

Title:

HISTORY OF CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

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Summary:

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William Lyons Mackenzie King not only holds the honour of being Canada's longest serving Prime Minister (1921-1930, 1935-1948), he also holds the distinction of becoming Canada's first official Canadian citizen in 1947. The concept of a Canadian citizen has been an evolving one. Residents of Canada have gone from being colonial subjects to British nationals domiciled in Canada before being able to call themselves Canadian citizens.

For most of its history since the first European settlement, Canada had been a part of a larger Empire (France and Great Britain). Despite the fact that Canada was granted autonomy in 1867 with the British North America Act, it was still not an independent nation. The British government still had authority in issues regarding foreign policy and citizenship was one of them. In the early 1900s, the British government no longer called those residing in Canada as "British subjects"; instead they became British nationals domiciled in Canada. Canada's participation in major international conflicts helped these British Nationals become Canadians.

As Canada got more involved internationally, Canadians started feeling a greater sense of pride as Canadians. Canada's role in World War I bolstered its position as a nation. While Canada may not have constituted a great power, its contribution to the war effort was of great help to the Allies. Canadian

soldiers helped in the Battle of the Somme and swept through Vimy Ridge. Britain needed the aid of its colonies and in return it offered its colony greater say in Imperial affairs. With the Statute of Westminster in 1931, all British colonies ceased to be subordinate to the Crown in England and became equal members in the Commonwealth of Nations. When the Second World War broke out, Canada joined the effort ten days after Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Again, Canada's contribution to the Allied effort was substantial. Canadians led the effort on the raids of Dieppe in 1943 and captured Juno Beach during the invasion of Europe on June 6, 1944. After World War II ended, Canadians felt a great sense of pride in what they had achieved and wanted to be seen not as part of the British Empire but as an independent nation.

In the summer of 1946, the Canadian Parliament passed the [Canadian Citizenship Act](http://www.immigroup.com) that came into effect on January 1st 1947. The Act granted Canadian citizenship to, among others, all British subjects born or naturalized in Canada, women who were British subjects and were married to a Canadian citizen prior to 1947, and those who were defined as members of First Nations or Eskimos. Canadian citizenship was seen as a privilege. While it granted entry to Canada to all citizens and allowed women to be in control of their nationality, it did not allow for anyone to hold dual nationality. Soon after the passage of the Citizenship Act, Canada saw a large influx of immigrants from post-war Europe.

In 1977, the Canadian government changed its Citizenship Act. Most notably, it removed the restriction on dual nationality and also repealed the provisions for which a person could lose their citizenship (except for charges relating to immigration fraud). Under the new Act (which is still in force today) [Canadian citizenship](http://www.immigroup.com) can be obtained through birth in Canada, birth to Canadian parents or naturalization (living for at least 3 years in Canada as a permanent resident).

Soon after the Citizenship Act passed, Canada changed its anthem from "God Save the Queen" to "O Canada". In 1967 Canada changed its flag from the Union Jack to the red and white flag with the red maple leaf. Finally, in 1982, Canada was given the authority to change its Constitution without the approval of the British Government. The foundation of Canadian citizenship is an important milestone in Canadian history. It was born out of a new sentiment of pride from Canadians as Canadians that would carry on in the last half of the 20th century.

For more information read at :- <http://www.immigroup.com>