

The end of the British World and the redefinition of citizenship in Canada, 1950s-1970s¹

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Abstract

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Keywords: *British World, Citizenship, Canada, Indigeneity, Ethnicity, National Identity, New Nationalism*

¹ The research for this article was undertaken while I was an Avi Arensen Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies (SICS) at Carleton University. I am grateful to the International Council for Canadian Studies for their financial support, and SICS for hosting me, and for all their support, both material and intellectual

In the 1950s, English-speaking Canada very much identified itself as a British country and an integral part of a wider British World, which had the United Kingdom (UK) at its centre. Canada's bicultural nature, with the French-Canadians, complicated this self-identity in Canada. However, by the 1970s this British World had ended, as had Canada's self-identification as a British nation. During this period, citizenship in Canada was redefined in a significant way from being an ethnic (British) based one to a more civic founded one – which was more inclusive of other ethnic groups and apparently Indigenous peoples. This article will argue that this redefinition of citizenship took place primarily in the context of this major shift in national identity. After having established the context of the end of the British World in Canada (with a focus on the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the UK's application for entry into the European Economic Community (EEC)) it will explore the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1967 and the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1977 to illustrate the way in which citizenship became more inclusive of other ethnic groups in the country. It will then study the awarding of the right to vote for First Nations (I will use the contemporary term 'First Nations' in this article to describe Indigenous groups who were historically referred to as 'Indians'. However, any quotes from historical sources will of course employ the term used at the time) in 1960 and the 1969 White Paper to highlight the way in which citizenship in Canada also appeared to incorporate Indigenous groups at this time.

Theoretical Background

Before studying these several key points it will be prudent to spend some time on the theoretical context to citizenship in Canada during the 1950s and 1970s – primarily the difference between normative (citizenship as status) as opposed to substantive citizenship (citizenship as rights and obligations). According to Christina Gabriel ‘Conceptualizations of citizenship are generally characterized by issues of inclusion and exclusion, rights and duties, and full participation...The nature of each of these issues, however...is historically specific, shifting, and the object of political debate.² Post-war ideas of citizenship have been heavily influenced by T. H. Marshall’s theory of citizenship rights.³ Marshall maintains that ‘Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community...All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is bestowed.’⁴ However, not everyone who has citizenship shares equitably in the social, political and economic benefits of their society. However, it does bestow specific crucial rights.⁵ Will Kymlicka and Norman Wayne argue that ‘Citizenship is not just a certain status, defined by a set of rights and responsibilities...It is also an identity, an expression of

² Christina Gabriel, ‘Citizens and Citizenship’ in Janine Brodie and Sandra Rein (Eds), *Critical Concepts: An introduction to politics* (Toronto: Pearson, 2009) 166.

³ *Ibid*

⁴ T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Development: Essays by T. H. Marshall* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1964) 84.

⁵ William Kaplan, ‘Who Belongs? Changing Concepts of Citizenship and Nationality’ in William Kaplan (ed.) *Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) 252.

one's membership in a political community.'⁶ Jane Jenson asserts that 'Citizenship involves much more than the recognition provided by a passport...It has come to mean the attribution to citizens of a range of rights, including civil rights that protect individuals and groups from state interference; political rights of democratic participation; and substantive social and economic rights which recognize society's responsibility for all its members.'⁷ Due to shifting outlooks and the large numbers of non-British migrants in the 1950s and 1960s, the difference in the way that British subjects and aliens were treated started to be criticised by the latter. The idea that citizenship is a privilege and not a right was also questioned by increasing non-British migrants.⁸ Canadian citizens however continued to be British subjects until 1977, when Canadian citizenship was acknowledged as a right in relation to a series of new initiatives incorporated in changes to the Citizenship Act. According to Linda Cardinal and Marie-Joie Brady 'The new Citizenship Act constituted a framework that served to denounce the discriminatory practices that had defined the linkages between the British Crown and its many subjects such as Aboriginal peoples, British citizens, French Canadians, or immigrants...Until the first half of the twentieth century, Aboriginal peoples living in reserves had the status of minors.'⁹ Darlene Johnston

⁶ Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, 'Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory', *Ethics*, vol. 104, 1994, 369.

⁷ Jane Jenson, 'Citizenship Claims: Routes to Representation in a Federal System' in Karen Knop, Sylvia Ostry, Richard Simeon and Katherine Swinton (Eds), *Rethinking Federalism: Citizens, Markets and Governments in a Changing World* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995) 99.

⁸ Valerie Knowles, *Forging our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1997) 88.

maintains that 'Citizenship...The very word conjures up notions of freedom and autonomy, the right to participate, a sense of belonging...The Western political tradition regards the evolution of citizenship as its crowning achievement...However, for the First Nations over whom Canada asserts jurisdiction, the experience of Canadian citizenship has been somewhat less ennobling.'¹⁰ Kenneth Carty and Peter Ward argue that 'In postwar Canada, newly ascendant liberal views on race and ethnic relations challenged traditional biases in electoral law, and, in response, governments dismantled these barriers one by one...But not until 1960 was universal suffrage, the proclaimed goal of popular democracy, truly achieved.'¹¹

Context of the end of the British World

Having laid this theoretical foundation, the article will now turn to studying the context of the end of the British World as the key cause for the redefinition of citizenship in Canada between the 1950s and 1970s. After the Second World War English-speaking Canada very much still saw itself as an integral part of a wider British

⁹ Linda Cardinal and Marie-Joie Brady, 'Citizenship and Federalism in Canada: A Difficult Relationship' in Alain-G. Gagnon (ed.), *Contemporary Canadian Federalism: Foundations, Traditions, Institutions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 384.

¹⁰ Darlene Johnston, 'First Nations and Canadian Citizenship' in William Kaplan (ed.), *Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993) 349.

¹¹ R. Kenneth Carty and W. Peter Ward, 'The Making of a Canadian Political Citizenship' in R. Kenneth Carty and W. Peter Ward (Eds), *National Politics and Community in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986) 74.

World. As stated above this Britannic identity was complicated by the presence of a competing founding European group: the French-Canadians.¹² The Canadian Citizenship Act of 1947 is an excellent example of the bicultural nature of Canada at the time. The legislation enshrined the concept of Canadian citizenship for the very first time, but it also maintained the status of British subject and British subjects from other parts of the Commonwealth were given privileged positions compared to non-British subjects in terms of naturalisation.¹³ However, English-speaking Canada's Britishness began to unravel with the Suez Crisis of 1956.¹⁴ According to Jose Igartua 'The Suez incident became a litmus test of Canada's sense of place on the international scene, of Canadian values, and of national unity...It provoked both defenders and opponents of the Canadian position at the United Nations into arguments based on varying conceptions of what Canada was as a country, and what it should be.'¹⁵ The

¹² For more on the prevalence of Britishness in English-speaking Canada at this time and the French-Canadian reaction to it see Jatinder Mann, "Anglo-Conformity": Assimilation policy in Canada, 1890s-1950s', *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 50, December 2014: 253-276. It should be pointed out though that English-speaking Canada's Britishness was not a sign of inferiority; rather English-speaking Canadian Britons saw themselves as superior to those in the 'mother-country'. It was maintained that the harsh Canadian climate, the realities of colonial life and a healthier diet had resulted in a fitter and stronger British population in Canada.

¹³ For more on the *Canadian Citizenship Act* of 1947 see Jatinder Mann, 'The evolution of Commonwealth citizenship, 1945-48 in Canada, Britain and Australia', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, vol. 50, no. 3, July 2012: 293-313.

¹⁴ This was a crisis precipitated by the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser in July 1956, which in turn led to the UK and France, who had substantial commercial interests in the canal, entering into a clandestine agreement with Israel to invade Egypt in October 1956, thus giving the two powers the opportunity to in turn send troops into the canal zone on the pretext of 'separating the warring parties'.

¹⁵ Jose Igartua, "Ready, Aye, Ready" No More?' in Phil Buckner (ed.), *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005) 48.

Liberal government did not support the Anglo-French action. Though Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent saw Nasser as a dictator, he believed that to respond to aggression with aggression, except under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), would lead to an estrangement in relations with neutral nations such as India, and would offer the Soviet Union an excuse to interfere even more in the Middle East.¹⁶ The United States (US) was also firmly opposed to the Anglo-French action, partly for the same reason. This consequently also influenced the Canadian government's position, as Canada was a core ally of the Americans in the context of the Cold War and the threat of communism.¹⁷ In contrast, John Diefenbaker, the Progressive Conservative spokesperson on external affairs (and future prime minister) expressed his party's position of being solidly behind the UK on the issue. He called on the St. Laurent government to support the UK in criticising Nasser's action as the abrogation of an international contract.¹⁸

After the British and French had invaded Egypt, the position of the Canadian government shifted from lack of support for the Anglo-French action to open criticism and condemnation of it. But the Progressive Conservative Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Howard Green, scathingly maintained that 'The United States would have far more admiration for Canada...if this government stopped being the United States chore boy...Now this

¹⁶ Dale C. Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968) 459.

¹⁷ Robert Bothwell, *The Penguin History of Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006) 381-3.

¹⁸ Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent*, 459.

government, by its action in the Suez Crisis, has made this month of November, 1956, the most disgraceful period for Canada in the history of this nation.’¹⁹ The Progressive Conservatives hence argued that the Liberal government was taking such a firm line against the Anglo-French action in Suez because it was keen to be seen as following the US position. They instead believed that Canada should support the UK one hundred per cent. An Anti-American tone from the Progressive Conservatives is obvious. This would later become exemplified through the personal animosity between Diefenbaker, when he became prime minister and President John F. Kennedy.

The English language press, usually loyal to Britain, was now divided. A survey of the twenty-six English-language dailies displayed a fifty-fifty split between those who agreed with the government and those who supported the Anglo-French intervention.²⁰

The positions of the two parties were polarised even further when Canada took a leading role in the United Nations Emergency Force (which the US sponsored) into Egypt, which signalled an embarrassing retreat for the UK and France, and symbolised to the whole world that they were no longer global superpowers.²¹ To the Progressive Conservatives it appeared to be only yet another instance of the Liberal government’s readiness to follow American policy, but once they themselves were in

¹⁹ Debates, *House of Commons (Hereafter H of C)*, 1956-57, 27 November 1956, Howard Green cited in Igartua, “‘Ready, Aye, Ready’ No More?’, 47.

²⁰ Igartua, “‘Ready, Aye, Ready’ No More?’, 61-2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

power, they came to realise that the ties with the 'mother-country' were not as strong as they once were.²²

In the context of concerns over US dominance in Canada, the UK's decision to seek membership in the EEC in 1961 was a deathblow to British race patriotism in English-speaking Canada. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's European ambitions were in no way the first disagreement between the UK and Canadian governments in terms of their own interests. However, it represented a clash of interests in a completely different league from those that had affected the harmony of the Commonwealth in the past. As Andrea Benvenuti and Stuart Ward make clear 'The prospect of British adoption of a European common tariff, and the long-term political implications of European unity, raised fundamental questions about the material and ideological foundations of a "Greater Britain".'²³ Before proclaiming any formal decision to seek membership, the Macmillan government believed it necessary to make some moves towards 'consulting' Commonwealth governments. Unsurprisingly, Duncan Sandys, the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Commonwealth Relations met with a cool reaction in Ottawa, and evidently failed to persuade the Diefenbaker government. Regardless of his reassurances that the UK cabinet had not yet made a firm decision to seek membership in the EEC, the Canadian ministers got the

²² Jack L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986) 43.

²³

general view that the UK had in fact already decided to open negotiations.²⁴

Canadian irritation with British methods arose more clearly a few months later at the Commonwealth Economic Conference in Accra, when Canada's Finance Minister Donald Fleming and Trade Minister George Hees carried out a direct attack on the UK's promises to the Commonwealth, made openly over several years, which they argued were plainly set to be broken.²⁵

The Liberal opposition, headed by Lester Pearson, accused the government of leading the criticism of the UK, and announced their unqualified backing for the UK's EEC membership application. Fleming was made to openly refute the view that Canada had acted in an aggressive way against the UK.²⁶ He justified his government's reaction to the EEC question in an address at Winnipeg: 'Like all families, we have had our differences; like all human associations ours is not a perfect one, but by and large our aims have been common, and where they have diverged we have brought our differences to the conference table and discussed them as members of a family.'²⁷ The language used by Fleming illustrates how Britishness still had some resonance in English-speaking Canadian society.

Diefenbaker agreed to not officially attack the British government publicly; he did however take the chance to express his worries to Macmillan privately. One

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 169, 170.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁶ Benvenuti and Ward, 'Britain, Europe, and the "Other Quiet Revolution" in Canada', 172-3.

²⁷ National Archives of the UK, DO 159/52, Fleming, speech at Winnipeg, 19 January 1962 cited in Benvenuti and Ward, 'Britain, Europe, and the "Other Quiet Revolution" in Canada', 173.

such opportunity arose when Macmillan visited Ottawa in April 1962. On his visit Diefenbaker emphasised the impact of trade preferences ‘in maintaining the cohesion of the Commonwealth’ in its entirety, and for Canada specifically ‘as a means of staving off United States domination.’ The political economic shift in Canada to a continental economy had begun in a large way after 1945. Diefenbaker stressed that the Canadian government ‘was keenly concerned with the preservation of the Commonwealth and feared that its future would be endangered by the political implications of United Kingdom entry.’²⁸ Benvenuti and Ward argue that ‘These comments reveal the extent of Canadian anxieties concerning the less tangible aspects of British entry into Europe – the unravelling of the British world raised acute awareness of the “other quiet revolution,” and posed difficult questions about Canada’s sense of place and purpose in the post-imperial world.’²⁹

‘It was our purpose to develop national symbols which would give us pride and confidence and belief in Canada.’³⁰ Prime Minister Lester Pearson’s comment on the adoption of the new Maple Leaf Flag in 1965 encapsulates the essence of the ‘new nationalism’ during this period. It emerged as something to fill the supposed void left by the demise of Britishness in English-speaking Canada. The

²⁸ Library and Archives Canada (Hereafter LAC), RG25, vol. 5519, file 12447-40 (pt. 51), record of meeting between Prime Minister Macmillan and Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Ottawa, 20 April 1962 cited in Benvenuti and Ward, ‘Britain, Europe, and the “Other Quiet Revolution” in Canada’, 176-7.

²⁹ Benvenuti and Ward, ‘Britain, Europe, and the “Other Quiet Revolution” in Canada’, 177.

³⁰ Lester Pearson, ‘Symbols and realities’ in J. A. Munro and A. I. Inglis (Eds), *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson: Volume 3, 1957–1968* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975) 270.

‘new nationalism’ involved the construction of local symbols of identity to replace those of British race patriotism. In this respect, an earlier antecedent was the establishment of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957, which aimed at supporting uniquely Canadian cultural endeavour.

At the same time as the ‘new nationalism’ was developed under Pearson, the Quiet Revolution was progressing in Québec (this was the mass modernisation of the province of Québec economically, politically, and socially) and its consequences were becoming more apparent. René Levesque, the Liberal Minister of Natural Resources in Québec (and future premier), when asked by a journalist at *Le Devoir* whether people exaggerated when they discussed the Quiet Revolution in Québec, replied: ‘There is no exaggeration, and indeed we have not yet finished measuring the significance of the recent changes in Québec...What is the result? A nation awake, in full swing, fed up with being seen as a museum, as “the quaint old province of Québec,” a nation bend on advancing, rising: no longer just content to endure.’³¹

Pearson responded to this growing nationalism in Québec by stressing a Canadian identity that incorporated French-Canadians. He stated in April 1965: ‘We must become increasingly proud of the composition and character of our people – the French part, the English part, and the third force’³² (these were Canadians of neither British nor

³¹ ‘The Quiet Revolution in Québec’, *Citizen*, vol. 10, no. 5, December 1964, 10, 11.

³² The first major reference to a ‘third force’ was by Senator Paul Yuzyk, who was of Ukrainian descent in his maiden speech to the Senate in 1964. He

French origin)...I don't believe that the Anglo-Saxon element in our society need be subordinated or minimized, because Canada is now a multiracial society.'³³ This was a ground-breaking statement as it was the first time that any Canadian leader had described their country as a multiracial society. This was the background in which citizenship legislation was amended during the 1960s and 1970s.

The Canadian Citizenship Act of 1967

The Canadian Citizenship Act was amended in 1951, 1957, 1962, 1967, and 1977. However, it was in 1967 and then in 1977 that major reforms were introduced. The 1977 reforms have quite rightly been given the majority of attention, but the 1967 reforms very much laid the foundation for the subsequent act and so I will explore these firstly. In May 1964, the Cabinet approved amendments to the Canadian Citizenship Act, which were primarily aimed at removing the discrimination between natural-born and naturalised Canadians and to make it simpler for a person who was married to a Canadian citizen to acquire Canadian citizenship.³⁴ However, progress was not made with the changes as the Cabinet was still

subsequently emerged as one of the

strongest proponents of multiculturalism.

³³ LAC, MG32-C67/Vol. 91/File 1, Prime Minister Lester Pearson, in the Weekend Magazine, no. 14, 3 April 1965, has seen fit to make the following significant statement to all Canadians.

³⁴ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6264 – Cabinet Conclusions – Amendment of the Canadian Citizenship Act, 7 May 1964, 3, 4.

discussing them nearly a year later. The changes were specifically aimed at removing Section 18 of the Act, which provided for the loss of Canadian citizenship by a naturalised Canadian who lived outside of Canada for more than a decade. The Cabinet Committee on Legislation had argued that the right offered by the deletion of Section 18 might be taken advantage of by new Canadians who went back to their country of origin – especially if it were a Communist nation – soon after being awarded citizenship. However, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, John Nicholson suggested that, considering its long-standing pledge, the government agree to remove Section 18 of the Citizenship Act. The Cabinet ultimately agreed to this.³⁵ However, it was not until towards the end of 1965 that the *Victoria Daily Times* commented that the Citizenship and Immigration Acts would be getting a major revamp at the next session of Parliament.³⁶ The cause of the delay was apparently the heavy parliamentary backlog.³⁷

In October 1966 J. R. Templeton, Clerk of the Court of Canadian Citizenship expressed his astonishment that there was no reference to ‘Canadian Citizens’ in a questionnaire produced by the city of Ottawa. He thought it surprising ‘that your questionnaire asks residents of Ottawa whether they are British subjects or Aliens and there is absolutely no reference to Canadian Citizens

³⁵ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6271 – Cabinet Conclusions – Proposed amendment to Citizenship Act – Report of security panel, 2 April 1965, 2, 3.

³⁶ LAC, RG6/Vol. 659/File 1-5-2, Part 2, Extract from the *Victoria Daily Times* – ‘Major Revamp Facing “Archaic” Act’, 26 November 1965.

³⁷ LAC, RG6/Vol. 664/File 3-6-11, Charles A. Lussier, Assistant Deputy Minister (Citizenship) to Donald A. Cameron, 21 July 1965, 2.

anywhere in the questionnaire.' He emphasised his point with 'it seems strange to me that there is no place on the form in question to indicate that you are a Canadian Citizen, particularly in view of the fact that the Canadian Citizenship Act came into effect on January 1st, 1947, that this is the eve of Centennial Year and especially because Ottawa is the capital of our country.'³⁸ Thus, the prevalence of the status of British subject, especially at a provincial or municipal level was still very evident. However, the criticism of this by Templeton illustrates that there was growing pressure to place more importance on Canadian Citizenship. However, the federal government did not feel that it should make a huge issue with the provincial governments about the usage of the term 'British Subject' now, as the situation was slowly improving by itself.³⁹

In a memorandum to Cabinet in late 1966, the Secretary of State Judy LaMarsh outlined the status of the revision of the Canadian Citizenship Act:

At the opening of the last three sessions of Parliament the Government has announced its intention to introduce amendments to the Canadian Citizenship Act to ensure full equality of rights for all Canadian citizens wherever they were born...In the intervening time a number of additional suggestions for amendment have been made, some of which have been approved by the Cabinet, and incorporated in a draft bill which has not yet been placed before Ministers. It

³⁸ LAC, RG6/Vol. 659/File 1-5-1, J. R. Templeton, Clerk of the Court of Canadian Citizenship to W. P. Simpson, Assessment Commissioner, Ottawa (including Questionnaire), 7 October 1966, 1.

³⁹ LAC, RG6/Vol. 659/File 1-5-1, W. R. Martin, Registrar of Canadian Citizenship to Assistant Under Secretary of State (Citizenship), 27 October 1966.

would be desirable to rewrite the Citizenship Act completely but the legislative programme is so full that even if a revision could be prepared quickly, which is doubtful, it could not be introduced for some time.⁴⁰

Hence, the revision process was taking quite a long time and LaMarsh could not even give an indication of when the final draft bill would be introduced, which perhaps indicates that it was not considered a top priority.

However, there was pressure on Jean Marchand, Minister of Manpower and Immigration at the end of the year by Dr. K. M. Banreti-Fuchs, a naturalised Canadian to remove the inequality between natural-born and naturalised Canadians in the current Canadian Citizenship Act. Specifically the provision whereby naturalised Canadians lost their citizenship if they lived outside Canada for over a decade. Dr. Banreti-Fuchs enquired ‘whether any concrete steps are being taken by your Department to correct the present state of affairs regarding our Citizenship Act.’⁴¹ LaMarsh replied that when the Parliamentary timetable permitted, she intended to ‘introduce amendments to the Canadian Citizenship Act which, amongst other things, will remove the element of discrimination concerning loss of citizenship to which you have referred.’⁴²

This was finally done in early 1967. However, some members of the Cabinet expressed their concern that the proposal would lead to a debate on the Commonwealth

⁴⁰ LAC, RG2-B-2/Vol. 6320/Cab. Doc. 700-66, Memorandum by Judy LaMarsh, Secretary of State to the Cabinet – Legislation: Citizenship Act Amendments, 30 November 1966, 1.

⁴¹ LAC, RG6/Vol. 664/File 3-6-11, Dr. K. M. Banreti-Fuchs to Jean Marchand, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, 1 December 1966.

⁴²

and the privileged status of British subjects in citizenship issues. LaMarsh's response was that those sections of the draft bill relating to these matters simply be deleted.⁴³ The Cabinet approved this the following day.⁴⁴ Therefore, because Britishness had unravelled in English-speaking Canada by this point, the continued preferential treatment awarded to British subjects was a potentially contentious issue.

There was a lively debate when the bill finally reached Parliament in May 1967. The debate unsurprisingly first centred on the continued privileges of British subjects in the legislation. A French-Canadian Liberal MP, Auguste Choquette pointed out that 'According to the Citizenship Act those who are born in Canada are also British subjects, and I say this with apologies to the hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan)...Since Elizabeth II is Queen of Canada would the hon. member recommend that the status of British subjects for Canadian citizens be eliminated?'⁴⁵ He received a quick riposte from Richard Bell, the Progressive Conservative member for Carleton: 'Indeed, I certainly would not...It is one of my great prides that in addition to being a Canadian citizen, which is my first love, I am also a British subject.'⁴⁶ This was a long-standing view held by many English-speaking Canadians. However, Choquette received support from

⁴³ LAC, RG2-B-2/Vol. 6325/Cab. Doc. 157-67, Memorandum by Judy LaMarsh, Secretary of State to the Cabinet – Canadian Citizenship Act Amendments, 15 March 1967, 1, 3.

⁴⁴ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6323, Amendments to the Canadian Citizenship Act, 16 March 1967, 5.

⁴⁵ Debates, *H of C*, Vol. 1, 1967, 26 May 1967, Mr. Choquette, 642.

⁴⁶ Debates, *H of C*, Vol. 1, 1967, 26 May 1967, Richard Bell, 642.

another English-speaking Canadian, the Liberal member for York-Scarborough, Robert Stanbury:

The argument is put forward very often that naturally a person coming from a British country, with British parliamentary traditions, is more familiar with our democratic processes and our history and therefore should have rights superior to those afforded immigrants from other countries. But I would suggest that there is no longer any logic to this argument (this was due to the end of the British connection and bicultural considerations)...I think the least we could do in amending the citizenship act is recognize this kind of discrimination, ensuring for instance that the stress placed upon a person being a British subject does not accentuate the discrimination against others which is already inherent in our laws.⁴⁷

This shows that attitudes were changing, even amongst English-speaking Canadians. Despite these continued distinctions, the Citizenship Bill passed the House of Commons and the Senate and received royal assent to become the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1967. I will now turn to examining the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1977.

The Canadian Citizenship Act of 1977

This Act finally removed the remaining privileges that British subjects had over other migrants to Canada. Similarly, to its predecessor the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1977 had a very long legislative process. At the beginning of 1974, the Cabinet agreed that the draft

⁴⁷ Debates, *H of C*, Vol. 1, 1967, 26 May 1967, Robert Stanbury, 647.

Citizenship Bill, initially prepared for introduction in 1972, be forwarded to the Department for Justice for revision. J. Hugh Faulkner, the Secretary of State would revise the oath included in the draft Bill, to incorporate references to both the Queen and to Canada, and would forward the finished product to caucus for its deliberation.⁴⁸ Faulkner would also confer with caucus regarding the issue of plural nationality. In addition, announcement of the introduction of the Bill should be incorporated in the Speech from the Throne for the next session of Parliament.⁴⁹ Some months later the President of the Privy Council and the Government Leader in the House of Commons highlighted that, the Bill would remove special treatment for British subjects. The Cabinet agreed to consider the draft Bill entitled ‘An Act Respecting Citizenship’ dated 24 April 1974 at a subsequent date.⁵⁰

The Bill finally reached Parliament at the end of 1975 – again the delay seems to imply that it was not a high priority for the government – although it would later claim that this was due to a detailed consultation process with various representative ethnic group organisations. Jake Epp, the Progressive Conservative member for Provencher maintained that more emphasis should be placed in the current Citizenship Bill on the obligations of citizenship for new prospective citizens. He thought this was particularly important as Canada was receiving considerable immigration

⁴⁸ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6436, Citizenship Legislation, 10 January 1974, 11.

⁴⁹ LAC, RG2-B-2/Vol. 26589/Cab. Doc. 1235-73, Record of Cabinet Decision by R. B. Charron, Supervisor of Cabinet Documents – Citizenship Legislation, 11 January 1974, 2.

⁵⁰ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6436, An Act Respecting Citizenship, 8, 9.

from countries that did not have strong democratic traditions.⁵¹

However, the Progressive Conservative member for Perth-Wilmot, Bill Jarvis was much more critical of the Bill, particularly the time it had taken to reach the house:

I hope later in my remarks to be a little more charitable, but at the outset may I say it is my opinion that this bill has been gathering dust in the citizenship branch for years and all through the twenty-ninth parliament. It is absolutely ridiculous that we are sitting here in the closing days of 1975 debating whether an 18 year old can apply for citizenship...The bill received first reading in October, 1974. Seven months later we got around to having the second reading debate. Now, well along in 1975, we are just getting into the third day of debate on this very important piece of legislation.⁵²

However, Jarvis' more substantive comments related to the change in the status of British subjects. He asserted that this was a major change. Jarvis was not so much concerned with the change in status itself; rather he was extremely critical of the 'rotten job' as he put it that the government had done in announcing the changes to British subjects. He said that he had never heard of a so-called advertising campaign by the government or any public pronouncements by the Secretary of State informing British subjects of their change in status or their change in voting rights.⁵³

⁵¹ Debates, *H of C*, vol. IX, 1975, Jake Epp, 9802, 9803.

⁵² Debates, *H of C*, vol. IX, 1975, Bill Jarvis, 9809.

⁵³ Debates, *H of C*, vol. IX, 1975, Bill Jarvis, 9810.

Walter Baker, the Progressive Conservative member for Granville-Carleton also discussed the change in status of British subjects in the new bill, but unlike his colleague, he criticised the change itself:

I think it is correct to say that, by virtue of this bill, we are to treat those who are not British, and not members of the Commonwealth of Nations, in the same way as we treat British subjects...the minister implied that we were wrong to treat the British subject differently. But I suggest there was good reason for treating him differently...We must bear in mind that many people who come to this country have enjoyed the British parliamentary system, British justice, and other protections of the law as a matter of traditions. An advantage is enjoyed by the citizen from Great Britain, a Commonwealth country...in terms of the necessity of absorbing new traditions.⁵⁴

This illustrates that even though English-speaking Canada's self-identification as a British nation had declined in the 1950s and 1960s, it was a gradual process and remnants still remained, even as late as the 1970s.

Len Marchand, the Liberal member for Kamloops-Cariboo offered a contrary view to Baker on the change in status of British subjects:

A bone of contention over the years regarding citizenship has been the term "British subject"...I always felt uneasy about the term because in no way did I feel like I was a British subject. I can understand how people coming from many other lands must feel. To me the term "British subject" connotes that a person comes from Britain...There will no longer be a

⁵⁴ Debates, *H of C*, vol. X, 1975-76, Walter Baker, 9899.

privileged status for anyone. People wishing to become Canadian citizens will be treated the same regardless of where they came from...This is a very progressive change and I welcome it.⁵⁵

This had been a long-standing view held by many French-Canadian parliamentarians since the inception of the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1947. The difference now though was that quite a large number of English-speaking Canadian parliamentarians shared that position.

Faulkner in a message in July 1976 announced the passage of the Canadian Citizenship Act the previous week. He acknowledged that the act had a long process of discussion and development. However, Faulkner did mention that his office had consulted numerous ethno-cultural organisations, both during the drafting of the Bill and through its passage through parliament.⁵⁶ More detail was given in a news release the following month:

The Secretary of State, J. Hugh Faulkner, stated that "This new Act will make the acquisition of citizenship a more logical, equitable and consistent process and I envisage that it will encourage many resident across the country to become official members of our great Canadian family." Under the new Act, applicants for naturalization are treated alike, regardless of...country of origin and citizenship now becomes a right, provided certain conditions are met.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Debates, *H of C*, vol. X, 1975-76, Len Marchand, 9904.

⁵⁶ LAC, R11236/Vol. 135/File 148-4-8, A Message from the Secretary of State (including short press release), 23 July 1976.

⁵⁷ LAC, R11236/Vol. 135/File 148-4-8, J. Hugh Faulkner, The Secretary of State for Canada to Bud Cullen, Minister of National Revenue (including copies of a press release to the ethnic press and women's groups and the bill itself), 6 August 1976, 1.

The Canadian Citizenship Act of 1977 was a ground-breaking piece of legislation as it finally removed all inequalities, especially in terms of ethnicity that had existed in previous citizenship legislation for such a long time. So, I have shown above how the context of the end of the British World in Canada led to the redefinition of citizenship in relation to other ethnic groups. I will now turn to exploring how this context led to shifts in the way in which Indigenous peoples in Canada were regarded when it came to citizenship.

Awarding of the right to vote for First Nation in 1969

Alongside the overall context of the shift in national identity – with an emphasis on a ‘new nationalism’, pressure from the UN and decolonisation movements also contributed towards the federal government addressing the issue of the federal franchise and First Nations in the early 1960s. There was considerable internal discussion within the Department of Citizenship and Immigration about the awarding of the right to vote for First Nations in late 1959. Reports from agencies on the ground indicated that there was a high level of interest in voting amongst some First Nations and relative indifference in others. In general, the consensus was that First Nations regarded the right to vote initially with suspicion. However, largely they had become politically more conscious after they were awarded the franchise in provincial elections, and this had resulted in their having a larger feeling of affinity with their fellow residents in the areas in which

they resided.⁵⁸ H. M. Jones, Director, Department of Citizenship and Immigration in a memorandum to the Deputy Minister agreed completely with the idea that First Nations should be awarded an unrestricted right to vote. Those living on reserves had certainly not come forward in large numbers to receive the right to the franchise under the terms imposed by the existing legislation (Under the revisions to the Indian Act [which from its first inception in 1876 regulated the lives of First Nations living on reserves in the country] in 1950 First Nations living on reserves could be awarded the right to vote only if they become ‘enfranchised’ – which was essentially giving up their status as First Nations living on reserves. This was achieved through them executing a waiver of exemption from taxation on money earned on reserves). Jones then outlined the steps that would be required to achieve this end, which were primarily amendments to the Indian Act and the Canada Elections Act.⁵⁹ A few days later Ellen Fairclough, Minister for Citizenship and Immigration in a letter to her colleague, E. D. Fulton, Minister of Justice announced her intention to introduce legislation to award the federal franchise to First Nations along the lines that Jones had suggested.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 94/File IA-166/File 18, Memorandum by H. M. Jones, Acting Director, Department of Citizenship and Immigration to the Deputy Minister, 20 November 1959, 1-2

⁵⁹ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 94/File IA-166/File 18, Memorandum by H. M. Jones, Director, Department of Citizenship and Immigration to the Deputy Minister, 25 November 1959, 1.

⁶⁰ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 94/File IA-166/File 18, Ellen L. Fairclough to E. D. Fulton, Minister of Justice, 27 November 1959.

Fairclough in a memorandum to cabinet on the subject in November 1959 made a persuasive case for the change:

The present legislation has created an anomalous situation: some of the most primitive Indians in Canada in the James Bay area of Québec and Ontario and also in the Yukon and Northwest Territories have the right to vote because they do not live on reserves and, in fact, voted in the last federal election. On the other hand, the most educated Indians in the southern parts of the provinces because they live on reserves and have never felt they should execute a waiver of exemption from taxation, are not eligible to vote. It is considered that the present restrictions should be removed and the Indians given the same privileges with respect to voting as other Canadian citizens.⁶¹

Thus, the changes to the Indian Act in 1950 had not led to a large number of First Nations living on reserves deciding to become 'enfranchised' and thereby being awarded the federal vote. The Cabinet approved the recommendations of the minister the following month.⁶²

There was also popular pressure for the government to act. In a brief submitted by the Primate of all Canada on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada to the Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Indian Affairs⁶³ in January 1960, it was 'urged that the

⁶¹ LAC, RG2-B-2/Vol. 2745/Cab. Doc. 383-59, Memorandum by Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister for Citizenship and Immigration to the Cabinet Re: Proposed amendment to the Indian Act and Canada Elections Act concerning voting by Indians, 27 November 1959.

⁶² LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 2745, Legislation – Amendment to the Indian Act and Canada Elections Act concerning voting by Indians, 15 December 1959, 5.

⁶³ This was a major committee set up by the Diefenbaker government to look into relations between First Nations and the Canadian state, with the ultimate goal of revising the Indian Act, which had

federal vote be granted to all Indians residing on reserves without prejudice to their status.’⁶⁴ However, the Aboriginal Native Rights Regional Committee of the Interior Tribes of British Columbia in its brief argued that ‘If we are to have the Federal vote at the expense of losing our aboriginal rights, we flatly refuse.’ They further added that ‘we would appreciate a system of voting similar to the Maoris of New Zealand, where all the Indians of Canada would vote for an Indian or Indian representatives in Parliament.’⁶⁵ Concerns by First Nations that they would lose rights guaranteed to them by the Indian Act and the long-standing treaties that some of them had with the Crown⁶⁶ (which predated the Indian Act) if they were awarded the federal franchise were a recurring one.

The Senate finally approved the awarding of the federal franchise to First Nations in April 1960. The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix drew attention however to critical remarks by Liberal Senator Thomas A. Crerar of Manitoba who said that passage of the legislation would lead to inequality and anomalies: ‘If the Indian is to become a full

not been reformed in any significant way since 1950. The awarding of the right to vote on the federal level to First Nations was one of the issues it discussed.

⁶⁴ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 88/File IA-12J, A brief submitted by the Primate of all Canada on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada to the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, January 1960, 5.

⁶⁵ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 88/File IA-12J, Brief Prepared by the Aboriginal Native Rights Regional Committee of the Interior Tribes of British Columbia, 20.

⁶⁶ Generally speaking the Crown concluded treaties with First Nations in parts of Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Québec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta when British settlers first arrived in what became Canada by which the First Nations agreed to surrender large tracts of their land and live on reservations for compensation of some sort, usually financial. However, there were no treaties with First Nations in British Columbia, the Metis (indigenous people of mixed First Nation and European descent) and indigenous peoples in the territories (Inuit). The treaties that did exist between the Crown and the First Nations were often not honoured though, which was a rightful cause of complaint by those First Nations that had signed the treaties in good faith.

citizen he must accept all the responsibilities and not receive these favors.⁶⁷ We are setting up a discrimination between citizens and that is not what we want to do.⁶⁸ Hence, there was not unanimous agreement that the proposed changes were a positive thing.

There was so much concern amongst certain First Nations that the changes proposed would lead to a loss of rights they had under the Indian Act and their own treaties with the Crown that some bands sought legal advice on their impact. There was particularly worry over military conscription during wartime.⁶⁹ However, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration emphasised that 'There is no compulsory feature in the legislation...It merely extends to the Indians the right to vote if they wish to do so.' In the past other legislation such as making the Family Allowances and Old Age Pensions payable to First Nations had engendered similar fears but they had proven to be groundless.⁷⁰

The *Globe and Mail* offered a First Nation perspective on the changes proposed through a First Nation person writing an editorial in the newspaper in which he asserted that 'Many Indians in Canada look towards the granting of the Federal vote with suspicion, scepticism, distrust, and fear.' The main cause of this according to the

⁶⁷ This was a reference to the continued right of First Nations living on reserves not to have to pay tax on any income they earned there.

⁶⁸ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File IA-166/File 1, Extract from the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* – 'Senate Group Approves Federal Vote for Indians', 1 April 1960.

⁶⁹ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File IA-166/File 1, Fred. R. & David Conroy Barristers et al. to Department of Citizenship and Immigration, 2 April 1960.

⁷⁰ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File IA-166/File 1, H. B. M. Best, Private Secretary, Minister to Fred R. & David Conroy Barristers et al., 11 April 1960, 2-3.

author was the continued existence of Section 112 of the Indian Act, which allowed the Minister of Indian Affairs to force a First Nation person, even an entire band or tribe to be ejected from a First Nation Reserve.⁷¹ The Regina Leader-Post also maintained that there would be extreme reluctance by First Nations to vote, as they were worried that by so doing they would lose rights guaranteed to them by the Indian Act. The newspaper argued that a written assurance by Prime Minister Diefenbaker detailing that this would not be the case would go a long way towards allaying their fears.⁷²

Fairclough wrote to those First Nation individuals who had executed a waiver of exemption from taxation in order to be able to exercise the federal franchise in May 1960 informing them that under the new legislation the waiver no longer bound them. They were exempt again from taxation on income earned on reserves as well as being able to vote in federal elections.⁷³ Nevertheless, there was still some considerable anxiety expressed by various First Nation group representatives that their people would lose rights guaranteed by the Indian Act if they exercised the federal franchise and that voting would be compulsory.⁷⁴ Fairclough did her best to assuage these concerns in individual replies.⁷⁵ However, she realised that a general

⁷¹ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File IA-166/File 1, Extract from the *Globe and Mail* 'The Indian and the Vote', 4 April 1960.

⁷² LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File IA-166/File 1, Extract from the *Regina Leader-Post* – 'Guarantee Indian's rights', 14 April 1960

⁷³ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File IA-166/File 1, Letter by Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, 20 May 1960.

⁷⁴ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File IA-166/File 1, Translation of letter from Chief Alphonse T. Picard to Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, 6 June 1960.

statement on the subject would be more effective and so she released a press release the following month:

Dominion Day 1960 marks another step forward in the progress of Canada's Indians. On July 1 all Indians aged 21 and over will gain the right to vote in federal elections... Parliament approved amendments to the Indian Act and the Canada Elections Act to permit the inclusion of Indian people on federal voters' lists...Indians will lose none of their rights or privileges by voting in federal elections. Repeated reassurances to this effect have been given in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister and by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Mrs. Fairclough.⁷⁵

This statement seemed to put concerns by First Nation representatives finally to rest, although the anxiousness of First Nations was completely understandable as in the previous reform of the Indian Act in 1950 First Nations people had, had to become 'enfranchised' in order to vote in federal elections.

The 1969 White Paper

Indigenous groups in Canada was the 1969 White Paper which proposed making First Nations 'equal' citizens with their fellow Canadians by amongst other things removing the special legal status of 'Indians', repealing the Indian Act, passing on responsibility for First Nations to

⁷⁵ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File 1A-166/File 1, Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration to Chief Alphonse T. Picard, 20 June 1960; Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister to Chief Councillor Alex Oakes, 13 June 1960, 2.

⁷⁶ LAC, MG32-B1/Vol. 95/File 1A-166/File 1, Press Release, 28 June 1960.

the provinces and appointing a commissioner to deal with land rights which would negate the long-standing treaties that many First Nations had with the Crown. The White Paper was a consequence of the Hawthorne Report of 1966, which investigated the status of Indigenous people in the country, and argued that a combination of long-standing government policies, particularly the Residential School System, had resulted in them becoming 'Citizens Minus'. It also made a list of recommendations to reverse this situation and instead make Indigenous peoples in Canada 'Citizens Plus' due to their particular socio-economic circumstances. First Nations had been consulted before the White Paper was announced regarding revising the Indian Act but the actual proposals went much further and actually called for the Indian Act to be abandoned altogether, which was not acceptable to a majority, if not all First Nations. Proposals were introduced at the beginning of 1968 to revise the Indian Act:

The proposed legislation would remove from the present Act many features which were considered by the Indians of Canada to be undesirable, and would provide such important elements for the social and economic development of the Indian people as a development fund, the ability of Indian bands to incorporate, and improved education, and on the whole would open the way for Indians to become more independent and better able to participate in services provided by provincial governments.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6338, The Indian Act – Proposed revision, 18 January 1968.

The Cabinet approved in principle the proposals of Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Specifically it agreed that:

Discussions be authorised on these changes with the provinces, the territories, and representatives of the Indian people...a report of these discussions be made to the Cabinet before drafting of the legislation is completed and introduced in the next session of Parliament...during these discussions the Indian people be advised that the Bill itself would be referred to them after first reading so that they could make additional comments directly to a Parliamentary Committee...and the Bill be referred to a Parliamentary Committee after second reading.⁷⁸

However, a few months later Chrétien suggested that discussion with First Nations regarding revision of the Indian Act should be postponed for a period of two months until after the upcoming federal election. First Nations themselves had apparently asked for the delay.⁷⁹

In September 1968, Robert Andras, Minister without Portfolio who was assigned special responsibility for developing new policies on Indigenous people gave a very frank address to the National Annual Conference of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada in Toronto:

We still have not plugged the Indian point of view into the policy decision-making process. A consultation program on the revisions to the Indian Act has started, but as I have repeatedly said across this country, one cannot expect true

⁷⁸ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6338, The Indian Act – Proposed revision, 18 January 1968, 3.

⁷⁹ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6338, Indian Act amendment – Consultation with Indians, 30 April 1968, 14.

and meaningful consultations to flow unless the prerequisites for communication are present; a feeling of mutual trust and respect; a willingness to admit past errors and the availability of similar resources to both parties to the exchange.⁸⁰

Therefore, Andras was conceding here that the government had not acted in good faith when it came to genuine consultation with First Nations. This difference in opinion in the Cabinet between Chrétien and Andras was picked up on by the *Globe and Mail* the following month. The newspaper argued that ‘A major internal reorganisation of the much-criticised Indian Affairs and Northern Development Department, has infuriated one Cabinet minister, created strains in the Trudeau Cabinet and unleashed loud protests amongst Indian leaders.’⁸¹ It is no overstatement to say that the White Paper of 1969 produced metaphorical fireworks across the country.

One of these protests was an excellent speech by Harold Cardinal, a First Nation representative of the Indian Association of Alberta in late 1968 (and part of a group of university educated and politically savvy First Nation leaders at the time): ‘Where has the commitment for consultation gone when policy changes can be made that ignore the needs and the will of the Indian people? The Indian Association of Alberta urges the Federal government to halt the Departmental re-structuring immediately pending consultation with Indian leaders.’⁸² He also offered solid

⁸⁰ LAC, RG6/Vol. 662/File 2-12-15, Notes for an Address by the Honourable Robert K. Andras to the National Annual Conference of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, Toronto, 28 September 1968, 3.

⁸¹ LAC, RG6/Vol. 662/File 2-12-15, Extract from the *Globe and Mail* – ‘Cabinet said to be divided over reorganization for Indian affairs, 1 October 1968.

suggestions for the start of a meaningful shift in First Nation/Government relations:

The Canadian Government will have to commit itself morally, philosophically and legislatively to honouring fully its agreements under Treaties signed with Indians. Let the Prime Minister give his Minister without Portfolio the authority and responsibility to work directly with the member organizations of the National Indian Brotherhood in developing new policies for the Federal Government and the authority to implement the proposals that come out of this arrangement.⁸³

Thus, Cardinal's emphasis was on greater consultation with First Nations by the government to produce better policy, which made obvious sense, as they were the ones who would be affected by any policies introduced by the government.

Chrétien attempted to explain his motivation in revising the Indian Act in early 1969:

Increasing numbers of Indians in Canada were asking for equal citizenship in terms of rights and responsibilities and were indicating that they did not feel at home in Canadian institutions under present circumstances. The problem was made increasingly difficult by the fact that although everything the federal government was now doing for the Indian people fell within provincial jurisdiction and responsibility, several of the provinces were reluctant to extend to Indians such services as education, welfare roads, municipal government, health, housing and regional development.⁸⁴

⁸² LAC, MG26-011/Vol. 22/File 5/635 – Speech by Harold Cardinal, 27 October 1968, 9.

⁸³ LAC, MG26-011/Vol. 22/File 5/635 – Speech by Harold Cardinal, 27 October 1968, 10, 12.

⁸⁴ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6340, Indian Program, 12 February 1969.

The Cabinet agreed that Chrétien prepare a memorandum outlining a 'policy of full non-discriminatory participation in Canadian society for Indian people, together with the means by which such a policy might best be implemented.'⁸⁵

Chrétien subsequently outlined the specific steps the government would take to put the policy in practice:

Propose to Parliament that the Indian Act be repealed and take such legislative steps as may be necessary to enable Indians to control Indian lands and to acquire title to them...Propose to the governments of the provinces that they take over the same responsibility for Indians that they have for other citizens in their provinces...Make substantial funds available for Indian economic development as an interim measure...Wind up that that part of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development which deals with Indian affairs.⁸⁶

In a further memorandum to Cabinet in October 1969 it was asserted that 'the provinces appeared to agree with the policy but wanted the federal government to get the approval of the Indians before their public concurrence was sought, some provinces were insisting that they would not meet the federal government unless Indians were present at the negotiating table.'⁸⁷ But the impact of Indigenous opposition to the proposals was evident as it was maintained that 'Indian groups would want to prepare counter-proposals to the government's statement and should

⁸⁵ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6340, Indian policy, 17 June 1969.

⁸⁶ LAC, RG2-B-2/Vol. 6349/Cab. Doc. 654-69, Memorandum on a 'Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy', 1969, 6, 7.

⁸⁷ LAC, RG2-B-2/Vol. 6354/Cab. Doc. 1007-69, Memorandum by Norbert Prefontaine, Secretary, Cabinet Committee on Social Policy to the Cabinet, 29 October 1969, 1.

be encouraged to do so' and that 'neither the Indians nor the provinces should be pressed, at this time, to agree publicly with the federal proposal; there would be need for three-way consultations (Canada, provinces and Indians) later.'⁸⁸

A sign of how much things had changed was given in mid-1970 when Chrétien announced to Cabinet that the Indian Association of Alberta with the support of the National Indian Brotherhood would be making a presentation in which they would assert that they did not agree with the policy proposed by the government. He added that he would be telling the First Nation representatives that he was pleased that they had looked at the policy outlined by the government and that all of their recommendations would be examined by the government and then discussed with them.⁸⁹ So, the fierce backlash by First Nations to the proposed White Paper of 1969 (which supposedly had the lofty aim of making First Nations equal with other Canadian citizens) highlighted to the government that First Nations were 'Citizens Plus'⁹⁰ due to the treaties that existed between many of them and the Crown which

⁸⁸ LAC, RG2-B-2/Vol. 6354/Cab. Doc. 1007-69, Memorandum by Norbert Prefontaine, Secretary, Cabinet Committee on Social Policy to the Cabinet, 29 October 1969, 2.

⁸⁹ LAC, RG2/Series A-5-a/Vol. 6359, Indians – Presentation to Cabinet, 4 June 1970, 5.

⁹⁰ This originated from a document with the same name, which is more commonly known as the 'Red Paper'. This was an extremely critical response of Harry Cardinal and the Indian Association of Alberta to the White Paper. Indian Association of Alberta, *Citizens Plus* ("The Red Paper") (Edmonton: Indian Association of Alberta, 1970).

Cardinal also published a book entitled *The Unjust Society* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999), which was a play on Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's famous catchphrase 'The Just Society'. Cardinal's widely read book was the first time that many non-indigenous Canadians learned about the special position of First Nations in the country due to their being the first inhabitants of the country and the treaties they had negotiated with the Crown which ultimately led to the establishment of Canada as a country and the historical obligations that the state still had towards them.

predated the existence of the state of Canada and/or the fact that they were the First Nations that inhabited what later became Canada and should be treated as such. Therefore, many First Nations saw the White Paper as an attempt by the federal government to abandon its responsibilities through delegation to the provinces and abrogate its treaty obligations. The whole thrust of the White Paper reflected Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's hostility to group rights. The strong reaction of First Nations to the proposals actually provided the impetus to the modern Indigenous rights movement in Canada. It should also be emphasised that the concept of 'Citizens Plus' was contested as there were, and still are, First Nations in Canada, the Mohawk Nation in Québec being a prominent example that do not necessarily consider themselves Canadian citizens, but citizens of their own nations.

In conclusion, this article has illustrated how the end of the British World led to a redefinition of citizenship in Canada between the 1950s and 1970s. The key highlights of the unravelling of Britishness in Canada were the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the UK's decision to apply for membership in the EEC in 1961. This resulted in a shift away from a British centred citizenship to one that was more inclusive of other ethnic groups and Indigenous peoples. The Canadian Citizenship Act of 1967 and the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1977 demonstrated the greater inclusivity towards other ethnic groups, as especially with the latter the last distinctions between British subjects and other migrants were removed from Canadian citizenship

legislation. On the Indigenous side the awarding of the right to vote for First Nations in federal elections in 1960 was a major milestone in their being able to exercise one of the major privileges of citizenship. The 1969 White Paper which amongst other things proposed a repeal of the Indian Act in the supposed goal to make First Nations equal to other citizens, faced such backlash from a highly educated and politically savvy First Nation leadership that the government was forced to concede that First Nations were not citizens just like other Canadians, but ‘Citizens Plus’.⁹¹

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⁹¹ Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).