

French-English Relations

(Chapter 16)

Introduction

Expo 67 was the biggest birthday party in Canadian history. The day after opening ceremonies, newspapers reported an even that marked the popular mood in Canada. A crowd of Canadian teenagers were standing in the chilly night air at the Ile Ste-Helene Expo Express subway station, waiting to leave the fairgrounds. They were from many ethnic backgrounds—English, Ukrainian, French, Italian, and more. And they were strangers to each other. Suddenly, they all joined hands and sang “O Canada.” Canadians were proud of themselves and their 100 year old nation.

But another event signalled future troubles between French and English Canada. The president of France, Charles de Gaulle, had been invited to take part in the festivities in Montreal. On July 24, 1967, de Gaulle stepped onto the balcony of Montreal’s City Hall to say a few words to a jubilant Expo crowd gathered in the square. At the end of his speech, de Gaulle raised his hands into a “V” for “Victory.” Then he spoke the words that jolted a nation: “Vive le Quebec libre!”—“Long live free Quebec!” Many English Canadians and some French Canadians in the crowd were outraged. Soon after, the Canadian prime minister, Lester Pearson, strongly rebuked the French president. “Canadians do not need to be liberated,” he declared, and de Gaulle’s visit to Ottawa was cancelled.

Story Outline for Chapters 16: French-English Relations

THE STORY	THE DETAILS	TERMS & PEOPLE
<p><i>Quebec separatism had a violent side which appealed to a small number of radical Francophones.</i></p>	<p>Page 315: The Nationalist Movement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The FLQ detonated a number of bombs in Quebec to bring attention to their desire for a free and independent Quebec. 2). Most French Canadiens disapproved of violence but a growing number of them were no longer willing to be treated as second-class citizens by English Canada. 3). A political party called the PQ formed with the express purpose of negotiating separation of Quebec from Canada. 	<p>FLQ: Front de Liberation du Quebec was a radical and militant separatist party responsible for kidnapping, bombings, and murder in the 1960s and early 1970s.</p> <p>PQ: the Parti Quebecois was established with the express purpose of pursuing legal means of helping Quebec leave Confederation.</p>
<p><i>In the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, Quebec society was dominated by the Catholic Church and the Union Nationale Party which both worked to prevent the changes taking place in English Canada from occurring in Quebec.</i></p>	<p>Page 317: The Quiet Revolution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Maurice Duplessis was the premier of Quebec for most of 1936 to 1956. 2). Duplessis encouraged English Canadians to invest in Quebec but he prevented French Canadians from taking to prominent a role in the province's development. 3). In 1959/60, Duplessis died and a new French leadership emerged including Pierre Trudeau and Jean Lesage. 4). Quebec underwent a "Quiet Revolution" in the 1960s as a result of the new leadership's efforts. 5). After being elected to power, Lesage addressed the problems of corruption under Duplessis' regime; moreover, he removed the Catholic Church from education, built a number of technical colleges, and new universities were built. 6). French Canadians began to call more and more for control over their own affairs. 	<p>Maurice Duplessis: a French Canadian conservative politician who controlled virtually every aspect of life—cultural, political and economic—in Quebec for nearly 30 years.</p> <p>Pierre Trudeau: the son of English/French parents was a journalist and brilliant lawyer. He made a name for himself supporting trade unionists during the famed Asbestos Strike against Duplessis.</p> <p>Jean Lesage: leader of Quebec's Liberal Party who after being elected undertook widespread reforms to modernize Quebec society.</p> <p>Quiet Revolution: throughout the 1960s Quebec society changed in a "quiet" revolution.</p>
<p><i>Trudeau became prime minister of Canada in 1969. He was a committed federalist and opposed giving Quebec special powers because he believed it would weaken Canada as a whole.</i></p>	<p>Page 319-320: Federalism or Separatism?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Trudeau's answer to French nationalism was the adoption of official bilingualism. 2). In 1969, Trudeau introduced the Official Languages Act. 3). Before 1960, people in Quebec had called themselves "Canadiens"; but during the 1960s they started to call themselves Quebecois (or citizens of the nation of Quebec). 4). The provincial government of Quebec became known as the "National Assembly." 	<p>Bilingualism: a policy whereby either English or French Canadians could speak their native language anywhere in Canada.</p> <p>Official Languages Act: gave Canadians the legal right to deal with the federal government and courts in either French or English. Provinces began offering French immersion programs. Manitoba re-instituted the separate school system that had been outlawed in 1916.</p>

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<p><i>The PQ ran on the platform of seeking independence from Canada.</i></p>	<p>Page 323: Growing Independence Movement 1). The PQ was finally elected in the late 1970s and were led by Rene Levesque.</p>	<p>Rene Levesque: a journalist and politician who helped establish the Parti Quebecois.</p>
<p><i>In October of 1970, the separatist movement within Quebec turned especially violent; it touched off a crisis effects of which continue to be felt in Canada today.</i></p>	<p>Page 324-325: The October Crisis 1). The FLQ kidnapped two people—James Cross and Pierre Laport in 1970. 2). The kidnappings touched off a crisis. The Quebec premier Robert Bourassa asked Prime Minister Trudeau to “send in the troops” to restore law and order. 3). Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act to legally suspend the rights of Canadians and address the emergency brought on by the crisis. 4). After Laport’s body was found the FLQ lost much of the sympathy of French people for their cause. Many Francophones wanted independence but did not support violent methods.</p>	<p>James Cross: British trade commissioner. Pierre Laport: the labour minister in Bourassa’s government. Robert Bourassa: provincial Liberal Party leader and premier during the October Crisis. He asked Prime Minister Trudeau to bring in the army to restore law and order. War Measures Act: a piece of legislation giving the federal government emergency powers in times of crisis; it has since been repealed.</p>
<p><i>The October Crisis put an end to violent separatism; however, it did not end the tension between French and English Canada. Protecting the French language was of primary concern to many people in Quebec following World War II.</i></p>	<p>Page 325-326: Quebec and the Language Crisis 1). The Quebec provincial government passed the Official Languages Act in 1974. 2). Bill 22 (see above) was controversial because Canada was officially bi-lingual but Quebec was officially mono-lingual. 3). The Liberal Party of Quebec lost an election to the Parti Quebecois in 1976. 4). The election of the PQ spelled the end of Confederation for many Canadians. 5). In 1977, PQ passed an even stronger language law called Bill 101. 6). The Canadian Supreme Court ruled that certain provisions of Bill 101 were unconstitutional; however, in 1988 Robert Bourassa was re-elected and he re-introduced the stronger provisions of Bill 101 by invoking the “notwithstanding clause”.</p>	<p>Official Languages Act: (also known as “Bill 22”) made French the only and official language of Quebec; introduced measures to strengthen the use of French in the workplace; limited the rights of parents to choose which language their children would be instructed in at school. Bill 101: placed even stronger limitations on the use of English in Quebec than Bill 22 had. French was the only language used by the government, courts, and businesses; moreover, commercial signs were to be in French only. “Notwithstanding Clause”: (Section 33 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms) gives provincial governments and the federal government the power to “opt out” of a given law for a period of five years. After five years the “opting out” must be renewed or else it lapses.</p>

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<p><i>During the 1976 election campaign, Levesque promised voters he'd hold a referendum on independence.</i></p>	<p>Page 320-321: The Constitutional Crisis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). In 1980, a referendum was held in which 60% of Quebecers voted "non" on the issue of whether or not to leave Canada. 2). Trudeau had promised French Canada that he would renew Canada's Constitution for the better if Quebec did not support independence. 3). The BNA Act was authored in the 1860s. Canada had changed dramatically over the course of a century. In 1982, Canada was a multi-cultural nation and no longer a British colony. 4). Attempts had been made in the 1960s to "patriate" or bring back the BNA Act to Canada (it was physically located in Britain). 5). Trudeau met with all the premiers of Canada in 1981 to begin the work of renewing Canada's Constitution. 6). Quebec (Levesque) worked to prevent any consensus from being reached on the much needed changes to the Constitution. 7). Trudeau knew Levesque would never compromise so he organized a secret meeting excluding Quebec. All of the provinces (except Quebec) agreed on a new constitutional formula. 8). Canada now had a new Constitution which Quebec has never signed. 9). On April 17th, 1982, Queen Elizabeth II signed the Constitution (called the Canada Act) into law. 	<p>Referendum: a process by which the people are given the direct ability to either accept or reject a law passed by the legislature.</p> <p>Patriate: to bring back.</p>
<p><i>Trudeau's actions were viewed by French separatists as a "stab in the back" and a betrayal. The federal Progressive Conservative Party under Brian Mulroney attempted to repair the damage caused by Trudeau's actions to the French-English relationship.</i></p>	<p>Page 330: The Meech Lake Accord</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Prime Minister Mulroney invited the premiers of Canada's provinces to a "first-ministers conference" to discuss how Quebec might be brought back into Confederation. 2). The premiers managed to work out a deal that Quebec accepted called the Meech Lake Accord. 3). For the Meech Lake Accord to pass into law each and every premier had get it passed in their respective legislatures. 4). For various reasons the Accord died because it was not accepted/passed by all of the legislatures, i.e. Manitoba and Newfoundland. 5). The main reason the Accord failed was because it did not adequately address <i>all</i> of the needs of <i>all</i> Canadians; moreover, people were critical of the accord because only white males were involved in the decision-making process. 6). Canadians believed that for a new Constitution to be valid that people of various backgrounds, i.e. French, English, First Nation, Chinese, Japanese, women, etc. should be consulted. 	<p>Brian Mulroney: leader of the Federal Progressive Conservative Party. His party was given an overwhelming mandate by the Canadian voting public.</p> <p>Meech Lake Accord: an agreement that acknowledged Quebec as a "distinct society"; three of the nine federal supreme court justices were always to come from Quebec; any future amendments to the Constitution about the structure or powers of government required the agreement of all ten provinces; provinces could "opt out" of new federal programs and establish their own matching programs; Quebec had complete control over immigration to its territory.</p>

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<p><i>The Meech Lake Accord failed because it had the limited objective of meeting Quebec's specific needs while ignoring the needs of basically everybody else.</i></p> <p><i>Quebec announced that if its needs were not met soon it would hold a referendum on independence. Mulroney sprang into action and tried to rescue Canada by coming up with a new agreement that gave everyone what they wanted.</i></p>	<p>Page 331: The Charlottetown Proposal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The Charlottetown Accord was reached by the ten provinces, two territories, and leaders from four major First Nations groups. 2). Every voting age Canadian was given the opportunity to vote on whether to accept or reject the accord during a referendum in 1992. 3). On October 26, 1992, the Charlottetown Accord was defeated. 	<p>Charlottetown Accord: proposed sweeping changes to Canada's Constitution, i.e. Aboriginal self-government, Senate reform, and a social/economic union that defined Canada's commitment to programs like universal health-care, workers' rights, and environmental protection; Quebec was also offered "distinct society" status.</p>
<p><i>Following the defeat of the Charlottetown Accord a new federal political party called the Bloc Quebecois formed. The purpose of this party was to actively work towards Quebec independence.</i></p>	<p>The 1995 Referendum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The Parti Quebecois was re-elected to power in 1994 under the leadership of Jacques Parizeau. 2). Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard of the federal Bloc Quebecois Party actively worked for Quebec independence. 3). In 1995, Quebec held another referendum on whether or not they should separate. 4). The results of the vote were extremely close, in that, only 51% of those who voted wanted to stay in Canada. 5). Following the referendum there was a bit of controversy over the wording of the referendum question, i.e. It was believed that some French Canadiens thought they were voting for sovereignty-association and <i>not</i> outright separation. 6). Following the failed attempt at gaining independence, Quebec turned its attention away from separatism towards growing the economy. 	<p>Jacques Parizeau: an economist and leader of the PQ at the time of the 1995 Referendum.</p> <p>Lucien Bouchard: one of the creators of the Bloc Quebecois which is a federal level separatist party.</p>
<p><i>The "close-call" of the 1995 referendum convinced Prime Minister Jean Chretien (of the Liberal Party) that something had to be done to make it harder for the separatists to achieve their aims.</i></p>	<p>The Clarity Act</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Chretien passed the Clarity Act in 2000. 2). This act made it so that Quebec could not achieve independence through a simple majority. 3). The drive for French independence is not dead. In fact, Prime Minister Harper made the controversial decision to acknowledge Quebec as a "distinct society" in 2006. 4). Harper's decision to acknowledge Quebec's unique place among Canada's provinces is viewed by some as legitimating Quebec's desire to have a country of its own. Harper was simply trying to gain votes from French Canadiens but he may have inadvertently created conditions for Canada's eventual dissolution. 	<p>Clarity Act: stipulated that any future referendum question would first have to receive the approval of the federal government; moreover, a super-majority (2/3 or 66%) would have to vote "yes" for any referendum to be considered binding and legal.</p> <p>Stephen Harper: prime minister of Canada from 2006 until . He is leader of the New Conservative Party of Canada.</p>