

CANADIAN HISTORY: AFTER CONFEDERATION

Foreign relations: BRITAIN AND THE US

Canada's contacts with the world in 1900 were almost completely through Great Britain and the United States. Indeed, Canada's formal relations with other countries were conducted only through the British Foreign Office because Canada, even if it had self government, was still **a colony and thus had no independent diplomatic status.**

In the late 19th century Canada's dependence on Great Britain raised the question of whether Canada might be expected to take some part in Britain's imperial wars. The **British colonial** secretary *Joseph Chamberlain* was **anxious that the dominion should at least be committed in order to support (send money) the mother country.** Also, **Britain's** naval competition with Germany made Britain eager to have **colonial help, preferably by contributions in money** or by the colonies' assuming their own naval defense. In **1910 he** established a Canadian navy, though in time of war the navy was to **be placed under British command.** The measure was bitterly opposed by the nationalists in Quebec, who argued that conscription (mandatory army service) in Britain's army would follow.

Canada's relations with the United States were close, but there had been a long record of border disputes, never quite completely resolved by Canadians. **Canada and the United States also clashed over fishing rights in the North Atlantic** and, in the 1890s, over the **sealing industry** in the Pacific. Another **issue happened during the Klondike Gold rush** when **Canada claimed the major inlets in Canadian territory**—which is now the Yukon territory. **The United States claimed a boundary** that would have excluded Canada from the sea. A joint commission of Americans, British, and Canadians **found in favour of almost the whole of the American claim,** the one British jurist voting with the three

Americans. The decision was bitterly criticized in Canada, though Canada's case had in fact been weak. The episode forced Canada to recognize that it **must be prepared to look out for itself**, prompting the rise of a new sense of **Canadian nationalism**.

Two results followed. In preparation for Canadians handling their own foreign affairs, the *Department of External Affairs* was created in 1909. In addition, to settle long-standing disagreements with the United States, the *Permanent Joint Commission on Boundary Waters* was also established in 1909, and the following year the Atlantic fisheries issues were finally settled. **United States began to turn to Canada as an outlet for investment and as a source of raw materials, particularly minerals and newsprint**, relations between Canada and the United States assumed a new guise.

At the beginning of 1900, two other important facts happened: the **immigration wave** started to rise and **World War I broke** out.