

## **Trudeaumania**

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Pierre Elliot Trudeau is known as one of the greatest political figures in Canada's history. He touched the lives of many Canadians, inspiring them to believe they were capable of accomplishing many things. Trudeau's successes impacted greatly on Canada, and his efforts will be remembered by future Canadian generations. During his time of influence, Trudeau gained the respect of the majority of the Canadian population. His popularity to the public began a great phenomenon because "he did what no politician before or since has done: he touched the dreams of an entire generation of Canadians"<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Trudeau's fame and popularity was named Trudeaumania by the media. With the support of his Canadian citizens, Trudeau accomplished many tasks, which positively affected Canada, perhaps forever. Pierre Elliot Trudeau was a great Prime Minister because he balanced the equality between the French and English Canadians, promoted multiculturalism to help Canada's independence grow stronger, and he passed many acts and bills that made a great impact on Canada to grow as a nation.

During his years in office, Trudeau kept Canada united, avoiding Quebec from separation. Expressing his opinion towards Quebec, Trudeau said in 1968, "I am trying to put Quebec in its place, and the place of Quebec is in Canada."<sup>2</sup> Before becoming Prime Minister, Trudeau was already concerned about Quebec's political situation. To help the French feel more comfortable and feel like they belonged in Canada, Trudeau established a French magazine, which he named "Cité Libre"<sup>3</sup> (Community of the Free) and he helped organize "Le Rassemblement"<sup>3</sup> (The Gathering Together), which explained democracy to the people of Quebec. In 1968, Trudeau said, "Of course a bilingual state is more expensive than a unilingual one –but it is a richer

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Stevens. (2000). *Maclean's*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Sheppard. (2000). *Maclean's*, 61.

<sup>3</sup> Granatstein, J.L. "Pierre Elliot Trudeau". [The World Book Encyclopedia](#). Chicago: World Book Inc. 2001 ed.

state.”<sup>4</sup> With his “Just Society”, Trudeau made a priority to make the French Canadians feel comfortable and at home. With this in mind, Trudeau passed the Official Languages Act in 1969, making French and English Canada’s official languages. This act made the federal offices offer services in both languages, therefore, English government workers were taught to speak and understand French. The act ensured that services were provided in French in areas where at least ten per cent of the population spoke French, and it worked vice versa as well<sup>5</sup>. Trudeau hoped to preserve the French heritage in Canada and balance the equality between the French and English. Trudeau’s efforts to ease the strain between French and English Canadians were significant as it helped maintain Canada’s unity as a nation.

Trudeau’s popularity with the public was a result of his actions. Even before his years as Prime Minister, Trudeau made a difference to the public. As the Minister of justice, he guaranteed that almost all Canadian workers were to be covered by the unemployment insurance benefits, he abolished the death penalty<sup>5</sup> in 1976, and he “introduced legislation to strengthen gun-control laws and to reduce restrictions on abortion, divorce, gambling, and homosexuality”<sup>5</sup>, because he believed in an individual’s freedom. This eventually led to his Charter of Rights and Freedom, passed in 1982. After winning Liberal Leadership in 1968, Trudeau said, “Canada must be unified, Canada must be one, Canada must be progressive, Canada must be a Just Society”<sup>6</sup>. Because of Trudeau’s enthusiasm and charismatic character, he became a celebrity and Trudeaumania began. Screaming fans, both young and old, rushed to his rallies and even demanded for autographs. Continuing to influence society, Trudeau passed the Election Act, which dropped the minimum age to vote from twenty-one to eighteen. Because he tried to

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<sup>4</sup> Benoit Aubin. (2000). *Macleans*. 75.

<sup>5</sup> Granatstein, J.L. “Pierre Elliot Trudeau”. *The World Book Encyclopedia*. Chicago: World Book Inc. 2001 ed.

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs: Volume 2 “The Art of Governing”* Videocassette. Les productions la fete. 1994. 100 min

convince other countries not to build nuclear weapons, Trudeau received the Albert Einstein Peace Prize<sup>7</sup>. After meeting Trudeau in 1969, John Lennon of the Beatles commented, “If all politicians were like Pierre, there would be world peace.”<sup>8</sup> Because his many actions had benefited the public, Pierre Trudeau’s popularity soared higher and higher during his years in office.

One of Trudeau’s main goals was to improve Canada, and in this attempt, Pierre Trudeau passed many bills and acts, which effectively aided Canada to develop more as a nation. Trudeau passed the Official Languages Act in 1969, making the country bilingual. Helping preserve the French culture, he thought it might ease off the French’s urge for separation. With the Constitution Act passed in 1982, Canada gained complete control over their constitution, and therefore it made Canada independent from the British government. “The act ended the need for British approval of amendments to Canada’s constitution”<sup>9</sup>. With his Charter of Rights and Freedoms included in the Constitution, Canadians were guaranteed freedom and would not suffer from discrimination. Everyone accepted this because it offered something everyone wanted<sup>9</sup>. Trudeau also gained better reputation on the international front, as he “wanted to strengthen Canada’s independence in world affairs”<sup>9</sup>. Pierre Trudeau encouraged trading with other countries, he strengthened Canada’s ties with Europe, recognized Red China when others would not, and reduced American ownership of the Canadian economy. During his years as Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau was responsible in passing the many acts that led to improving Canada.

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<sup>7</sup> “Pierre Elliot Trudeau”. The Canadian Encyclopedia. 2000 ed.

<sup>8</sup> “Pierre Elliot Trudeau.” (2000). *Macleans*. 86.

<sup>9</sup> Granatstein, J.L. “Pierre Elliot Trudeau”. The World Book Encyclopedia. Chicago: World Book Inc. 2001 ed.

Pierre Trudeau will be remembered as a great Prime Minister because he attempted to restore and promote peace between French and English Canadians, strive to strengthen Canada's independence, and he contributed many of his achievements to Canada, and as a result, helped Canada mature even more. Throughout Trudeau's time of influence, he achieved and accomplished many goals, which affected Canada positively. During his time as Prime Minister, Trudeau worked hard to keep Canada united, convincing Quebec to avoid separatism. He improved the nation by passing laws and acts, and because of everything he did for Canada and its people, Trudeau was dearly admired by the public. Pierre Trudeau impacted and inspired the Canadian public to believe in multiculturalism, to find peace in all people, even if they were different, so everyone had the freedom and rights to express themselves.

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