queen's University, Gregory of the Daily Star of Toronto. They do not all think alike but, whether they confess it or not they look towards an independent Canada. I have had the most intimate social and personal relations with these men for thirty years. With all of them my relations still are as good as they can be but I know what they think and what they mean. Again and again they have pleaded with me to join their movement. I have refused because that is not the direction in which I desire to go. I suppose you know how the thirteen colonies were separated from the Mother country. The British people in the United States at that time were plunged into secession before they knew what they were doing. (...)

I have no desire to dictate a policy to the Times on any question and I know that I would do the Times no service if I dragged it into Canadian political controversies. That is the thing I have tried to avoid from the first and I believe I have succeeded. What I do want the Times to know is that there is definite planning behind the autonomist movement in this country. It will fail but it will make trouble. The British Press should not encourage such a movement by seeming to accept its leaders as the authoritative exponents of Canadian opinion. ¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Times Archives, London, *Willison Papers*, Letter from Willison to F. Paterson, 25 April 1923.

Willison maintained that ideally, the British Empire should evolve into a federation. However the tendency since the end of the war was towards greater autonomy for the Dominions. Management at *The Times* recognized that the facts showed a different evolution from that described by its Canadian correspondent. Moreover at the Imperial Conference of 1917, Borden himself was the author of a resolution to prevent the creation of such a federation for the Empire. Willison remained attached to his ideal empire and failed to see its true evolution. This did not help him to carry out his work as a journalist.

The newspaper management was aware of Willison's difficulty to adapt to this new reality. The editors attempted several times in private correspondence to show Willison that the idea of an Imperial federation was fading.

"Our ideas on Imperial subjects are so akin that it is rarely I find myself [159] at variance with your views, but I do not altogether agree with your version of a Federate Empire. You speak of the parallel between the Federation of the Empire and the Federation of Australia and Canada. (...) But with the Empire changing as it is today surely each Dominion is developing more and more an independent national status, and what is even more important, a national spirit of its own, so that the idea of federation recedes rather than advances." ¹²⁹

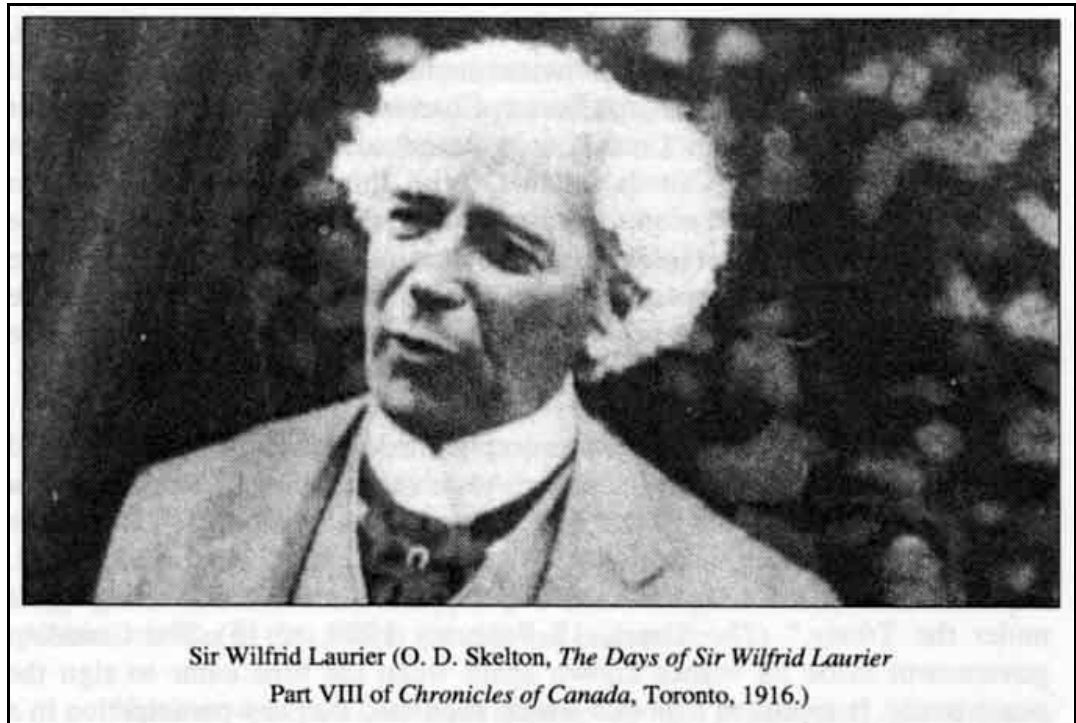
This then was Willison's predicament: the image he conveyed of Canada from this point forward reflected the attitude of a dyed-in-the-wool yet deeply disappointed imperialist. Management at *The Times* tried its best to dissociate itself from its Toronto correspondent in order to gain a more realistic view of the true tendencies in Canada. It is within these constraints that the following analysis is situated.

¹²⁹ NAC, *Willison Papers*, F. Peterson to Willison, 24 July 1923, document 31402.

[159]

Figure 16

[TOC](#)



Sir Wilfried Laurier (O.D. Skelton, *The Days of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*
Part VIII of *Chronicles of Canada*, Toronto, 1916.)

[160]

4.2 Politics

4.2.1 External politics: Canada acquires autonomy

[TOC](#)

Both Liberal and Conservative governments between the years 1908 and 1918 wished to assert Canada's authority on the international scene as evidenced by the creation of the Ministry of External Affairs in 1909. When England negotiated treaties directly concerning the Dominion, Canada demanded to be consulted more and more often. Though Laurier tolerated the situation of a dependent Dominion, it was clear that he supported Canada's eventual autonomy concerning participation in Imperial wars. Though the strategy of Borden's Conservatives was less aggressive, it was just as persuasive when it came time to defend the great principles of self-government. Because of their contribution to the war, Canadians were convinced that they could demand equal status with the Mother country. After the war, Canadians showed greater assurance and determination in international affairs.

This new attitude was demonstrated in early 1919 when the President of the Privy Council in the Union government, N. W. Rowell, a Liberal, proposed a bill wherein the government nominated Sir Robert Borden and three of his ministers, Sir George Foster, Charles Joseph Doherty and Arthur Lewis Sifton to represent Canada in a peace conference. They were empowered to sign the treaty in Canada's name. With this gesture, the Dominion reaffirmed its intention to acquire a new status on the international scene. (*The Times*, 14 April 1919, p. 11) The United States did not see things in the same light. They launched a campaign against Canada, stating that the British Empire was using Canada as a means to gain more votes, thus extending its influence among the Allies.

The Canadians were deeply offended and openly denounced the United States. Rowell criticized the American position: "Canada was at a loss to understand why the United States, her nearest neighbour, should be the one nation in the world to challenge her position." Canada, continued Rowell, "... cannot and will not assent to any impairment of her status or voting rights under the Treaty." (*The Times*, 17 February 1920, p. 15) The Canadian government made its wishes known again when the time came to sign the peace treaty. It approved a motion which stipulated that any participation in a war had to be determined by none other than the Canadian Parliament. (*The Times*, 13 September 1919, p. 11)

In the majority of articles dealing with Canada's status as an equal partner with England, it was generally recognized that this right was acquired in exchange for the war effort on behalf of the Allies. From now on, stated the Commander of the Canadian Corps in France, General Currie, the Empire was no more than a constellation of free nations, equal and united by goodwill, common ideals and mutual confidence. The relationship of "superior - inferior" [161] was a thing of the past. (*The Times*, 27 May 1919, p. 13) Editorialists at *The Times* shared these views but could not hide their doubts. The Mother country did not take these considerations seriously enough.

"Canada and the other Dominions have made up their minds that equality within the Empire, which they have gained during the war, must be real equality of words that gloss over the real predominance of the British Government and Parliament. No one here denies their claim specifically, but how many there are who are searching about for a formal addition to Imperial institutions which may provide a new semblance of equality for the Dominion representative and may be a new gloss over the truth of their relations to Great Britain." (The Times, editorial, 27 May 1919, p. 13)

Officially, *The Times* hoped for a change in attitude on both sides. The newspaper noted the comments of the Canadian Minister of Justice, Doherty, who stated that his country had entered the conflict and conducted itself as an independent nation.

"She did not ask the Mother Country to do her fighting for her. She sprang to the front as a nation among the nations of the world. Nationhood, he declared, is a matter of fact, not a question of what is written on the Statute-Book." (The Times, editorial, 13 September 1919, p. 11.)

At the same time, Canada initiated a campaign to send a permanent Canadian representative to the United States. Rowell led this crusade also. He emphasized that such a move allowed Canada to play her role of intermediary between the United States and England more effectively; it also favoured a better defense of Canada's particular interests. (*The Times*, 27 May 1919, p. 11) As for Willison, he noted that popular opinion seemed favourable to the nomination of a Canadian envoy to the United States. (*The Times*, 25 March 1920, p. 15) Willison still believed, however, that Canadian politicians, whatever their political allegiance, were promoting policies harmful to the entire British Empire. He was extremely disappointed to see his good friend Borden adopt a position similar to what Laurier had endorsed.

"Laurier was often the object of attack by high Imperialists, but curiously enough the later speeches of Sir Robert Borden are not distinguishable in letter or in spirit from those of Laurier which Imperialists censured or suspected." (The Times, 12 July 1921, p. 9.)

Willison could not contain his annoyance. The attitude of his compatriots and his closest allies irritated him. Rowell, like Borden, went too far.

"Either we are an Empire or we are not. If we are an Empire we must work together and put less emphasis on equal status, equal privileges, [162] and all the rest of it. I am sure that I am Canadian before I am anything else, but I cannot see any essential conflict between Canada and Great Britain. No one can

persuade me that separate representation in the League of Nations and diplomatic representation of the Dominions at foreign capitals is the way to consolidate and perpetuate an Empire." ¹³⁰

It appears that Willison's bases for analysis were associated with an idealistic concept of the Empire. The real evolution escaped his attention somewhat because it was in complete contradiction with his deepest convictions.

Canada's vigorous campaign was led by Sir Clifford Sifton, a Liberal dissident and one of the main architects of the coalition government. He represented a school of thought which advocated political independence for the Dominion. Influential newspapers such as the *Toronto Star* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* were the loyal mouthpieces for this movement. Even the *Toronto Globe*, though less explicit, evolved irremediably in the same direction. Newton Rowell, a Liberal, guided Canadian politicians in political strategy. The House of Commons was aware, each time the need arose, of the necessity to name a Canadian minister to Washington. Borden supported his colleagues by affirming that it was in the best interests of Canada itself to do so. He believed that a Canadian representative in the American capital would bring the United States and the entire British Commonwealth closer together. ¹³¹

It must not be assumed that all parties were in perfect agreement with the plan to send an ambassador to Washington. W. S. Fielding, Rodolphe Lemieux and Henri Béland were the chief organizers of the opposition. Others such as the Liberal leader, Mackenzie King and the leader of the Western Farmers, Thomas Crerar supported the project. The opposition alleged that Canada was not a nation but a colony, and therefore did not have the right to name an envoy to the United States. Moreover they charged that the action would create friction with the Mother country. Lastly, the Dominion should not go ahead with the

¹³⁰ *Times* Archives, London, Willison to Long, 12 May 1921.

¹³¹ The term "Commonwealth" made its first appearances in *The Times* towards 1917. It was not used regularly. Several politicians began employing the term at the beginning of the 1920's and this tendency was reflected in the press.

plan because the Canadian population did not wish it. Even the new Prime Minister, Arthur Meighen, who succeeded Borden, clearly stated that for purely sentimental reasons he opposed the plan to send a delegate to the United States; however he admitted that the time had come for Canada to go forward. (*The Times*, 23 April 1921, p. 10)

The editorialists at *The Times* were surprised at the fervour with which the issue was debated in Canada :

[163]

"There is however, no question that the assumption by Canada of international status as an equal of any other nation is questioned by many Canadians, who see that rights of this kind in international affairs carry responsibilities which cannot be evaded with honour when once the claim of equality has been asserted on the Canadian side and allowed by the rest of the world." (The Times, 23 April 1921, p. 11.)

Although the apprehensions of the Canadian population were understandable, it was impossible to revert to the pre-war status. The Canadian people had new responsibilities to shoulder. This was difficult, agreed *The Times'* editorialists, but did the Canadians really have a choice?

"The alternative has not been presented to them (Canadians) any more clearly. It is that they should revert to their pre-war international position, that their foreign relations should be settled for them - with no more than the pre-war formality of consultation - by the British Government; that they should be bound by its decisions in questions even of peace and war; that they should leave to this country almost the whole weight of the burden of defence of their share by sea. To state this alternative is enough. It is no longer a possible position for the great Dominions." (The Times, 23 April 1921, p. 11.)

The paper stated that Borden's position seeking equality in the Assembly of Allies expressed the will of the Canadian people. It was then up to the people of the British Empire to find a way to solve the constitutional dilemma. Any solution had to allow the Dominions to acquire equal status while maintaining close ties with the Empire. How was this difficulty to be overcome? *The Times* promoted the strategy proposed by Hall, an Australian, who simply advised that regular consultations between the statesmen of the Empire would be sufficient to maintain Imperial solidarity. Such meetings would become the logical manifestation of total equality between the Mother country and her Dominions. (*The Times*, editorial, 23 April 1921, p. 11)

The Times' stand on the question was an accurate reflection of the British government's official position. Lloyd George believed that Canada had achieved international recognition due to its important war-time contributions. He also promised to use all the means at his disposal to clarify the Dominions' status in the future.

"In recognition of their services and achievements in the war the British Dominions have now been accepted fully into the comity of nations by the whole world. They are signatories to the Treaty of Versailles and of all the other Treaties of Peace: they are members of the Assembly of the League of Nations, and their representatives have already attended meetings of the League. In other words, they have achieved full national status, and they now stand beside the United Kingdom as equal partners [164] in the dignities and the responsibilities of the British Commonwealth. If there are any means by which that status can be rendered even clearer to their own communities and to the world at large, we shall be glad to have them put forward at this conference." (The Times, speech made by Lloyd George, 21 June 1921, p. 12)

When Canadian politicians prepared the nomination of a representative to the United States, it was in direct concordance with British policy; the British government strongly encouraged the Dominions to

assume greater responsibilities. Any apprehensions came from the Dominions themselves. As for Lloyd George, his stand on the issue was clear.

"We have cooperated willingly with that, and we shall welcome a Canadian colleague at Washington as soon as the appointment is made. (...) We shall also welcome any suggestions which you may have to make for associating yourselves more closely with the conduct of foreign relations. Any suggestions which you can make upon that subject we shall be delighted to hear and discuss. There was a time when Downing Street controlled the Empire; to-day the Empire is in charge of Downing Street." (The Times, speech made by Lloyd George, 21 June 1921, p. 12.)

The British Prime Minister concluded with the precision that the British Empire differed from any other in that it relied not on force but on the goodwill of its constituents and a shared way of thinking. Freedom was the main unifying factor. Other English politicians supported this change in attitude. Bonar Law, a Canadian-born politician elected to the British House of Commons, had supported the Canadian plan to appoint a representative to Washington as early as 1919. (*The Times*, 19 July 1919, p. 13) Lord Milner, the spiritual leader of the most ardent imperialists, joined the general movement of support. As Colonial Secretary, he recognized that sooner or later it would become necessary to adjust theory to reality. The Empire's survival depended on the establishment of a system which allowed relations between equal partners.

"The only possibility of a continuance of the British Empire is on a basis of absolute out-and-out partnership between the United Kingdom and the Dominions. (...) No international conference is really complete in these days unless the British Dominions are represented (cheers). It is absurd to suppose - I do not wish to say anything offensive, but it is really absurd to suppose that the presence of Canada and Australia at interna-

tional discussions is not at least of equal importance with that of Chili or the Argentine, not to say Bolivia or Paraguay." (The Times, 10 July 1919, p. 7.) ¹³²

[165]

Other individuals such as L. Amery, former *Times* associate, author of the *Times History of the South African War*, and Under-Secretary of State to the Colonies, wondered if Canada was morally capable of separation from the Mother country. The Empire was a single entity, he said, and should remain so. Amery's comments elicited much criticism from certain Canadians. (*The Times*, 4 January 1921, p. 9) ¹³³

¹³² Vladimir Halpérin in his book on Lord Milner and the evolution of British imperialism, Paris, 1950, presents two opinions on Milner's attitude towards the Dominions. In his introduction, he asserts: "A une question que nous lui avons posée, la veuve de Lord Milner n'a pas hésité à répondre que, non seulement Milner n'a pas inspiré la rédaction du rapport Balfour, mais que, s'il avait vécu lors de son élaboration, il s'y serait opposé de toutes forces." However in a recent book, the author, who was able to get very close to Milner, especially during the war from 1914 to 1918, affirms that one of the "fathers" of the report of 1926 was indeed Milner. B. K. Long, who was Dominion Editor at *The Times* from 1913 to 1921, then Editor-in-chief of the *Cape Times*, a member of the South African Parliament and a friend and follower of Smuts, recalled his meetings with Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada in London, 1917. Borden believed that it was time that the Dominions became independent and stopped being considered as Great Britain's colonies. "They have proved their right to full nationhood," he stated. Borden asked Long to support this idea in *The Times*. At Borden's request and with his and perhaps Smuts' collaboration, John Dafoe, Editor-in-chief at the *Winnipeg Free Press* and an extremely influential publicist, outlined a project for the Dominions' equality in 1917. In 1926, the main ideas of this plan were maintained. Long added, "Lord Milner was from the beginning one of the most enthusiastic and constructive champions of the new idea." According to Milner's own statements, as they were reported in *The Times*, it must be acknowledged that, far from opposing the idea, Milner favoured nationhood for Canada.

¹³³ Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens français*, vol. II, pp. 213-214. Wade affirms that a broader conception of Imperial relations became widespread in England, following Amery's appointment to the Colonial Office. Milner's influence appears to be stronger than that of Amery. The former seemed to

The Americans wanted to exclude Canada from the League of Nations at all costs; they argued that the British Empire could have but one representative. Canadians were frustrated at this attitude which relegated them once again to an inferior status on the international scene. Countries such as Haiti, Honduras or Nicaragua, thanks to their status, enjoyed a degree of influence; however, these small nations had not contributed to the war effort. (*The Times*, 28 July 1919, p. 11)

The Chanak Incident

England's actions, whether pre-meditated or not, provided Canada with the opportunity to affirm itself. The precedent created by the Chanak Incident [166] was one of many where Canada made its desire for independence known. In September 1922, Britain declared war on Turkey. The British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, appealed to the Dominions for military aid since Mustapha Kemal's troops were gaining on the English forces, more particularly in the Strait of Chanak. (*The Times*, 18 September 1922, p. 10) On September 20, *The Times* published a declaration made by the Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King. The Canadian leader asserted that Parliament would have to be consulted on this issue in order to respect public opinion.

"It is the view of the government that public opinion in Canada would demand authorization on the part of Parliament as a necessary preliminary to the dispatch of any contingent to participate in a conflict in the Near East. The Government is in communication with members of the Cabinet in Europe as Canada's representatives at the League of Nations, and with the British government, with a view to ascertain whether the situation would justify the summoning of a special session of Parliament."(*The Times*, 20 September 1922, p. 10.)

wish to adjust to the situation, the latter evangelized, inspired by a more traditional conception of Imperialism.

The Times published certain comments from the Ottawa newspaper, *Le Droit*, which allow us to evaluate the state of popular opinion in Canada.

"It is time that those who govern us should let the masters of the Empire know once and for all that Canada is not a colony and that its inhabitants are not born to be sacrificed in Imperial wars from which she will reap nothing but mourning, ruin and misery." (The Times, 20 September 1922, p. 10.)

Arthur Meighen, who was a member of the Opposition at the time, protested against the government's tergiversations, claiming that this contributed to the whole world's image of a disunited Empire. (*The Times*, 27 September 1922, p. 10) Canada definitively refused to accede to the British Prime Minister's demands. Less than a month after this incident, Lloyd George resigned and was succeeded by Bonar Law, who came to office on October 23, 1922.

It is important to emphasize that Canada enjoyed a position of force after 1918 as compared to its status in the pre-war years. The determination of Canadian politicians reflected this change most accurately. Step by step, Canada asserted itself as an autonomous member of the international community. Whether the issue was peace negotiations, membership in the League of Nations or the delegation of an envoy to Washington, the Canadian government had a single goal: Canada had to be recognized as an equal and autonomous member among the nations of the world. The Chanak Incident provided an opportunity for the North American Dominion to advance one more step when Mackenzie King declared that any Canadian involvement would have to be decided by the country's Parliament. Furthermore, in 1923, when Canada and the United States ratified a fishing treaty, Ernest Lapointe, representing the Dominion, [167] negotiated and signed the agreement without Great Britain's help. Canada irrevocably acquired its political autonomy from the Mother country. The last legal restrictions which prevented the Dominions from obtaining their autonomy were abolished by the Statute of Westminster, approved by the British government in 1931.

4.2.2 Domestic Politics: National Unity and the end of the Conservatives

[TOC](#)

Several changes after the war affected internal politics. Laurier died in February 1919 and Borden was forced to leave his post as Prime Minister in 1920 for health reasons. Arthur Meighen, the new Prime Minister, was unable to attract dynamic or capable followers. The Union government faltered as partisan interests re-emerged and the Conservatives simply marked time. The Liberals re-organized around a young leader, Mackenzie King. The federal Liberal party sought out none other Sir Lomer Gouin, the Quebec Premier, to enhance its support in this province. Gouin had a solid reputation after fifteen years at the head of the provincial government. He was able to maintain popular support and satisfy the most diverse interests. He was also an administrator at the Bank of Montreal as well as the Royal Trust Company. ¹³⁴ Alexandre Taschereau succeeded Gouin as Liberal leader and provincial premier.

After the war all parties worked on campaign strategy; elections were not far away. Both new and old questions were debated. Reciprocity with the United States reappeared on the agenda as soon as the economic recession was felt in 1920, moreso in 1921. Greater autonomy from England meant independent military forces so Canada prepared to acquire its own navy. The themes were not new but the context had changed.

In 1919, governments were preoccupied with numerous labour demands. Reinsertion of veterans into civilian life also posed a problem. A new political formation in the West, the Progressive Party, sought the support of the working class; it wanted to alleviate the general discontent that people of the West felt towards the traditional political parties. This was the situation which prevailed after the war.

¹³⁴ Mason Wade, *Les Canadiens français*, vol. II, p. 204

Reorganization of the Political Parties

In spite of repeated efforts to consolidate the coalition government on a single-party base, it became more and more evident in the first months of 1919 that the House members were waiting for the first chance to resume their former party allegiance.¹³⁵ During Borden's prolonged absences, the Minister [168] of Finance, Sir Thomas White, proved himself a capable and perspicacious leader on the home front. However he could not maintain an already instable system when the Prime Minister was frequently overseas. Willison believed that this explained the weakness of the party alliance in Parliament:

"For years the Unionist party has been practically under absentee leadership. From the time when the Unionist Government was organized in 1917, until he resigned the Premiership, Sir Robert Borden was almost continuously absent from Canada. As a result the Unionist Party in Parliament was never consolidated and the organization in the constituencies was neglected." (The Times, 16 May 1921, p. 7.)

When Borden announced his resignation, there was great speculation on the choice of a successor. (*The Times*, 17 December 1919) The analysts agreed that the Union Government was maintained by a majority of Conservative members; it was therefore most unlikely that the leader would be chosen from the Liberals. Consequently, Arthur Meighen, a long-time Conservative and an influential member in several of Borden's Cabinets, was sworn in as Prime Minister on July 10, 1920. Meighen was a 46 year-old lawyer; he was born in Ontario and educated in Toronto. During the war he held several ministerial posts, including Secretary of State, Minister of Mines and Resources and Minister of the Interior. Unofficially, authorities at *The Times*

¹³⁵ On the Unionist Party, see *The Times*, 10 March 1919, p. 9 and 28 June 1919, p. 11. Concerning the difficulties of the Union government, see *The Times*, 28 May 1919, p. 11.

greeted Meighen's nomination with scepticism. Sir Campbell Stuart did not hide his feelings when he wrote to Willison:

"... in conversation with my many friends in French Canada I found a very strong feeling existing against him, a feeling which his speeches in the Eastern Townships - most honest speeches - have done nothing to allay. (...) I gather that he suffers somewhat from the fact that he has travelled so little beyond his native land, and has naturally not had a great experience of men and affairs, so well enjoyed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Robert Borden. His life in a small Manitoba town, followed by his intense application at Ottawa to his Parliamentary and Ministerial duties, together with the strong North of Ireland Protestant character which pervades him, helps to make for narrowness, in no unkind meaning of the word." ¹³⁶

In his reply, Willison defended the new Prime Minister. He was a man of quality, he said, and predicted that Meighen would become one of the gr at [169] men of Canada. The Toronto journalist believed that the new leader was a more zealous imperialist than either Borden or Laurier.¹³⁷ Willison considered this was a good reason to give him their support.

With Laurier's death in the first part of 1919 the Liberals also had to choose a new leader. The party continued to reflect Laurier's personality. The Liberals were weak in Ontario and in the West, but the party remained invincible in Quebec and kept its strongholds in the Maritimes. (*The Times*, 20 February 1919, p. 7) Party strategists did not underestimate the difficulty of choosing a new leader but they did agree to favour the choice of an anglophone. In order to assure Quebec's support, great efforts were made to convince Sir Lomer Gouin, Liberal Premier of Quebec, to join the federal Liberal team. With Laurier gone. it was essential to offer the French-Canadians a viable alter-

¹³⁶ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, Stuart to Willison, November 1920, documents 30686 to 30688.

¹³⁷ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, Willison to Stuart, 30 November 1920, documents 30697-30698.

native. (*The Times*, 20 February 1919, p. 7; 30 May 1919, p. 11; 23 June 1919, p. 13)

The new Liberal leader was chosen on August 8, 1919. Mackenzie King won on the third ballot. The delegates numbering 1,000 favoured King over William Stephen Fielding by a narrow margin (476 to 438). (*The Times*, 9 August 1919, p. 10) It is likely that Fielding's defection, when he chose to join Borden's Union government, tarnished his image among several Liberal delegates. (*The Times*, 12 July 1921, p. 9) Officially, *The Times* enthusiastically welcomed the news. King was a young man of 45 in whom the Liberal party and the Empire could have complete confidence. As Minister of Labour, he had demonstrated tact and common sense, qualities for a reliable politician, both for Canada and the Empire.

"It is easy to understand that his special knowledge of labour conditions did him no harm as a candidate for the Liberal leadership after the recent experiences of Canada in industrial unrest. But to exaggerate that aspect of his record would be to distort the proportion of his value to the Liberal Party of Canada and to the Empire. A young man of forty-five, he has imagination, is an idealist and stands apart from the ruck of thrusting politicians. It is most significant that the Canadian Liberals who followed Sir Wilfrid Laurier should have elected him as their leader. With him at the Liberal helm, there can be little risk that the position of Canada in the Empire and before the world should be treated as a pawn in the contest of local politics." (*The Times*, editorial, 9 August 1919, p. 11.)

This editorial marks the first time since 1908 that *The Times* acknowledged that a Liberal leader could defend imperial interests as well as a [170] Conservative. Sir John Willison was not pleased with the Liberal choice. The new leader favoured the appointment of an envoy to Washington and independent representation at the League of Nations: "...he believes, as does Borden, that this way lies the dignity of Canada and the security of the Imperial Commonwealth." (*The Times*, 12 July 1921, p. 9) Willison feared that if King became Prime Minister he would abuse governmental power to alleviate social ills.

This did not mean, however, that King would utilize revolutionary tactics to achieve his ends. He remained a pragmatic man in whom Canadians could have complete confidence.

"He has not the distinction of Laurier, nor the intellectual solidity of Borden, nor the keen combative temper of Meighen, but he has eloquence and integrity, and a frank ambition to secure and to deserve the confidence of the Canadian people." (The Times, 12 July 1921, p. 9.)

The West registered its disapproval of Ottawa's governmental policies, policies which the Western provinces said heavily favoured central Canada. A political party was formed in 1920 to defend the special interests of the West (Progressive Party). The leader of the movement was Thomas A. Crerar, an influential member of the Grain Growers' Association. Crerar participated in the Unionist government of 1917 when Borden chose him as Minister of Agriculture. He resigned in 1919, protesting that governmental policy favoured economic protectionism too strongly. (*The Times*, 12 July 1921, p. 11) For Willison, the Progressives were simply autonomists who promoted free trade combined with protectionist tariffs in favour of Britain. Ultimately, such protectionism would lead gradually to greater freedom in trade.

Within a few months of the ballot, each of the three parties was able to ensure the election of a considerable number of candidates. The new Progressive party, led by Crerar, was sure of the Western grain producers' vote. In Ontario the Progressives stood to benefit from their alliance with the United Farmers and the Independent Labour Party. Though the Progressives had some support in the Maritimes, there was none in Quebec or British Columbia. (*The Times*, 24 May 1921, p. 5) Willison considered that the Liberals had accomplished little since Laurier's death. He predicted that they would obtain all 65 of the seats in Quebec but the outlook was dark in the other provinces. The third group consisted mainly of Conservatives, and here, too the future was uncertain.

The electoral Campaign

The election campaign began in the first weeks of September 1921. Prime Minister Meighen intended to emphasize issues dealing with tariffs; indeed he wished to make this theme the main plank of his party Platform :

"The cleavage between the advocates of a policy of moderate Protection and its enemies, the Free Traders, the Farmers' and the Liberal Parties, [171] was never before drawn so clearly or forcibly. The government fought for the policy upon which the present greatness and prosperity of Canada had their foundations, and which had built up Canada as a self-sufficient nation." (The Times, 3 September 1921, p. 7.)

From the very beginning of the campaign the government's future appeared compromised, as Willison himself admitted. The Liberals and the Progressives were well in advance and the Conservatives saw very little possibility of obtaining a majority in the upcoming election.

"Mr. Meighen is steadily strengthening his personal authority in the country, but the odds are so heavily against him in the conditions which have developed in Canadian politics that it seems impossible that he can carry the majority of the constituencies or secure a preponderance of support outside Ontario or British Columbia." (The Times, 7 September 1921, p. 8.)

Meighen reshuffled his Cabinet to help his troops in the battle for votes. Three French-Canadians were added to the roster: Dr. Louis-Philippe Normand, Louis de Gonzague Belley and Rodolphe Monty. (*The Times*, 23 September 1921, p. 9) Despite his lack of experience, Normand became President of the Privy Council. Belley was named Post-master General, a position traditionally held by French-

Canadians. Monty found himself with the title of Secretary of State. ¹³⁸

On the day Parliament was dissolved, Meighen announced his party's platform. Firstly, he wished to maintain harmonious relations with the British Empire. Secondly he stressed the necessity to pursue Canada's policy on the issue of tariff protection. In sum, he continued to defend the ideals of the Canadian Conservative Party.

"By tradition, by the sense of a common inheritance and common ideals, (...), the Dominion aspires to one destiny and one destiny only, than which there is none nobler - nationhood within the British Empire. (...) We enjoy the fullest autonomy, and that autonomy is not challenged and never shall be challenged. (...) Sentiment and interest are in accord in upholding the British connexion.

Free trade means the curtailment or closing down of many scores of industries, the discouragement and contraction of our towns and cities, and the impairment of the best market for the product of our farms. It means the surrender of the advance which we have made as a self-contained, aggressive industrial nation, and reversion to a position in [172] which dependence upon a more favourable American fiscal policy will become more and more a national aspiration. The spirit of this country will not tolerate a course so weak and disastrous." (The Times, speech made by Meighen, 6 October 1921, p. 9.)

For the Liberal leader, Mackenzie King, the election hinged on two issues: tariffs and the nationalization of the railways. The Liberal leader considered it fruitless to envisage the abolition of tariffs. Instead, he proposed tariff revision to increase governmental revenues, to help industry improve production and to reduce the cost of living. Faced with the difficult situation in Canadian railways, King proposed that the directors of the national network no longer be allowed to accord

¹³⁸ *Le Progrès du Saguenay*, Chicoutimi, 29 September 1921, p. 6.

important contracts without tender and that the details of these transactions be submitted to Parliament. The procedure in practise at the time only served to discredit the government when it dealt with such important business concerns. The future Prime Minister specified however "That he was not attacking the integrity of the directors, but maintained that a full return to constitutional and responsible government in all matters concerning public administration was an essential step towards the solution of the railway problem." (*The Times*, 22 September 1921, p. 9)

Politicians were compelled to propose solutions to the problems in the rail transport sector. The presidents of the great companies wished to force the politicians' hand: they took advantage of the electoral campaign to underline the accumulation of increasing deficits. The railway system, it was discovered, had become too vast and exceeded the needs of the country. Sir Joseph Flavelle, president of the Grand Trunk and a friend of Willison's, led his own campaign when he stated before the Toronto Chamber of Commerce, on October 5, 1921, that:

"... Canada had built 5000 miles of railway which the country did not require, and that the people must look for a deficit running as high as \$1,000,000 (about \$250,0000) every month.

He suggested that it would be 20 years before the railways could be operated without losses. If, however, at the end of of 20 years the railways had become self-sustaining, the country would have a property of tremendous value." (The Times, 7 October 1921, p. 9.) ¹³⁹

Crerar, the Progressive leader, believed that economic protectionism should lead to a tariff policy favouring the development of natural resources and more especially, production in the agricultural, mining and forestry sectors. Eager to broaden his electoral platform, Crerar emphasized the fact that if his [173] party came to office, it would not govern in the interests of a single class: "I detest class legislation.

¹³⁹ Several articles were written concerning this subject. See *The Times*, 22 September 1921, p. 3, 6 October 1921, p. 9, 5 November 1921, p. 9.

I detest class domination. There has been far too much of both in this country." (*The Times*, 7 October 1921, p. 9)

Concerning the precarious situation of the railways, Crerar thought that, regardless of the solution proposed, a monopoly in this sector was unacceptable. The Dominion had sufficient railways to fulfill the needs of a population of 20 million. Canada had only 8.7 million inhabitants at this time. The Progressive leader concluded that if the Canadian government promoted prosperity, it would be possible to attract great numbers of immigrants. (*The Times*, 7 October 1921, p. 9)

A few weeks before the election, Willison evaluated the chances of the three parties involved in the struggle: the Conservative party, the Liberal party and the Progressive party.¹⁴⁰ It was probable that a government would be formed with alliances after December 6. Willison considered that the positions of the Quebec Liberals put them in conflict with their counterparts from the other provinces. The franco-phone Liberals favoured an adequate preferential tariff and opposed a government take-over of the railway companies. In his argument, Willison suggested that the Conservatives would benefit from an alliance with the dissident Liberals from Quebec and he even envisaged that they could form the next government in Ottawa.

"The National Conservative Party is making a supreme struggle to have the largest group in Parliament in the hope that an accomodation with the Quebec group will be possible after the election." (The Times, 12 October 1921, p. 9.)

The senior journalist overestimated his party's capacities and underestimated those of the Liberals and their leader, Mackenzie King. After taking power, King, to his great credit, was able to maintain party unity.

¹⁴⁰ We have chosen to use the term "Progressive" to identify the third party. It must be specified that it was only towards the end of the campaign that the party systematically used the label "Progressive Party". At the start it was primarily identified as the Farmers' Party.

As the campaign continued, instead of clarifying the issues, the various political parties succeeded in creating ambiguity concerning the central themes of the campaign. Thus, Meighen was unable to make the most of his arguments on the tariff question. Crerar, on the other hand, while reaffirming his opposition to economic protectionism, came to suggest that Free Trade was desirable in the long term. According to the Progressive leader, protective tariffs should be reduced cautiously to avoid hurting Canadian industry. Lastly, King, the [174] Liberal leader, favoured a reduction of tariffs. He wished to avoid any drastic change that could hinder the development of national industry. (*The Times*, 22 November 1921, p. 9)

The December 6 election carried Mackenzie King and the Liberals to power. They won 116 seats out of a total of 235. Crerar and the Progressives succeeded in sending 64 members to Ottawa, surpassing their main adversaries, the Conservatives, who managed only 50 seats in the Commons.¹⁴¹ As was predicted, Quebec elected Liberals in all of its 65 ridings. In Ontario, the Liberal party obtained 21 seats but continued to slide in the West where only 5 members were elected out of a total of 49. The Progressive team excelled in the West with 39 seats. Crerar's party also obtained a respectable showing in Ontario with 24 members.

The Conservatives were the great losers of this election, even in Ontario, their traditional stronghold, where only 37 members were elected out of a total of 82. In British Columbia only 7 Conservative candidates defeated their opponents while in New Brunswick 5 members were elected. To add insult to injury, Meighen himself was defeated in his home riding. (*The Times*, 8 December 1921, p. 10)

For the *Times* editorialists the election results were evidence of the Canadian people's desire for change. The existence of the Union Government which had been created in response to a particular conjuncture, the war, was challenged as soon as the hostilities ended. Of course with only 116 members, the Liberals were unable to effect major changes. Despite this, Mackenzie King and his team had a great deal to do. His first task was to assure better francophone representation within the government:

¹⁴¹ J. M. Beck, *Pendulum of Power*, Prentice-Hall, Scarborough, Ontario, 1968, pp. 149-161.

"...there is a great hope in the fact that the Liberal Government would consist in fairly equal proportions of men representing the French and English citizens of the Dominion, the two great races to which it owes its existence and the high position that it has won for itself in the world. If Mr. Mackenzie King is appointed Premier he will have associated with him Sir Lomer Gouin, a French Canadian of marked ability and determined loyalty both to the Dominion and the Crown, with a long record behind him of successful administration. Between them they should be able to do a great work for Canada and the Empire." (The Times, editorial, 8 December 1921, p. 11.)

King formed his Cabinet on December 29. W. S. Fielding was named [175] Minister of Finance and Sir Lomer Gouin became Minister of Justice. King's colleague from Quebec, Ernest Lapointe, was appointed Minister of the Navy and Fisheries and became the Prime Minister's main lieutenant. Gouin would never play the pivotal role he sought in Ottawa. The Conservative press nevertheless, attempted to convince the Canadian population that Ottawa was dominated by Gouin and subject to the whims of Quebec. (*The Times*, 31 December 1921, p. 7)

The day following the Liberal victory, the chief correspondent for *The Times* in Canada, Sir John Willison, sent his congratulations to Prime Minister Mackenzie King.¹⁴² Though Willison reiterated that he had not supported any Liberal candidate during the election, he attempted to cultivate sympathetic sentiments. He asserted that his articles in *The Times* and in the *Round Table* magazine were surely to King's advantage.

¹⁴²When Willison worked at the *Globe*, he hired a young student for the summer - Mackenzie King. In a note sent to J. Flavelle on April 23, 1913, Willison stated..: "King and his group very little people - cannot imagine King will go far in public life." See *The Willison Papers*, N.A.C, document 40381.

"I did not vote for your candidate in my own constituency and I am not seeking to establish some after-election relation with the government of which you will be the leader. (...) It is a great thing to have become Prime Minister of Canada at your age, and so far as I am concerned I shall not be a captious critic. In the London Times and the Round Table and other publications in which I have written I have tried to be fair and friendly in all references to you..." ¹⁴³

Even though the Western provinces contributed largely to the election of a sizeable contingent of Progressive members, they remained on their guard. The farmers in particular doubted that their interests would be adequately served by their party in the federal capital. *The Times* ran an article on December 30, 1921 (p. 9) with the title "Secession talk in the Prairie Provinces". Willison reported the points of view of three large newspapers concerning this issue: the *Regina Leader*, the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Le Devoir*.

In the *Leader*, a farmer wrote that the federal election demonstrated to what extent the needs of the West were diametrically opposed to the demands of the East. Opposition was so entrenched, he said, that the West, with its provincial governments united, should envisage complete independence from the rest of Canada.

"A fairly obvious suggestion is that when the Prairie Provinces are all [176] unitedly Progressive (Agrarian) in their Provincial governments - and Saskatchewan will shortly be in line with Alberta in this respect - these provinces, whose needs and policies are so diametrically in opposition to those of the Eastern Provinces, will take steps to secure complete political independence, which appeal, if the Provinces were solidly united, could scarcely be withstood. This would open the way for reciprocal trading treaties with the States." (The Times, 30 December 1921, p. 7.)

¹⁴³ N.A.C., *Willison Papers*, letter from Willison to King, 7 December 1921, document 17155.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* considered that this farmer expressed "...his own despairing and foolish opinion." It was false to claim that he represented the views shared by the majority of his colleagues. The power of such a sizeable group of members in Ottawa was sure to exert its influence on the government, concluded the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Lastly for the manager of *Le Devoir*, the Canadian federation was contrary to the very nature of the country. Consequently it was plausible that regions like the West could conceive of a separation from the rest of Canada.

With the emotions of the electoral campaign set aside, Willison's commentaries foresaw a bright future for the Liberals. King could not convince the Progressive Party to join the Liberal ranks but he could lay the foundations for his majority by practising "intelligent patronage". This constituted a valuable tool in the exercise of power in Canada: "...one may expect that Progressive members from time to time will be drawn over to the Government, and that in a year or two Mr. King will have a dependable majority in the House of Commons. Patronage is a great power in Canada, and its uses are not neglected." (*The Times*, 23 January 1922, p. 9)

Finally, Willison admitted that the Conservatives suffered a great loss. They failed to acquire a seat in 6 out of 9 provinces. Even in Ontario, bastion of the Conservative party, the results were disappointing (37 seats out of a possible 82). Meighen had to exercise caution and patience if he wished to remain party leader. He had to support King while attempting to destroy the Progressive political formation. As for the Liberal government, it had to use all the means at its disposal to satisfy the demands of the Western farmers, who protested against the low prices for their products, their exclusion from lucrative American markets and high prices for the shipment of merchandise.

Willison revised his attitude concerning Quebec. He no longer believed that the province was preparing to take its revenge for conscription. (*The Times*, 15 September 1921, p. 7) He noted that this province did not obtain any ministry where the spending budget was of any importance. Of course, Gouin was influential in the Cabinet but Willison stated that it was unfair to suggest that Quebec manifested any desire to exert its influence on the other provinces.

"There are some signs that Quebec is resolved to be conciliatory and [177] moderate. It is remarkable that none of the chief spending Departments have been taken by Ministers from Quebec. (...) No doubt Sir Lomer Gouin will be signally influential in the Cabinet, but it is unfair and ungenerous to suggest that Quebec shows any disposition to exercise a controlling influence over the other provinces." (The Times, 23 January 1922, p. 9.)

In fact the government became stronger after the first Parliamentary session. The Progressives and Conservatives were unable to unite and topple King. About forty Progressives were pacified when they struck agreements with the government. (*The Times*, 3 August 1922, p. 7) The Prime Minister kept his party united. The diverse demands of Quebec, in spite of a 65 member bloc, were diminished in the general tumult of Canadian politics.

Reciprocity

In an effort to satisfy Western interests, Liberal politicians once again brought up the possibility of signing a reciprocity agreement with the United States. (*The Times*, 1 March 1919, p. 9 and 19 March 1919, p. 10) This policy had been accepted in the United States in 1911. In Canada Laurier and the Liberals were defeated in an election where reciprocity was a central issue. At the Liberal convention where Mackenzie King was elected party leader, Western grain producers succeeded in making their demands part of the Liberal party platform. The pact negotiated with the United States in 1911 would be accepted by Canada, that is, if the American Congress did not rescind the agreement. Customs duty would be abolished on a list of items including wheat, wheat flour and derivative products as well as farm machinery and a variety of other goods affecting the mining, petroleum and fishing sectors. As well the Western farmers wished to increase the trade preference with the countries of the British Empire by 50% in order to aid exports. (*The Times*, 17 September 1919, p. 9)

As soon as he came to power, King attempted to convince the Americans to reconsider the plan. The mediator in this project was the Liberal Minister of Finance, W. S. Fielding, who had negotiated the trade reciprocity agreement in 1910 and 1911. The efforts proved futile and Fielding returned from Washington in March of 1922. He admitted that a group of farmers from the American West who were strongly represented in Congress were demanding effective customs protection against Canadian products. In this context, any negotiations seeking greater freedom in trade relations between the two countries became impossible. (*The Times*, 8 March 1922, p. 12) Once again it was the Canadian farmers who were penalized in this matter. The Conservatives, ardent protectionists, were unable to accept free trade after 1911. When King's Liberal government tried to help the farmers, the Americans changed their mind. In this respect, the farmers endured the consequences of decisions made by political powers over which they had [178] little control. Canadian farmers were forced to seek other means to improve their situation:

"As for the Canadian farmers, now that they have learned that they cannot have free trade with the United States in grain, they may turn their attention to other means of improving their condition by better systems of storing, by improved and cheaper transport, and in Europe with the collapse of Russia they have wider markets than ever before." (The Times, 17 April 1922, p. 16)

The Navy

Given that Canada wished to assume its identity on the international scene as an independent nation, it was essential to envisage the reorganization of its navy. British experts, at the Canadian government's request, offered plans for restructuring the naval force. The Canadian Navy League was in favour of a military force which in war-time would be under the orders of a supreme authority. Of course Willison believed that the more zealous autonomists would see this as

a plot to engage the country in the centralizing policies of the British. But it must be recognized that all the major newspapers opposed any plans for an Imperial Navy. They were against any Canadian commitment without the consent of the electorate. (*The Times*, 17 February 1920, p. 15)

Great Britain sent Lord Jellicoe in response to Canada's request for aid. On March 12, 1920, the British delegate submitted four plans to the Canadian government. The least expensive proposal was evaluated at one million pounds sterling and the most costly project was estimated at five million pounds sterling. In his general recommendations to the Canadian people, Jellicoe proposed that the administration would be under the leadership of a local council. He suggested the nomination of a Naval Minister and he favoured a degree of centralization which would allow for the coordination of activities. Jellicoe concluded that the war had shown the importance of a central authority.

"He urges particularly the necessity of keeping the naval service outside the range of party politics, and recommends that the British plan of administration, which he says stood the test of time, should to a great extent be followed." (The Times, 12 March 1920, p. 15.)

Several days after the British delegate's report, the Union Government caucus made it known that it would take a decision on this pressing issue during the current Parliamentary session. (*The Times*, 17 March 1920, p. 18) On March 19, *The Times* published a dispatch from the Reuters press agency. In the article it was reported that the British government was willing to sell Canada a fleet evaluated at more than 3.3 million pounds sterling (approximately \$16.5 million) for an advantageous pre-war price. The fleet consisted of a light [179] cruiser, four torpedo boats, eight patrol boats, one flagship, eight submarines and four mine-sweepers. A crew of fifteen hundred was required to man this military fleet. Canada had only 500 qualified men, many of whom were young officers. High-ranking officers were lacking but their services could be easily borrowed from the Royal

Navy. The annual cost of maintaining such a fleet was estimated at \$5 million. (*The Times, Reuter*, 22 March 1920, p. 16) ¹⁴⁴

Less than three months later on June 16, *The Times* published a news item from Ottawa: "Warship for Canada. Mother country's offer accepted." Charles Colquhoun Ballantyne, the Canadian Minister of the Navy, declared in the Commons that the generous offer from the Mother country would be accepted.

"These vessels will be manned exclusively by Canadians except the senior officers. They will be kept part of the time in the Atlantic and part in the Pacific. Arrangements have been made for the interchange of officers if necessary so as to keep the ships up to the same point of efficiency as the Home Fleet. It was well for Canada to have her naval training on the lines of that given in the Home Fleet." (The Times, 16 June 1920, p. 11)

It would seem that the problem was resolved in the space of a few months behind the doors of certain Canadian and British politicians. The leader of the Opposition, Mackenzie King was the only one to voice a protest. He criticized the government for having engaged such heavy expenditures without consulting Parliament.

The Embargo on Livestock

The naval question demonstrated to a certain extent the Canadian inability to act alone on matters of defense. The Mother country held considerable influence over the decisions taken by Canadian politicians. On other issues, Canadians were able to show more backbone; they succeeded in influencing British politicians concerning the thorny problem of the embargo affecting Canadian livestock.

¹⁴⁴ For more details on the British proposals, see G. N. Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada, Its Official History*, King's Printer, Ottawa, 1952, Chapter 14.

At the beginning of 1921, the Agricultural Council of England accepted with a landslide majority a motion to persuade the British government to maintain existing restrictions concerning the import of Canadian cattle. Faced with Canadian protest, *The Times* attempted to bring some light to the issue. The newspaper stated that continuing the embargo did not mean that the British government wished to discriminate against Canadians. The prevailing sentiment [180] in the United Kingdom was one of goodwill towards the agricultural industry in the North American Dominion. (*The Times*, editorial, 5 March 1921, p. 11) Such restrictions had had to be imposed several years prior and they applied to all countries. In spite of a certificate of health required on all livestock imported from Canada, it had been noted that, before the embargo, disease had been transmitted to local herds. Great caution was necessary due to the inability to solve this problem. The Americans had been able to eliminate the contagious diseases which affected their herds and this was the reason British farmers favoured American livestock over Canadian animals.

This editorial, far from pacifying the concerned parties, added fuel to the fire. In spite of its usual reticence and caution, the House of Commons in Ottawa unabashedly proclaimed Canada's anger. Firstly, the members stated that it was false to claim that Canadian livestock still carried infectious diseases. Secondly they specified that even if Canadians felt wronged, they had no intention of trying to influence Great Britain's internal policy. This said, Parliament supported this governmental policy as well as those of preceding governments and protested against the British arguments for maintaining the embargo. (*The Times*, 2 May 1921, p. 7)

The new Prime Minister, Arthur Meighen, appealed to the tolerance of Canadian citizens so they would not use this matter to discredit the British government: "I do not think it is a proper function of this country to launch or initiate a propaganda against the course taken by the British Government." (*The Times*, 2 May 1921, p. 7) Though Meighen was on the defensive due to political strategies, influential business leaders did not tread so lightly. The President of the Steering Committee of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) launched a vigorous campaign opposing the embargo. In an interview with a *Times* representative, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy emphasized that the American market was closed to Canadian producers because of tariff laws

(the Fordney Tariff). The embargo prevented Canadian access to the British market. These restrictions had been borne by Canadians for over 25 years and they continued, even more so after the American rejection of reciprocity, to stir debate and strong protest, especially in areas where raising livestock was a main industry. What was more difficult to bear, Shaughnessy continued, was that the British based their policy on false affirmations. Everyone was aware that Canadian cattle were not diseased. Consequently the CPR representative demanded the immediate recall of the embargo in question:

"I hope most sincerely that the British Parliament will recognize the soundness of our position and the justice of our complaint, and that this most unwise and undefensible embargo will be shortly removed. At the Imperial Conference in 1917 the Prime Minister of Canada was assured that it would be done. The mutual relations existing between Canada [181] and the Mother Country are too warm and too sacred to let a grievance of this character breed even sectional resentment." (The Times, 27 April 1922, p. 9)

Though *The Times* defended British government policy in an editorial on March 5, 1921 it later came to support Canadian prerogatives, particularly in May. Willison rejoiced at this change in attitude and even asked the British government to acknowledge the excellent quality of Canadian livestock. The Canadian correspondent added that it had been agreed during the war that this embargo would be lifted as soon as the conflict ended. (*The Times*, 8 May 1922, p. 22) At a meeting of the Empire Press Union which was held in Canada in 1921, Northcliffe himself gave a speech explaining the reasons which had incited the newspaper to change its attitude.

"I have to keep the whole British Empire in my mind in making my newspapers. (...) The question to which I refer is the great slur we have placed upon the people of Canada by the embargo on the importation of their cattle. One or two public men, like Lord Beaverbrook in particular, have seen that pro-

blem. He is a Canadian, and he knows the problem. I have not his knowledge of Canada, I certainly have his admiration for Canada, and I fear greatly what will happen if we continue to put upon those fine people that slur. The Canadians are not a very noisy people. We did not hear very much about their coming into the war, but they came, and when they came they did things." (The Times, 11 May 1922, p. 13.)

Northcliffe reassured Canadians: the British had made their promise and he was convinced that they would respect it. Now, concluded the British press magnate, it remained to convince the newspapers to take up the defense of this cause:

"Even my own newspapers have been late with it (Laughter). They were late with it because it is only lately that I have been able to collect around me the journalists I have now gathered from Australia and Canada and other Dominions who are to watch British interests overseas for my journals." (The Times, 11 May 1922, p. 13.)

In mid-June 1922, *The Times* came to Canada's rescue. It stated in an editorial that a large majority of the British population supported the lifting of the embargo. A national conference which gathered the principal public organizations as well as representatives from the major cities in the United Kingdom approved a resolution on this issue:

"It urgently calls upon the Government forthwith to honour the unqualified undertaking given to Canada at the Imperial Conference in April 1917, and to act upon the unanimous conclusions of the Royal [182] Commission on the Importation of Store Cattle in favour of the admission into this country of Canadian stores." (The Times, 15 June 1922, p. 17.)

On July 26, 1922 the British government put an end to the embargo, by a vote of 250 in favour, 172 against the motion. Willison

concluded that here, finally, was a positive action which would, to some degree, help the Western provinces.

Figure 17

[TOC](#)



A last Victory Loan was designed to pay the cost of soldiers's re-establishment.
(National Archives of Canada)

"In the Western Provinces particularly a Free British market would be of great immediate advantage to the cattle interest. The Western farmers are vitally affected by low prices and the practical [183] exclusion of their cattle from the United States, and while indisposed to put direct pressure on the British Government, the Western people will unquestionably be grateful for the timely relief which the removal of the embargo will afford." (The Times, 26 July 1922, p. 10)

Willison esteemed that *The Times* played a determining role in the debate since it had permitted the creation, throughout the United Kingdom, of a movement favouring the removal of the embargo.

4.3 The Economy

[TOC](#)

When the war ended, journalists were able to analyze, with some objectivity, the advantages and the disadvantages that the conflict brought to the Canadian economy. Evaluations were made concerning agriculture, external trade and industry. However a shadow darkened the balance sheet: the national debt had increased excessively. Governments would have to take measures to prevent it from becoming an even heavier burden.

The year 1920 was encouraging but it was followed by two years, 1921 and 1922, which were marked by a cyclical slowdown. A general decrease in prices was accompanied by lower salaries. Unemployment rose throughout the country. Analysts tried to identify the weaknesses of the Canadian economy: the experts concluded that Canada was developing too rapidly and it had neglected to integrate its economy.

Lastly certain industrial sectors were briefly analyzed and these reflected various aspects of the Canadian economy. If problems continued to plague the railways, it was because development had outstrip-

ped the needs of the country. Conversely, the most dynamic sectors relied on the exploitation of national resources.

4.3.1 A Balance Sheet and Perspectives for the Future

[TOC](#)

During the war, the Canadian economy made extraordinary progress. The country's total international trade made an unprecedented leap, reaching \$1 billion in 1914 and over \$2.5 billion in 1918. The export value of agricultural products tripled during the same period: it rose from \$250 million to \$700 million. The most notable gains were made in the manufacturing sector however. Export values in this sector increased tenfold, from \$57 million in 1914 to \$636 million in 1918.

Canadian farmers responded positively to the repeated appeals from governments when the war started. Between 1914 and 1917, cultivated lands increased by 33 1/3%, from 33 million acres in 1914 to 44 million acres in 1917. The land given over to wheat production rose from 10.2 million acres to 17.3 million acres. (*The Times*, 21 January 1919, p. 16) Willison explained this success by the patriotism of people involved in agriculture. Though he admitted that high prices encouraged the phenomenon, he was convinced that the farmers were more interested in increasing production to help Great Britain than in filling their pockets. Moreover, they had undertaken the task at great risk, since labour was scarce. (*The Times*, 21 January 1919, p. 16)

The manufacturing sector also benefitted from the tendency to higher prices due to the demands of war. Between 200 and 300 industries specialized in the manufacture of all types of munitions necessary to the military forces. In the financial sector, bank deposits increased by half a billion dollars between [185] 1914 and 1918, in spite of all the investments made by Canadians. The government solicited the public by means of "Victory Bonds" which allowed it to borrow approximately \$1.3 billion. (*The Times*, January 21, 1919, p. 16)

The consequences of war forced the politicians to adapt their budgets accordingly. The Minister of Finance, Sir John Thomas White,

often reminded Canadians that the national debt had increased considerably due to the war. He estimated that the total would ultimately reach \$1,950 million, or \$220 for each man, woman and child in Canada. The interest alone amounted to \$115 million annually. (*The Times*, 6 June 1919, p. 11) He invited Canadians to change their habits: "The motto for the future must be *Produce and save*" But politicians had to remind the nation that the state also would be forced to adjust its spending due to the new economic situation.

The war-produced economic prosperity gave Canada a new beginning. With the advent of peace, the European nations slowly reorganized. War industries closed their doors or adapted to new sectors of production. Suddenly labour was plentiful. More than 364,000 soldiers returned to the work force. Of these, some 150,000 wished to settle agricultural land granted by the government.

The year 1919 was a favourable period for Canada. Demand continued in the international market. Salaries did not decrease. However, labour conflicts were more prevalent than was predicted. A total of 3,161,525 work-days were lost. The situation continued to deteriorate during the first weeks of 1920. There was a marked decrease in Canadian exports and to a lesser degree, in imports as well. (*The Times*, 21 January 1919, p. 16 and 23 January 1919, p. 40) The situation worsened in 1921. The value of Canadian exports fell from \$1.3 billion in 1920 to \$800 million in 1921. Imports suffered likewise (from \$1.33 billion in 1920 to \$799 million in 1921). ¹⁴⁵

By the end of 1920, the effects of lower prices and decreased salaries were being felt by those in the workforce. The Ford Motor Company in Windsor reduced its work-week to four days. In Montreal, more than 200,000 workers in the garment industry were forced to accept a 20% wage-cut. Several other industries had to decrease production. (*The Times*, 2 November 1920, p. 11) Unemployment became evident as the crisis was accentuated in the first weeks of 1921. In Toronto the Veterans' Association estimated the number of unemployed at 12,000 of which 9,000 were former soldiers. There were fewer unemployed in Montreal; the total was 10,000. (*The Times*, 28 January 1921, p. 36)

¹⁴⁵ Urquhart and Buckley, *Historical Statistics...*, p. 183, Chapter 1, Tables I and II.

Dispatches published in the middle of summer 1921 made mention of new [186] wage reductions in the country's principal industries. The decreases varied from 5% to 20%. As a consequence, wholesalers and retailers were obliged to lower the prices of their merchandise. (*The Times*, 19 July 1921, p. 10)

During the crisis Canadians wondered why American capital began once again to invade the country at such an accelerated pace. Investment from the United States reached more than \$200 million annually at the start of the 1920's. (*The Times*, 24 March 1921) Proud of their success, the American investors were not shy in making public the results of a survey demonstrating the strength of their companies operating in Canadian territory. According to the Banker's Trust Company of New York, there were more than 600 American-owned operations in Canada. In Toronto alone, a minimum of 140 branch offices of American companies could be found. The analysts concluded:

"It is estimated that our people to-day have invested in Canada upwards of \$1,250,000,000 as against about one-fifth of this amount in 1914., The sums annually payable to our citizens for interests, profits, freights, insurance, and so forth, probably now aggregate, or even perhaps exceed, \$75,000,000 a year." (*The Times*, 24 May 1921.)

The war favoured Canadian development but it also fostered the rise of American imperialism. Although they were not directly involved in the conflict before 1917, the United States, using Canada as an intermediary, helped the Allied cause and benefitted greatly from the situation.

Faced with this state of affairs, Canadians evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of their economy. The president of the Bankers' Association of Canada, Sir Frederick Taylor, was optimistic. In one of his speeches reported in the January 9, 1922 edition of *The Times*, (p. 15), Taylor foresaw the end of the crisis. The report was titled "Canada and her resources. A record of Progress. Preparing for a great future." Taylor stated firstly that Canadians had acted rashly in the course of the last 25 years. They had accumulated debts and obligations of

every variety. The crisis could not last, according to Taylor, because of Canada's immense riches. First there were its natural resources: hydro power, mines, forests, agricultural lands, etc. Secondly the country's stability held many advantages. It allowed the acquisition of massive capital, for example, for the construction of a great communications network. The third source of wealth in Canada lay in its workforce. (*The Times*, 9 January 1922, p. 15) The outlook for 1922 was positive if Taylor's expert analysis was accurate.

Willison also set out to prove that the crisis would be resolved. (*The Times*, 31 January 1922, p. 32) Stocks were reduced in all sectors. Industrialists lowered production costs by decreasing salaries. In general, all sectors of production were resigned to lower their output except for the agricultural sector. Farmers produced 263 million bushels of wheat in [187] 1920 and 329 million bushels in 1921. Since the United States maintained high protective tariffs preventing Canadian wheat export, prices dropped because offer far exceeded the demand. (*The Times*, 31 January 1922, p. 32) Guarded optimism prevailed as the situation began to return to normal in 1922.

4.3.2 *The Railways*

[TOC](#)

The rail transport system was also affected by the economic slowdown. During this period the railway network seemed to be overdeveloped for the needs of the nation. Deficits accumulated and increased inordinately. Government intervention became necessary. In the spring of 1921, the Grand Trunk Company admitted that it was unable to meet its payments. The federal government led by Meighen decided to take responsibility for its debts. (*The Times*, 5 April 1921, p. 6) Meighen, the new Prime Minister became a scapegoat: he was severely criticized by those who defended free enterprise and opposed any aid coming from the state. However, if Meighen did not intervene, Canada would be left with the Canadian Pacific Railway, which would hold a monopoly in the country. This was the justification presented to Meighen's opponents.

In fact, in this difficult economic context, only the Canadian Pacific Railway was able to maintain a healthy financial situation. The rail system was finished in 1886 and it quickly became the heart of the communications network in Canada. Companies such as the Canadian National Railway (CNR) and the Grand Trunk concentrated their service in more isolated and less populous regions. The volume of transport on these new lines was insufficient to guarantee long-term profitability. The CNR lost \$26 million in 1920 and the Grand Trunk was on the edge of bankruptcy. As for the CPR, it continued to declare a profit.

"In merchandise the Canadian Pacific Railway has a tremendous advantage. Not only is its traffic much greater in actual volume but it also includes a greater proportion of high-class freights. (...) Not only does the tonnage of manufactured goods and merchandise pay a higher rate, but it provides tonnage which generally moves in the opposite direction to the movement of natural products with a corresponding advantage from an operating point of view." (The Times, 9 May 1921, p. 9.)

Willison supported the defenders of private enterprise. He recalled the succession of deficits accumulated by state-controlled railways. Skyrocketing salaries threatened the profit-making capacities of industry and the rail transport system. In 1910, wages and salaries represented only 36.61% of the company's outlay ; the figure reached 54.56% in 1919. International labour unions obliged Canadian companies to accord the same salaries as their [188] American counterparts, which, concluded Willison, seemed somewhat unreasonable. (*The Times*, 24 May 1921, p. 5) ¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ For more information on this subject, see G. P. de T. Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, Carleton Library, vol. 11-12, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1964.

4.3.3 *The Pulp and Paper Industry*

[TOC](#)

Most sectors of economic activity after the war were engaged in over-production; the pulp and paper industry was the exception to this tendency. Demand rose constantly on the international market and supply remained stable. This imbalance created an increase in prices, which in turn favoured investment in the industry.

In January 1920, Sir Lomer Gouin, the Premier of Quebec, in a speech given before the Canadian Association of Pulp and Paper, declared that he was opposed to any form of government intervention in this industry. His policy rather was to protect it :

"The Premier of Quebec suggested that possibly there might be further restriction of the export of pulpwood from the province in order that the industry might not suffer. The province, he said, was the first to realize the importance of keeping the raw pulp for its own mills. 'We do not intend to depart from that policy. We may have to go further, and if the situation demands, we shall not hesitate to take the necessary measures.'" (The Times, 3 February 1920, p. 11.)

It was the Americans who pressured Canada to accelerate pulp and paper production. The *Times* Washington correspondent outlined the American grievances. The neighbours to the south did not accept Canadian governmental restrictions on the export of forestry products. Even though the Americans had difficulty in understanding that the provinces had jurisdiction over natural resources, they were resolved to win their cause, using any means possible to avoid the problems that the scarcity of the product engendered.

"The Canadian restrictions on the export of pulp wood (sic) are popularly misunderstood here. It is supposed that the federal Government refuses to allow the export of pulp wood to the

United States, while as a matter of fact it is the Provincial Governments which refuse to permit the export of pulp wood grown on Crown Lands. This is of course the bulk of the supply. Canada is perfectly willing to continue to send to the United States most of her print paper, but the provinces are naturally unwilling to exploit their forests without regard to conservation, and to throw away a big industry by permitting the export of raw material [189] rather than the manufactured article. As the shortage here is so acute, however, the United States may be trusted to bring the strongest possible pressure to bear." (The Times, 29 April 1920, p. 15.)

The paper shortage also affected British publications, which began to look towards Scandinavian suppliers. How did the analysts explain such a gap between supply and demand? World consumption of newsprint increased by 25% from 1914 to 1920. The effort concentrated on the war industries prevented any investment in the construction of new paper mills. Production stagnated while demand increased, which would explain the scarcity of newsprint. (*The Times*, 11 May 1920, p. 17) More than 280 British newspapers and periodicals were obliged to raise their prices in the first weeks of 1920. To stabilize the situation, the English recommended that new mills be opened in favourable locations. Canada was the country designated for investment.

It may seem that Canada sailed through this paper crisis with little worry within its borders, but such was not the case. A ton of newsprint which cost \$40 in 1916 cost \$120 in 1920. Faced with these new conditions, some newspapers were forced to discontinue. Smaller publications were swallowed up by larger newspapers. (*The Times*, 3 June 1920, p. 15)

Willison admitted that the rarity of this product brought several advantages to Canada. The mills operated at full capacity. More than 25,000 people were employed in this industry which exported for a value of more than \$113 million in 1919. Massive investments made between January 1919 and June 1920 amounted to \$240 million. Lastly American publishers greatly decreased the number of periodicals sent to Canada, to the immense joy of Canadian editors. The United States experienced a shortage of 500,000 to 700,000 tons, which re-

presented between 60 and 90% of total Canadian production. (*The Times*, 3 June 1920, p. 15) In conclusion, Willison reminded the Americans that although their complaints were doubtless justified, they had to understand that the forest industry was under provincial jurisdiction. The federal government could not force the provinces to change their policies, which required that primary resources be transformed within their borders.

The Americans were not ready to give up the struggle. A Senate Committee investigating the newsprint shortage presented its findings in the beginning of June 1920. The report concluded that the problems of supply were caused by artificial restrictions and not by the natural law of supply and demand. The committee accused the manufacturers of discriminatory, unjust and even illegal practices. (*The Times*, 8 June 1920, p. 13) Even in Canada, newspaper and magazine owners protested against their suppliers. They asked for government support to force the paper industry to meet domestic needs at prices already fixed in valid supply contracts.

In sum, the provincial governments maintained their authority concerning the [190] pulp and paper industry. The manufacturers in this sector endeavoured to obtain maximum benefit from a favourable conjuncture. Newspaper and periodical editors were the most profoundly affected by the paper shortage. A more balanced relationship between supply and demand was gradually realized only after the construction of new factories, thanks to the investments of 1920 and 1921

4.4 Society

[TOC](#)

In 1917-1918, workers' demands were reasonable but became more pressing with the end of the war. However all levels of government, supported by the press, vowed to keep the labour movement in check. Moreover, the administrators associated the workers' disorganized demands with the malevolent actions of the Bolsheviks.

Immigration, an issue which became popular whenever the economy flourished, once again held the interest of Canadians. Promoters reiterated their desire to encourage Anglo-Saxon immigration. Restrictions were imposed due to the economic slowdown in 1921 and only workers wishing to settle on new lands or able to fulfill specific conditions were welcome.

Lastly, after the divisive conscription debate, Canadians wanted to re-establish national unity and restore consensus. Efforts were made to draw the two founding races closer together. Bilingualism once again became a valuable policy; it pacified French-Canada and did not pose much of a threat to English Canadians.

Figure 18

[TOC](#)



Returned men, out of work during the 1921 depression. (Morton, 1989)

Returned men, out of work during the 1921 depression.
(Merton, 1989.)

4.4.1. *The Revolt of the Working Class*

[TOC](#)

The war situation obliged the workers to moderate their demands but the end of hostilities allowed them to make up for lost time. However their [192] expectations were thwarted by the difficult economic situation. In spite of their determination and a relatively well-structured organization, the workers encountered several obstacles. The greatest of these was the "Bolshevist" label: the press and the political powers associated all worker movements with the revolutionary Russian action which overthrew the Czar in 1917, this in the name of the proletariat. This attitude mobilized both political power and public opinion against the unions.

Willison was quick to explain that the Bolsheviks glorified the Russian Revolution in order to destroy the entire Canadian capitalist system:

"The situation is aggravated by an extreme Bolshevik element which has become singularly mischievous and daring. (...) These 'social democrats', not recognized by the responsible leaders of organized Labour, are represented at all public meetings where discussion is permitted, and are violent in attacks upon the Government, upon capital, upon employers, upon the wage system and private control of industry. They are as bold as they are violent. They glorify the results of Bolshevism in Russia, and allege a great capitalist conspiracy to conceal the true situation there in order that 'wage slavery' may not be destroyed in other countries." (The Times, 5 March 1919, p. 9.)

The Toronto correspondent was not alone in his scorn for "these revolutionaries who wished to use Canadian workers to serve their own ends". Former soldiers added their voice to the chorus; they saw the movement as the work of a few "foreign revolutionaries". These war veterans organized demonstrations at the gates of factories where

such "foreigners" were too numerous. They demanded that employers dismiss all those who did not hold Canadian or British citizenship. In several instances, it seems that employers yielded to the veterans' demands. (*The Times*, 5 March 1919, p. 9)

Though analysts predicted strikes in Winnipeg and elsewhere in the country in April 1919, they were unable to foresee the serious deterioration in labour relations. Indeed the newspapers spoke of reconciliation between the two parties. Everyone, said Willison in a reassuring article, wanted to improve working and living conditions.

"It is true, also, that there is a general disposition among Canadian employers to establish a sympathetic partnership with labour, to improve working and living conditions, and to give good wages. There have been few attempts to reduce wages since the Armistice, and a notable desire to reinstate returned soldiers. There is some unemployment, but it is neither great nor general, and does not seem likely to increase." (The Times, 3 May 1919, p. 11, an article written on April 17.)

During the first weeks of May, the press dispatches described an ever-worsening climate. (*The Times*, 3 May 1919, p. 4) Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Vancouver [193] and Montreal were all affected by work stoppages. The Winnipeg strikers were at the heart of the conflict.

Winnipeg

On May 15 the entire city was paralyzed by general strikes in several sectors. Policemen, firemen, rail and postal employees as well as steel-workers stopped work. The *Times* correspondent in Montreal considered that the *Winnipeg Citizen*, the only workers' newspaper which continued publication, gave an unequivocal account of the goals and objectives of the labour organizations:

"Winnipeg as a matter of fact is governed to-day by the Central Strike Committee of the Trades and Labour Council. The present movement is a serious attempt to over-run British institutions in this Western country and to supplant them by the Russian Bolshevik system of Soviet rule." (The Times, 23 May 1919, p. 13.)

The correspondent concluded that the avowed goals of the revolutionaries were laid down for all to see:

"This paper is published with the full consent of the unions, and it proves conclusively that their scheme is a purely Bolshevik one."

Having said this, it remained only to show by what means the Canadian people intended to put an end to such abuse:

"The government is preparing to meet revolution by force, and the public is determined not to submit to the strikers, as is shown by the formation of a volunteer army of 5,000 to fight them." (The Times, 23 May 1919, p. 13.)

The *Times* journalist demonstrated with this article that the movement was doomed to failure. However it seems very unlikely that any labour organ with a modicum of lucidity would have issued such statements, unless it had been infiltrated or directed by people with little strategic sense. Further research would doubtless allow us situate these statements in a more specific perspective.

Movements supporting the Winnipeg workers sprang up in several Canadian cities. Wishing to avoid chaos, the various political powers prepared a vigorous riposte. The mayors of the affected cities, the provincial ministers, the federal Minister of Labour (Gidéon Robertson) aided by the Minister of the Interior (Arthur Meighen) planned a counter-attack as the movement continued to spread.

The government representatives met in Winnipeg and promised publicly [194] that they would rid the movement of all Bolshevist elements. (*The Times*, 24 May 1919, pp. 12-14; 26 May 1919, p. 11) Prime Minister Robert Borden made his resolve known; law and order would be maintained. He acted as the spokesman for all levels of government when he demanded that civil servants return to work immediately, under threat of dismissal. (*The Times*, 28 May 1919, p. 12)

Until the end of May it was believed that the labour movement was led by "foreigners". On June 7, 1919, the Canadian Parliament voted a law "To expel British agitators who advised the overthrow of the constitutional government." (*The Times*, 9 June 1919, p. 10) The text of the law was approved in record time, less than an hour. At the same time Parliament amended Canadian immigration laws, according itself the right to expel "foreigners". ¹⁴⁷

The leaders of the labour unions were arrested on June 17. In an article entitled "The Arrest at Winnipeg. Hopes of Strike Collapse, Bolshevist Activity", Willison reported that police officers representing the Ontario provincial government had managed to seize documents which clearly proved that the worker unrest was directed by the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). (*The Times*, 19 June 1919, p. 12) The creation of a world-wide workers' union was the goal of a project prepared by William D. Haywood, the Secretary-General of the organization in Chicago. There was also a plan to take control of the Canadian Dominion in order to ultimately dominate the world. As well as advocating that workers unite in one great international union ("One Big Union, Industrial Workers of the World") to improve their wages, the revolutionaries wished : "...to build up an industrial democracy which shall finally burst the shell of Capitalist Government and be the legacy by which the workers shall conduct the industries and appropriate the products themselves." (*The Times*, 19 June 1919, p. 12)

Newspapers supporting the workers were closed by the authorities. One of these was the *Western Labour News*. The editor, a Methodist minister, James S. Woodsworth, was arrested. Woodsworth later founded the CCF party (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation)

¹⁴⁷ Any individual who was not of British origin was usually considered a foreigner.

which, after 1932, became a force to be reckoned with in certain Western provincial legislatures and took its place as a third party in the House of Commons in Ottawa. The main objective of this party was to defend the interests of the working class in Canada.

According to numerous articles in *The Times*, public opinion disapproved of the strikes. Citizens answered the defiant actions of the strikers with equal firmness. They supported their political leaders who intervened to put an end to the crisis :

[195]

"The union leaders at Winnipeg, whose defiant attitude first created the crisis, are now backing down before the equally firm attitude of the citizens, the North-West Mounted Police, and the military forces. The government announces the presence at Winnipeg of five regiments, one battery and a strong mounted police force. (...) The bulk of public opinion in Winnipeg and throughout the Dominion is disgusted with the strikers' attitude and applauds the firm stand of General Kitchen and the Mayor. (The Times, 24 May 1919, p. 12.)

Popular discontent quickly became evident throughout the country. In Montreal volunteers replaced striking firemen and were applauded by the entire population of the Dominion. People had had enough of the strikers' disregard for public safety. (*The Times*, 26 May 1919, p. 11) Despite this reaction, it seemed that the workers kept some support across the country. Work stoppages were called in Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge in answer to appeals from the Winnipeg strikers. In Toronto 44 unions voted to strike for improved conditions for their members. Protest movements in Montreal lacked organization; the influence of the Catholic Church circumvented the power of the unions. The *Times* Montreal correspondent stated:

"It is unlikely that a large measure of success will attend this effort for various reasons, but especially the powerful influence of the Catholic Church which is against collective striking because of the widespread and unmerited suffering inflicted on

women and children not concerned in the strikers' grievances."
(*The Times*, 3 June 1919, p. 11.)

Both sides stood firm. The spectre of Bolshevism was more and more frightening. It was even suggested in some articles that Trotsky, through his writings and speeches in America, was responsible for the uprising. (*The Times*, 2 June 1919, p. 11)

As the worker unrest continued, it became more evident that the "Bolshevists" were not Russian, much less "foreigners". Rather the majority of labour leaders were of British origin. Among the 15 directors of the Toronto Strike Committee, 14 were British, 10 of whom were born in Great Britain. Only one individual was of Russian origin. (*The Times*, 2 June 1919, p. 11)

The Winnipeg strike ended on June 25. It had lasted 6 weeks. Wilson believed the failure of the strike could be attributed to several factors: the arrest of the union leaders, the suppression of their main newspaper, *The Labour News*, the hostile attitude of the war veterans and the intransigence of the international labour unions. Although some in the private sector, such as the steel-workers, realized certain gains, those in the public sector, the firemen, the postal workers and the policemen, did not improve their working conditions. (*The Times*, 27 June 1919, p. 11) When the strike ended in Winnipeg, the labour movement collapsed, first in the West and then in the rest of the country.

[196]

The union organizations themselves decided to purge their ranks. In October the president of the Dominion Trades and Labour Congress, Tom Moore spoke before more than 800 delegates and reaffirmed his faith in actions better suited to the national context: "Such a strike," he said, "may succeed for a moment, but in a democratic country like ours nothing can last for long that is done by force and against the mass of opinion in the country." (*The Times*, 24 September 1919, p. 9) The radical wing of the movement was unable to remove Moore from the presidency; the moderates prevailed.

In general, the population, urged by politicians and the press, came to oppose the strikers. Although the political powers were in disarray

at the beginning of the labour unrest, they organized rapidly and effectively coordinated their actions. The workers demonstrated surprising determination and resistance in the first weeks. Their position quickly crumbled when the three levels of government united to denounce their unrealistic demands. The turning point came when public service workers refused to ensure a minimum of public safety to protect the general population. The strikers lost popular support and became an easy target.

4.4.2 Immigration

[TOC](#)

After the war, Canadians once again favoured the arrival of immigrants. However the governments could not exercise a policy that was too liberal. The economic slowdown left an increasing number of unemployed and the shortage of work did not facilitate the reintegration of returning veterans. The Minister of Immigration for the Union Government, J. H. Calder took this difficult situation into consideration when he explained why Canada was forced to limit the number of immigrants. Calder stated that the cities were filled with the jobless. There were still many agricultural lands available however and this was where the new arrivals would be directed. In fact, Canada was still depicted as a country in need of settlers. Politicians knew that only a sufficiently large population could ensure the survival of local industries that required a larger domestic market.

"Canada needed more population, and especially more rural population. Only by acquiring it should she carry the increased burden of taxation due to the war without stunting her economic development. Greatly increased development was necessary. Existing railways must be made to pay and branch lines must be constructed to open up Western Canada, where production had been enormously retarded owing to the lack of them. Population alone could achieve these aims and place Canada's industries on a secure basis; population alone could relieve the burdens of municipal taxation assumed by the cities

for improvements and undertakings ahead of their actual requirements." (The Times, 11 June 1919, p. 10)

[197]

When the Canadian government amended its immigration laws following the labour unrest in the spring of 1919, it closed its immigration offices on the European continent and prevented the entry of Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians and Turks. Severe restrictions were also imposed on Asiatic immigration. (*The Times*, 11 June 1919, p. 10)

The British leaders stated that they understood Canada's immigration problem. The British government decided to react positively to the efforts of the North American Dominion by announcing an aid programme for those wishing to emigrate. Colonel L. Amery, Attaché at the Colonial Office, declared that his government was willing to pay passage for soldiers and sailors as well as their families who wished to emigrate to any part of the British Empire, provided that they were assured of a job or a place in the agricultural programmes offered by certain Dominions. (*The Times*, 11 June 1919, p. 10) The government spokesman said that the goal of such a policy was to reinforce the British character of the entire Empire:

"Obviously the first step towards the solution of the pressing problem how to populate our vast Empire, and at the same time ensure that it shall everywhere remain essentially British in character, is to conserve within the Empire the population that is there already. (...) The war has redoubled the importance of conserving 'all' British people for the Empire, and the policy enunciated by Colonel Amery, by offering help to those who will stay in the Empire and giving none to those who decide to leave it recognizes the urgent need of the moment and goes some way to supplying it, while avoiding even the semblance of favouring one part of the Empire over any other." (The Times, 11 June 1919, p. 10.)

In conclusion the author of the article recalled that Canada's population still included a great proportion of citizens of either French or American origin. From several points of view, these groups remained profoundly distinct from authentic British groups. It was not enough to populate the Empire: its unique character had to be ensured. Colonel Amery's statements complemented Willison's remarks preceding the war when he expressed his fears that the foreign population of Canada - and he included French Canadians under this heading - would soon surpass the population of British origin. This perception was based on a single premise: the only true members of the British Empire were Anglo-Saxon. All others seemed to be considered second-class citizens, tolerated for historical and economic reasons.

In the West and especially in Vancouver, the course of the immigration debate followed a different direction. There, too the problem did not go unnoticed. (*The Times*, 28 March 1919, p. 11) There were urgent demands to deport foreign enemies and prohibit all immigration, except of course individuals from Great Britain. It must be remembered that 20% of the British Columbian population of 350,000 was comprised of foreigners. The Oriental portion of [198] this group, more specifically the Japanese, were the objects of criticism. Certain economic sectors such as net-fishing were completely dominated by the Japanese. British Columbia legislators declared that in 1918, 13% of of the 5,337 fishing licenses granted in the province went to British subjects; 50% were given to Japanese fishermen. (*The Times*, 28 March 1919, p. 11)

In the difficult economic context, jobs were scarce and Canadians felt threatened. They tried by several means to benefit from the advantages assured by British nationality. The Canadian government acted cautiously by admitting only specific categories of workers: specialized agricultural workers, teachers and domestics. (*The Times*, 24 December 1920, p. 12)

By the end of 1920, official reports confirmed that 20,122 veterans had obtained loans to settle on new lands. (*The Times*, 24 May 1921) However vast territories were still available to immigrants. The federal government and business leaders were convinced that the country's prosperity depended for the most part on Canada's ability to attract immigrants.

"One hundred thousand new families settled in the great prairie country would mean 500,000 new effective consumers, living amid climatic conditions and engaged in a form of industry that makes them possibly the largest 'per capita' purchasers of commodities in the world. This means a large new market for goods, greatly increased traffic for railways, more revenue for governments, and a consequent lightening of national burdens. (...) As the Dominion Government and the leaders in the financial and business life generally know that the development and prosperity of the country will be promoted in proportion as immigration is secured, desirable settlers will always be heartily welcomed." (The Times, 24 May 1921, p. 5.)

The Canadian government moderated its immigration laws at the first indications that the economic crisis was easing. Restrictions concerning occupations for all British subjects were abolished. (*The Times*, 24 May 1922, p. 5) Willison welcomed this turn of events.

"No doubt, during the severe unemployment of the past two years the government has been unwilling to open the doors too freely to people who desire to follow industrial pursuits, but this period is ending and the whole country is recognizing the necessity to increase its population. Unquestionably British people are preferred, with Americans second, but there is also an increasing readiness to admit people from Switzerland, Holland, Norway, Belgium and other approved countries." (The Times, 14 October 1922, p. 9.)

After the war Canada reopened its doors to immigration. The Dominion continued to encourage the arrival of British subjects, especially those from [199] the Mother country. Needless to say practically all of these immigrants were anglophones. Although French-Canadians accounted for 30% of the Canadian population, they had no influence on immigration policy. The federal government remained responsible for a policy which exclusively favoured the interests of a

nation dominated by an Anglo-Saxon majority. Even though European immigration was sought for economic reasons, there was no political desire to foster the entry of francophones.

4.4.3 Reconciliation of French and English Canadians

The conscription debate had created a deep division between the two founding peoples; the English majority had finally imposed its views on the French minority. The war left its mark on both sides. It was time to revive the better sentiments of the two linguistic groups.

In some of the rare editorials on this issue, *The Times* analyzed the situation after the war with an attitude that was clearly more favourable to French-Canadians than it had been previously. The newspaper officially distanced itself from Sir John Willison, its Canadian correspondent, and adopted positions differing from his. The editorialists benefitted from the occasion of a reception honouring Rodolphe Lemieux, a French Canadian member of Parliament, to comment on his speech. Lemieux stated that there were important francophone minorities in Ontario and Manitoba. These communities were forced to struggle against the attempts made to abolish instruction in their own language.

"Is this, he asks, (Lemieux) a healthy condition of things, from the British or the Imperial standpoint? French Canadians do not want schools exclusively French. They ask only for the respect of the natural rights of their children in schools supported with their money, and the efficacious teaching of the two official languages during the whole primary course. These demands he bases on the grounds of the policy which Sir Wilfrid Laurier declared to be the only possible one for Canada, from a national standpoint - that of equal justice and equal rights for all." (The Times, editorial, 24 March 1920, p. 17.)

The editorialists first recalled that the whole bilingualism issue was specific to Canada. Next they were in agreement with Lemieux when he stated that it was necessary, as much as possible, to forget the anger and quarrels of the past. However the editorialists refuted Lemieux's claim that the attitude of English Canada towards French Canadians was similar to that of the Germans towards the inhabitants of Lorraine: "No attempt has ever been made in Canada to prohibit the speaking of French, whereas the Germans absolutely forbade the use of the native language in these countries at public meetings, and sometimes even in private life." (*The Times*, 24 March 1920, p. 17)

Having made these points clear, the newspaper went on to say that [200] French instruction was to be encouraged. Belgium tolerated two languages; Switzerland and the United Kingdom had three languages and no one suffered from this fact. As long as parents in Ontario and Manitoba wanted French instruction for their children and were willing to pay for the extra expense, it was difficult to imagine that a law could stand in the way of their wishes. French Canadians had demonstrated their loyalty during the war and throughout Canada's history. Those who opposed French instruction ought to change their opinion; this would put an end to the controversy once and for all, concluded the newspaper. (*The Times*, 24 March 1920, p. 17)

It is impossible to determine the reasons that motivated the newspaper to take such a clear position on this thorny Canadian issue. It may be that the arrival of Campbell Stuart, originally from Montreal and a francophile, contributed to the change in attitude at *The Times*. In a private hand-written letter addressed to Willison on March 28, 1920, Campbell Stuart remarked :

"Rodolphe Lemieux has been addressing a good many meetings, and we said some kind things about him in 'The Times'. I am really much interested in the coming of Gouin whom I hope to get to know a little better. He seems to have the balance of power in his hand." ¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ N.A..C, *Willison Papers*, letter from Stuart to Willison, 28 March 1920, document 30565-30570

Angered by the statements in *The Times*, Willison replied some weeks later. His arguments were based on a literal interpretation of the constitution while the editorial evaluated the question from a perspective which considered the social and political reality of Canada. The Constitution gave French Canadians language rights in Quebec, in the federal Parliament and in federal courts, affirmed Willison. He rebuked those who defended the French language because they were demanding constitutional rights for francophones where none existed. This was the case in almost all the Canadian provinces.

"The mistake which the champions of the French language make is to demand constitutional rights where none exist. It has been finally settled that French has no constitutional recognition in Canada except in Quebec, in the Houses of Parliament, and in Federal Courts and documents. This Sir Wilfrid Laurier often admitted. This the Council for the French Educational Association has confessed. This the Imperial Privy Council has affirmed. This was all Cartier demanded at Confederation." (The Times, 3 May 1920, p. 13, an article dated 15 April.)

Willison believed that francophone leaders could obtain all "reasonable [201] concessions" as long as they respected established rights. He entreated the leaders not to carry the debate into the political arena.

"If the French leaders would appeal rather than demand, there is no concession within reason that they could not obtain. When they drive the question into politics, bad feeling, misunderstanding, and mischief result." (The Times, 3 May 1920, p. 13.)

Lastly Willison asked French Canadians to understand that the political leaders of the other provinces did not wish to treat French as a

foreign language. They had to consider other ethnic minorities at the same time as they gave preference to French.

"It is not so easy in the Western Provinces, where many languages are spoken, to give French a preference. It becomes less easy in the older provinces, with the incoming of immigrants from many countries. The Jews, for example, have been making just such demands as the French are making. So are other nationalities in Western Canada. Indeed, schools in foreign districts in Manitoba have been closed because people will not submit to compulsory teaching of English. There are few responsible men in Canada who desire to treat French as a 'foreign language'. Saskatchewan refuses to do so. So do the Atlantic Provinces. So does Ontario. (The Times, 3 May 1920, p. 13.)

Willison maintained that his home province, Ontario, would only demonstrate a lack of flexibility if it chose to treat French as a foreign language.

"It would be not only ungenerous but stupid to treat French as a 'foreign language' in Ontario. In the primary schools in the French districts the language should have adequate recognition. In secondary schools and Universities it should have preference over all languages but English." (The Times, 3 May 1920, p. 13.)

The Canadian correspondent noted that there were two extreme positions: total exclusion of French or recognition of equal status for both languages throughout the country.

"While the Orange Associations are demanding absolute exclusion of French from the schools the Regina leader suggests that both French and English should be compulsory in all schools of the country. It says that 'so long as the population of

Canada remains divided into two distinct sections, one speaking English and the other French only, there is certain to be an unfortunate line of division between the two and the continuance of a condition of things inevitably bound to result in misunderstanding and friction.' It argues that if 50 years hence all Canadians could speak both French and English there would be less racial conflict and that Canada would occupy a stronger position both [202] at home and abroad and be able to maintain that position with greater assurance. This is the view of many thinking Canadians in all the English provinces." (The Times, 3 May 1920, p. 13.)

Willison believed it was necessary to avoid both extremes. It was already possible to have a "bilingual" country in the framework established by Confederation. The notion of bilingualism as a unifying factor gained impetus. Each francophone and anglophone ought to be able to speak the language of the other linguistic group.

"Actually, whatever school regulations may say, Canada is a bi-lingual country. A third of the population is French, and the chances are that the proportion of French will increase rather decrease. It is vital, therefore, in the national interest that the French should be able to speak English and that the English should be able to speak French. If the fact could be admitted and the question of language removed from the arena of partisan political controversy progress would be made towards the 'rapprochement' so greatly to be desired." (The Times, 3 May 1920, p. 13.)

The concept of a bilingual Canada evolving in the judicial framework established by the Constitution was not new to Willison's commentaries. Francophones and anglophones had equal rights in Quebec. Outside Quebec, francophones had privileges at best concerning instruction in their native language. In the central Parliament and in federal courts the use of both languages was accepted. Willison reflected the ideology of the anglophone majority which admitted cultural dua-

lity and linguistic equality only in Quebec. In the other provinces it was a question rather of "privileged" bilingualism. Seen from this perspective, bilingualism posed little threat to English Canada. The illusion was maintained among French-Canadian populations because they had everything to gain. With such a scheme, English-Canadians had a clear conscience and were pleased with themselves because they accorded the francophone minority more than their due.

The concept of bilingualism promoted during this period already appeared as an ideological means for reconciliation. It perpetuated the status of inequality between the anglophone majority and the francophone minority. English was acknowledged across the country while French enjoyed recognition only in Quebec and in federal institutions. ¹⁴⁹

It is important to underline that Willison defended his position by adhering to the letter of the law. French Canadians had little to gain from such an interpretation and sought instead to benefit from unwritten tradition. [203] *The Times* dissociated itself from its correspondent towards 1920 when it stressed political rather than legal arguments and opted for the recognition of French across Canada. As Campbell Stuart indicated in a confidential letter sent to Willison (28 March 1920), *The Times* would take advantage of every opportunity to promote better understanding between the two races. When Sir Lomer Gouin, the Liberal Premier of Quebec, travelled to England in May 1920, he prepared his entry into federal politics by stating that the Empire was a mixture of races and languages. Canadian governments ought to favour closer cooperation between anglophones and francophones. There had always been men of character guided by the spirit of mutual tolerance and respect - Lafontaine, Baldwin, Cartier and MacDonald, for example - which had made the the union of the provinces into one great Dominion possible. In such difficult times, pursued Gouin, there has always been a man of my race to rise up and join with a man of your race to strengthen Canada's ties with England. Lastly, concluded Gouin, all my compatriots desire to remain loyal

¹⁴⁹ For more information on this subject see Albert Lévesque, *La dualité culturelle au Canada, hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, Ed. Albert Lévesque, Montreal, 1960.

subjects, respectful of all their traditions. (*The Times*, 12 May 1920, p. 6)

In a lengthy editorial, *The Times* praised Gouin's speech and added that Canada reflected admirably the image of the entire British Empire.

"It is this cooperation of races, with the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which it engenders, that the British Empire owes much of its solidarity in the past and its hopes for future welfare. (...) We share Sir Lomer Gouin's optimism with regard to the brightness of the intellectual and economic future which lies before his province and the Dominion, both of which are deeply indebted to his statesmanship and devotion to the Empire. It is by such efforts as his that the Empire has been built up; that it stands four-square to-day on solid foundations; that it must continue in prosperity and greatness." (The Times, 12 May 1920, p. 17.)

To what can we attribute this sudden support for French-Canadians? During the Imperial Conference held in Canada in September 1920, Willison reported that several speeches were made appealing for a reconciliation between the two principal linguistic communities. The correspondent wrote: "The truth is that there is a great and common desire throughout the country for an abridgment of any differences which the war produced." (*The Times*, 29 September 1920, p. 9)

Conclusion

After the war Canada was in an advantageous position to affirm its identity on the international scene. The nation simply had to seize any opportunity which would allow it to establish in fact what it could not accomplish due to judicial restrictions.

On the domestic front, Conservative rule came to a close. Willison was [204] alone in the defense of what he believed to be the true principles of Canadian conservatism. As an ardent believer in protectionism and imperialism, Willison was disappointed by the attitude of the Conservative leaders. Like Laurier, the Conservatives defended a policy of greater autonomy for Canada when they signed the Treaty of Versailles, when they demanded independent representation at the League of Nations and when they favoured the nomination of a Canadian ambassador to the United States.

The Liberals returned to power in Ottawa at the end of 1921. Willison, who had spent the last 20 years as the advocate of the Conservative party, had difficulty adapting to the new political reality, both in Canada and in the world at large. This was the view of his superior at *The Times*. In the first months of office King, for his part, demonstrated that he wished to promote consensus within his party. It is interesting to see how the newspaper distanced itself from the positions held by its Canadian correspondent. This healthy dissent within the newspaper widened the scope for debate.

On the economic scene, reconstruction proved to be an arduous undertaking. The economic difficulties in turn caused social problems. Workers were the losers in the strikes of 1919. Government and public opinion joined forces to oppose them. It must be acknowledged that the workers' tactics invited confrontation. When the economy stabilized, calm was restored and immigration was re-established.

Leaders of the two major ethnic groups in Canada were prepared to make an effort to restore domestic harmony. *The Times* removed itself from the views of its Toronto correspondent who had affirmed that francophones were getting ready to take their "revenge" for the defeat of 1917. As for Mackenzie King he demonstrated intelligent and shrewd leadership in his dealings with the 65 members from Quebec. The Prime Minister was able to gratify his Québécois members without according them the balance of power, even though they formed the majority of his government.

[205]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

GENERAL CONCLUSION

a) A general world-view

[TOC](#)

The Times' ideological world-view accorded great importance to politics because it encompassed both economics and society. In its view, politics maintained the balance among diverse interest groups and consequently became indispensable to the safekeeping of social consensus.

Created mainly for economic reasons, Canada has been maintained thanks to its political structures. Inter-ethnic rivalry, regional disparity and other social issues result in electoral battles, in parliamentary debates or even in newspaper articles which defend one or the other point of view. This political expression may be found at two levels of government, federal and provincial. In this sense the Canadian governmental system becomes a system of social integration and constitutes a safety valve which helps to avoid violence.

This does not prevent the unequal distribution of power among individuals or social groups. The law of the majority replaces the law of the strongest. This is a model of a western democratic system.

b) The Times, an imperialist and conservative newspaper

[TOC](#)

In this study, the day-to-day reality of a prestigious newspaper - *The Times*, its owner, its editors, its journalists and more particularly, its Canadian correspondent, Sir John Willison - articulated imperialist ideology. In this context a complex network links journalists, politicians and businessmen.

Between 1908 and 1922, *The Times* defended the prevailing ideology which favoured the survival and strengthening of the British Empire. Even though several indications pointed to the rise of American imperialism, the arrival of war brought new life to British imperialism.

In preparing for war, the Mother country sought reassurance that her North American Dominion would give unconditional support. British imperialists joined forces with their Canadian counterparts. The issue of defense united the members of the Empire. This ideology drew its strength from political, economic, social or cultural factors. British imperialist ideology found its ideal exponent in the British majority which declared its loyalty to the Mother country.

[205]

In 1908 *The Times* maintained a neutral position on Canadian politics but gradually came to support Borden and the Conservatives from 1909 until 1920. Why? Because the Conservatives offered the best guarantees for the Empire. However the newspaper welcomed the arrival of Mackenzie King in 1921. *The Times* was not limited to defending an obsolete view of the Empire. The newspaper was first and foremost imperialist, but this did not prevent *The Times* from being pragmatic in its constant search to adapt to new realities. It was nevertheless conservative: the newspaper took positions and evaluated issues with great caution, regardless of the party it supported.

c) Sir John Willison

[TOC](#)

Sir John Willison carried out his duties as journalist and commentator with great conviction. He was rarely content simply to describe or report; he took sides, he fought to defend his ideas. Though he endeavoured to maintain a certain objectivity, it was within specific parameters.

In politics, Willison considered that the federal government was the one true defender of national interests. He defended and supported Borden and the Conservative party exclusively, and, to a lesser degree, Meighen. In spite of the bias which restricted his view of Canada to the Ontario elite which dominated the federal government, Willison was an excellent political commentator. The elite in question favoured closer ties with the other members of the British Empire.

With regard to economics, Willison was in favour of free enterprise and protected trade with the Empire. Again he favoured the interests of central Canada, Ontario in particular. He had a deep admiration for the great builders, those businessmen and industrialists who had helped to create a country distinct from the United States. Willison deemed it extremely important to maintain close ties with the Empire and the Mother country specifically to avoid total assimilation with the American Empire. Tariff protection was Canada's only hope if it wished to avoid an American invasion that would rob the nation of its unique character. Canada, he believed, would best conserve its originality by maintaining close relations with Britain.

In a societal context, the commentaries of the Toronto journalist reflected the struggle between the two principal linguistic groups: the English-Canadian majority and the French-Canadian minority. Willison was an ardent defender of the British majority and tolerated the minority insofar as it did not overstep its prerogatives.

Concerning the labour movement, Willison considered that unions had a role to play in improving conditions for the workers, but he believed they should act responsibly and not make strident demands. He thought they should avoid violence and mistreatment of the general

public. It is possible to say that [207] he understood the workers but maintained a favourable bias for the employers who created jobs and ensured economic well-being?

In order to defend the specific interests of the Empire, *The Times* joined forces with Canadian anglophone imperialists for whom Willison was the main spokesman. At Willison's instigation, *The Times* supported Sir Robert Borden and the Conservative party from 1909 to 1920. It was in favour of the Unionist government in 1917. If the newspaper did not welcome the election of Arthur Meighen it was most likely due to the arrival of Sir Campbell Stuart at *The Times*. Stuart showed a preference for the party led by Mackenzie King. After 1920, Willison became disillusioned; Laurier had betrayed the principles of liberalism at the turn of the century and both Borden and Meighen had abandoned the precepts Canadian conservatism.

d) The British Empire and Canada: an Analysis based on The Times, 1908-1922

*d-1) External affairs:
Acquisition of independent status on the international scene*

[TOC](#)

With the potential for war in Europe becoming more evident, especially between 1909 and 1914, Canada was forced to play a more important role on the international scene. Before the war, Canadians had been diffident; the judicial status of Dominion limited the country's possibilities. Due to their war effort, Dominions such as Canada joined the ranks of sovereign nations on the world scene. After the war, Canadian politicians showed great determination with a series of actions that forced the Allies and the world community to recognize the change of status.

E. Grigg, editor of colonial affairs at *The Times*, was scandalized in 1910 when Laurier stated that any Canadian participation in the war of Europe would have to be approved by an Order in Council. The British editor declared that this "...went much further in the direction

of absolute independence than anything of his that I remember. I am sure you will agree that the talk about autonomy is all nonsense."¹⁵⁰

After the war, *The Times'* attitude changed. The Dominions became States of the British group and were no longer to be considered simply as colonies or dependencies. They were self-governing nations with the status of equal partners within the Empire.

[208]

The Dominions proved themselves in time of war. The situation was comparable to that of parents suddenly realizing their children had become adults.¹⁵¹ Relationships were on an equal footing but this did not prevent collaboration to defend common interests.

For Willison, however, it was not a question of evolution or maturity; for him the change signified a break, an unacceptable separation from the great imperial family. His loyalist nationalism was fulfilled in imperial attachment. He was unable to believe that Canada could emerge as a distinct nation in North America without this tie to the British Empire: the American giant would surely crush the Dominion. Willison's convictions were firmly rooted in the ideology of the American loyalists who had come to Canada during the American War of Independence because they wished to remain true to the Mother country. The development of this ideology was founded on a school of thought that was more conservative than that of the Americans who sought complete independence. For these reasons the model of the British Empire defended by Willison belonged to a period pre-dating the war, and not to the reality which existed after the war. The first concept belonged to the nineteenth century and the second was adapted to the twentieth century.

¹⁵⁰ N.A.C. *Willison Papers*, letter from Grigg to Willison, 13 May 1910, documents 29593-29594

¹⁵¹ Several authors use this image to illustrate the change in relations between the Mother country and its Dominions. See *The Times*, 17 May 1919, p. 10 and 7 December 1922, p. 5.

*d-2) Internal politics:
One state or two nations?*

Canada found itself in a difficult position during the war due to its status as a Dominion, its close ties with Great Britain and its internal structures. The war incited most national populations to close ranks but in Canada two nations struggled against each other. This demonstrated that the Dominion was as yet unable to rally around a nationalism that was not based on countries of origin. In time of peace and economic stability, problems were relatively few, but in a crisis such as that which surrounded the conscription issue, the country came close to dismemberment as the two strains of nationalism met head-on. The attitude of French-Canadians during the war clearly demonstrated that they formed a distinct nation within Canada. English-Canadians, in their defense of the Empire, also affirmed their nationalism.

In both cases, the nationalist sentiment had its source in the hearts of individuals but was also influenced by historical and sociological realities. During the war English-Canadians rediscovered that they formed the majority of this country called Canada, a situation which allowed them to use the federal government to serve their own interests if they felt threatened. French-Canadians [209] were reminded that were a minority in Canada. The crisis of 1917 confirmed that two distinct nations still existed in Canada, separated both by history and society. Canadian political structures however, more specifically the federal government, were designed to create a nation whose wish for unity was based on economic factors. Because the emergence of political nationalism endangered the country's very existence, governments looked instead to Canadian development based on a broader nationalism which was inspired by economic considerations. Canada's development as an economic nation would eliminate the historical and sociological identities.

The crisis in 1917 and the troubles of 1918 also demonstrated the degree to which the Canadian government was able to squash French-Canadian nationalism. The movement was stripped of its positive potential, driving it to introspection and violence; both constituted a form of alienation.

The domestic confrontation confirmed that the Canadian federal structure minimized the national force of French-Canadians and maximized the power of English-Canadians. Negative sentiment towards French-Canadians enabled anglophone imperialist Canadians to regroup and gather strength. Did not the Canadian political structure impede the normal evolution of French-Canadian nationalism when it chose to destroy the positive aspects of the movement? Was not the alienation also caused by the Canadian political system? French-Canadians had two possibilities: either they collaborated with English Canada or they were rejected. The alternative offered by the Francoeur Motion which opened the door to separation from the rest of Canada, corresponded to a very timely strategy at this period. It served to bring the parties together.

French-Canadians wished to be treated as equal partners in a Confederation where there formed a minority. The English-Canadian majority repeated that compromise was possible provided that the Constitution was respected. For this reason, francophone leaders were impelled to collaborate, through the federal government, with a system of "domination by consent".

After the war, the French-Canadian elite split into two groups: on one side were those who continued to collaborate with Ottawa and on the other were those who continued to fight for the survival of the French-Canadian nation in a more specifically Québécois context. The majority of those who defended this idea rejected politics and found themselves completely without means. How could they devise positive action? They lacked direction and became easy targets for the supporters of a renewed Canadian nationalism which was superior, more open and more positive.

The Canadian political system did not allow French-Canadian nationalism to develop adequately; instead it took control of the movement principally through the federal government. Did not this French-Canadian nationalism become conservative and retrograde because the Canadian system did not allow it to evolve otherwise? When the elite of French Quebec was integrated in the Canadian mosaic, local influential groups became preoccupied with the introspective leitmotiv of "la survivance". This nationalism evolved in isolation. Both the English and a certain French-Canadian elite used the phenomenon as

evidence that only Canadian reality could eliminate this nationalism which they considered narrow, provincial, petty and racist.

Canadian imperialists during this period considered Quebec the only territory of French-Canadians. Other provinces were dominated by the British majority. The Constitution recognized the use of French in certain federal institutions in exchange for the rights which Quebec accorded its anglophone population. Some anglophone provinces granted privileges to their [210] linguistic minorities for political reasons since they were not obliged by the Constitution.

*d-3) The Economy:
A choice for development*

The Canadian nation evolved not from deep cultural ties, but from a common desire for economic development to ensure the well-being of its citizens. This interest receded during the war.

The historical compromises which allowed Canada's creation and survival were carried out in the name of higher interests. The Canadian capitalist system attributed considerable importance to the production of material goods and the creation of wealth. For this reason, British imperialism was slowly supplanted in Canada by American imperialism which was more competitive and profitable at the start of the twentieth century.

Historical compromise between anglophones and francophones can be explained by this common desire for development. As soon as the First World War ended, ethnic conflict subsided and Canadians came to their senses. The economy was once again of prime importance.

In Canada these concepts of development were translated by British or American imperialist ideology. Imperialism, like all ideologies, seeks to persuade and take control. Canadians acted on several fronts that favoured economic development. Tariff protection with England allowed Americans wishing to benefit from an exclusive Imperial market to settle in Canada. Trade protection favoured the rise of American imperialism. Willison however could see only advantages in the protectionist policy of the British Empire.

Ontario and Quebec possessed better-structured economies and a more concentrated population. The agricultural West successfully defended its interests which were different from those of central Canada. Maritime economy declined due to activity based on traditional and stagnating industries. This regional disparity was reflected in the political system which favoured representation by population in each province. Central Canada emerged the winner with 60% of the population.

Canada's population was insufficient to counterbalance the strength of the United States. Enormous capital and gigantic markets would have been necessary to build a capitalist economy in a country covering such a vast territory. Due to a weak domestic market and a unique industrial and trade tradition, businessmen were forced to look towards foreign capital and foreign markets. The Canadian economic system was wedged between its desire for internal development and its perpetual dependence on external factors to ensure this development.

[211]

*d-4) Society:
Social groups with unequal powers*

The relationships which linked members of the press with the political and economic elite are evident in the pages of *The Times*. These groups of men pursuing common goals were not limited to the structures of the newspaper or the framework of the political and economic systems. Although there was sometimes disagreement and dissension within their ranks, these men shared a common objective: a pragmatic societal ideal. Northcliffe, Dawson, Stuart and Grigg at *The Times* with Willison as the principal correspondent in Canada, worked in close collaboration with politicians. They also sought the expertise of businessmen, industrialists and bankers in order to make projections concerning economic development. *The Times* was most attentive to these elite groups which made up the newspaper's target readership and *The Times* responded admirably to their expectations. Although Northcliffe had acquired the reputation of a high circulation press ge-

nius, he did not succeed, despite repeated efforts, in changing the style of journalism practised at *The Times*. The newspaper's format evolved, but its content changed very little. Northcliffe failed in this area. The newspaper was modernized but maintained its journalistic tradition. *The Times* preserved its original character and functioned within a particular social framework. Not only was the newspaper a full-fledged member of this society, it also accurately reflected this society. This explains why, in our analysis, it is possible to assert that a capitalist class and two national classes existed in Canada. The capitalist class made Confederation possible in its desire to ensure Canada's survival with the conditions necessary for economic development. The national classes were based rather on ethnic or linguistic factors. In stable times, these classes are not in evidence since Canadian reality tends to nullify their influence. However in crises such as in 1917, the class differences were accentuated and the two groups clashed, endangering the very existence of the nation as it was conceived in 1867.

The working class received little attention from the newspaper. To *The Times*, it appeared poorly-structured and unable to communicate its point of view to businessmen, politicians or to the press. Power was unevenly divided among these groups.

Our research leads us to another conclusion. Politically, economically and socially, Canada depended on external factors for its development. Local populations appeared incapable of acting effectively in this area.

This study also shows that an ideology such as British imperialism helps us to understand Canada's evolution. Both internal and external influences as well as alliances and conflicts between various groups shed light on Canadian history, with its ambiguities and contradictions, its successes and its failures. In sum, the Canadian experience is on the human scale, the individual who exists within him or herself and who seeks to take his or her place in the larger community. The history of Canada and the history of Quebec are the by-products of European nations and economic empires; they evolve at different rates, whether it be the case of a region, a nation, a continent or the world. If this is forgotten, national history becomes a study with limited scope.

Other studies will doubtless be able to specify how imperialism was manifested in the Canadian experience. In this regard, the study of American imperialism which supplanted British imperialism at the turn of the century, remains essential to the understanding of contemporary [212]Canadian history. This does not presume to close research on the subject; rather it modestly opens the way to further study of the varied forms of imperialism and their impact on the economy, politics, society and culture of Quebec and Canada.

[213]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

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[214]

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[231]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

APPENDIX I

Times Correspondants in Canada

[TOC](#)

1836	-«A Canadian» - Egerton Ryerson Financial Corres. Dr. C. McKay (1865)	1899- 1913-	Capt. R. M. Melville F. Sutherland
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Toronto/Montreal/Ottawa

1871 - W.A. Foster
1872 - A. Bernard (occasional) Ottawa
1886 - Joel Cook (from U.S.A.)
1890 - (nil: possibly M.O. Scott)
1890's - 1911 - Fred Cook
c1894 - c1903 - G.R. Parkin (Occas.)
1903 - C. Hanbury - Williams
1910 - 27 - Sir John Willison
(1914 - A.P. Ford - Ottawa)

(1920 - G. O'Leary ass. Ottawa)
(1914 - 15 - 1920 - M. Powell occas.)
(1923/4 - 1927 - T.H. Blacklock - Ottawa)
(1925 - J. Kidman - Montreal)
(1927 - W.A. Willison, sub.)
(Montreal - Frank Mynott)
1927 - 42 - J.A. Stevenson (Ottawa)
(1930 - 56 - M. McDougall, dep.)
(1932 - 37 - W. Marchington - Toronto)
1946 - 48 - J.W. Sanction (Montreal)
(1948 - G.J. Fitzgerald)
1948 - 1950 - H. Peters (Montreal)
1951 - 52 - R.W. Robbins (Toronto) (i)
1951 - 54 - J.S. Buist
(1953) - 56 - M. MacDougall)
1952 - 56 - R.W. Robbins (Montreal) (ii)
(1952) R. Kerwin - Montreal)
1952 - 57 (1958 - occas.) M. Jacob (Toronto)
1954 - 1971 - H. Brigstocke (Ottawa) (1957 - 64 - J. McCook, Ottawa)
1962 - 64 - P. Anglis (Montreal)
1965 - 67 - M. McMahan (Montreal
(J. Mackie, 1957 - 64 - dep.)
(V. Mackie, 1965, July 1970 - Ottawa)
(R. Mackie, July 1970 -)
1970 - Julie Weston
1974 - J. Best (Ottawa)

Vancouver

1891 - C.T. Lewis
1896 - P. Woodley
1914 - R.H. Brown
1914 - 1944 - P.C. Rawling
1918 - 1928 - E.H.C. Johnston
1945 - 1956 - F.H. Goodchild
1956 - 1960 - P. Anglis
1960 - 1969 - J. Dyer
1963 - P. Wild (occas.)
c1920 - Maj. L. Johnstone

Winnipeg

c1914 - A.E. Blow
(Again in 1920)
c1920 - R.C. Dafoe
c1920 - W.F. Payne
1930 - G.V. Ferguson (occas.)
1932 - J.W. Dafoe
1946 - 57 - Carlyle Allison
1958 - F.S. Manor

Calgary

1949 - 1954 - B. Dean

Edmonton

1932 - J.D. Craig

Red River Expedition - 1970

G.T. Lanigan

British Columbia Espedition

F. Smythe

Fraser River & Caribou Glod Rushes

1854 - Donald Fraser

Newfoundland

c1914 - 1929 - Sir P.T. McFroth

c1932 - 1934 - C.E.A. Jeffery

(1959 - P.J. O'Reilly)

Nova Scotia

c1920 - W.R. McCurdy

1932 - W.H. Dennis (emergency)

1942 - 1956/7 - F.W. Doyle (Halifax)

To retrace articles:

Articles were not signed until the middle of the 1920's. Often, however, there was a sub-title: «From our correspondent» followed by the name of the city where the article was written, ex: Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver.

See also: **The Official Index of the London Times or Palmer's Index** (Indispensables)

The list was prepared by the archivist at *The Times*:

Mr. Gordon Philipps

Archives of the «Times»

Gray's Inn Road

London - England

Certain additional information was supplied by the author.

[234]

CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.

APPENDIX II

Prices and Circulation of the Times (1785 to 1922)

Prix et circulation du <i>Times</i> (1785 - 1922 et 1976)				
Year	Price (1)		Circulation	
1785	3d		—	
1790	4d		—	
		Dec. 1792	2 810	copies (2)
1794	4 1/2d			
1797	6d	1797	1 700	(3)
1809	6 1/2d			
1815	7d	1817	6 592	(4)
1836	5d	1830	11 000	
		1837	11 000	(5)
1855	4d	1855	69 000	(11 sept.) (6)
1861	3d	1863	108 000	(11 march) (7)
1877	2d (8)	Nov. 1877	60 896	(8)
		1908	38 000	(9)
1914	1d	Sept. 1914	318 000	(10)
1916	1 1/2d	1916	192 000	(11)
1917	2d			
1918	3d	1918	143 000	
		Dec. 1919	114 414	
1922	1 1/2d	Dec. 1922	184 166	
1976	12p		309 560	

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- * *History of «The Times»*, vol. 2, p. 215 et *Times*, 4 March 1922, p. 11 e.
 2. *History of «The Times»*, vol. 1, p. 34.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 35
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 163
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 332
 6. *Ibid.*, vol. 2 p. 358
 7. *Ibid.*, Special edition on the marriage of the Prince of Wales
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 1018
 9. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 768
 10. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p.1054
 11. Times - Newspapers Ltd, «*Facts about The Times» 1785-1977*, 1977, p. 27.

[235]

**CANADA. A COUNTRY DIVIDED.
The Times of London and Canada, 1908-1922.**

INDEX

[TOC](#)

- Action catholique l'* : 122
Agriculture : (see *industry*)
Alaska Border Treaty : 54-55
American independence : 22, 208
American imperialism : 74-76, 81, 211
Amery, L. : 165
Ashburton Treaty : 54
Ashburton Lord: 54
Atholstan, Lord : 122
Australia : coverage in *The Times*, 23-24; and conscription, 129-130
Aylesworth, Allen : 55
Banks : 80
Baring Brothers Bank : 54
Beaverbrook, Lord : 156
Bégin, Cardinal : 112
Behrmann-Hollweb, Mr. : 115
Béland, Henri : 162
Belley, Louis de Gonzague : 171
bilingualism : 86-91, 199-202
Blondin, Paul-Émile : 122, 128
Blow, A.E. : 21
Bolshevism : and the conscription conflict, 139 ; and the labour movements, 192-195
Borden, Robert : 30, 31, 81, 207 ; 1908 elections, 56 ; 1911 elections, 62-63 ; 1917 elections, 120-133, 142 ; *défense of the Empire*, 64-67 ; the Navy question, 66-68, 93 ; and conscription, 96, 106, 115-129 ; on Hughes, 113 ; on recruitings, 110 ; thanking after 1917 victory, 132 ; and the 1919 peace conference, 160 ; departure from political life, 167 ; on Winnipeg strike, 194
Bourassa, Henri : 59, 62, 88, 90, 109-110, 112, 116-117, 123, 126
Bourne, Monsignor (Archbishop of Westminster) : 86
Brierley, J.S. : 51
British Columbia : economical development, 29

- British North America Act* : 88
 Brown, R.H. : 21
 Bruchési, Archbishop, 122, 133
 Buchmaster, Mr. : 98
 Burnham, Lord : 51, 99-100
- Calder, J.H. : 196
 Cambridge University : 20
Le Canada (newspaper) : 101, 122
Canadian Association of Manufacturers : 71
Canadian Association of Pulp and Paper : 188
Canadian National Railways : 187
Canadian Pacific Railways : 77, 84, 180, 187
Canadian Trades and Labour Congress : 92
 Censorship : 96-100
 Chamberlain, Austen : 71
 Chamberlain, Joseph : 46, 112
 Chanak Incident : 165-167
Chronicle, The (newspaper) : 134
 Churchill, Sir Winston : 66
 Civil War (United States) : 88
 Clarck, Dr. Michael : 120
 Clémenceau, Georges : 115
 Clergy : (see *Religion*)
 Cod Treaty : 31
 Colquhoun Ballantyne, Charles : 179
 Commonwealth : 23, 162
 Confederation : 64, 89, 202 ; ans
 WWI, 96
Congrès sur la langue française : 88
 Conscription : 31, 96, 106, 11-134, 209 ; Military Service Bill, 120-122, 129, 138-139; opposition to, 133, 209 ; the Norman Lewis case, 138
 Cook, Fred : 21, 46, 51
 Crerar, Thomas A. : 128, 162, 172-174
 C.R.E.W. Smith (newspaper, Ottawa) : 21-22
Croix, La (newspaper) : 117
- Currie, General : 160
 Curtis, Lionel : 104
- Dafoe, R.C. : 21
 Dafoe, J.W. : 117
Daily Mail, The (newspaper) : 20, 155
Daily Star, The (newspaper) : 104
Daily Telegraph The (newspaper) : 51
 Dawson, Geoffrey : 50, 132, 155, 157, 211
 Debt (Canada) : after the war, 140, 184
 Dennis, Mr. : 84
 Desjardins, Charles : 124
Devoir, Le (newspaper, Montreal) : 62, 122, 175-176
 Doherty, Charles Joseph : 160-161
 Dominion Labour Congress : 119
Droit, Le (newspaper, Ottawa) : 166
 Durham, Lord : 22
 Durham's Report : 22
- Economic crisis (1913) : 27
 Economy (Canada) : after the war, 184-190; and american investments, 186-187, 189-190
 Eddy Company : 71
 Education : 86-91
 Elections : 1908, 56; 1911, 62-64; 1917, 120-133; *Wartime Election Act*, 126; *Military Voters Act*, 126; 1921, 170-174
 Embargo (England) : on canadian livestock, 179-183
 Emigration : of British citizens, 82, 197
Empire Press Union : 51, 99, 181
 English Canadians : and éducation, 86-91; and language, 86-91; and religion, 89; domination on French Canadians, 92-93; and war, 96, 117, 119, 142;

- and anglophone-francophone polarization, 31, 126-127, 130, 141, 206; after the war, 154; réconciliation with French Canadians, 199-204
- Eucharistic Congress : 86
- Événement, L' (newspaper, Quebec City) : 101, 119, 134*
- Fallon, Bishop : 86
- Fielding, William Stephen : 162, 169, 174-175, 177
- First World War : overview, 18-19, 96-133; Borden and, 96, 106, 115-133; canadian foreign trade during, 28; conscription, 31, 96, 106, 111-133; and French Canadians, 107-117, 126, 132-134, 141-142; and English Canadians, 117-119, 142; plebiscite, 62-64; *The Times'* coverage of, 97-98, 117-121, 129, 207; and Willison, 117-121, 126, 130; and impérial unity, 101-106; supply of soldiers, 107-110, 117, 127, 140; canadian debt after, 140, 184; supply of munitions, 140
- Flavelle, Joseph : 48, 122, 172
- Foreign Trade (Canada) : imports, 28, 185; exports, 27-28, 185; with the United States, 27-28; with the united Kingdom, 27-28, 75-76; and national unity, 128-129, 142-143; and war, 184, 210; French Canadians : 85-91; participation in development, 29p; and anglophone-francophone polirazation, 31, 126-127, 130, 141 , 206; nationalism in Quebec, 62-63, 65; and immigration, 84, 199; and éducation, 86-91, 200; and language, 86-91, 200; and religion, 89; dominated by English Canadians, 92-93; and war, 107-117, 122-124, 126, 132-134, 141-142; and 1917 elections, 115, 130-131; opposition to conscription, 122-124, 126, 132-134, 141-142; and 1917 elections, 115, 130-131; opposition to conscription, 122-124, 126, 132-134, 209; after the war, 154; and fédéral représentation after 1921 elections, 174; réconciliation with the English Canadians, 199-204
- Foster, Sir George : 160
- Francoeur, Joseph-Napoléon : 133, 134
- Francoeur Motion : 133, 142
- Free Trade Union : 73
- George, Lloyd : 105, 155, 163, 166
- Globe, The (newspaper, Toronto) : 104, 117, 127*
- Gouin, Lomer : 79, 134, 167, 169, 175-176, 188, 203
- Grand Trunk Company : 187*
- Grey, Lord : 46, 51, 71, 84
- Guthrie, Hugh : 120
- Haywood, William D. : 194
- Herald, The (newspaper, Montreal) : 51*
- Hughes, Sir Sam : 108, 112-113
- Immigration : 82-85, 126, 141, 191, 196-199
- Imperial Conference on Education : 86
- Imperial unity : Commonwealth, 23, 162; 101-106, 112; Imperial Conference on, 105-106; Canada as threat to, 160-165; the *Chanak Incident*, 165-167; Meighen official elec-

- tion Platform on, 171; and importance in Canada, 211-212
- Independance (Canada) : from the British Empire, 160
- Independant Labour Party : 170
- Industrial Workers of the World : 194
- Industry : forestry, 79, 83, 189; wool, 79; textile, 79-80; agriculture, 83, 186-187 (and war), 140, 184, 186; fisheries, 83; manufacturers, 184; communication network, 186-187; after the war, 184-186; pulp and paper, 188-190
- Inter-Imprtisl Free Trade : 71
- Jellicoe, Lord : 178
- Jetté, Amable : 55
- Johnston, E.H.C. : 21
- Kemal, Mustapha : 166
- Labour movements : 29, 91-92, 115-116, 139, 142, 185; after the war, 187, 191-192; Winnipeg strike, 193-196
- Labour News, The* (newspaper) : 195
- “*Laisser-faire*” economy : 69-80
- Lalumière, Élie : 124
- Language : 86-91, 199-201, 209-210
- Lapointe, Ernest : 166, 174, 203
- Laurier, Wilfrid : 30, 204, 207; relations with Willison, 47-48; on the limited powers of the Dominion, 55; 1908 elections, 56; 1911 elections, 62; and war, 101, 115-127; 1917 elections, 127-133; death, 167
- Law, Mr. Bonar : 103, 164, 166
- Leacock, Professor : 55
- League of Nations : 154, 165, 170, 204
- Lemieux, Rodolphe : 68, 162, 199
- Lemieux, Law : 91
- Lewis, Norman : 138
- London Daily, The* (newspaper, London) : 109
- Long, B.K. : 136
- MacDonald, John A. : 63, 76
- Mackenzie King, William Lyon : 30, 91, 154, 162, 166-167, 169, 172-177, 203, 207
- Manitoba Grain Growers’ Company : 128, 170
- Mann, Sir Donald : 122
- Maritimes : economical development, 29; and Liberals, 169
- Mathieu, Archbishop, 138
- McCarthy, D’Alton : 88
- Meighen, Arthur : 30, 122, 154, 162, 166-170, 173-174, 180, 193, 206-207
- Military Service Bill : 120-122, 129, 138-139
- Military Voters Acr* : 126
- Milner, Lord : 46, 51, 52, 56, 164
- Monk, F.D. : 58, 59, 62, 65
- Montreal Star* (newspaper, Montreal) : 122
- Monty, Rodolphe : 171
- Nationalism : French Canadian, 62-63, 142-143, 208-209; English Canadian, 81, 208; Borden on, 81; and war, 112, 142-143
- National unity (Canada) : 128-129, 167-168
- Natural resources : 27, 186, 188-189
- Navy Bill : 61
- Navy (Canada) : 66-68, 93, 178-179
- News, The* (newspaper, Toronto) : 46; and Willison, 48; Financial difficulties, 49, 61; and 1911 elections, 64; end of

- Willison's participation to, 125
- Normand, Dr. Louis-Philippe : 171
- Northcliffe : 20, 46, 51, 52, 155-156, 181, 211
- O'Leary, G. : 21
- Ontario : economical development, 29; urbanization, 29
- Osler, Judge : 79
- Oxford University : 20, 112
- Painlevé, Paul : 115
- Palmerston, Lord : 54
- Papineau, Captain Talbot : 112
- Pardee, Frederick : 120
- Patenaude : 122
- Patrie, La* (newspaper, Quebec Province) : 57, 122
- Patriotism : among the Dominions, 101-102
- Payne-Aldrich Act : 69
- Payne, W.F. : 21
- Pelletier, Archbishop : 138
- Pelletier, Louis-Philippe : 124
- Plebiscite : 62, 64
- Pope Benedict XV : 113-114
- Powell, Morgan : 21
- Press Bureau, The : 98
- Presse, La* (newspaper, Montreal) : 50-51, 122
- Press (function) : 97-101
- Progressive Party, The : 167, 170, 172-173, 176-177
- Protectionism : 70-74, 77, 80
- Pulp and paper : (see *industry*)
- Quebec Act : 88
- Quebec Chronicle, The* (newspaper, Quebec City) : 88
- Quebec (province : economical development, 29; urbanization, 29
- Quebec riot : 134-135
- Railways (Canada) : 70, 76-77, 172-173, 187-188; *Canadian Pacific Railway* : 77, 84, 180, 187; *Canadian National Railway* : 187; *Royal Colonial Institute* : 84
- Rawling, R.C. : 21
- Rebellion of 1837 : 22
- Reciprocity : 69-74, 81, 167, 177-178
- Regina Leader, The* (newspaper, Regina) : 175
- Religion : 86-91; and war, 111-114, 122-123, 133, 138, 141; and the Winnipeg strike, 195
- Repington, Charles à Court : 61
- Round Table Movement : 104-105
- Robertson, Gidéon : 193
- Rowell, Newton W. : 86, 125, 128, 160-162
- Rowley, W.H. : 71
- Ruling XVII : 87, 141
- Russian Revolution : 115, 192
- Sévigny, Alfred : 122, 128
- Shaughnessy, Sir Thomas : 180
- Sifton, Arthur Lewis : 128, 160
- Sifton, Sir Clifford : 69, 117, 128, 162
- Smith, F.E. : 98
- Soleil, Le* (newspaper, Montreal) : 122
- South African War : 76
- Star, The* (newspaper) : 117
- Stuart, Sir Campbell : 155, 168, 200, 207, 211
- Taft, William Howard : 69
- Taschereau, Alexandre : 167
- Taylor, Sir Frederick : 186
- Times, The* (newspaper, London) : archives, 18; indexes, 19, foreign correspondents, 20; format, 21; defender of the British Empire, 23, 205; importance of Canada in, 23; Australia, 23-24; India, 23-24; Northcliffe, 20, 46; sup-

- plément on Empire Day, 21, 46, 104, 119; Willison's influence on, 58; official position on reciprocity, 72-73; campaign against Bourassa and the Nationalists, 112; and censorship during wartime, 97-98; on war and conscription, 97-98, 1170-121, 129; coverage of the Canadian division during wartime, 135-136; post-war changes, 155, 157-159; on Meighen's arrival, 168; on Mackenzie King, 170; on embargo, 179, 181-182; dissociation from Willison, 203; general overview of changes, 211.
- Toronto Empire Club, 104
- Toronto Globe, The* (newspaper, Toronto) : 162
- Toronto Star, The* (newspaper, Toronto) : 162
- Trades and Labour Congress : 92; against conscription, 127, 196
- United States of America : campaign against Canada : 160
- Versailles, Treaty of : 31, 154, 204
- Victory Bonds : 185
- Walter, John : 20
- Wartime Election Act* : 126
- Watters, Mr. : 119
- Webster, Daniel : 54
- Western Labour News, The* (newspaper) : 194
- Western provinces (Canada) : economical development, 29; immigration, 30, 197-198; and Conservatives for 1917 elections, 120-121; and the Progressive Party, 167, 170; and Liberals, 168, 170, 175-176; and reciprocity, 177-178; and embargo, 182p-1u83; and the Winnipeg strike, 193-195
- Westminster, Statute of : 167
- White, Sir John Thomas : 168, 185
- Whitney, James : 86
- Wickham Steed, H. : 155
- Willison, John : 20; collection of private papers, 22; archives (London), 22; coverage of Canada, 23; first publication in *The Times*, 46; contract with *The Times*, 46-47; and *The News*, 47; relationship with Laurier, 48-49, 56, 118-119, 122, 130, 141, 207; and *The Globe*, 48; and French Canadians schools, 49; political beliefs, 50, 157; political feelings towards Borden, 57, 65, 156-157, 207; influence on *The Times*, 58; officially hired by *The Times*, 60; on Borden and the Navy question, 66-68; knighted, 68; on immigration, 82-83; on Quebec, 86, 89-90; and censorship, 98-99; on war, 101-102, 107, 109, 117-121, 126, 130; on conscription, 110; on French Canadians during WWI, 109, 111, 126, 133-134, 141-142; on Bourassa, 110-111, 141; on the Church during wartime, 111; on 1917 election results, 130-133; coverage of the Canadian division (Quebec riot) during wartime, 135-137; on « Bolchevism », 139, 192; personal life during wartime, 124-126; correspondence with Campbell Stuart, 156-157, 168-

169; post-war problems with *The Times*, 157-159; on Mackenzie King, 170, 173, 174-176; on 1921 elections, 171, 173; on the navy after the war, 178; on labour movements, 192, 206-207; on French Canadians after the war, 199-202; dissociation from *The Times*, 203; general conclusion on, 206-207

Willison, Lieutenant W.T. : 124
Winnipeg Citizen, The : 193
Winnipeg Free Press, The (newspaper, Winnipeg) : 117, 122, 162, 175-176
Winnipeg strike : (see *Labour Movement*)
Women : and 1917 election, 132-133
Woodsworth, James S. : 194

Fin du texte