5

Canadian domestic policy, 1945–82

Introduction

This chapter considers the domestic policies of the prime ministers who governed Canada between 1945 and 1980. It explains how Canada emerged economically and politically from the Second World War. The chapter evaluates the premiership of Mackenzie King and goes on to consider why his successor St. Laurent was defeated only a few years later, thus ending Liberal dominance. It considers how, despite a landslide victory in 1958, the Progressive Conservatives were removed from power five years later. The chapter also investigates why the Liberals were able to dominate the period from 1963, assessing the success of their economic and social policies. The chapter concludes by explaining why the Conservative ministry of 1979 was so short-lived, and discusses the subsequent Liberal return to power.

TIMELINE

1946 **Jun:** Citizenship Act

1948 **Nov:** Mackenzie King retires and is replaced by Louis St. Laurent

1949 **Mar:** Newfoundland joins Canada

Apr: Canada joins NATO

Supreme Court of Canada is made the final court of appeal

Construction of Trans-Canada Highway starts

1951 Indian Act

1954 St Lawrence Seaway started

1956 The pipeline debate

1957 **Jun:** Progressive Conservatives win election, ending 22 years of Liberal rule

1958 **Mar:** Progressive Conservatives win landslide election victory

Agricultural Stabilization Act introduced

1959 **Feb:** Avro Arrow contract cancelled

Aug: Canadian Bill of Human Rights passed

1962 **Jun:** Diefenbaker wins election but as minority government

1963 **Jan:** NATO commander insists Canada honour its commitment to NATO

Apr: Liberals win election but fail to gain overall majority

1965 **Feb:** Canadian flag adopted

Nov: Second Liberal electoral victory without overall majority

1967 Canadian centenary

1968 **Apr:** Pearson retires as Prime Minister; replaced by Pierre Trudeau

1969 **Sep:** Official Languages Act passed

1970 **Oct:** October Crisis

1971 Multiculturalism Act passed

1979 **May:** Trudeau defeated; Clark takes office with minority Conservative government

1980 **Feb:** Trudeau returns to power

1982 **Apr:** Constitution Act

KEY QUESTIONS

- How did Canada emerge from the Second World War?
- How successful was Mackenzie King as Prime Minister?
- Why did the Liberals fall from power in 1957?
- Why was the period of Progressive Conservative rule in Canada so short-lived?
- How successful was the Pearson administration?
- Why was Trudeau able to remain in power for so long?

Overview

- Canada emerged from the Second World War stronger economically and militarily than it had been in the period before the war.
- The Liberal government of Mackenzie King, which had won the 1935 election, also won the 1940 and 1945 elections. He was able to hand over power to Louis St. Laurent when he retired in 1948.
- St Laurent's premiership witnessed a continued period of economic growth. This allowed the financing of social welfare legislation and a number of large-scale transport projects.

- John Diefenbaker's election victory in 1957 ended a Liberal dominance that dated back to 1935. The Prime Minister secured the largest government majority in the 1958 election, but a series of errors in handling policy, particularly over defence, and Diefenbaker's abrasive personality brought down the government in 1963.
- The Liberal leader Lester Pearson remained in power until 1968, despite never having a majority government.
- Pearson's administration passed significant welfare reforms, oversaw economic growth and helped to bring greater unity to the country, symbolised by the new flag.
- Although Trudeau fell from power in 1979, the Conservative government under Joe Clark lasted only nine months and Trudeau was re-elected in 1980.

Figure 5.1: Canada showing its provinces and main cities.

5.1 How did Canada emerge from the Second World War?

Canada before the Second World War

Canada was hit badly by the Depression and economic downturn of the 1930s. Government policies did not solve the problem of high unemployment, which was only reduced by an upturn in the trade cycle in the late 1930s and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Despite the economic problems the Liberal government of **Mackenzie King** continued to dominate politics and won the 1940 election.

William Lyon Mackenzie King (1874–1950):

Mackenzie King is the longest serving Canadian Prime Minister. He trained in law and social work, a background that was reflected in his motto, 'Help those who cannot help themselves'. He led Canada throughout most of the 1920s to the 1940s, with a period of four years out of office following his defeat in the 1930 election. This domination of Canadian politics is surprising, as he lacked charisma and public-speaking skills and did not shine in radio or newsreel broadcasts. Many contemporaries saw him as cold and tactless, but he understood the Canadian temperament, and as a moderniser and compromiser he was able to guide Canada through difficult periods.

The economic situation

The Second World War made Canada the second richest nation behind the United States. GNP had more than doubled from $5.6 billion in 1939 to $11.8 billion in 1945. However, the war had also left Britain devastated and this meant that Canadian links with the USA, which had become closer during the war, developed even further causing some to express concern that the country was becoming too reliant on their neighbour, with the historian Donald Creighton claiming that King acted 'like a puppet on a string' and with his minister of economic reconstruction, C. D. Howe actively courting US investment.

The period immediately after the war saw continued economic growth and prosperity. This prosperity was seen most clearly in Alberta where the discovery of oil in the Leduc Valley brought unprecedented wealth to the province, so that by 1959 it was able to spend more per capita on health care and education than any other province. However, the period also witnessed union unrest as the number of strikes increased to its highest since 1919 and union membership grew.

The economy was given a further boost by the growing population, which rose by 50% in the years from 1946 to 1961. The development of suburbia and the commuter lifestyle, with its emphasis on consumption, also encouraged economic growth. The public had enjoyed a period of prosperity during the war, with personal expenditure rising from $10.6 billion in 1938 to $14.1 billion in 1944.

This was given a further stimulus by the Keynesian approach to economics adopted by the government. The British economist John Maynard Keynes believed that the government should play a role in preventing the continuous economic cycle of 'boom and bust'. He believed that the government should spend money during bad times instead of cutting back on projects, even if it meant borrowing more money.

This would prevent the economy going into depression and help to maintain levels of employment. He also suggested that government spending could be reduced during good times. Critics challenged his view and argued that this approach served only to make the bad times even worse.

However, determined to prevent a return to Depression the government continued, as Keynes argued, to invest and spend money, creating further demand. The government supported companies who converted their facilities to peacetime production, but with a growing economy these companies were soon paying full taxes on their new plants. Moreover, funds were available for further capital expansion.

The military situation

Canada had certainly played its part in the Second World War, with troops heavily involved in the invasion of Italy and in Northern Europe. At the end of the war it had the third largest navy and fourth largest air force. It was therefore a major player on the international scene.

During the war it had become more closely tied militarily to the USA, signing the Ogdensburg Agreement in 1940, which established a joint board to integrate North American defences and linked the US and Canadian military for the first time, and the Hyde Park Declaration in 1941, which coordinated the work of the two countries in terms of production.

However, these closer military ties were something of a contradiction for Mackenzie King who was an isolationist, but as events developed he would discover that such a position, with the development of the Cold War, was no longer possible.

The political situation

The Liberals had dominated the political scene since Mackenzie King had been leader of the party, with only four years between 1930 and 1935 in opposition. In 1940 Mackenzie King had called a snap election and won a huge majority on the promise that his party would not introduce conscription. However, in 1942 he called a plebiscite on the possibility of conscription, asking the Canadian people whether they would release the government from its earlier promise. Despite winning a large majority, it was not until 1944 that it was introduced, with most considering that King had done his best to keep his promise.

He had been able to keep the country united through the war and, in 1945 won another majority. The Liberals had also been able to introduce Family Allowances in 1944, by which the federal treasury paid up to $8 per month for each dependent child. They also promised a Keynesian approach to economics with public works, financial assistance for training and employment as well as economic planning. In the social field they promised to implement hospital insurance, housing programmes and support for farmers.

With the Conservatives re-branded as the Progressive Conservatives under a new leader, **John Bracken**, also offering similar policies there was little for the electorate to choose between and therefore it is perhaps hardly surprising that they went for the experience of the Liberals.

John Bracken (1883–1969):

Bracken began his career as a university professor in animal husbandry, but after the victory of the United Farmers in the Manitoba provincial election of 1922 he became leader of the party and served as Manitoba's leader for over twenty years. He formed an alliance with the Manitoba Liberals in 1931 and the parties eventually merged. In 1942 he was urged to take over the leadership of the national Conservative party, but he agreed only on the condition that they changed their name to the Progressive Conservative Party. Although leader, he did not take a seat in the Commons until 1945, but in 1948 he was pushed to resign and lost his seat in the 1949 election.

ACTIVITY

Make a copy of the following chart and use the information in this section to help you complete the strengths and weaknesses of Canada after the war:

Factor	Strengths	Weaknesses
Economy		
Military		
Political		

5.2 How successful was Mackenzie King as Prime Minister?

Mackenzie King remained as Prime Minister until 1948 when he retired. During his last years as premier he oversaw a period of substantial economic growth, with GNP rising 25% in the period from 1945 to 1948. Although unemployment rose after the war, by 1948 levels had returned to those of the war years and with wages rising there was a general feel-good factor. However, underneath this apparent picture of success were some problems.

The most notable issue was the unfavourable balance of trade with America. As a result, there was such a drain on American dollars that imports from the US had to be cut and credit made available. However, by the summer of 1948 the problem had been resolved.

This period also saw the introduction of the 1946 Citizenship Act, which became law on the 1 January 1947. The act made Canadians citizens of their own country, rather than British, further eroding links with the former mother country. However, he also took a firm line about political and economic refugees after the war, and fearing the threat that they might cause to social stability introduced strict immigration laws, which discouraged many non-white and Christian groups from applying to enter the country. Despite this approach, it should be remembered that it reflected the mood of many Canadians who were fearful of a flood of refugees.

Many of King's achievements were in the pre-war and wartime period, although he did oversee the start of the post-war boom. He had brought in old age pensions in 1936, unemployment insurance in 1940 and family allowance in 1944. Moreover, he had kept Canada united during the war. However, many of his achievements were in the field of administration and therefore he is often portrayed as dull and grey, despite the fact that he has been championed as Canada's best Prime Minister by university professors. It is true that he was a great manager and an astute politician, but perhaps his greatest achievement was his longevity.

KEY CONCEPTS ACTIVITY

Significance: Using the evidence from this section, find evidence to support or challenge the following statements made about King. In light of the evidence, which do you think best describes King. Explain your answer.

- 'the greatest ever Canadian leader'
- 'a very capable administrator'
- 'divided Canadians the least'

5.3 Why did the Liberals fall from power in 1957?

The Liberal Party was the dominant force in Canadian politics for most of the early 20th century, broken only by the short-lived Conservative government of Richard Bennett from 1931 to 1935. In an attempt to change their image and win support, the Conservatives joined forces with the Progressive Party in 1942, but this had little impact on their popularity with the Canadian people. By 1957, the Liberals had enjoyed an uninterrupted 22 years in power and the Conservatives had lost five elections in a row.

Louis St Laurent was fortunate in that he ruled Canada during some of the most prosperous times. The surplus revenues allowed him to expand Canada's social welfare provision with the expansion of family allowances, pensions, the funding of education and hospital insurance.

The measures included:

- 1951: the provision of
  - universal old-age pensions for all Canadians over 70
  - assistance for those aged over 65 and in need
  - allowances for the blind

- 1954: the provision of allowances for the disabled
- 1956: unemployed assistance for those on welfare or who did not qualify for unemployment insurance benefits.

The administration also brought in several large-scale projects:

- 1949: Trans-Canada Highway, which was completed in 1962.
- 1951: TransCanada PipeLines (natural gas) which was completed in 1959.
- 1954: St Lawrence Seaway, which was finished in 1959. This opened up the interior to ocean-going ships, but did cause problems with the Mohawks as it cut through their territory and with the loss of their land cut them off from the river that had featured in their history.

The administration also did much to extend Canada's independence at home. The practice of appealing Canadian cases to the Judicial Committee of Great Britain was ended in 1949. The Supreme Court of Canada became the final court of appeal and replaced the British Privy Council. In the same year St Laurent also negotiated the British North America Act (Number 2), which gave the Canadian parliament the power to change parts of the constitution.

Louis St Laurent (1882–1973):

St Laurent was Prime Minister from November 1948 to June 1957. He had begun work as a lawyer and became one of Quebec's leading lawyers and was offered a place in government in 1926, but it was not until 1941 that he finally entered politics. He was appointed Minister of Justice and was persuaded to carry on in politics after the war, becoming Minister of External Affairs. It was Mackenzie King who persuaded his senior ministers to support St Laurent's selection as his successor. He was popularly known as 'Uncle Louis', due to his carefully managed image, but he ran the country with a business-like efficiency and his legendary temper. Having been Minister of External Affairs, it is perhaps not surprising that many of his achievements were in the field of foreign affairs, taking Canada from the isolationism favoured by King to an active middle power. Under his leadership Canada was a founding member of NATO, sent troops to Korea and was at the forefront, with his Secretary of External Affairs, Lester Pearson, of solving the 1956 Suez crisis.

Figure 5.2: Louis St Laurent with King, from whom he took over as Prime Minister in November 1948.

In 1949 Newfoundland became Canada's newest province, although it was a close-run thing. During the Second World War it had become clear that the island had considerable strategic importance due to it jutting out into the North Atlantic, but with the development of intercontinental bombers this significance increased.

The US, Canada and Britain had all established a military presence and the island was put under increasing pressure about its future. A referendum was held, but the result was inconclusive, so a second was held and due largely to the work of **Joey Smallwood**, a former pig-farmer turned politician, it voted 52% to 48% to join Canada.

Joey Smallwood (1900–1991):

Smallwood started work at a newspaper, edited *The Book of Newfoundland* and hosted a radio programme. However, in 1943 he established a pig farm. He had been involved in politics in the late 1920s and 1930s, criticising British rule of Newfoundland. He was elected a member of the Convention to make recommendations about Newfoundland's future. He argued that they should join Canada as it would increase prosperity. After victory in the referendum he was a member of the delegation that negotiated terms to join the Union with Canada. Following acceptance of the Union, Smallwood, as leader of the Liberal party became premier of the province until 1972.

The government also passed the Indian Act of 1951. For the first time, they involved indigenous people in the discussions and although the changes were not dramatic, it did give them more control over their finances. However, they were still not allowed to vote and their movements outside their reserves were still limited. Moreover, the aim of the act was to bring about the assimilation and disappearance of native cultures. Although it is difficult to see the act in positive terms, the actual involvement of native groups in discussions was a breakthrough.

Despite the achievements of the St Laurent administration, the Liberal government's reputation was declining. It was increasingly regarded as autocratic, and lost a great deal of support in 1956 after failing to back Britain during the Suez Crisis. More significantly, the Pipeline Debate the same year further damaged the Liberals' prestige.

This controversial incident began when the minister of trade and commerce, C. D. Howe, organised a deal with US investors to build a gas pipeline from western Canada to Montreal. A lengthy debate over the issue began in parliament. The Progressive Conservatives, who opposed the pipeline, used delaying tactics in the hope that the Liberals would miss the deadline for signing the agreement with the US.

Frustrated by the slow progress, the Liberals overruled traditional parliamentary procedure to push through the necessary legislation to secure the pipeline. The government actions were widely perceived as an overreaction by the Canadian people, many of whom had reservations about the pipeline and were concerned about the amount of influence the USA already had in their country.

The Conservatives were outraged, and in the wake of the Pipeline Debate they turned nationalist sentiment to their own advantage. Under the leadership of the populist **John Diefenbaker**, the Progressive Conservative Party was returned as a minority government with the largest single party with 112 seats compared to the Liberals 105 in the 1957 elections.

John Diefenbaker (1895–1979):

Diefenbaker grew up in Saskatchewan and interrupted his training as a lawyer to fight in the First World War. He later sought election to parliament a number of times before winning a seat in 1940. He also made several attempts to secure the leadership of the Conservative Party, and was finally successful in 1956. Diefenbaker became the only Progressive Conservative Prime Minister to win three elections, although not all with an overall majority. He built a reputation on his skill for public speaking, and his style prompted the *Toronto Star* to describe him as 'humbug and flapdoodle served up with an evangelistic flourish'.

KEY CONCEPTS ACTIVITY

Significance: For each of the reforms introduced by the St Laurent government, assess their importance in changing Canada and Canadian society.

5.4 Why was the period of Progressive Conservative rule in Canada so short-lived?

The Progressive Conservatives were a minority government, and the new Liberal leader Lester Pearson called on John Diefenbaker to hand power back to the more experienced Liberals, but instead Diefenbaker took up Pearson's challenge and called a snap election.

Diefenbaker's personality

Diefenbaker built his election campaign around smart slogans, and he inspired many Canadians with his talk of 'A new Canada! A Canada of the north!' Historian Donald Creighton states that Diefenbaker seemed to 'combine the inspiring vision of the prophet, the burning sincerity of the evangelist, and the annihilating attack of a prosecuting counsel determined on the conviction of a monstrous criminal'. However, the new Prime Minister soon proved 'less an alternative to the Liberals than an epilogue', according to historian Robert Bothwell.

DISCUSSION POINT

What do you think Bothwell meant when he referred to Diefenbaker as an 'epilogue' to the Liberals?

The election of 1958 was a personal triumph for Diefenbaker. The Progressive Conservatives won 208 seats, compared to the Liberals 48. He was helped by the electoral change in Quebec, which instead of supporting the Liberals as it had done in the past backed the Progressives. Meanwhile, a collapse in support for the Social Credit Party which lost all of its 19 seats aided Diefenbaker as many of its traditional supporters turned to the Progressives.

KEY CONCEPTS ACTIVITY

Causation: Make a list of the reasons why Diefenbaker was able to win such a large majority in 1958. For each of the reasons you have identified assess its significance in the election victory.

Known as 'the Chief', Diefenbaker tried to run both his party and his government with iron discipline, but according to critics he was 'all heart and no brains'. After his landslide victory in 1958 – the greatest in Canadian history – it became clear that he and his government lacked the experience necessary to deal with the issues Canada faced. Their policies appeared confused and impractical. In the face of economic decline and other domestic troubles, Diefenbaker's early rhetoric seemed empty, and the public lost faith in his ability to push through reforms of any substance.

Economic problems

Diefenbaker was unfortunate to come to power just as the post-war boom ended and Canada entered an economic downturn that lasted until 1961. Unemployment remained high, at 6–7% throughout the period 1958–61. Diefenbaker attempted to alleviate some of the problems by increasing unemployment benefits from 16 to 52 weeks, and by expanding seasonal unemployment benefits for people who worked in industries that only operated at certain times of year. However, these efforts did not tackle the cause of the problem, and many Canadians continued to suffer in the poor economic climate.

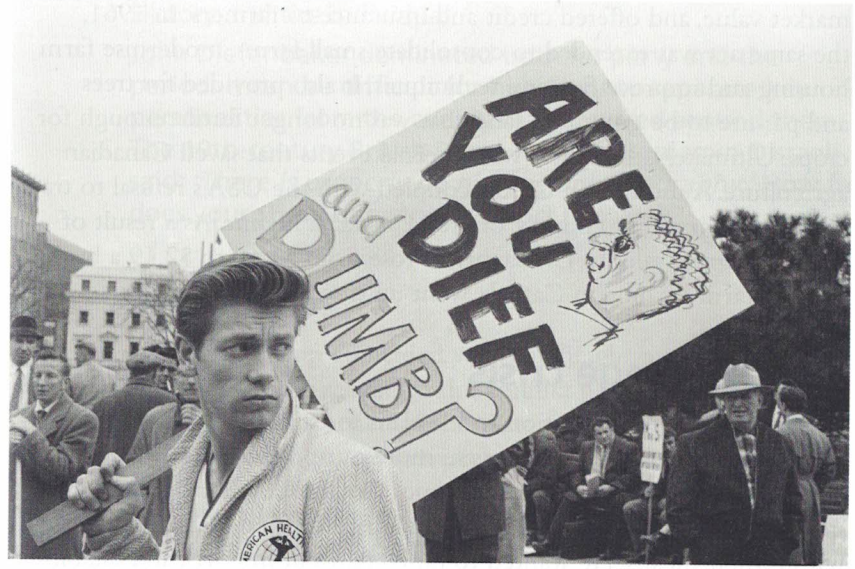

Figure 5.3: Protestors in April 1961 complain about rising unemployment.

Diefenbaker also made a significant blunder as a result of his desire to make Canada less economically dependent upon the USA. He publicly announced that Canada would move 15% of its trade from the USA to Britain; this amounted to $625 million a year, almost double the previous British import figure. More importantly, Diefenbaker's pledge was impossible to fulfil, as it was contrary to the conditions of the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which prevented favourable terms being given to a particular country.

The government made some attempts to stimulate the economy. It introduced tax cuts and new spending schemes – notably a programme to build road and rail links in northern Canada. It also expanded funding for education through grants to universities and technical and vocational schools.

Agricultural stabilization

Diefenbaker recognised the need to protect Canada's valuable agricultural industry during the economic downturn, and he introduced the Agricultural Stabilization Act in 1958.

This established a minimum price for certain goods regardless of their market value, and offered credit and insurance to farmers. In 1961, the same act was extended to consolidate small farms, modernise farm housing and improve farming techniques. It also provided for trees and pasture to be grown on land that was no longer fertile enough for crops. Ultimately, though, it was external events that saved Canadian agriculture. A drought in China, coupled with the USA's refusal to trade with the communist country, offered Canada a lifeline. As a result of Canadian grain sales to China, prices rose from $1.60 to $2.19 a bushel and net farm income in Canada went up threefold in three years.

The exchange crisis

Diefenbaker faced opposition to his plans for stimulating the economy from several quarters, but few were more outspoken than the Liberal governor of the Bank of Canada, James Coyne. Coyne made several speeches in which he encouraged Canadians to spend less and live within their means. He wanted to raise taxes, cut imports, and establish a fixed exchange rate between the Canadian and US dollars. These ideas all went against Diefenbaker's desire to increase spending to reverse the economic downturn, and Coyne's remarks caused a drop in confidence among businesses and consumers. This decline triggered an outflow of funds that eventually caused an exchange crisis.

Diefenbaker's government attempted to solve the exchange problem in the budget of June 1961. In the budget, the Conservatives proposed that the Canadian dollar be devalued (allowed to drop in value against the US dollar), and the rate was fixed at 92.5 US cents per Canadian dollar in May 1962. However, there was a general feeling that this rate would not be maintained and that the Canadian dollar was still over-valued. Investors withdrew their money and either swapped their dollars for

gold – which drained the country's gold reserves – or invested in US dollars, which they believed were more stable.

By June 1962, the exchange crisis was so severe that the government had to embark on a policy of austerity and ask for foreign help to make the Canadian dollar more secure. Diefenbaker's political opponents accused the government of incompetence, and fake 'Diefendollars' with a picture of the Prime Minister in place of the queen were circulated, further undermining the government's credibility.

Theory of Knowledge

History and the individual

John Diefenbaker dominated both his party and the period. It can be difficult for historians to separate key personalities from the events that occurred around them. The 19th-century British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli said: *'There is properly no history, only biography.'* How far does your study of history support this view?

The Arrow crisis

Diefenbaker's premiership coincided with the height of the Cold War, and his handling of issues related to the conflict played a critical role in his eventual downfall. In particular, the 'Arrow crisis' highlighted the government's failure to deal appropriately with difficult decisions.

The Arrow was a state-of-the-art fighter plane designed to intercept Soviet aircraft over the Arctic. Although the Arrow was considered essential for Canadian security in the Cold War climate, it was nonetheless a costly project. As expenses mounted, the government formally announced that it was stopping further development of the Arrow in February 1959.

Although privately the Liberals were also preparing to abandon the scheme if they came to power, it did not prevent them criticising the Conservative government's decision. The Liberals argued that the abandonment of the Arrow project marked the end of Canadian sovereignty, as the country's air defence would now have to rely on US equipment. The cancellation of the Arrow also resulted in the loss of 14 000 jobs for skilled workers, many of whom left Canada to seek work abroad.

It was Diefenbaker's management of the situation, however, that drew the most criticism. Firstly, he incorrectly pronounced that the plane was outdated anyway due to the more developed technology of long-range missiles that was now available. He also declared that Canada was a nuclear-free zone, but promptly allowed the US to place two squadrons of Bomarc anti-aircraft missiles – which were to be armed with nuclear warheads – on Canadian soil.

The defence minister resigned in disgust at Diefenbaker's ignorance and contradictory policies, and the government was left open to further accusations of incompetence. Historian Desmond Morton summed up the situation: 'The Arrow cancellation was the right choice made the wrong way… Diefenbaker had taken one hard look at the costs of technological independence and fled.'

Failed policies and the recovery of the opposition

Even some of Diefenbaker's apparently successful policies seem hollow on closer scrutiny. The clearest example of this was the 1960 Bill of Rights, which guaranteed equality in terms of race, religion and beliefs. Such a bill was widely popular, especially among minority groups, but in reality the Bill of Rights was little more than an attempt to win popularity. Without being enshrined in the Canadian constitution it was difficult to enforce its terms. As Canada was a federal state, the bill also lacked authority in provincial courts. Ultimately, very few people would benefit practically from it.

As Diefenbaker's lofty ideals came crashing down, the opposition parties gained ground. The political allegiances of different sections of society began to change. The Conservatives' economic errors lost them the backing of the business community, and they came to rely instead on support from rural areas and the agricultural communities for whom their policies had been more successful. At the same time, Diefenbaker's 'One Canada' policy – seeking equality for and unity among all Canadians, whether French- or English-speaking – offered no concessions to the province of Quebec. There, the French Canadian majority began to support the Liberals.

The Social Credit Party also enjoyed a revival at this time. This conservative-populist group supported a theory of monetary reform called social credit, in which economic power was returned to citizens

through an even distribution of wealth. This would be provided in the form of cash vouchers to boost spending, and thus stimulate the economy. The Social Credit Party increased its presence in parliament from 19 seats in 1957 to 30 seats in the 1962 election.

By the time of the 1962 election, Conservative support had dropped dramatically. Although they won the largest number of seats, they had to continue ruling without an overall majority, as Table 5.1 shows:

Party	Seats
Progressive Conservative Party	116
Liberal Party	100
Social Credit Party	38
New Democratic Party	19

Table 5.1: The 1962 election results.
Source: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register

Nuclear policy

After the Arrow crisis, it was clear to many that Diefenbaker had no coherent policy on nuclear weapons. The fact that he had allowed US surface-to-air missiles on to Canadian soil was a matter of grave concern, not only to those who objected to nuclear weapons, but also to those who felt that US influence in Canada was already too strong. Such concerns had arisen earlier in Diefenbaker's premiership, when he signed the North American Air Defense Agreement (NORAD) with the USA. This established an integrated air-defence system under the joint control of both nations. However, at that time Diefenbaker refused to allow nuclear weapons into Canada; he also denied tactical nuclear weapons to Canadian troops serving under NATO in Europe.

In January 1963, the NATO commander told Diefenbaker that Canada was failing to honour its agreement with NATO by refusing to accept nuclear weapons. Sensing an opportunity, the opposition changed tack, and the Liberal leader Lester Pearson announced that the Conservative government should honour its pledge to NATO.

As support ebbed away, the Conservatives tried to win the backing of the Social Credit Party. However, before committing their support, members of Social Credit wanted the Conservatives to give a clear and decisive explanation of their defence policy. Dissatisfied with the answer it received, the Social Credit Party joined forces with the Liberals and the New Democratic Party to bring a vote of no-confidence against the government. At a critical moment in the Cold War, Diefenbaker's inability to reassure his political opponents and the Canadian public about defence of their country ensured his downfall. In the 1963 election, the Liberals took power once more.

DISCUSSION POINT

How far does your study of Diefenbaker's administration support the view that it is impossible to fully understand the history of a country without considering foreign policy?

ACTIVITY

Copy and complete the following chart to show evidence of Diefenbaker's successes and failures. In the last column, make a judgement about how successful Diefenbaker was in that area by awarding a mark out of six – the greater the success, the higher the mark.

Issue	Evidence of success	Evidence of failure	Judgement 1–6
Electoral performance			
Economic performance			
Social policy			
The Arrow crisis			
Nuclear policy			

Explain the marks you have awarded. When you have completed the chart, write a paragraph that reaches an overall judgement about Diefenbaker's administration.

KEY CONCEPTS QUESTION

Change: Diefenbaker won the largest majority in Canadian history in 1958. However, by 1963 the Progressive Conservatives were out of office. What had changed since 1958 to impact on their electoral performance? What do you think was the most important reason? Explain your answer.

5.5 How successful was the Pearson administration?

Liberal electoral successes

Despite the failings of Diefenbaker's government and the Liberals' promise of '60 Days of Decision' – during which they would make plans to revive the Canadian economy and the country's credibility in foreign affairs – the party was unable to win an overall majority in either the 1963 or the 1965 elections (see Table 5.2). It gained support from the business community, the professional classes, the army and the civil service. However, in 1963 Diefenbaker led a surprisingly energetic campaign against his challengers, and to many people he still seemed preferable to the comparably unexciting Lester Pearson.

KEY CONCEPTS QUESTION

Causation: Why do you think that Pearson was unable to win an overall majority in either the 1963 or the 1965 elections?

Election results	1963	1965
Party	Seats	Seats
Liberal Party	128	131
Progressive Conservatives	95	97
Social Credit Party	24	21
New Democratic Party	17	5

Table 5.2: Election results from 1963 and 1965.
Source: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register

Economic policy

Pearson's administration got off to a bad start with the budget. The finance minister, Walter Gordon, was an ardent economic nationalist, and he immediately introduced plans to block the foreign takeover of Canadian industry. His programme was unpopular with the business community – which relied on foreign interests – and Gordon was soon forced to revise his plans.

Despite this, Pearson presided over the start of a 20-year period of almost unbroken prosperity in Canada, and the economic upturn naturally reflected well on the Prime Minister. By 1966, unemployment was relatively low, at 3.4%, and the purchasing power of incomes began to rise significantly. However, this prosperity was regional and several areas continued to suffer economic problems, including Newfoundland, central Ontario and rural Quebec.

Development areas

In order to tackle the issues in poorer regions, Pearson introduced a fund for rural economic development, which provided grants for schools, adult education and land purchase. Elderly farmers who left the land were also offered guaranteed minimum incomes. Development areas were established in places where unemployment was high. The Liberals also allocated more money to the Atlantic Development Board (which had been established by the Conservatives) and set up the

Area Development Agency, which offered grants to companies that settled in the development areas. Gradually, the number of regions covered by the scheme was extended so that even more Canadians benefited.

The Auto Pact 1965

Perhaps the most important scheme Pearson introduced was the 1965 Auto Pact. This agreement removed the duties (import taxes) on trucks, cars and vehicle parts moving between Canada and the USA, creating a 'one-industry' free-trade area. The pact helped to guarantee levels of production and investment in the Canadian automobile industry, which was also nationalised. With the rise in exports came a resulting rise in the numbers employed in the car industry. As a result, by 1970 Canadian automobile production was showing a small profit.

The rise of the unions

The economic picture was not all success under Pearson. Throughout the 1960s, strikes increased as union membership grew and the right to strike was extended to civil servants. Typically, strikes were rare as they could take place only after a period of negotiation between unions and employers, often with compulsory arbitration by an independent body. However, the rise in union membership gave the workers greater influence during these negotiations, which led to more frequent cases of stalemate. During Pearson's premiership, strikes occurred over wages, working conditions and benefits – an indication that the unions were trying to use the improved economic climate to regain living standards eroded previously.

Despite the rise in the number of strikes and a series of trade crises, Pearson's time in office is remembered as one of economic growth, rising exports and domestic investments. Visual evidence of the boom could be seen across the country in the form of the steel mills constructed in Quebec, the expansion of the Montreal and Toronto subways and the Nova Scotia heavy-water plant for atomic energy, among many examples.

Theory of Knowledge

History and economics

How far do you agree with the view that the study of economic history requires different skills to that of any other field of historical study?

Figure 5.4: Prime Minister Lester Pearson, with the premiers of Ontario and Quebec – John Roberts (left) and Jean Lesage (right).

QUESTION

What is the image of Pearson in the cartoon in Figure 5.5? Use your own knowledge to assess how accurate this view of Pearson is.

Social policy

Very little social legislation was introduced in Canada in the 1950s, but this changed in the following decade. In the five years of Pearson's premiership – and remarkably without the Liberals having a majority in parliament – widespread reforms were passed. In part, this was a direct result of the improved economic situation, which allowed investment in other areas. There was also pressure from the media to increase social provision, and Pearson knew it would secure his continued popularity with the people.

Throughout Pearson's time in office, the state took on more and more social responsibilities, and became increasingly interventionist and paternalistic. Some critics accused the government of pursuing socialist policies, but it continued to rely heavily on the private sector and there were far fewer objections in Canada to federal intervention than there were in the USA in the 1960s. The scope of Pearson's social policies was wide, and included a War on Poverty like that in the USA (see Section 3.3, Kennedy's failed plans), heavier investment in welfare programmes and a widening of the social safety net in the form of insurance schemes.

Tom Kent, Pearson's main policy advisor, regarded the changes to health care as 'the most important of all the social reforms introduced by the Pearson administration'. Moves towards a national health insurance scheme began in 1957, but the Liberals extended the programme from acute hospital stays and diagnostic treatments to include doctor services. There were four principles behind the act:

- universality of coverage
- a comprehensive definition of services to be provided by doctors
- the transfer of benefits between provinces
- public administration of the scheme.

The healthcare proposals caused some debate in Conservative provinces, but ultimately the scheme was approved and the costs were divided between the federal and provincial governments.

The Canadian Pension Plan was also a major step in improving the lives of many Canadians. This established a mandatory investment fund, which pooled the money deducted from wages to provide a minimum standard of living. Not only was the scheme contributory, it was also universal and portable, meaning it could be carried from one province to another if an individual moved out of his or her native province. The federal government also agreed to increase the share of personal income tax that the provinces received, which allowed provincial governments to further expand their social service provision.

Pearson was acutely aware that one of the greatest limits on economic advancement – for individuals and the nation as a whole – was the lack of educational facilities in some of the less affluent provinces. His government therefore placed a great deal of emphasis on providing funds to improve a range of education services in these areas, in the hope of benefiting the population in the longer term (see the section on economic policy above).

There were other attempts to introduce social modernisation to Canada. Capital punishment was temporarily suspended (it was formally abolished in 1976), and amendments were made to the criminal code dealing with both divorce and sexual morality. The position of women also improved, largely as a result of the establishment in 1966 of the Committee for the Equality of Women in Canada, which forced the government to launch a Royal Commission to investigate their status.

National unity

The greatest challenge Pearson's government faced was the problem of Quebec. This is covered in detail in Chapter 6, but the situation there highlighted a larger problem in Canada as a whole: the country's cultural and linguistic diversity meant that there was no strong sense of national unity.

The federal structure of government gave the provinces a great deal of power, and this led to concerns that certain regions would soon want greater independence – and perhaps even to break from Canada altogether. To bridge the divide between French-speaking and English-speaking parts of Canada, the Liberals launched campaigns promoting bilingualism and encouraging a greater understanding of the different cultures within the country.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the moves towards increased unity came with the retirement of the British Union flag and the introduction of the distinctive Canadian Maple Leaf flag in February 1965. The Canadian MP John Matheson remarked that 'the search for a flag was really a search for a country'. Even this decision faced opposition, however – notably from former Prime Minister Diefenbaker, who called the new flag the 'Pearson Pennant'. In the end, the issue was only decided after the government ruled an end to the debate and forced a vote.

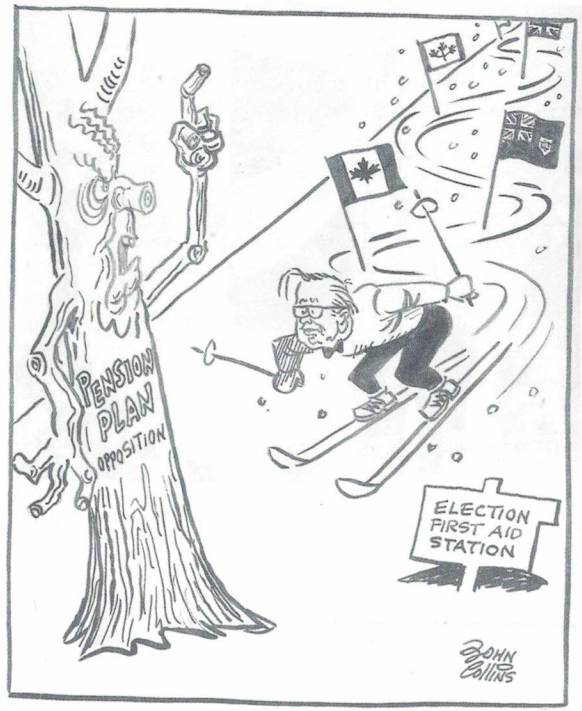

Figure 5.5: The problem of the national flag was not the only problem facing Pearson's government as this cartoon shows.

The new flag provided a symbol around which the nation could unite – an issue that became increasingly important as Canada approached its centenary in 1967. However, when Pearson retired in 1968 there were still many questions to answer about Canada's future and, most significantly, that of Quebec.

DISCUSSION POINT

In light of the assessments you have made of Diefenbaker and Pearson, who was the more successful Prime Minister?

Figure 5.6: The new Canadian flag is raised for the first time at Canada House in London on 15 February 1965.

Figure 5.7: Cartoon of Pearson sewing the new Canadian flag.

QUESTION

What is the message of the cartoon in Figure 5.7? Use your own knowledge and the source to explain the problems Pearson faced in uniting the country.

ACTIVITY

In section 5.4, you copied and completed a chart on the success and failures of the Diefenbaker administration.

Issue	Evidence of success	Evidence of failure	Judgement 1–6
Electoral success			
Economic policy			
Social reform			
National unity			
Quebec			
Other			

Now copy and complete the following chart to carry out the same exercise for Pearson's administration.

Using the information in the chart, write a paragraph that reaches an overall judgement about the success of the Pearson government.

5.6 Why was Trudeau able to remain in power for so long?

Trudeau's image

Pierre Trudeau succeeded Lester Pearson as Liberal Prime Minister of Canada in 1968. His personality soon won him many admirers. His young and suave image appeared to capture the spirit of a new era, and

he was greeted with a wave of hysteria as 'Trudeaumania' swept across Canada. The historian Desmond Morton reflected that 'for a few warm spring months in 1968 Pierre Elliott Trudeau synthesised the dreams, achievements and illusions of the liberation era'.

Pierre Trudeau (1919–2000):

Born of French Canadian parents, Trudeau dominated Canadian politics from 1968 to 1984. An intellectual who had been a professor of law before entering politics in the 1960s, he became secretary to Pearson and then minister of justice. Despite acquiring a playboy image, his personal motto of 'reason before passion' reflected his workaholic temperament. Trudeau was adored by supporters for his intelligence and efforts towards the preservation of Canadian unity, but criticised by opponents for his mismanagement of the economy. He remains a controversial figure in Canadian politics to this day.

During the 1968 campaign, Trudeau seemed less a political leader than a film star. His enthusiasm and energy inspired the same in a whole new generation of supporters, and contrasted significantly with the withdrawn personality of the Conservative candidate Robert Stanfield. Even before he came to power, therefore, Trudeau's populist appeal and playboy image overshadowed his real inclinations as a strong reformer and a determined politician, undeterred by extreme circumstances.

This more serious side to his personality was notably revealed during the October Crisis (see Chapter 6), but glimpses of it could be seen during the campaign. The day before the election, Trudeau attended the annual St Jean Baptiste Day celebrations in Montreal. While sitting in the bandstand with other dignitaries, Quebec separatist agitators forced their way forward and began throwing missiles and stones. Everyone except Trudeau fled. The future Prime Minister waved away his bodyguard and despite being nearly hit, he refused to move or flinch. The mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, returned to Trudeau's side and together they faced down the demonstrators. If any single act won Trudeau the respect of the Canadian people it was this, and it undoubtedly played a part in securing his electoral victory.

Figure 5.8: A jubilant Pierre Trudeau at the 1968 Liberal convention.

Trudeau fought the 1968 election campaign under the slogan 'the Just Society', and during his time in power he set out to establish a participatory democracy, expanding the welfare state through his defence of the healthcare programme, and implementing many reforms designed to help parliament run more smoothly. For example, the Criminal Code was amended to safeguard individual rights, and family allowance was raised. In 1971, unemployment insurance was expanded and the ceiling was removed so that its provision became universal.

A multicultural Canada

The greatest social changes came in the field of multiculturalism. Trudeau followed up the findings of a Royal Commission established by Lester Pearson, and introduced a range of measures that adopted a 'multicultural policy within a bilingual framework'.

Trudeau's first notable reform in this regard was the Official Languages Act of 1969. This ensured that Canadians – whether French- or English-speaking – had access to federal services in their own language. It was followed by regulations that required bilingual labelling on all

commercial products. In 1971, Trudeau introduced the Multiculturalism Act, which guaranteed equality for all cultural and ethnic groups within a bilingual nation. Funding was provided for ethnic organisations and second-language instruction. This represented a considerable shift in attitude, as multiculturalism was now federally supported. Despite concerns at the time that multiculturalism would be a dividing force in society, it did not lead to the collapse of national unity or chaos. Trudeau's policies were largely successful, and they played a significant role in defeating the separatist claims of Quebec.

In the same way that Trudeau tried to reduce cultural tensions, he also aimed to limit regional inequalities. In 1969, he established the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. He protected the farming community through tariffs, and established import quotas and provincial marketing boards. These policies effectively nationalised the economy.

Native Canadian affairs

One notable failure in Trudeau's social policies were those regarding Native Canadians. In 1969, the government published a White Paper on Indian Affairs. This recommended the abolition of the Department of Indian Affairs and the Indian Act (which gave the federal government control over Indian issues), the transfer of responsibility for Native rights to the provinces, the elimination of reservations, and the ending of the special status for Native Canadians.

Putting these recommendations into practice would bring Native Canadians into mainstream society and encourage equality through assimilation. The proposals divided Canadian society. The Native Canadian senator James Gladstone supported the measures and argued that the goal of absolute equality outweighed the short-term losses. However, most Indian groups opposed the changes. Some argued that Native Canadians had a prior legal and historic claim to the land that could not be changed by an Act of Parliament. Native rights became a major political issue, and Trudeau was forced to back down. The government withdrew its proposals in 1971 and established an Office of Native Claims to deal with outstanding land issues.

Economic policy

Much like Diefenbaker, Trudeau grew increasingly concerned about the growing US domination of the Canadian economy. To combat this, he initiated a policy of economic nationalisation.

In 1973, Trudeau introduced the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA). The agency was to screen foreign business takeovers and decide if they benefited Canada, but in practice it did little more than discourage investment and growth.

The establishment of the national oil company Petro Canada in 1975 helped to 'Canadianise' the petroleum industry, which had been dominated by foreign interests up to this time. Trudeau also launched a National Energy Policy in the 1980s, which increased Canadian ownership of the oil industry, forced the western provinces to give the central government a larger share of the revenue, and helped to make Canada more self-sufficient in energy. However, these policies angered both the USA and western Canada, which saw them as an assault on provincial resources.

The success of Trudeau's economic policies remains a matter of debate today. The rise in oil prices that characterised the latter part of the 1970s were largely the result of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) controlling supply, but Trudeau's erratic economic policies did not help.

QUESTION

What is the message of the cartoon in Figure 5.9? How useful to a historian studying the premiership of Trudeau is the cartoon?

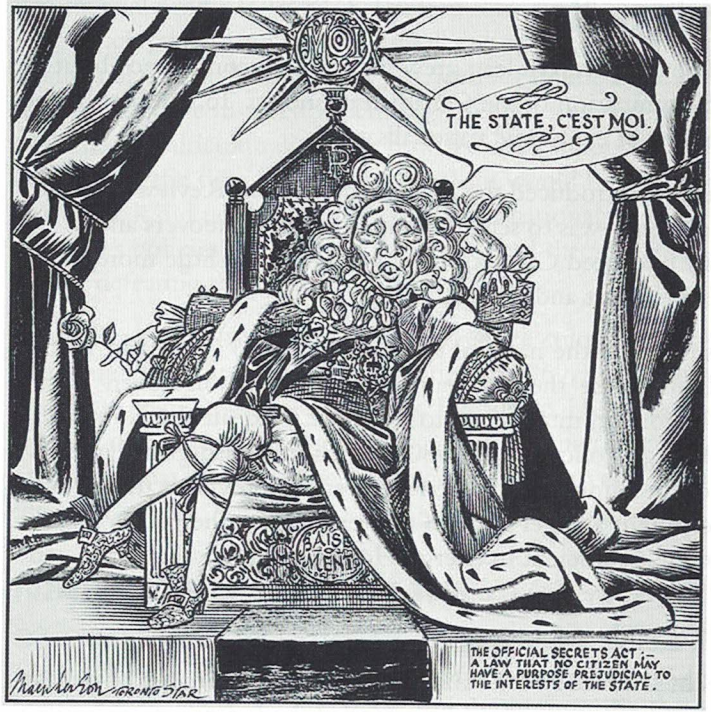

Figure 5.9: A Cartoon comparing Pierre Trudeau to the absolute king of France Louis XIV, with the caption 'The State, it is me'.

Policy changes from 1972

Trudeau failed to win a majority in the 1972 election, and remained in power at the head of a minority government that relied on the support of the New Democratic Party, which held the balance of power. This forced Trudeau into a move to the left. The 1973 budget revealed a drop in personal income tax, increased pensions and amendments to social–economic legislation, as the government adopted a more economic nationalist policy. When the 1974 budget was unveiled, however, political opposition to its plans ended in a no-confidence motion in parliament.

In the ensuing election campaign, the Conservative leader Stanfield proposed government-sanctioned wage and price controls to tackle the problem of inflation. Trudeau criticised the scheme and ran his own campaign on the slogan 'Zap! You're frozen' to deride Stanfield's policies. Trudeau won the election, but almost immediately introduced

a similar policy. This allowed wages to rise at the rate of inflation plus 2%, and prices to rise only when a cost rise could be demonstrated. The policy failed and was aborted in 1978. Such events highlighted the confusion that surrounded many of Trudeau's economic strategies, and by 1979 the Prime Minister faced a country in the grip of a declining population and rising national debt.

The fall and rise of Trudeau

Much of Trudeau's time in office was spent dealing with issues in Quebec, and this allowed the Conservative Party to gain ground in more national issues. In addition, Trudeau alienated the western provinces with his oil policy, and many people felt that federal government control had extended too far. The economy was struggling, inflation was rising, and many were weary of Trudeau's arrogance. He delayed the next election for as long as possible, but it was eventually held in 1979. The Liberals took only one seat west of Winnipeg and lost much of urban Ontario. Trudeau resigned as leader of the Liberal Party, but his time in Canadian politics was not over yet.

The result of the election brought Progressive Conservative leader **Joe Clark** into power at the head of a minority government. Clark's political rise had been rapid – so much so that after his election victory one newspaper ran the headline 'Joe Who?'

His inexperience soon became clear. He pledged to move the location of the Canadian embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; he privatised Petro Canada, causing a rise in the price of petrol; he delayed calling parliament; and he lacked support in Quebec. When parliament did meet, it passed one bill – a minor amendment to old-age pensions – but when the government tried to introduce a tough budget to tackle the economic crisis, it was defeated. After just nine months in power, Clark faced another election.

The Liberals pleaded with Trudeau to return, to which he readily agreed. In February 1980, he was reinstalled as Prime Minister with a majority government, quoting the poet Robert Frost: 'I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep.'

Joe Clark (1939-):

A statesman, businessman, university professor and journalist, Joe Clark's rise to political prominence was dramatic. He entered parliament in 1972, but became leader of the Progressive Conservatives in 1976 and was sworn in as Prime Minister on the day before his 40th birthday in 1979. Although his premiership did not last long, he returned to government in 1984, serving in Brian Mulroney's cabinet.

ACTIVITY

You have now considered the three Canadian prime ministers from 1957 to 1980. Copy and complete the following chart to summarise their achievements and reach a judgement about their relative successes.

Issue	Diefenbaker	Pearson	Trudeau
Electoral success			
Economic policy			
Social policy			
Handling crises			
Other			

Trudeau remained as Prime Minister until his retirement in 1984. During his second period in office his ministry was dominated by two issues:

- the 1980 referendum in Quebec (see Section 6.7)
- The Constitution Act of 1982 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

When Trudeau returned to office in 1980 Canada was still not fully independent. The British North America Act meant that any changes to the constitution had to be approved by Britain. Although this was a formality, there were still issues to be resolved.

There had been previous attempts to bring Canada's constitution home, most recently in 1964, but this had failed following the election of the *Union Nationale* in Quebec and again in 1971.

However, during the referendum campaign of 1980 Trudeau promised that he would 'renew the constitution.' His aim was to bring the constitution home and ensure that provisions were put in place to allow future change. Alongside this he also wanted to add a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This Charter was to be part of the constitution and would therefore give it greater standing. These developments were opposed by the Conservatives and debates in parliament resulted in ugly scenes, with the Conservatives accusing Trudeau of being totalitarian.

The struggle raised many issues such as language rights, resources, oil and exports. With progress appearing impossible, Trudeau issued an ultimatum to the province's premiers, either they agreed a compromise or he would act alone to bring the constitution home. The issue was taken to the Supreme Court, where it was agreed that this was legal. Aware that Quebec would not agree to a deal, Trudeau then worked with the other provinces to reach a settlement.

Trudeau was able to get his Charter, but he was forced to make a significant compromise, which has been called the 'notwithstanding clause.' This allowed provinces to override areas of the Charter if they believe they conflict with their own laws. Despite this, Quebec still objected and claimed that they had been betrayed. Similarly, Native groups complained that they had been ignored in the first draft of the legislation. However, Section 35 of the final bill recognises 'existing aboriginal rights' and entrenches them in Canadian society.

The Act became law on April 17, 1982. The Canadian constitution was no longer under British control. Moreover, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognised four basic freedoms in Canadian society:

- freedom of conscience and religion
- freedom of expression, including the press
- freedom of peaceful assembly
- freedom of association.

The Charter was another step in unifying the country, both morally and legally. However, critics have argued that the Charter undermined democracy as courts, rather than elected representatives have the final say. In practice there has been little evidence of this concern. The passing of these acts were a personal triumph for Trudeau and it might have been beneficial for his legacy if he had stood down then, but he continued in office until his retirement in 1984, by which time much of the gloss of these achievements had worn off due to the worsening economic situation.

The passing of the Constitution and Charter have caused divisions among historians, with some seeing Trudeau as a democrat, while others portray him as an autocrat. However, there is little doubt that these acts and others had a serious impact on Canadian society.

Those who look at his achievements and see his period in office as positive point to the reshaping of what it was to be Canadian, with the establishment of a bilingual and multicultural country. He defeated separatism and terrorism in Quebec and brought the constitution home. However, others argue that his legacy was far from positive as national debt grew from $16 billion in 1968 to $154 billion in 1984.

Many government programmes failed, as did economic nationalism and the attempt to break away from the shackles of the USA. Critics argue that a judgement can only be reached by looking at the situation in 1984 when unemployment was high and the dollar was in free fall. They contrast the youthful hope that was seen in his election victory of 1968 with his arrogance that characterised later years. Yet, despite this, Trudeau was third longest serving Prime Minister in Canadian history.

KEY CONCEPTS ACTIVITY

Significance: Draw a set of scales. On one side list all the achievements of the Trudeau administration and on the other side the failings. Which side do you think is the heaviest and should be Trudeau's lasting legacy? Why? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.

Paper 3 exam practice

Question 1

'The autocratic nature of the Liberal government was the main reason for the election victories of the Progressive Conservatives in 1957 and 1958.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? **[15 marks]**

Skill

Avoiding irrelevance

Examiner's tip

Do not waste valuable time writing irrelevant material. If it's irrelevant, it won't gain you **any** marks. Writing irrelevant information can happen because:

- The candidate does not look carefully enough at the wording of the question (see Chapter 2).
- The candidate ignores the fact that the questions require selection of information, an analytical approach and a final judgement; instead the candidate just writes down all they know about a topic (relevant or not), and hopes that the examiner will do the analysis and make the judgement.
- The candidate has unwisely restricted their revision; for example, if a question crops up on the Liberal defeat in 1957, a candidate may include extensive information about the policies of Diefenbaker because this is an area that they have revised.

Whatever the reason, such responses rarely address any of the demands of the question.

For this question you will need to:

- identify the reasons for the Liberals' defeat in 1957, and the role played by the autocratic nature of the government in its defeat
- describe the nature and scale of their defeat
- explain the role played by a range of factors in the Liberals' defeat, considering both Liberal mistakes but also the strengths of the Progressive Conservatives

- explain the role played by Liberal policies in the period before the election in their defeat
- explain what the Progressive Conservatives and Diefenbaker were offering the electorate and the role that played in the outcome of the election
- compare the importance of the 'autocratic nature' of the Liberal party with other factors in order to weigh up the importance of the given factor and reach a balanced judgement about its importance.

Common mistakes

One common error with questions like this is for candidates to write about material they know well, rather than material directly related to the question. Another mistake is to present too much general information, instead of material specific to the person, period and command terms. Finally, candidates often elaborate too much on events outside the dates given in the question.

Sample paragraph of irrelevant focus/ material

Diefenbaker was unfortunate that the Progressive Conservative victory came just as the post-war boom was ending. It meant that they were in office when there was a downturn in the economy, rising unemployment, which reached some 7%. His failure to tackle the causes of these problems meant that his government soon lost much of the popularity that had brought it to power in 1957. He did not help the economic situation by his desire to make the Canadian economy more independent of the USA, an aim he was unable to fulfil and therefore gave the impression of showing little understanding of the economy. This approach was typical of his approach to politics, he lacked both the brains and experience to deal with the problems the country now faced and his impractical policy towards the USA was typical of many he pursued. As one critic commented he was 'all heart and no brains'. Therefore, having won a landslide victory in 1958 the party was soon in trouble and unable to build on its success.

EXAMINER'S COMMENTS

This is an example of a **weak answer**. Although there is a brief comment about the popularity of the Progressive Party in 1957 and their landslide victory in 1958, the focus is on the economic situation after Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservatives came to power and some of the mistakes that they made once in office. Although some of the material about the booming economy after the war and its slow down at the end of the period of Liberal rule could have been made relevant if used to explain why the Liberals had been dominant until 1957, instead the answer looks at the Progressive Conservative's problems once in office. The material highlighted in blue is irrelevant and will not score any marks. In addition, the candidate is using up valuable writing time, which should have been spent on providing relevant points and supporting knowledge.

Activity

In this section, the focus is on avoiding writing answers that contain, to a greater or lesser extent, irrelevant material. Using the information from this chapter and any other sources available to you, write an answer to **one** of the Paper 3 practice questions that appears at the end of this chapter. You should keep your answer fully focused on the question. Remember – writing a plan **first** can help you maintain this focus.

Question 2

'Trudeau's greatest achievement as Prime Minister was the establishment of a welfare state.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? **[15 marks]**

Skill

Avoiding a narrative-based answer

Examiner's tips

Even once you have read the question carefully (and so avoided the temptation of including irrelevant material), produced your plan and written your introductory paragraph, it is **still** possible to go wrong.

By writing a 'narrative answer', history examiners mean providing supporting knowledge that is relevant (and may well be very precise and accurate) **but** which is not clearly linked to the question. Instead of answering the question, it merely **describes** what happened.

The main body of your essay/argument needs to be **analytical**. It must not simply be an 'answer' in which you just tell the story. Your essay must **address the demands/key words of the question** – ideally, this should be done consistently throughout your essay, by linking each paragraph to the previous one, in order to produce a clear 'joined-up' answer.

You are especially likely to lapse into a narrative answer when answering your final question – and even more so if you are getting short of time. The error here is that, despite all your good work at the start of the exam, you will lose sight of the question, and just produce an *account* rather than an analysis. Even if you are short of time, try to write several analytical paragraphs in your answer.

A question that asks you how important a particular factor is, or the extent to which you agree with a statement, expects you to come to a judgement about success/failure or the relative importance of the named factor or individual, or the accuracy of the statement. You need to provide a judgement on the views expressed in the statement. Very often, such questions give you the opportunity to refer to different historians' views.

A good way of avoiding a narrative approach is to refer back continually to the question, and even to mention it now and again in your answer. That should help you produce an answer that is focused on the specific aspects of the question, rather than just giving information about the broad topic or period.

For this question, you will need to cover different aspects of Trudeau's time in power and the policies he followed. Firstly, you should consider the importance of the welfare reforms and the areas that were tackled:

- family allowance
- defence of healthcare provision
- unemployment insurance and the removal of the ceiling so it was universal
- 'The Just Society'.

Then you should consider other factors, as the question does not invite simply an explanation of the named factor:

- the establishment of multiculturalism
- the treatment of Native groups and their issues
- the handling of the October Crisis in Quebec (see Chapter 6)
- economic nationalism and the economy
- the Constitution Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

You will then need to make a judgement in your concluding paragraph.

Common mistakes

Every year, even candidates who have clearly revised well, and therefore have a good knowledge of the topic and of any historical debate surrounding it, still end up producing a mainly narrative-based or descriptive answer. Very often, this is the result of not having drawn up a proper plan. The extracts of the following student's answer show an approach that essentially just describes the policies of Trudeau's period in office

Sample paragraphs of narrative-based approach

Many Canadians were concerned that America was dominating the Canadian economy. A 1972 study outlined the options for Canada. Diefenbaker had tried to break the dependence before by his 15% promise, but instead Trudeau decided to use government policy and introduced a series of measures which can be described as economic nationalism. He established the Foreign Investment Review Agency to check whether foreign business takeovers would bring any benefit to Canada. He also established Petro-Canada which established Canada's own national oil company and introduced the National Energy Policy to increase Canadian ownership in the oil industry. As a result of this last policy the Western provinces of Canada, notably Alberta, had to give the federal government more of the income from oil. Trudeau thought the provinces were keeping their wealth at the expense of the country. He also introduced wage and price controls after his victory in the 1974 election.

[The rest of the essay continues in the same way – there are plenty of accurate/relevant facts about Canada, Trudeau and his policies, but there is no attempt to answer the question by addressing the relative importance of various factors.]