



News in Review

February 2000

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Canada 2000: The State of the Nation

A new millennium signals both a beginning and an end of an era and, like the study of history, requires forward and backward viewing. Recognizing time as a historical agent, one of Canada's greatest prime ministers, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, declared that The 20th century shall be the century of Canada. Laurier, a man of vision, compromise, and pragmatic solutions, correctly identified a century in which Canada would truly come into its own, although not without difficulty. In a sense, this News in Review story picks up where Laurier left off and examines and assesses Canada on the threshold of the 21st century. This is a story in which Canadians and students of Canadian history can examine our current notion of statehood, our legacies, and the extent to which we will claim ownership of our future.

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News in Review

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Introduction

Canada 2000: The State of the Nation

Since 1984, Maclean's magazine has conducted an end-of-the-year survey of Canadians' attitudes on important issues affecting this country. Beginning in 1995, the CBC's National Magazine has also been involved in this annual poll. The results of the last of these national soundings to be taken before the new millennium were broadcast on The National on December 13 and 14, 1999, and published in the December 20, 1999, issue of Maclean's. The survey involved 1200 adult Canadians who were telephoned between November 5 and 15, 1999. Respondents were asked a number of questions, such as what they thought was the most important problem facing Canada, their opinion of the nation's mood, and their attitude toward their personal financial situation and future prospects. The survey was conducted by The Strategic Counsel, a polling firm headed by Allan Gregg. Gregg and his associates have been involved in this annual ritual for 16 years. Gregg believes that his poll provides Canadians with an important year-end evaluation of the nation's psyche. In his view, "We're not only trying to make news, we're trying to explain news."

A significant departure from previous years, Gregg's firm this time also surveyed 1000 Americans who were asked the same questions as the Canadians polled. Both groups of respondents were also invited to give their opinions on a number of issues concerning how citizens of the two neighbouring countries view each other. These included a look at what makes Canadians different from Americans, how Americans regard Canadians and

what they think about us, and how both groups reacted to the idea of the two countries uniting. The results of this comparative survey revealed some interesting similarities and differences between Canadians and Americans. They also uncovered a fact that will hardly come as news to most Canadians: we are far more knowledgeable and concerned about our neighbours to the south than they are about us.

One of the strongest messages the Canadians polled were sending was that of a rising national concern about the future of the country as an independent state. Eighty-three per cent stated that the growing foreign ownership of the nation's economy was a serious threat to Canada's identity and sovereignty. A large majority of respondents also indicated that they would support firmer government action to halt or even reverse this trend. This finding came as a shock to Gregg and his associates, who have tracked Canadians' views on important economic, social, and political issues for over a decade and a half. To Gregg, American control over the Canadian economy was shaping up to be the sleeper issue of the next millennium, and represented a real opportunity for any political group or party willing to address it seriously.

Despite their concerns, most of the Canadians manifested a deep sense of national pride and confidence in the country's future. The poll suggests that our elusive and, some would say, interminable quest for that mysterious entity known as the

Canadian identity will continue into the new millennium. But it also revealed that over 90 per cent of Canadians claim their country does have a distinct national identity, which 77 per cent believe to be grounded on a sense of pride in Canada's history and the accomplishments of its people. Moreover, 81 per cent think the country can prosper into the 21st century if we hold on to our own set of national values and not try to become more like Americans. Such findings reflect a solid feeling of national self-assurance that Canadians may need to draw upon as they face the problems and challenges that will confront this country and the world in the century ahead.

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Impressions, Information, and Inferences

Canada 2000: The State of the Nation

The 1999 Maclean's-CBC poll focused on two major topics. The first examined how Canadians feel about themselves and their country on the verge of a new millennium. The second was concerned with Canadians' attitudes toward the United States and Americans, and the advantages and disadvantages of the two countries becoming one. In a significant departure from previous years, this poll also surveyed Americans' views of Canada and the people who live here. The results led to some interesting, and in some cases surprising, conclusions.

1. The Stats

Before viewing the video, read [Introduction](#) on the previous page of this resource guide and discuss with your classmates the principal findings of the poll. Determine how your class would answer the questions the Canadian and American respondents were asked in the poll.

2. Viewing and Reacting

Now watch the video and as you do so, note your reactions to the images it presents and the individuals who are interviewed in it. While watching, try to decide the following:

- (a) Which of the people and situations portrayed in it seem closest to the realities of life in Canada today as you and your family experience them? Which seem least similar to yours?
- (b) How typical do you think the people in the video are? How do

you react to the views they express about the problems Canada faces, their own personal financial situations, and their opinion of Americans?

(c) After watching the section of the video that deals with Americans and their awareness of Canada (or lack thereof), note your reactions to their opinions of our country and its people. How easy or difficult is it to remain neutral and objective in this regard? Have you tended to over-generalize about Americans or stereotype them? Why is it important to take this into consideration?

(d) After viewing, form groups with your classmates to debrief and discuss your impressions of the material contained in it and how it is presented visually to the viewer. In your groups, prepare a summary of your opinions of the video and to what extent you find the information and conclusions it contains credible. To what extent does this information correspond to the views of your class as a whole?

3. Language Issues

Discuss the significance of the title of this section of this month's resource guide. Consider the meaning of the words carefully and research inference and its verb infer (which many people confuse with imply) in a dictionary.

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Processing the Information

Canada 2000: The State of the Nation

Polling companies use sophisticated and scientific methods of gathering and analyzing information. It is the responsibility and the right of the consumer, however, to attempt to understand and assess the validity and implications of the polling results. One begins by reviewing the facts, that is, the poll results. During a second viewing of the video, find answers to the questions below. Questions may be assigned to individual students.

1. According to the poll, what is the major worry of Canadians? How is this different from previous polls?
2. What does Michael Comp of Brock University say is the most important problem facing the country? What group supports his view?
3. What do most Canadians consider to be the biggest threat to the economy?
4. Why does Gregor Ramsey, a former Bell Canada employee, worry about foreign control of our economy?
5. State three examples the CBC correspondent Sasa Petrecic gives of U.S. companies that have recently taken over Canadian firms. Which potential foreign takeover he mentions did not happen?
6. What do many Canadians fear as a possible result of growing American control of the nation's economy?
7. What does pollster Allan Gregg mean when he says that foreign ownership is a real sleeper issue of the next millennium?
8. Why are Paul and Nicola Le Blanc so optimistic about their

future? How do they view the idea of relying on others for financial support?

9. What is the nexus generation ? According to D-Code founder Robert Barnard, why are its members so optimistic about their future?

10. Why does reporter Joan Leishman say that the future is being created at Devlin Applied Design?

11. What statistics challenge the view that the generation that came of age in the 1990s would be worse off than their parents?

12. What view do most Canadians polled have of Americans?

13. On what experiences with Americans do Mike Belleveau and his family base their negative views?

14. How does transplanted American Leslie Choice react to Canadians negative views of his former compatriots?

15. What big difference in religious beliefs exists between Americans and Canadians? What conclusion does Rev. Morley Bentley draw from this finding?

16. What view do most Americans polled have of Canadians?

17. According to correspondent Anna Maria Tremonti, why do Canadians know more about Americans than they do of us?

18. Why do some of the American students interviewed in Milan, Tennessee, think that it would not be a good idea for Canada to join the United States?

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Now, working in small groups, consider the implications of the answers to the questions on the previous page. In your opinion, what does this information tell us? How can it be interpreted? Is there something we should do in light of the information?

1. The poll found that Canadians are most concerned about the state of social services like health care and education. This is a change from previous polls, where the top worry was the economy.
2. Michael Comp, a health professor at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, says that the deteriorating health care system is the most important problem facing Canada. He is supported in this view by nursing students at Niagara College, in Welland, Ontario, who are concerned about being able to provide the services hospital patients require.
3. Eighty-three per cent of Canadians think that foreign ownership of Canadian companies is the biggest threat to the economy.
4. Gregor Ramsey, a former Bell Canada employee whose uncle used to run Air Canada, worries that Canadian companies are being purchased by American firms. As a result of this, Canada becomes a market for foreign goods, and the number of jobs in this country declines.
5. Sasa Petrecic lists the following examples of recent foreign takeovers of Canadian companies: Sears buys Eatons, U.S. forest giant Weyerhaeuser takes over MacMillan Bloedel, and a

British company buys Shoppers Drug Mart. American Airlines did not succeed in getting a piece of Air Canada. Instead, Air Canada is poised to take over its long-time rival, Canadian Airlines.

6. Almost two-thirds of Canadians, including the wealthiest and best educated, say Canadian control of business is slipping away, and 79 per cent say our national identity is slipping away with it, making us more like Americans.

7. Allan Gregg means that foreign ownership of the Canadian economy is not an issue that has received much attention from the media or politicians recently, but is obviously a matter of great concern to many Canadians, according to the poll results. He thinks that given this concern, the issue could become important enough for the media to start paying attention to it and for political parties and leaders to begin proposing solutions for it.

8. Paul and Nicole Le Blanc are a newly married couple with good jobs, two condos, a Jeep Cherokee and the kind of attitude that breeds success. They are very confident about their personal financial future. Paul Le Blanc runs his own business and does not expect there to be much of a social safety net available for him when he turns 65. For this reason, he thinks it is important for him and his wife to take personal responsibility for their financial future.

9. The nexus generation refers to the seven million Canadians aged 18 to 29. According to D-Code founder Robert Barnard, whose company studies this generation, its members are optimistic because they have already lived through two recessions, an increasing divorce rate among their parents generation, and the end of the Cold War. These and other constants in their lives have disappeared, leading them to learn how to adapt to change and become more confident that they will be able to handle the challenges of the future.

10. Devlin Applied Design is a firm that designs Internet Web sites and does digital marketing. Most of its employees are under 30. Aaron Fernandez is a senior employee after working there for only two and a half years. Firms like this are at the cutting edge of the information revolution and offer lucrative positions to young people with the computer skills required to work there.

11. According to Barnard, 48 per cent of Canadians between the ages of 18 and 35 are already investors. Of that group, the average age of beginner investors is 22, and the average value of its investment portfolio is \$27 000. These statistics would appear to challenge the widespread view at the beginning of the 1990s that the generation coming of age during that decade would be worse off financially than its parents.

12. Most Canadians used the words arrogant and snobs to describe Americans.

13. Mike Belleveau and his family run a Foodland store in

Tadamagoosh, N.S. There they frequently encounter American tourists who shop in their store. Their impression of their customers is that they are often overconfident and arrogant.

14. Leslie Choice is an American by birth who has lived in Nova Scotia for 21 years. He doesn't think that his fellow Americans intend to appear arrogant but that when they are arrogant they do it well. In his view, many American tourists expect that the countries they visit should be like the United States. He also thinks that Americans have a tendency to appear greedy and aggressive, seeking to profit from any given situation. In his view, these are not Canadian traits.

15. A major difference in the religious beliefs of people in both countries is that while only 49 per cent of Canadians believe in Hell, 73 per cent of Americans do. This finding indicates to Rev. Morley Bentley that there may be a link between Americans' religious fundamentalism and their sense of self-confidence. This is because the more fundamental you are in your beliefs, the more positive you are that you are right and the other person is wrong.

16. Most Americans polled think that Canadians are friendly and nice people.

17. Anna Maria Tremonti says that in Canada, it's practically impossible to grow up without being aware of the United States. Most Canadians know a great deal about that country and its people. On the other hand, if you are from a small American town like Milan, Tennessee, it is very likely that you can live your life without knowing anything about Canada. To many Americans, we are their invisible neighbours.

18. Many of the students Anna Maria Tremonti interviewed in the Milan, Tennessee, high school did not think it would be a good idea for Canadians to join their country. Some of them have a negative view of their own people as arrogant and violent, and believe that Canadians would be losing their friendly, peaceful nature by joining the United States.

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The Growing Americanization of Canada

Canada 2000: The State of the Nation

Focus Question: This poll reports on the current state of affairs in Canada. With reference to the information below, suggest what lessons from Canadian history are relevant to this data.

In 1891, a British-born historian and journalist named Goldwin Smith who had settled in Toronto wrote a book called *Canada and the Canadian Question*. It is quite likely one of the first in a long series of works that explored the question of whether or not Canada could survive as an independent country separate from its huge and powerful neighbour the United States of America. In Smith's view, Canada was an artificial construction composed of four distinct regions that really had very little in common with each other but were much more closely linked to their natural markets to the south. Smith was convinced that it was only a matter of time before Canada joined the United States and that this would be a desirable development for both countries. As he noted, "A young Canadian thinks no more of going to push his future in New York or Chicago than a young Scotchman thinks of going to Manchester or London."

Even in Smith's time, it was clear to many that Canada's economic ties to the United States were becoming tighter. He observed that "Americans are the chief owners of Canadian mines and large owners of Canadian timber rights. Canadian banks trade largely in the U.S. market, and some have branches there. There is almost a currency union, American bank-bills

commonly passing at par in Ontario. Aside from the equality in the exchange rate between the Canadian and American dollar that existed during Smith's day, most of his other comments about Canada's economic relationship with the United States at the end of the 19th century certainly ring true a hundred years later.

Many young, ambitious professionals who have been educated in Canada are moving south to seek their fame and fortune in what they believe to be the low-tax, high-salary heaven of the United States. The result has been an alleged brain drain of highly skilled people from this country, and the danger that with their disappearance Canada might lose its competitive edge in the developing global high-tech marketplace. American companies continue to gain control over Canada's natural resources industries, a recent example being the Seattle-based forestry giant Weyerhaeuser's takeover of B.C.'s MacMillan Bloedel. Canada's major banks face the real possibility of competition from their U.S. rivals anxious to set up branches in this country. And the federal government has even considered the possibility of a currency union with the United States.

Focus Question: This poll indicates a high level of concern in Canada over Americanization. Define and explain the nature and magnitude of this concern.

As the results of the 1999 year-end Maclean's-CBC poll indicate, many Canadians are uneasy about what they perceive to be the growing Americanization of this country. This concern manifests itself in a number of ways. There are worries that with growing foreign ownership of our economy, the loss of our political sovereignty is only a matter of time. The creeping American domination of Canadian culture is seen as posing a threat to any sense of a distinctive national identity shared by this country's citizens. And there is also a very real fear that as Canada and Canadians become more like Americans, we are in danger of losing what have been our core values as a nation qualities like tolerance, civility, a commitment to social justice, and a rejection of violence as a means of resolving domestic and international disputes. The poll reveals that while a growing number of people believe that the Canadian experiment in North America is in real danger of disappearing, there remains a strong sense that it is worth preserving, and that our government and other national institutions should be doing more to defend it.

In the issue of Maclean's that reported the results of the poll, there is an article by journalist Peter C. Newman that focuses on the increasing American domination of Canada's social,

economic, and cultural life, and its serious implications for the nation's future. Newman's article provides some disturbing statistics as evidence of the growing Americanization of the economy. For instance, during the past 12 years, direct American investment in Canada has passed \$800-billion. In 1999 alone, U.S. firms purchased 127 Canadian companies worth \$25-billion, compared with 121 enterprises worth \$21-billion in the previous year. Aside from tiny Luxembourg, Canada now controls a smaller proportion of its national productive wealth than any other industrial country in the world, and, according to Newman, faces the very real possibility of becoming an economic colony of the United States. In his words, Canadians have become squatters on our own land.

In the post-Cold War era of globalization, where the United States has emerged as the world's dominant military and economic superpower, it may become even more difficult for Canada to withstand the American onslaught. Newman believes that Canada's economic interests are being trampled by the United States, and that our federal government is doing little, if anything, to halt the process. He notes that even business groups that supported free trade with the United States a decade ago are now becoming alarmed about the negative effects of growing American domination, and are appealing to Prime Minister Chrétien to take action.

As for the provinces, critics say there has been a lack of direction on the issue at this level of government also. They say that, instead of promoting greater interprovincial trade, provincial leaders like Ontario Premier Mike Harris eagerly pursue closer trade links with neighbouring U.S. states. At a recent Great Lakes Governors' Conference, Harris told his American state counterparts . . . we really see you as very strong allies, more so than many parts of Canada. What happens in Newfoundland and British Columbia economically, does not affect us as much as what happens in Michigan, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. And the provincial government of B.C., led by the NDP, a party once known for its strong commitment to economic nationalism, recently welcomed the takeover of MacMillan Bloedel, the province's leading forest industry firm, by a U.S. corporation as economic good news for B.C. residents.

Focus Question: Some might say, So what? This is simply a natural progression in the evolution of North American society. Others would say that there is a very real threat to our way of life and that our economic and cultural self-determination is at risk. Assess the validity of these points of view in light of the following criticisms that are commonly heard.

Because of the devalued Canadian dollar and our open border, American companies have been able to buy up firms here at a faster rate than at any time since the 1970s.

American businesses view Canada's culture and social programs as they do health care and education as opportunities for investment and profit.

In the recent transborder magazine dispute, our federal government failed to protect Canadian magazines from American competition when the U.S. threatened trade retaliation if Canada did not remove barriers designed to defend our cultural industries.

American trade representative Christine Barshefsky recently affirmed the U.S. intention to include all services, including health care and education, on the negotiating table at the World Trade Organization's recent summit in Seattle.

Ten years after the signing of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, our economy is even more closely linked to our big neighbour's than it ever was before. In 1998, for example, fully 84.7 per cent of Canada's exports were to the United States.

Company head offices are migrating south, lured by lower tax rates and wages in the United States.

During the late 1990s, Canadian businesses started pouring large amounts of investment capital into acquisitions in the United States, instead of reinvesting it in Canada.

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the first French-Canadian prime minister of Canada, is famous for having predicted in 1904 that the 20th century shall belong to Canada. Laurier was optimistic that Canada would achieve its national destiny as a North American state in the 20th century, in much the same way that the United States had done in the 19th. He believed this because he was convinced that the country was blessed with abundant human and natural resources that were required for a country to progress toward prosperity and development.

Having now left the 20th century, it is perhaps appropriate to take stock of what Canadians have achieved during the course of the past 100 years, and look ahead to what are likely to be the most serious challenges the country will face in the current century. What would Laurier think of the progress Canada has made during the last 100 years? Below are summaries of the views of some contemporary and prominent Canadian writers and thinkers.

Charles Taylor

A professor emeritus at Montreal's McGill University, Charles Taylor is one of the world's most renowned philosophers. In addition to his many books on political theory, he has written extensively on Canada's national identity and the importance of reconciling the different groups that comprise our country. He views Canada as a country of three dimensions: English-French,

aboriginal, and multicultural. In his view, we have made considerable progress over the course of the last century on achieving a viable multicultural society, where people of a variety of ethnic backgrounds can come to feel a sense of belonging.

Taylor thinks that the policy of encouraging immigration to this country, originally promoted during Laurier's time, was of great benefit to Canada. He also gives credit to Pierre Trudeau, whose government extended equal rights to cultural minorities, thus enacting a politics of equal dignity for all Canadians. Taylor believes that in a world where many countries are in the process of violently tearing themselves apart over cultural and linguistic differences, Canada's achievement of a multicultural society represents an example of tolerance that other countries would do well to emulate.

However, when it comes to English-French relations, and Canadians' response to aboriginal issues, Taylor is far less positive in his evaluation. In both instances, he believes, it is a lack of historical knowledge and perspective that prevents many people from resolving these difficult problems. He was shocked by the strong opposition among certain political groups and much of the media to the recent Nisga'a land claims treaty. In his view, this reaction reveals no recognition of our history, as though the Nisga'a have arrived just 25 minutes ago. On the issue of English-French relations, Taylor calls for English-Canada's recognition of the fact that Quebec is a distinct society, as was proposed in the ill-fated Meech Lake Accord of 1990. In his view such a recognition would do much to undercut the appeal of Quebec sovereignists in that province. It would provide a sense of security to Quebecers. For them, what's still missing is the assurance that their existence will not be rejected, that their identity will not be eaten away at the fringes.

But how can English-Canadians be convinced that granting such a recognition to Quebec is a necessity, given the sense of constitutional fatigue that grips the country in the wake of Meech, Charlottetown, and the 1995 Quebec referendum? In Taylor's view, Canadians should understand that our country has been given a tremendous advantage compared with others but that it is one that comes with a high price. By this he means that unlike the United States, France, or other countries that apply a single national formula to handle linguistic and cultural differences among their citizens, Canada has chosen a different way of accommodating them. In his view, we have done this successfully in our ability to incorporate immigrants from all parts of the world into Canadian society without requiring them to plunge into an American-style melting pot and abandon their

original cultural identities. If we could only apply the same kind of politics of equal dignity to francophone and aboriginal Canadians, then Taylor believes Canadians would be able to move forward into the new millennium as confident citizens of a country that values collective identities within the framework of a postmodern global civil society. If we fail, however, he believes we run the risk of blowing up the gold mine and destroying a valued experiment in nation-building.

Desmond Morton

Desmond Morton is the director of McGill University's Institute for the Study of Canada, and has written a number of books on Canadian history. Despite the challenges of national unity and Canada's survival as an independent country separate from the United States, Morton is optimistic that we can draw on the same problem-solving abilities that helped our country overcome past difficulties in order to handle those existing at present. In his view, Canada has not done too badly as a nation since Laurier's time. He notes that . . . we started out as a country for the white trash of Europe. But look at where we have ended up! People from all over the world want to come here now.

Morton believes that the national unity problem can be resolved, but that it will require a mixture of firm leadership from the federal government and tolerance on the part of English-Canadians. Like Taylor, he believes that an official acknowledgment of Quebec's distinctiveness is absolutely necessary if a break-up of the country is to be avoided. As a historian, he reminds Canadians that Confederation in 1867 was a solemn compact, not merely among the provinces, but also between the French and the English. This is why he argues that Quebec's particular identity must be protected. If Canada fails to do this, then Quebecers will do it for themselves.

Morton is the co-editor of a recent anthology of speeches and writings by prominent Canadians over the past 200 years titled *Who Speaks for Canada?* In the introduction to this book, he writes that Canadians have always lived with a number of loyalties. We are French-Canadians, or Western Canadians, or Maritime Canadians. Native Canadians are divided among more than 600 First Nations. If we came from elsewhere and who hasn't? we all have our hyphens. Even those who defiantly reject them are called unhyphenated Canadians. Each wave of newcomers feels entitled to remake the country. But he also believes that we should not complain about this, since in his historical perspective it is older than maple syrup.

One recent political trend that does concern Morton, however, is

the rise of what he calls neo-conservative thinking, represented by leaders like Ontario's Mike Harris and Alberta's Ralph Klein. He believes that neo-conservatism is an ideology that is fixated on the ideal of personal greed, and promotes a single version of economic truth that all are expected to embrace. He fears that if this political vision becomes too powerful, then the collective strengths that have built Canada as a nation may be threatened. He notes that "We can't not be social beings in the second-largest nation on earth. Together, we have enormous bench strength."

William Dimma

A prominent and influential member of Canada's business community, William Dimma is the former president of Torstar Corp. He has served on the boards of directors of almost 50 corporations. He is deeply disturbed about what he perceives to be the displacement of our national values as Canada moves increasingly closer to the United States economically and culturally. He worries that despite a booming economy and rising rates of growth, what he calls the "sinews of nationhood" are being cut away. As a businessperson, Dimma recognizes the fact that Canada must have a close economic and trading relationship with its large southern neighbour if it is to survive at all. He acknowledges that this relationship with the dynamic, innovative, and entrepreneurial American economy has been one of the factors contributing to the economic well-being of many Canadians. But he also sees some signs that this relationship is also leading us to an unwilling acceptance of American societal values and culture. In his view, this is an extremely negative development.

Dimma points to four aspects of American values and social practices that he finds particularly objectionable. He points to the decline in civility and common politeness in American society that he fears can lead to aggression, violence, and barbaric behaviour. He is appalled at the low culture, gossip, and rumour that pass for news, and the near-religious veneration of mass-market celebrities that are prevalent in the United States today. He objects strongly to the core American value of extolling the individual at the expense of the community and the common good. He believes that America's selfish individualism leads to narcissistic behaviour and a disregard for the rights of others. Finally, he believes that American-style capitalism is an economic system that Canadians have always rejected for its uncaring, "devil-take-the-hindmost" philosophy. Dimma is a strong supporter of private enterprise but he thinks that, carried to extremes, as he believes it has been in the United States, it can lead to an unjust and unstable society consisting of a few "haves" and many "have-nots."

In Dimma's view, Canada's national core values are quite different from those that motivate our southern neighbours. Among these he believes are civility, a sense of propriety, a commitment to the common good, and support for a mixed economy where both private and public enterprise have a social role to play. He believes that these values have been fostered and developed over the course of our history, and that leaders like Laurier and others played a major role in promoting them. He also fears that today they are at serious risk as economic and cultural pressures drive us deeper into the American orbit. He hopes that Canadians will be able to resist the economic attractions of joining the United States, and instead, like him, persist in our stubborn way in remaining Canadian, holding quintessential Canadian values with others who share them.

Follow-up Activities

1. After reading the above three viewpoints, form groups to discuss each. Make a written summary in your own words of what each writer has said about Canada's past, present, and future. As a group, decide whether or not you think their views are optimistic or pessimistic regarding Canada's future.
2. According to Taylor, Morton, and Dimma, what has been the major achievement of Canada and its people during the course of the 20th century? What poses the major threat to Canada's survival and well-being as a nation in the next century? How do you respond to these views?

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The New Census: Who We Are, April 1993

Canadian Unity: The Calgary Initiative,
November 1997

Quebec: The Rules For Separation, October 1998

Homelessness: Canada's Mean Streets,
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Down on the Farm: Crisis in Agriculture, February 1999

Nunavut: Birth Of A Territory, April 1999

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Ask a Silly Question

What Border: The Americanization of Canada





News in Review

February 2000

Discussion, Research, and Essay Questions

Canada 2000: The State of the Nation

1. Using your school's resource centre, obtain a copy of the December 20, 1999, issue of Maclean's magazine, which includes the questions Canadians were asked in the survey and their responses to them. With your classmates, choose some of the questions that are of most interest to you. Make a list of these questions and ask the members of the class to answer them. Collect and tabulate the results, and compare them with the findings of the poll. Do the members of your class have similar views to those of the Canadians participating in the poll? Or are they different? If so, how?
2. Read one of the following books that deals with Canadian economic, social, political, and cultural trends at the dawn of a new century and prepare and present a book report on it: *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millennium*, by Michael Adams; *Who Speaks for Canada? Words that Shape a Country*, by Desmond Morton and Morton Weinfeld; *Shakedown: How the New Economy is Changing Our Lives*, by Angus Reid; *The Canadian Revolution: From Deference to Defiance*, by Peter C. Newman; *Reflections on a Siamese Twin: Canada at the End of the Twentieth Century*, by John Ralston Saul; *The Undeclared War: Class Conflict in the Era of Cybercapitalism*, by James Laxer; *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, by Neil Bissoondath; *The Fight of My Life: Memoirs of an Unrepentant Canadian Nationalist*, by Maude Barlow; *Paper Boom: Why Real Prosperity Requires a New Approach to Canada's Economy*, by Jim Stanford; *Pay the Rent*

or Feed the Kids: The Tragedy and Disgrace of Poverty in Canada, by Mel Hurtig; and Boom, Bust, and Echo: Profiting from the Demographic Shift in the New Millennium, by David K. Foot and Daniel Stoffman.

3. Research one of the major issues that the poll revealed are of concern to Canadians at the beginning of a new century. Among these are: foreign ownership of the Canadian economy, the state of social services (health care, education), the preservation of Canadian cultural institutions, the need to adapt to the demands of the new knowledge economy or any other topic of interest to you. Prepare a one-page report on it based on newspaper or magazine articles, Internet sources, or television programs. The index at the end of this guide may be a good place to start.

4. Write an essay or deliver an in-class oral presentation on the topic Why I think Canada should (or should not) join the United States.

5. The creation of free trade zones around the world has always been fraught with controversy and concern. How does this poll indicate that there is still concern over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)?

6. As a class, discuss the following comment by CBC reporter Rex Murphy on what he views as Canadians' love-hate relationship with American mass consumer culture, especially television. We say in the polls that American culture is a devouring monster, chewing up our distinctness as Canadians, and we don't like it. The truth is, however, that the great American prime-time machine wallpapers the Canadian mind as much as the American. We love the stuff, and their pet specials too. Based on your own experience, how true do you think Murphy's observation is?

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