

CHC2P Unit 5: Canada's Century

Activity 4: Canadian-American Relations

Overview

In this activity, changes in the roles and status of women in Canada will be examined.

Lesson

Historical Relations between Canada and the United States



This course has examined Canadian-American relations at several points. American investments in Canada during such times as the 1930s and 1950s have been explored. The relationship between Prime Minister Mackenzie King and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was especially close during the Second World War.

On the other hand, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker did not get on well with President John F. Kennedy, nor did Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau with his counterpart, President Richard Nixon. Throughout the past century, the United States has also influenced Canadian culture.

In the evolving present, those relations between Canada and the United States continue to be an important topic.

The Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement

The Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (1984-1993) signed a free trade agreement with the United States in 1988.

The United States and Canada were each other's largest trading partners. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) removed many tariffs or taxes on goods moving between the two countries, and set a schedule for the removal of remaining taxes by 1998.

The FTA created a large degree of controversy in Canada. Business supported the opportunities for increased trade with the United States. Some Canadians also looked forward to lower prices in stores.

Other Canadians, including the members of the Liberal Party and the NDP, accused the Progressive Conservative government of endangering the independence of Canada. Would Canada's health care system and cultural industries (such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television) be threatened by the FTA? Would working conditions and benefits be diminished, as Canadian industries tried to compete with lower-paying American firms? Would the FTA lead to Canada being forced to join the United States?

The 1988 federal election was fought on the issue of free trade, and the Progressive Conservatives won that election (with 43% of the popular vote) against the Liberals and the NDP.

NAFTA: The North American Free Trade Agreement

In 1994, the FTA became the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as Mexico joined the United States and Canada in the world's largest free trade area.

A public opinion poll in 2003 indicated that 70% of respondents supported NAFTA. About 87% of Canada's exports go to the United States, and Canada receives 77% of its imports from America. Supporters of NAFTA state that all countries have benefited from the agreement.

NAFTA has not eliminated all trade disputes between Canada and the United States. For instance, the two countries continue to disagree about the sale of Canadian softwood lumber in the U.S.

To learn more about the Canada / US Free Trade Agreement view "Entering A New Era", broadcast on January 1, 1989 at the CBC Archives:
<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/economy-business/trade-agreements/canada-us-free-trade-agreement/making-sense-of-it-all.html>

The Canada/United States Auto-Pact, 1965

To learn about the Auto Pact, view "The End of an Era", broadcast on February 18, 2001 at the CBC Archives:
<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/economy-business/trade-agreements/the-auto-pact-en-route-to-free-trade/the-end-of-an-era.html>

Canada's Independent Foreign Policy



In 2003, the Canadian government of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien openly displeased the American government, when it refused to send Canadian troops as part of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S., the government of President George W. Bush saw military support of the U.S. as a test of friendship.

In 2005, Prime Minister Paul Martin created further tension with the United States when his government rejected Canadian participation in the American missile defence program.

American Influences in Canada

Some people worry about Canadian institutions disappearing. For example, in 1999, the long-lasting Canadian T. Eaton Company went bankrupt. American companies such as Home Depot, Walmart and Starbucks have invaded Canada and have often forced Canadian-owned independent businesses to close their doors. Others worry about Canadian television programs, books, and magazines surviving in the face of American competition.

Assignment

1. Answer the following questions:

- a. Name your two favourite fast food places
- b. Name your two favourite television programs
- c. Name your two favourite movies
- d. Name your two favourite sports personalities
- e. Name your two favourite musical artists:
- f. Name your two favourite entertainment personalities
- g. Name your two favourite Internet websites

Now, determine how many of your “favourites” were American in origin. List the Canadian ones.

2. **Choose only one (1) of the following two questions:**

- a. According to the CBC video segment on the Canada – US Free Trade Agreement, “Entering A New Era”, what Canadian products will benefit from free trade and what products will suffer?
- b. According to the video segment on the Auto Pact, “The End of an Era”, what was the Auto Pact, and what caused its ending in 2001?

3. **Perform research on only three (3) following Canadians.** In two or three sentences, summarize each of their contributions to Canadian identity:

- a. Group of Seven
- b. Gabrielle Roy
- c. Gordon Lightfoot
- d. Rick Mercer
- e. The Tragically Hip
- f. Terry Fox
- g. Georges St. Pierre