



CANADA

Plan to the lecture

1. Physical and Geographical Features
2. Mineral Resources
3. The weather
4. The History
5. Population and Main Cities
6. The Political System



1. Physical and Geographical Features

Canada occupies the northern third of North America. The land area is 10 million square kilometers. Canada is surrounded by oceans on three sides: the Atlantic on the east, the Pacific on the west and the Arctic on the north.

To the east is the narrow plain of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence; to the west - the rolling plains; to the center - the Hudson Bay Lowlands; and to the north - the Arctic Lowlands. Together, these plains cover one quarter of the territory.

Two majestic river systems stand out: in the North - the Mackenzie, and in the east, - the St. Lawrence.



2. Mineral Resources

The Canadian Shield, which forms the stable core of the North American Continent, is composed of the most ancient rocks on the planet. These formations bear minerals such as iron, nickel, copper, zinc, uranium, magnesium and lead, gold, silver and platinum

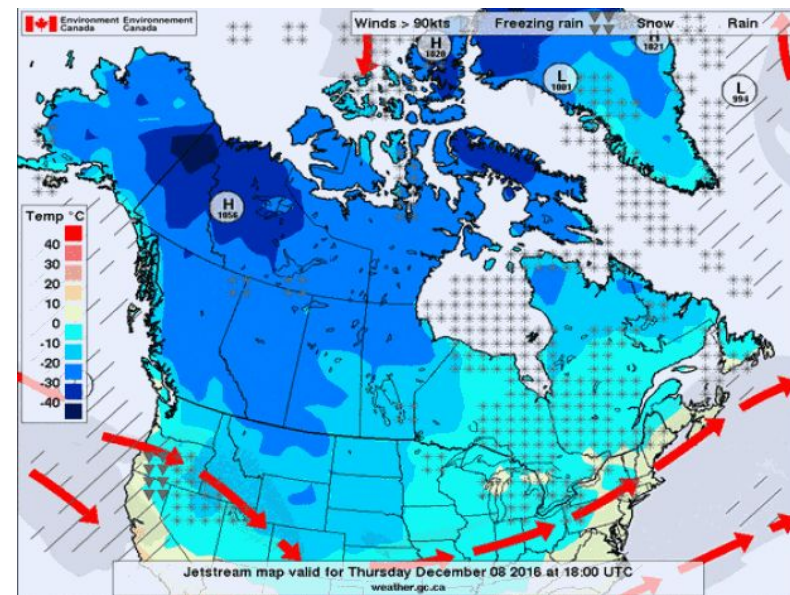


3. The weather

Canada is a cold country. During the winter no place within its boundaries escapes the bite of frost. On the other hand, its southern regions have hot or even scorching summers. In fact, this vast country is home to several climates: an arctic climate in the Far North, a relatively cold and wet climate in the east, a continental climate in the center, and a mild, wet climate on the West Coast.

The farther south - the less severe the winter chill.

Only a small region in southern Alberta enjoys a few episodes of respite during the winter, thanks to a warm, dry wind from the Pacific that sometimes manages to find its way there.



4. The History

In 1535, when Jacques Cartier reached the island known today as Montreal, he discovered that it had «fine plough land». This was the land of the farming peoples who occupied the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region at that time, living in villages of as many as 2000 inhabitants.

After a few decades in one place, when the soil was depleted, these peoples moved their villages and cleared new land.

Scattered bands of nomadic hunters lived on the wide belt of boreal forest and taiga that crosses Canada from Labrador to the Yukon, as in the forest of what are now the Atlantic Provinces.

When the good weather arrived, they gathered at water's edge to fish, hunt for birds, collect eggs and gather roots and berries. The forest also supplied them with a precious material: birch bark. This was ideal for making various containers, wigwams and the indispensable canoes.



For their part, the nomads of the western plains truly worshipped the buffalo, for that animal provided them with everything they needed in order to live - with the exception, they said, of water to slake their thirst and roles to constrict their teepees.

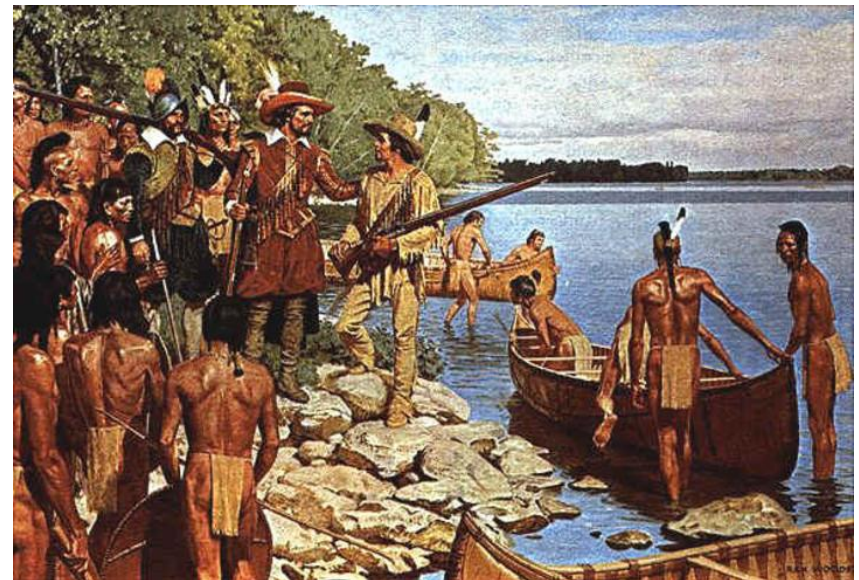
The life of buffalo hunters improved substantially when the horse, introduced by the Spanish in the 16-th century made its appearance on the northern plains in the 18-th century. The nomads could then move about more quickly and carry more with them.



On the Pacific Coast, Aboriginal peoples enjoyed the bounty of nature. The greatest of all nature's riches was the abundance of salmon. For the Aboriginal peoples, salmon were nothing less than reincarnated human beings who would continue to offer themselves to the fishermen so long as the fishermen returned their bones to the sea.

The seacoast of this region provided its human inhabitants with a profusion of fish, sea mammals, water birds, edible seaweed and shellfish. Its forests abounded in priceless resources: wood to build villages and carve boats or totem poles; goats wool for weaving; and a wide variety of meat, berries, roots and mushrooms to vary the diet.

The Inuit of the Arctic occupied vast icy expanses that offered no protection against the elements, no edible vegetation and no building materials. Yet the Inuit managed to survive in this hostile environment and create a unique culture that assigns a central role to art.



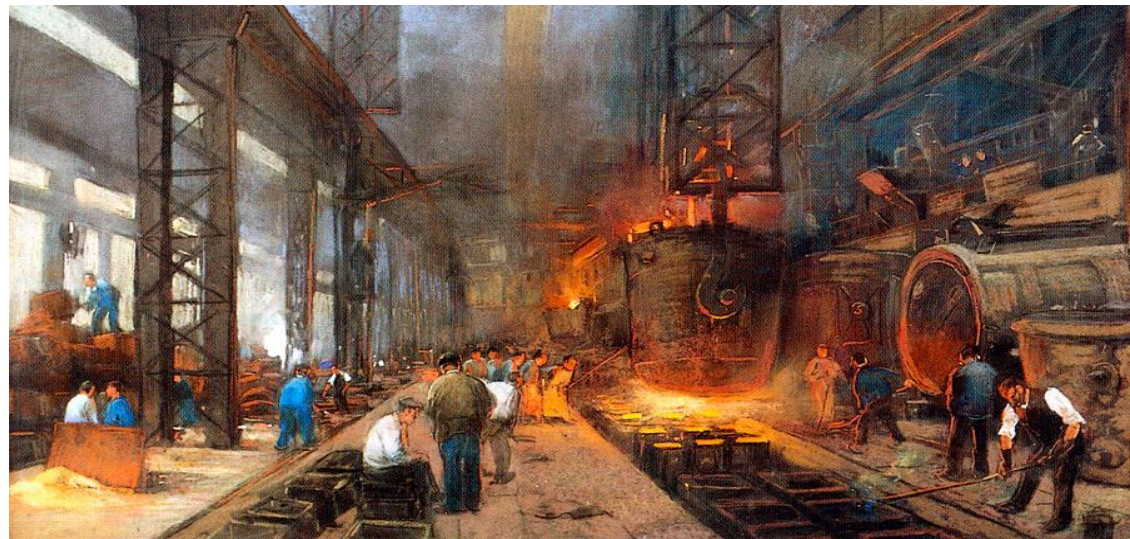
The first Europeans arrived from the northeast. They were Vikings, who reached the coast of Newfoundland in the 10-th century by travelling from southern Greenland. Other Europeans did not reach the continent until six centuries later, when navigation techniques and instruments had improved. This time, their presence was more lasting.

The West Coast had attracted Europeans for its furs beginning in the late 18-th century. After a territorial dispute with the Spanish, the British established the sister colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. Gold seekers began to invade this little-frequented region in 1858, marking the start of a more sustained European presence. A few decades later, the construction of the railroad accelerated European settlement.

Immigrants engaged in a variety of economic activities, including the forest industry, salmon canneries on the coasts, mines in the Kootenay region and fruit growing in the Okanagan Valley.



In Canada, industrialization began in the second half of the 19-th century. Many factories using steam power made their appearance at that time, including flourmills, sawmills shoe factories, textile plants, foundries and factories manufacturing transportation equipment. Industrial progress intensified in the early 20-th century with the introduction of electricity. New industries sprang up, especially in the fields of electrical equipment, chemicals, the automobile, aluminum, pulp and paper, radio and household appliances. Following the Second World War, industrialization entered a truly expansionist spiral, giving rise to a consumer society. By 1870, Montreal and Toronto were the growth centers of Canada's commercial, industrial and financial activity. As the Canadian economy turned toward industries and then services, the population movement toward the cities gathered strength.



5. Population and Main Cities

Most of Canada's population of 30,6 million lived within 200 kilometres of the United States. Thousands of kilometres to the North, the Polar Region - the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut - is relatively empty, embracing 41% of Canadian land mass but only 0.3% of Canada's population.

Some of the metropolitan areas have watched the tide turn on population growth. The majority of Canadians - 6 out of every 10 - lived in Ontario and Quebec. Canada's North has a young population.

Main (the largest) cities of Canada are Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver. Ottawa is the capital city of Canada.



6. The Political System

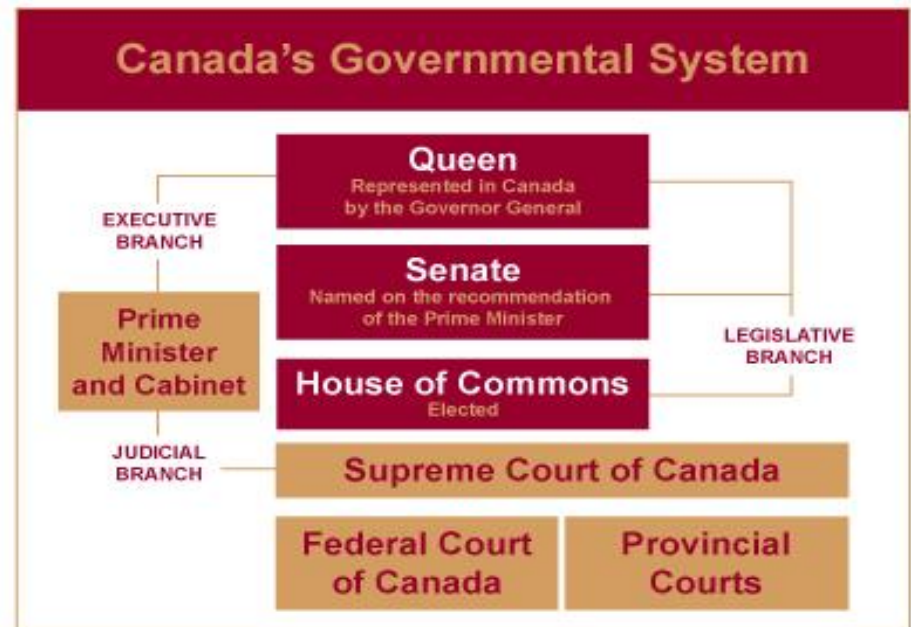
The form of the government of Canada is a constitutional monarchy.

The head of the political party with the most elected representatives in the House of Commons becomes the Prime minister, the leader of the country.

From the members of parliament (MPs) within the governing party, the Prime minister selects a Cabinet which, in effect, runs the country and initiates legislation.

The Prime Minister and the Cabinet ministers also propose most new laws.

There are 3 levels of Government in Canada: Federal Government, Provincial (Territorial) Government and Municipal (local) Government.





Legislative (legal) power

The constitution consists of both written proclamations under the Constitution Acts (1867 and 1932) and unwritten conventions.

Canadians have rights and freedoms that are protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom through the justice system.

The Parliament of Canada

Parliament has 3 parts: the Queen, the House of Commons and the Senate.

Electoral (voting) system

Canadians vote in elections for the people they want to represent them in Parliament.

Federal elections are usually held every four years.

According to Canada's Constitution, an election must be held within five years of the last election.

Canada is divided into 301 electoral districts.

An electoral district is a geographical area represented by a member of the House of Commons. The citizens of each electoral district elect one member of Parliament who sits in the House of Commons.