

Quebec Nationalism and Regionalism in Canada

Socials 11 Exam Prep

In the beginning

- From 1600s-1700s, the French and British battled to control Canadian Colonies
- Wars were fought over who would rule Eastern Canada
- Eventually Britain won control, but French culture was well established in Eastern Canada, especially Quebec
- French way of life was very different than British, and they wanted to maintain their unique culture

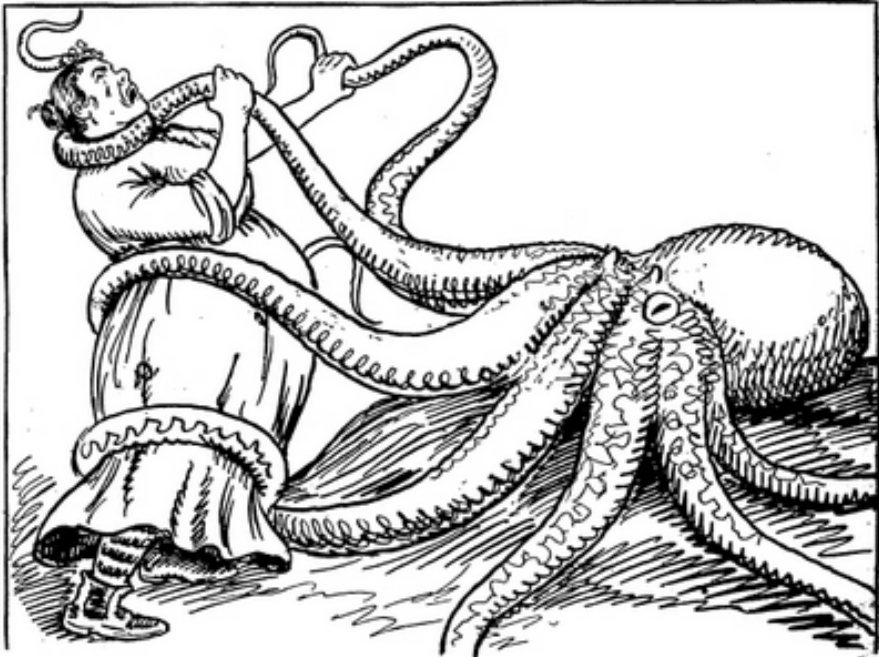
The Conscription Crisis

- World War One and World War Two
- Declining enrollment in army
- Canada decided, against popular opinion, to conscript
- French Canadians did not identify with the war in Europe and were outraged



Anti-conscription demonstration in Quebec

LA CONSCRIPTION

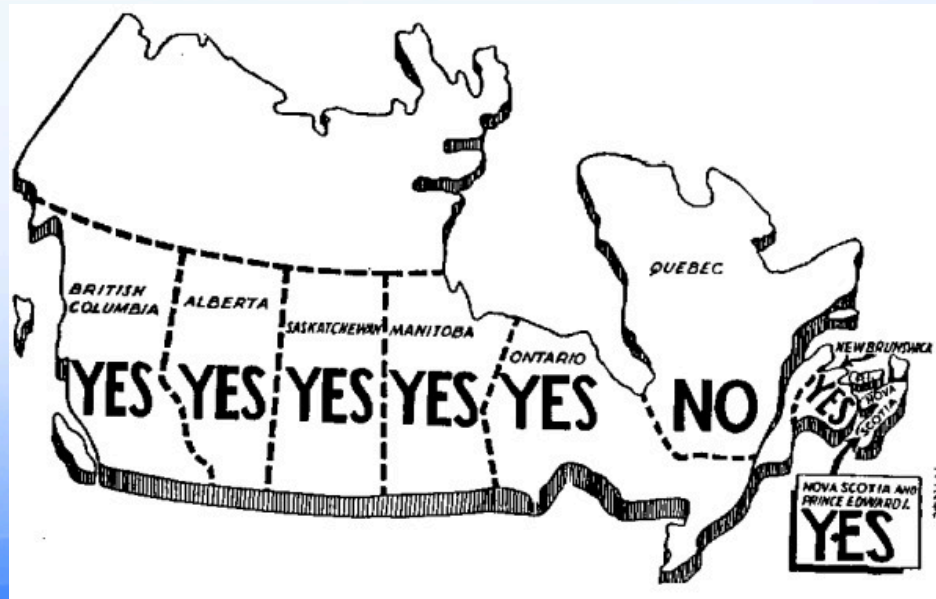


C'est le triomphe du trust des armements, des fournisseurs du gouvernement, des accapareurs et des souscripteurs de la classe électorale.

CONSCRIPTION

It is the triumph of the armaments trusts, the government suppliers, the monopolists and the underwriters of the election.

Le Canard, Montréal, 24 June 1917



Union Nationale

- From 1930s-1950s Quebec was controlled by Union Nationale Party
- Premier was Maurice Duplessis
- Believed in idea of Quebec as a distinct nation, not just another Canadian province
- Introduced a new flag for (Quebec) symbol



Union Nationale

- Roman Catholic Church was main defender of Quebec culture
- The church ran hospitals and schools. Education was inferior and outdated.
- Quebec welcomed foreign investment and kept wages low by banning unions
- There was a lot of corruption: Businesses that invested in Quebec were expected to give money to the Union Nationale party

The Quiet Revolution

- After Duplessis died, the Liberals came to power
- They modernized Quebec's economy, politics, education and culture—a change known as Quiet Revolution
- Influence of Roman Catholic Church declined
- Liberals stamped out corruption
- Also nationalized services (such as Hydro) and reduced foreign investment: “Maitres Chez Nous”
“Masters of Our Own House”

Quebec Separatism

- Quebec Separatists felt it was unfair that Canada seemed to be run by English-speaking Canadians, with few French-Canadians in powerful government positions.
- At that time there were no laws about bilingualism, and French-Canadians were mad that they were expected to speak English in stores, at work, and with government agencies.
- Also wanted French-Canadians in other provinces to have their own schools (this struggle dates back several hundred years).

FLQ: Front de Libération de Québec

- A radical group that believed Quebec should be politically and economically separate from Canada.
- Saw English-Speaking Canadians as colonizing/oppressive force.
- Tactics included bombing English-Canadian buildings and symbols (such as Canada Post Mailboxes)



Parti Québécois

- In 1967, Quebec cabinet minister René Lévesque left the Liberal Party to start Parti Québécois (PQ).
- The party wanted Quebec to separate from Canada.



Official Languages Act

- Prime Minister Trudeau responded by passing the Official Languages Act, making Canada bilingual.
- All federal government agencies must provide service in both languages.
- Government will provide support to employees to learn the other language.
- Later, another law was passed to mandate that all products need to be labeled in French and English.

Reaction to the Act

- Some Canadians liked the idea of bilingualism (example: French Immersion schools).
- Some, especially in West, felt federal government was forcing French on them and giving too much attention to Quebec.
- Quebeckers not that impressed—wanted federal government to give Quebec more autonomy than other provinces, but Canada insisted Quebec is a province like any other.

October Crisis

- Members of the FLQ kidnapped a British Diplomat
- In exchange for his release they made several demands, including release of FLQ members serving criminal sentences for previous acts.
- Federal government refused to release these prisoners.
- FLQ kidnapped another person: a Quebec government minister

October Crisis: War Measures Act

- Trudeau invoked “War Measures Act”—only time it has ever been used outside WW1 and WW2
- This allowed FLQ members to be arrested and detained without being charged with an offense
- 450 people were detained, only 25 were ever charged
- Membership in FLQ became a crime



October Crisis Response

- There were many protests by separatists in Quebec
- The federal government sent in the military
- Eventually the British Diplomat was found strangled in the trunk of a car
- The other hostage was found two months later, and the FLQ leaders were granted safe passage to Cuba



Bill 101

- Parti Québécois won 1976 election in Quebec
- They passed Bill 101: Made French the only official language in Quebec
 - All government offices must operate in French
 - All outdoor signage must be in French only
 - Children of immigrants must attend French schools
- To non-francophone it felt oppressive

Separatism Referendum (1980)

- Quebec held a referendum on whether Quebec should be a separate nation from Canada
- Trudeau (PM of Canada) promised to negotiate a new Constitution if Quebec voted no
- 40% voted yes and 60% voted no

Constitutional Debate

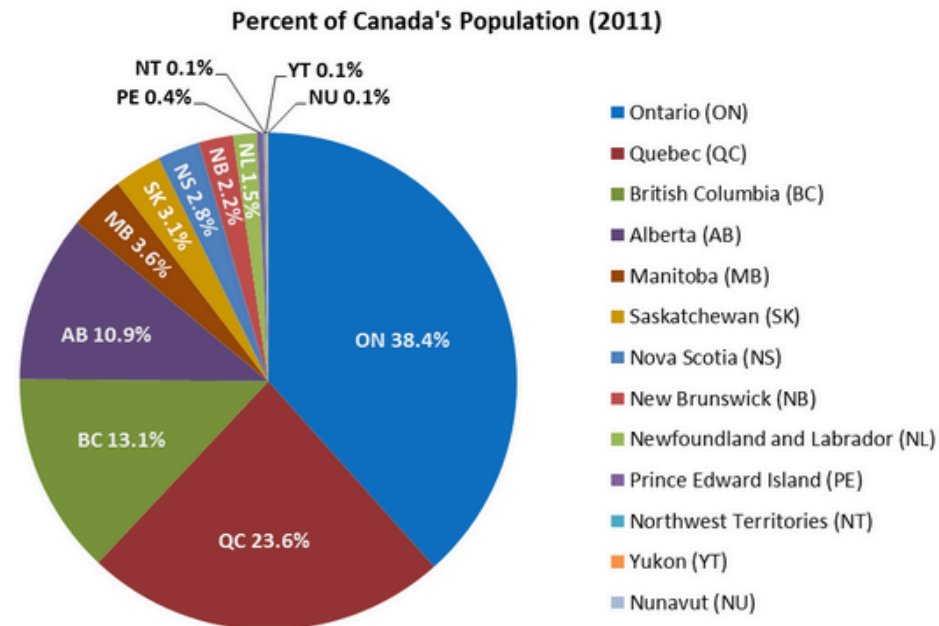
- When the new Constitution was introduced in 1982, it was hard to get Quebec's support.
- For the next 10 years the Canadian government tried to pass various agreements that would give more power to the Provinces, support Aboriginal self-government, reform the Senate, and make Quebec a "distinct society" still connected to Canada.
- These agreements (Meech Lake Accord and Charlottetown Accord) were not passed by the Provinces. Some felt they gave Quebec too much power.

Another Referendum (1995)

- Many Quebeckers still wanted to separate
- They held another referendum
- 49.4% voted yes to separation, 50.6% voted no—
So close!
- Eventually separatism died down in Quebec, but there are some who still believe Quebec should be separate

Quebec wasn't the only one feeling left out

- Western and Eastern provinces felt that the federal government wasn't tuned into their needs.
- Ontario and Quebec hold majority of government seats—leads to Western Alienation



National Energy Program

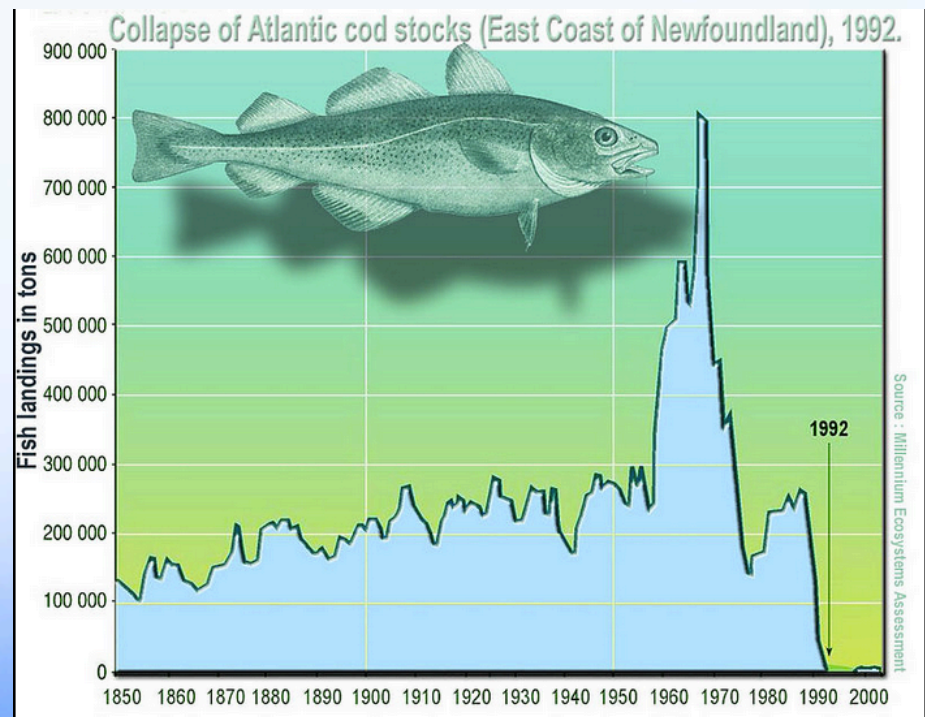
- Western Provinces (especially Alberta) were upset by this policy introduced in 1980 to control the oil industry in Canada.
- It taxed oil industry so more funds went to federal government and less to Provinces where oil was found.
- Slogan: Let the Eastern Bastards Freeze in the Dark
- Ended when oil prices dropped (1984)

Collapse of Cod Fishery

- Meanwhile in Newfoundland...
- For 500 years economy had been based on fishing for cod. Now only 1% of the original cod population were left.
- Ended a way of life



Child with cod. Newfoundland, Canada 1895.



Cod Fishery

- 1992: Government banned commercial cod fishing
- Economy of Newfoundland collapsed: 30-40,000 people out of work
- Government provided relief programs, but communities dwindled
- Many Newfoundlanders unhappy about how federal government managed the crisis

Regionalism

- Over the 1980s and 1990s there were many challenges to Canadian unity
- Feelings of Quebec separatism, Western alienation, and Atlantic provinces distrust of Ottawa continue today
- Cartoon: 1990

