

The macdonald national policies essay sample

[Countries](#), [Canada](#)



John A. MacDonald was the first prime minister of Canada. His policies were focused in growing the country politically, economically and physically. His wish for a bigger nation that was independent economically was not easy considering the other bigger and stronger nations that surrounded Canada. Furthermore, Canada was under the leadership of Britain which made it quite challenging for any leader to make and implement any laws. However, this did not hinder MacDonald from achieving his dream of better Canada. In his national policies, he still considered Britain to be its great supporter and in fact engaged the nation to ensure the success of the country. The achievements of MacDonald and his national policies have been echoed differently by various authors. In this paper, we shall compare and contrast MacDonald national policies based on the readings of Ben Forster, Donald Creighton and Vernon Fowke.

One of the greatest memories of the national policy was the introduction of high tariffs on imported goods. This was one of the strategies that MacDonald used to minimize on imports and hence encouraging local traders. MacDonald understood the fact that growing the country's economy would begin by promoting the people. By imposing high tariffs on imported goods, local traders were encouraged to venture into innovative activities that will ensure adequate supplies of the goods. Importers on the other hand were discouraged from buying manufactured from outside the country as they would be forced to set higher prices for them. This in turn led to a stiff competition between the locally manufactured goods and those abroad. Considering the fact that the nation was still young economically, most of the people preferred locally manufactured goods to imported ones that were

expensive.

As Forster further explains in his book, high tariffs on imports did not only promote Canadian products in the market but also prompted innovators to come up with high quality goods. Since there was no threat on the international market, local entrepreneurs started launching more into consumer goods. This therefore created a stiff competition locally which in turned led to the production of high quality goods (Creighton, 1955). Local products gained so much popularity that they were considered fit for export. Vernon on the other hand argued that the introduction of high tariffs on imports made Canadians to gain confidence in their products as well as encouraged them to be innovators. This was because of the crisis that they were facing which left them with no alternative but to be innovative and to use their own home products.

Another issue that was of main concern to Macdonald was the education sector. This was considered the best way through which the country would get civilized and acquire the necessary skills to grow its economic and political environment. There was however a challenge of most students travelling to other nations such as united states to acquire the necessary skills. Even though this was good considering that United States was well advanced and equipped to handle higher educational needs, Macdonald wanted to minimize on the rate at which the country depended on other nations. Macdonald realised the need of instilling confidence in the nation with the little resources they had. He was not of the school of thought that they had inadequate facilities and hence needed help from outside. In as much as such help was necessary and important for a growing nation, over

relying on external resources would minimize on the need and the rate at which the country grew.

Donald in his book notes that Macdonald had to make decisions, however unpractical they seemed to be and later learn from the mistakes. This implied that he was not afraid of failure as long as the nation will learn from the mistake and come up stronger. It was a time for the government to launch into new ideas and policies that will ultimately grow the nations. Through the education policy, the government aimed at establishing more institutions of higher learning to minimize on the rate at which students went to America to study. The government also purposed to ensure that the education standards were high by encouraging productivity among teachers and lectures. With this strategy, the government was able to minimize on the amount of money that flowed out of the country and using it to improve education in Canada. As more local scholars were employed to take over teaching positions, job opportunities were created and therefore raising the living standards of citizens.

The education policy helped many students acquire skills and knowledge which had now been brought closer home. Even those from poor backgrounds were able to acquire knowledge due to reduced costs of acquiring it locally as well as obtaining government scholarships. Education being the pillar of any economic and political empowerment, the nation was transformed as more youths engaged in development activities. With minimum job opportunities, those who had acquired entrepreneurial skills launched into businesses and hence creating job opportunities for those who were out of school. The economic status at the time allowed both for skilled

and non-skilled labour (Fowke, 1957). However, as many more people acquired education, it was better for the country as there was quality provision of services.

The immigration policy was also another important aspect of the national policy that was adopted by Macdonald. The reason of the policy was to encourage more people to consider Canada as their land of destiny. The immigration to Canada would boost the country's economy in several ways. For instance, the immigrants would provide the much needed labour to the country that was just growing. Intellectuals who came to the country would also supply the nation with the needed skills and knowledge which would in turn boost its political and economic standing. By making the environment favourable enough for immigrants, the government would ensure that more foreign revenues were tapped into the land rather than being sent out. The nation hoped that immigrants will not only come and invest in the country but also come and gain from its academic institutions. Foreign income was one of the ways through which the economy of the country would be strengthened.

The immigration policy was also aimed at discouraging Canadians from migrating to other nations especially the United States in search of greener pastures and education. Macdonald realised that need of making Canada habitable enough by improving the economy and hence the standards of people. Citizens would have a reason to stay in the country as foreigners found the need to come back to the country. Immigration was denying the country the opportunity to advance economically by discouraging local and foreign investors. With the immigration policy, the government was at least

able to tame its citizens by minimizing on unnecessary immigrations (Creighton, 1955). Even though Macdonald's government did not quite succeed in making more foreigners come to Canada, there was a sigh of relieve in managing to provide for the needs of its citizens.

The building of the transcontinental railway (CPR) was another project that took centre stage in Macdonald's national policy. This was also considered to be a project that will promote local trade and industries. The railway line crisscrossed through the country to the cities. It would facilitate effective transportation of raw materials, goods and even unskilled labourers to their prospective destinations. The railway line also promoted infrastructure and attracted foreign investors to Canada. This was one of the greatest achievements of the Macdonald's government which has remained to effectively serve the population of Canada. The construction of the railway line involved huge finances which called for more taxes among the citizens. As Donald observes in his book, the construction of the CPR would also open up Canada to western countries. This will facilitate the transportation of finished goods close to the borders of western countries and hence accessing the markets.

The CPR opened up the nation to more revenue opportunities. This included tourism, telecommunication, cargo and passenger transport to the regions in the pacific region. The cars were designed to soot the various needs of people of all status and classes and hence making it the most reliable and convenient means of transport that the pacific could ever have. Cars for tourists and passenger transportations were designed with sitting areas, sleeping areas and even dining areas just to soot those travelling for longer

distances. The rails were also constructed with restaurants at various stations just to give the travellers a chance to freshen up and even eat as they travelled. This hence implied that there were more investment and employment opportunities especially for the locals. Most Canadians were employed either as train attendants or to work in other establishments that arose due to the construction of the line.

Settlements along the railway line were also facilitated with the construction of the CPR. This was caused by immigration of foreigners and even people from various parts of Canada. Some of them were employees to the CPR while others took advantage of the open business opportunities to carry out their trade practices. Increased cargo transportation also facilitated efficient exchange of goods and raw materials within and across the pacific region.

Improved infrastructure was also a development synonymous with the CPR as there was need to transport the products from the railway terminus. Mails and telegraphic messages were also easily transported in the region.

As a means of encouraging investors to migrate to the country, Macdonald's government gave foreign entrepreneurs a train ticket to Canada as well as a piece of land to establish their business. Even though it was an investment strategy, many people considered it as a selfish procedure that preferred foreigners to locals. A foreign investor with entrepreneur skills accessed more favours from the government than local peasant farmers. There was hence a call from the government to also invest in local entrepreneurs rather than concentrating on foreigners who may not necessarily have the interests of the country at heart. However, MacDonald's government was balanced enough to ensure that only potential entrepreneurs invested in the land and

employed the locals. With this strategy, Macdonald's government hoped to improve infrastructure in the country and improve transport and communication.

Western nations and especially United States of America and Britain had gained a lot of access to the resources of other developing nations. The strategy of Macdonald's government was to be less reliant to such nations as much as it could. This was done indirectly to ensure that even though the country will not be controlled by the west, they will still be close enough to provide the market needed for its products (Forster, 1986). The country still needed to benefit from the skills that were synonymous with the west. There was also need for expansion. Canada was originally a small nation and had to stretch its borders. This would give it the military supremacy that every developed nation was craving for.

Another strategy that was developed by the Macdonald's government was to centralise all activities of the country. This meant that all provincial authorities were given lesser power and authority. All decisions affecting the country were made by the central government. This was to ensure that the government takes complete control of the resources as well as ensuring maximum utilization of the same. Even though this was seen as a strategy of denying local authorities some power, it was meant to ensure and facilitate equal distribution of resources. The government considered some areas that had great potential of growth and therefore invested some of its resources there. This would also ensure that there was no interference from local authorities or the possibilities of them forming treaties with neighbouring countries. The local authorities were mainly required to facilitate

development projects and give a comprehensive report to the government. Despite the advantages that the national policy had on the economic growth of Canada during the Macdonald's government, it did not work well for subsequent governments. It was considered to be a selfish strategy that denied other western nations the opportunity to form trade treaties with the country. With this, western nations completely sidelined from Canada which made it difficult for them to market their products. Canada was somehow left to be a lonely nation with almost no imports and no export. Trade agreements were not made by other nations with the fear of possible exploitation. The west also wanted to prove to Canada that they can survive without them. They decided to make treaties instead with other developing nations where they were able to get raw materials for their industrial products.

There were also cases of unequal development of the nation even as the MacDonald government concentrated on areas believed to be having high potential for growth. There were major developments experienced in major towns while the country side remained underdeveloped. People in the country side and more especially peasant farmers were not assisted and the only thing they could boast of was the railway line which was only used to transport farm products. The initial plans of promoting local traders by encouraging entrepreneurs were mainly concentrated in major cities (Forster, 1986). There is a big difference between the architectural developments and infrastructure distributions in main city compared to what is in the country side. A person walking through such areas may be mistaken to think that they have moved to a totally different region.

The unequal development in Canada has also led to rural-urban migration where the young people move to the cities in search of a better lifestyle and job opportunities. This has in turn led to complete negligence of the rural areas that have great agricultural potential. Such farming has been left to old people or peasants who do not have the required farming skills to promote the area. There have been no much efforts put in place to encourage the young people to engage in farming as well as using modern farming techniques to boost food and crop production. The government also concentrated its attention in industrial production and neglected farming. It is for this purpose that there are many industries in Canada, some which had to be closed down because of lack of raw materials (Fowke, 1957).

References

Creighton, D. (1955). Sir John A. Macdonald. Vol. 2: The Old Chieftain.

Toronto: Macmillan.

Forster, B. (1986). A Conjunction of Interests: Business, Politics, and Tariffs, 1825-1879. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fowke, V. (1957). The National Policy and the Wheat Economy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.