

# Pierre trudeau

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Often more times than not, people cringe at the thought of politics, but there are the few whom desire the power to enforce change. Politicians rarely receive adoration from the general public, and they shoulder the country's burdens, but none have been adored (hence the term Trudeau-mania) and have progressed like Pierre Trudeau. Trudeau grew up speaking French to his father and English to his mother and this combination is what defined him; Trudeau was not French or English, he was a true Canadian.

Pierre Trudeau was not like most politicians, other politicians compromised and soothed; while Pierre Trudeau came into politics with his guns blazing while saying, "Just watch me". The consequence of these actions led Pierre Trudeau to have a strong supportive following, and an equally strong army of critics. He was a controversial man, but not one Canadian can argue that Trudeau did not bring Canada to where it is today. Prime Minister Trudeau, almost singlehandedly, molded Canada into the image that he desired; a country that was bilingual, rational, and a just society that was founded upon the ideals of freedom and individual autonomy.

Of course, critics of Trudeau will bring forth the most dramatic event of his first government which was the "October Crisis" of 1970. In that year British diplomat James Cross and Quebec- Cabinet Minister Pierre LaPorte were kidnapped by a terrorist group, Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ). As a response Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act. The act is meant to perceive the existence of war, invasion or insurrection, real or apprehended, but in mundane terms it allowed the government extraordinary powers of detention, arrest, and censorship.

Controversy over the appropriateness of these emergency measures has continued to the present. However this was an unprecedented event, and after that occasion Trudeau pledged to refine and limit the application, leading to the Emergencies Act of 1988. Also critics would bring forth the Official Languages Act of 1969 which improved the position of the Francophone in Ottawa, but caused a ripple of backlash from the Anglophone individuals of Western Canada. Many individuals perceived that Pierre Trudeau was alienating the West of Canada and accused him of trying to “ shove French down our throats”.

Although the Official Languages Act did not have many short term rewards, Trudeau was thinking of the long term affects. Trudeau's thought process transcended past the next election, and because of that Canada is a bilingual country, paying tributes to the history of the Francophone and the Anglophone which created Canada. One of the foremost actions that Pierre Trudeau endorsed in his years as Prime Minister was made in the year 1968. In that year Trudeau had passed the omnibus bill (a single document that is accepted in one vote by a legislature) called the Criminal Laws Amendment Act.

The Criminal Laws Amendment Act covered a variety of topics and decriminalized many issues that are still relevant to society today. Trudeau decriminalized abortion, contraception, homosexuality, gambling, gun control, and driving under the influence. Trudeau famously defended his actions by saying " there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation", adding that " what's done in private between adults doesn't concern the Criminal Code. " At the time the public was scandalized by

decriminalizing such issues, and critics pounced on the opportunity to criticize his ethical values.

However this document still stands in the law and it remains an example of Trudeau's pioneer thinking. The Criminal Laws Amendment Act paved the way for homosexual rights, restricting the usage of guns and set the backbone for the rights that other countries desire to emulate. However one of Trudeau's infamous political moves and sheer perseverance came forth in the 1980 Quebec Referendum. His campaign was against the Party Quebecois's whose proposition was that Quebec should be separated from the rest of Canada.

Trudeau based his campaign policy upon the promise of Canada having its own constitution (one of the first things that Pierre promised to bring to Canada during elections) and making sure that Canada became a bilingual country, only if Quebec voted no. At the time in Quebec the "yes" side thought by bringing the Constitution, Trudeau would adjust it in accordance to their demands (the demands were to have exclusive power, levy its own taxes and establish its own sovereignty). Trudeau warned Canada that a "no" vote did not mean that things would remain the way they were, he consistently repeated that a change in powers would happen.

Later on during the election 2, 187, 991 (almost 60%) voted no to the separation of Quebec. The defeat of the Quebecois's proposition was a landmark against the separatist movement. While the effect of the Quebec Referendum was not long lasting, it set an example for other Prime Ministers on how to deal with the separatist movement which has not been resolved. After defeating the movement Trudeau motivated forward for an accord on a <https://assignbuster.com/pierre-trudeau/>

new Canadian Constitution. This was a show of Trudeau's political powers in government, his determination to keep promises and it remains part of Trudeau's great legacy.

Over the course of Pierre Trudeau's session in parliament he has made important decisions that have revolutionized Canadian politics, but one of his greatest accomplishments is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Before Trudeau there was the Canadian Bill of Rights, and while it contains similarities to the Charter, it had less substance than the Charter. For example the Bill of Rights did not contain the right to vote and freedom of movement in Canada, while the Charter of Rights and Freedoms does.

Also the negative point with the Bill of Rights was the fact that it was a bill, and majority governments could demolish it. The Canadian people felt insecure about this vulnerability and desired a stable solution; they did not want their freedom taken away by any form of government. Even before Pierre Trudeau was named part of the Liberal Party, he had, as attorney general, appointed Barry Strayer to research potential Bill of Rights. Meanwhile when Trudeau became the Liberal leader and Prime Minister of Canada he continued to work towards a constitutional Bill of Rights for all of Canada.

In 1979 Trudeau came close to achieving this goal, but the Victoria Charter was never implemented. However he succeeded when he announced the creation of the Canada Act of 1982. " ' Canada itself' could now be defined as a society where all people are equal and where they share some fundamental values based upon freedom, and that all Canadians could identify with the values of liberty and equality. " (Pierre Trudeau, Memoirs)

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This act has continued to show Canadian nationalism which represents and defines the morals that Canadian people value.

All in all Pierre Trudeau shaped Canada, he molded our justice system with the Criminal Laws Amendment Act, he united Canada by the provinces and languages with the Quebec Referendum of 1980, and defined our Canadian values, the very morals which individuals within Canada pride themselves upon, with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Back in the 1960s to the 1980s Canadians were loggers and loved hockey players that fought, but after Trudeau- Mania he gained respect as an intellectual individual and he was an unapologetic figure.

Thus he was an easy man to dislike and many Canadians did not approve of him. However Trudeau had an image that he projected outward upon Canada an image of a bilingual, rational, and just society that focused its attention upon values and ethics. At the end of Pierre Trudeau's political career he took his famous long walk in the snow and announced his retirement. It does not matter if an individual supported the foremost Prime Minister Trudeau, in the end Canadians are the beneficial fruits of his labour and that cannot be denied.