**Canadian History Notes**

**Canada leading up to WWI**

Macdonald and Confederation:

* John A. Macdonald 1st PM and leads us into Confederation in 1867
* Wanted the new country to be called “the Kingdom of Canada”, but British government would not allow it, partly because they did not want to create ill will with the US
* The BNA Act was officially signed by Queen Victoria on March 29, 1867, and came into effect on July 1st
* Premier of New Brunswick suggested calling it the “Dominion of Canada”, which stuck. He got this term from the Bible, as on the OT, Psalm 72 says, “His dominion shall be from Sea to Sea”. This is where we get our national motto from: *A Mari Usque Ad Mare* (“From Sea to Sea)
* The VERY next day after the BNA Act is signed by the queen (March 30th) the US buys Alaska off the Russians, trying to outflank Canadian progress to the Pacific ocean and squeezing BC (not yet in Confederation) in between two American states. Aggressively trying to take over dominance of the continent
* The US Secretary of State who had orchestrated the purchase of Alaska had these words: “It is very well. You [Canada] are building excellent states to be hereafter admitted to the American Union.”

B.C. Joins Confederation:

* There was a smaller, but vocal group in B.C. who wanted to join the US, but in the end loyalties to the British homeland won out and the colony decided to officially join Canada. They went to Ottawa to sign the agreement and come to terms. One of the things they wanted was a wagon trail to be created between BC and Manitoba. They were amazed when they were instead offered the promise of a transcontinental railway
* The federal government also agreed to absorb BC’s debts and provide postal services
* 1871 BC officially joins the Dominion of Canada

The Mounties:

* Created by Macdonald’s government in 1873, and called the NWMP (North West Mounted Police), they were designed to police and control the Canadian western frontier
* American whisky traders had been crossing into Canadian territory and setting up illegal trading posts, selling mostly to the Indians
* In 1873 a group of American wolf hunters killed 36 Indians in what is now southern Saskatchewan. This provided the government the backing it needed to get the order created
* Were given red coats to distinguish them from the blue coats of the US Cavalry, who were waging bloody war south of the border. Also harkens to the “Red Coats” of the British military vs. the blue uniforms worn by Colonial troops in the War of Independence
* Mounties were wildly effective. In 1920 they became reorganized as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
* There was a huge cultural discrepancy between the settling of the West in the US and Canada, highlighting national values. South of the border there was a wild and lawless culture, full of ruffians, robbers, and gangs. North of the border the law was strictly and effectively carried out. The Mounties were in charge and kept control

Macdonald to Laurier:

* Macdonald dies in 1891. Leaves a void in Canadian politics which nobody from the Conservative party can seem to fill. However, Macdonald had just won an election, which gave the Conservatives 5 years to find a replacement to lead to party
* 4 different PMs emerge, but none of them suitable. The first resigned, the 2nd died suddenly while visiting England, and a third was overthrown by his own party
* The 4th was Charles Tupper, Father of Confederation and former premier of Nova Scotia. Brought in at last minute to lead Tories into the election, but lost. His 69 days as PM are still the shortest in Canadian history
* 1896 election sees Wilfred Laurier and the Liberal party win. Liberals had had very radical left wing ideas, even championing a full commercial union with the US against the world. In the 1891 election John A. had called this “treason” and the Liberals had been blasted
* Laurier reshaped the Liberals into a more mainstream and centrist party. Under him the liberals supported much of John A. Macdonald vision for Canada, but with one main difference. While John A. and the conservatives wanted a strong federal government with the provinces as subordinate powers, Laurier “championed regional autonomy”.

Interesting issue: what is more important – regional concerns or national concerns? Provincial interests or federal? John A. vs. Laurier’s vision?

* Contemporary Canada reflects Laurier’s vision, with Canada being a “land of compromise”, patched together and always reflecting a cultural and regional mosaic vs. a melting pot
* Because of the importance of this and the impact Laurier’s vision had on the development of the nation, Laurier is often referred to as “the first Canadian”

Manitoba Schools Question:

* 1870, The Manitoba Act (brings Manitoba into Confederation) guaranteed the rights of French Catholics in the new province
* Over the next 20 years, due to the settling of the West, floods of English peaking immigrants had flooded the area. French Catholics became the minority
* In 1890 Manitoba government passed the Manitoba Schools Act, which ended publically funded Catholic schools. They also, in violation of the Manitoba Act, got rid of French as an official language
* The goal of Ottawa was crystal clear = French language and culture would be “contained” in Quebec and New Brunswick, while the West would be English, clear across to BC
* Raised important questions regarding the governance of Canada: could provincial governments simply rewrite constitutional acts? Could Ottawa step in to protect minority rights?
* The Manitoba schools Act is of extreme importance because is effectively killed the chance for any significant French presence in Western Canada and ended hope of a bilingual nation East – West
* Today there are still issues regarding provincial vs. federal power, whether it is the privatization of mdecine in Alberta or limits to English-language education in Quebec
* How did it end? When Laurier was elected in 1896 he worked out a compromise: no public funds for French-Catholic schools, but some religious instruction could happen in schools for a ½ hour at the end of the day. In terms of language, if there were enough students in a given area then *bilingual* instruction would be permitted.
* French Catholics were so appalled that they appealed all the way to the Pope in Rome, who sent a special envoy to Canada. Reassured by Laurier, the Church supported to compromise

Canada’s Greatest Sport:

* Everyone knows about the Stanley Cup
* Named after Lord Frederick Arthur Stanley, Gov. General from 1888-1893
* Ice hockey developed in Nova Scotia, spreading to Boston, then Montreal
* In 1893 Lord Stanley donated a silver rose bowl to promote amateur hockey
* Was originally called “The Dominion Hockey Challenge Cup”
* Grows over time, with new rings added
* The original rose bowl is in the Hockey Hall of Fame

Alaska Boundary Dispute:

* Quite simply, the US and Canada were fighting over where to draw the territorial line on the map to separate Alaska from North Western Canada
* 1903: A six-person panel was set up to deal with the issue: 3 Americans, 2 Canadian lawyers, 1 British judge
* During negotiations the British judge sided with the Americans, causing Canada to lose some significant strips of territory. The Canadians were disgusted, walking away from the table and refusing to sign the agreement. Didn’t matter though
* “Wake up call” for Canadians = could no longer rely on Britain to oversee Canadian foreign relations. Canada would need to start to strive for its own independence

Boer War:

* 1899 war breaks out in British South African colonies. Had nothing to do with Canada, but English Canada rallied for the cause of the “motherland”
* Britain wants Canadian troops. English Canada willing, French Canada outraged, saying that this was an imperialist war that should not involve the blood of Canadian soliders
* Laurier compromises and does not send regular troops. However, Canada will equip and transport volunteer soldiers to South Africa, where they will be under the command of the British. More than 7000 Canadians go
* War ends in 1901. It was the first time Canadian soldiers had fought overseas, and set the stage for more English-French tensions in relation to war on foreign soil, as in 1909 the British were gearing up for possible war with a new foe: the Germans…
* Britain wants Canada to build ships for the imperial navy. Laurier once again compromises: Canada will build its own ships and have its own fleet, though the fleet could be put at Britain’s disposal during times of war. Another small step in the future independence of Canada.