

CHAPTER 2

1896-1945

*Nationalisms and
Canadian Autonomy*

PART 1

Canada's place in the British Empire

BANK OF CANADA • BANQUE DU CANADA
CE BILLET A COURS LEGAL / THIS NOTE IS LEGAL TENDER

CANADA CANADA CANADA CANADA CANADA CANADA CANADA CANADA CANADA CANADA



SIR WILFRID LAURIER PREMIER MINISTRE / PRIME MINISTER 1896-1911

CANADA
CINQ • FIVE
DOLLARS



THE WEST BLOCK OF PARLIAMENT - L'ÉDIFICE DE L'OUEST DU PARLEMENT
L'ÉDIFICE DE L'OUEST DU PARLEMENT - THE WEST BLOCK OF PARLIAMENT - L'ÉDIFICE DE L'OUEST DU
PARLEMENT

17

5

W. P. Jenkins / [Signature]
DEPUTY GOVERNOR / SOUS-GOUVERNEUR / GOVERNOR / GOVERNOR

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SPOTLIGHT ON . . .



Wilfrid Laurier (1841–1919)

A politician, lawyer and journalist, Wilfrid Laurier was prime minister of Canada from 1896 to 1911. He was the first Francophone to hold this office. Laurier acted as a unifier, encouraging closer ties between Anglophones and Francophones. Defeated in the election of 1911, he remained the leader of the Liberal Party until his death in 1919.

2 opposed political doctrines

BRITISH IMPERIALISM



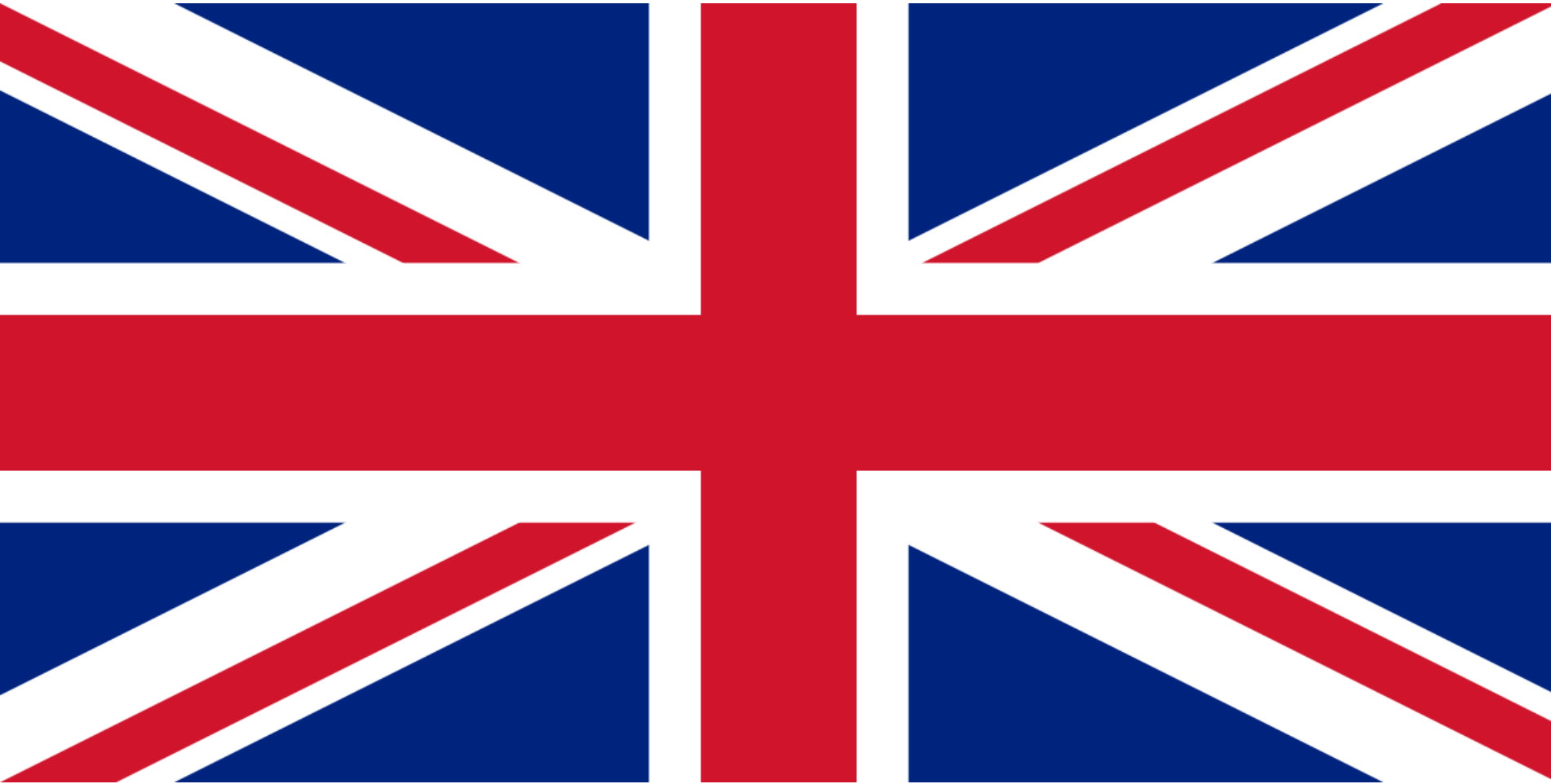
**FRENCH-CANADIAN
NATIONALISM**



Imperialism VS French- Canadian nationalism

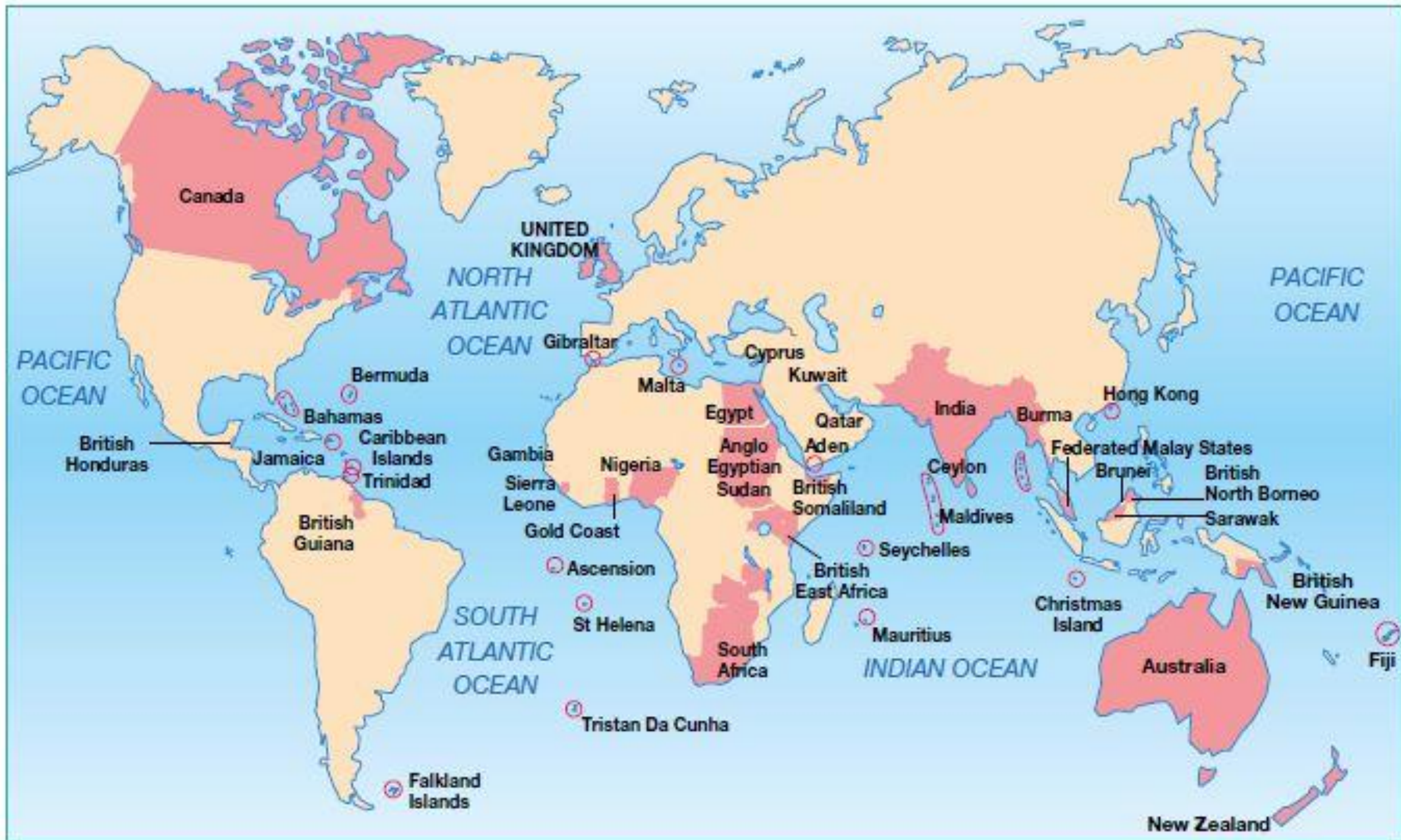
- English-Canadian imperialists:
 - were **proud to belong to the British Empire**
 - believed that Canada should be involved in the Empire's expansion throughout the world
 - some believed in the superiority of the “Anglo-Saxon” race, and the need to protect it and perpetuate it.

There were also a few French-Canadian imperialists!



**The Royal Union
Flag or Union
Jack (1801-1965)**

- The British flag
- It was used
across British
North America
and in Canada.





The *Victoria Memorial* at the centre of Victoria Square in Montréal

- Bronze and granite work of the sculptor Marshall Wood
- Unveiled in 1872 by Lord Dufferin, the Governor General of Canada at the time.

Imperialism VS French- Canadian nationalism

- French-Canadian nationalists (1):
 - led by **Henri Bourassa** (founder of the newspaper *Le Devoir* in 1910 and grandson of Louis-Joseph Papineau).



Imperialism VS French- Canadian nationalism

- French-Canadian nationalists (1):
 - were anti-imperialists
 - wanted to close the divide between English Canadians, French Canadians and immigrants so as to foster **a unified nationalism that was respectful of differences**
 - demanded that the federal government respect the jurisdictional autonomy of the provinces
 - demanded greater autonomy for Canada from the UK
 - were against Canada's involvement in the Empire's wars
 - defended the language and religious rights of French Canadian Catholics.

6 Henri Bourassa's nationalism

Henri Bourassa felt that the union of the two founding nations (French Canadian and English Canadian) was necessary in order to defend Canada's autonomy and liberate it from its colonial ties with the United Kingdom.

“ . . . For us, the fatherland is the whole of Canada, that is, a federation of distinct races and autonomous provinces. The nation that we wish to see developed is the Canadian nation, composed of French Canadians and English Canadians, that is, of two elements separated by language and religion . . . , but united . . . in a common attachment to a common country. ”

Excerpt from: Henri Bourassa, *Le Nationaliste*, April 3, 1904.

Imperialism VS French- Canadian nationalism

- French-Canadian nationalists (2):

- The Catholic priest **Lionel Groulx** was a **clerico-nationalist**, a more extreme type of nationalism.
- **Clerico-nationalism** guided French-Canadians toward the Church's values:
 - French language
 - Catholic faith
 - farming as a defense against the dangers of the city and as a way to gain economic independence (rural way of life)
 - survival in Canada among an Anglo-Protestant majority
 - upholding the Canadian federation.



Imperialism VS French- Canadian nationalism

- Imperialists and French-Canadian nationalists **BOTH:**
 - feared an American takeover of Canada
 - promoted the importance of the “Canadian race”.

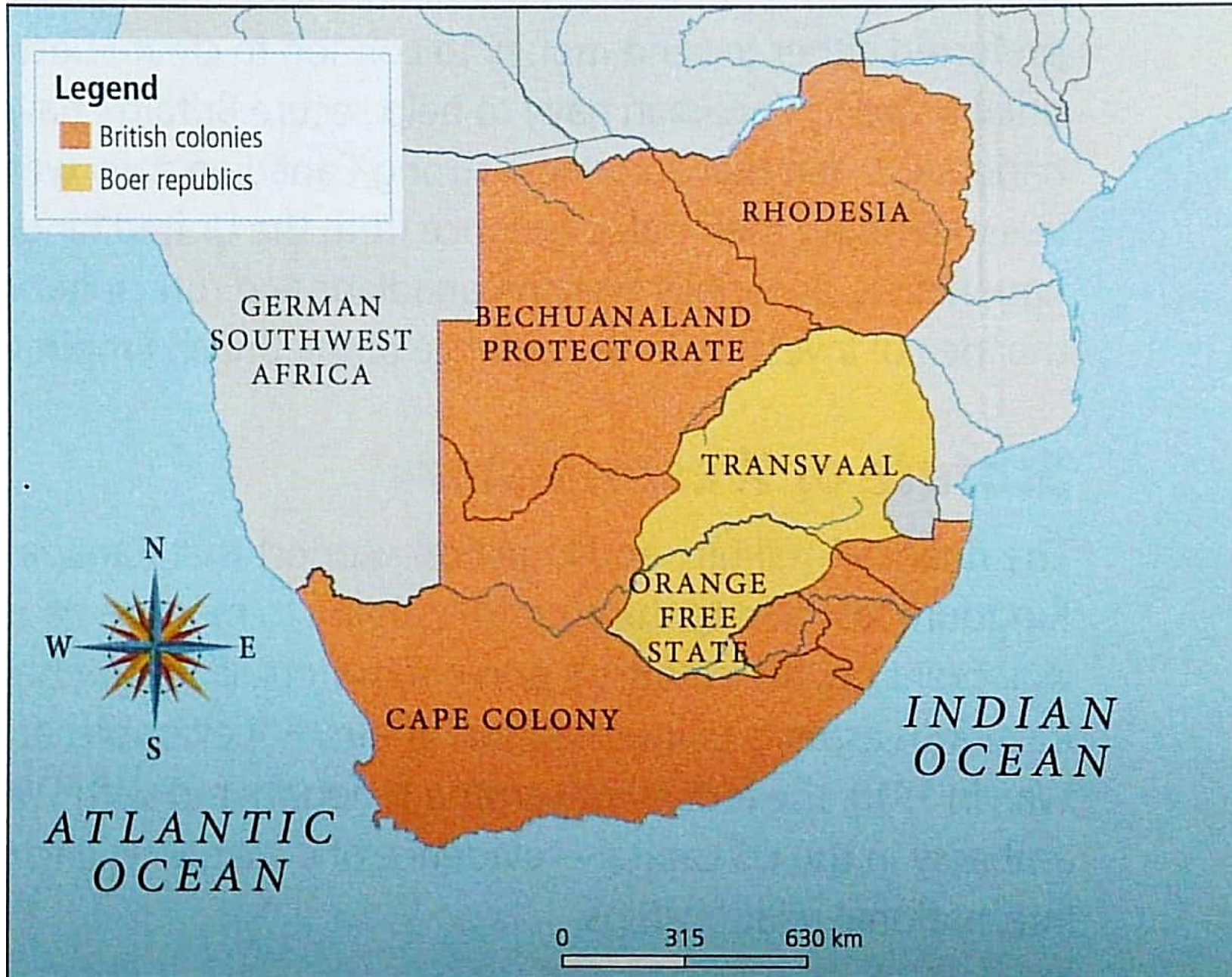
Canadian military support

1) The Boer War / South African War (1899-1902):

- The Boers were descendants of Dutch settlers who arrived in the British colony of South Africa and established the republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.
- In the mid-19th century, the Boers wanted independence from the UK, which was denied.
- The UK wanted continued access to the territories' gold and diamond mines, and to maintain political control of the region to counterbalance the German influence in nearby African colonies.
- **War between the British and the Boers broke out in 1899.**

2.4

BRITISH COLONIES AND BOER REPUBLICS IN SOUTH AFRICA IN 1900



Canadian military support

1) The Boer War / South African War (1899-1902):

- The UK called on its colonies and dominions to send troops to fight in South Africa. So, as a dominion, Canada was expected to fight.
- In Canada, on one side, **imperialists supported sending soldiers to protect the Empire.**
- On the other side, **nationalists opposed sending soldiers** because, to them, it would be **a waste of resources and human lives**, and they feared that their participation **would cause a precedent for future wars.**
- In the end, the Laurier government tried to compromise by:
 - contributing \$3 million to the war effort
 - sending 1,000 volunteers to the front lines (+ 6,368 later on).

Canadian military support

1) The Boer War / South African War (1899-1902):

“Canada, and especially the province of Québec, has no choice but to take up the quarrels of England, Russia, France, Germany and the United States. We are raising our children for more than to spill their blood [...] in all the oceans and continents of the world.”

[TRANSLATION]

L’Avenir du Nord

Canadian military support

1) The Boer War / South African War (1899-1902):

“While everyone supports sending soldiers, Québec is obstructing these efforts, and the representatives of this people, to whom the motherland has offered so many privileges and special concessions, have shamed us in front of the whole world [...] . Never has the Canadian heart beat so strongly in unison with the British; but it has been constricted by French-Canadian apathy; Québec has stopped their hearts from beating as one.”



2.5 This imperialist pamphlet targeted those who opposed sending Canadian soldiers to South Africa.

9 An autonomous Canada within a vast empire

Prime Minister Laurier, addressing a British audience, reasserts his position with regard to ties between Canada and the Empire.

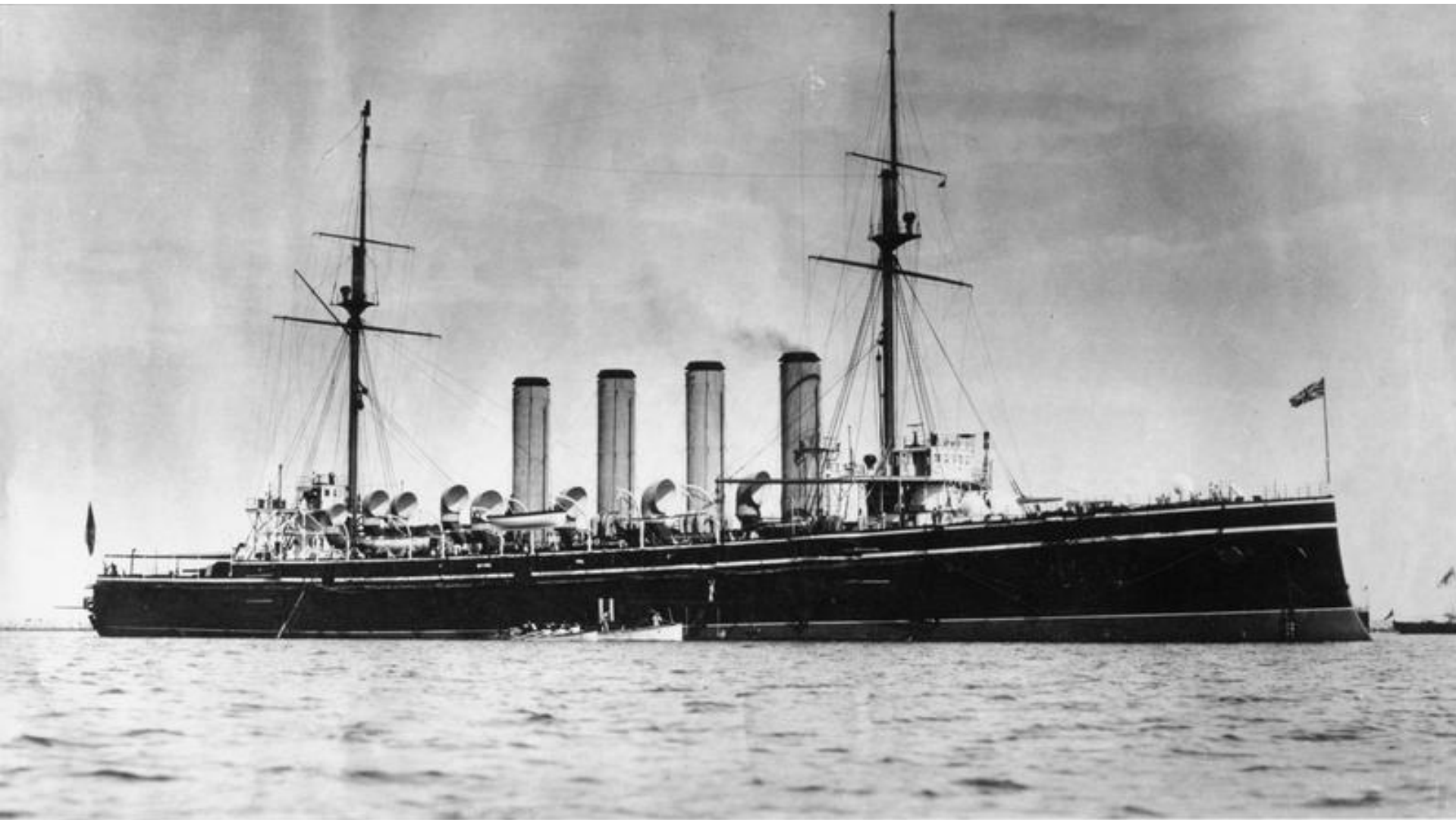
“Canada is free and freedom is its nationality. Canada is practically independent. . . . The first place in our hearts is filled by Canada. . . . Whilst I cannot admit that Canada should take part in all the wars of Great Britain, neither am I prepared to say that she should not take part in any war at all I claim for Canada this, that in future she shall be at liberty to act or not act, to interfere or not interfere, to do just as she pleases.”

Excerpt from a speech by Wilfrid Laurier just before the Colonial Conference in London, 1897.

Canadian military support

2) Creation of the Canadian navy (1910):

- In the early 20th century, the UK called on its colonies to send money to help maintain its Royal Navy because it feared Germany's growing power
- In 1910, the ***Naval Service Act*** was passed, which led to the **creation of the Royal Canadian Navy** to patrol and protect Canada's territorial waters. Our naval force was modest with only 379 sailors in 1914.



HMS Niobe

- One of the two Canadian ships at the outbreak of WW1 in 1914.

1949 A

H.M.S. NIOBE,
11,000 TONS, I.H.P. 16,500.

IWM
ROTARY PHOTO, E.C.

Canadian military support

2) Creation of the Canadian navy (1910):

- **Imperialists** would have preferred either to send money to London for better combat units, or to build a strong Canadian navy to help secure Britain's naval supremacy.
- **Some nationalists** felt like having a Canadian navy would help to become independent from UK, while **other nationalists** rejected the idea of investing in the defence of the British Empire.

Canadian military support

3) League of Nations (1919-1945):

- An international organization founded by the victorious countries of the First World War
- Its mission was to ensure world peace
- The Dominion of Canada was accepted as a separate member from the UK
- It was replaced by the United Nations (UN) at the end of the Second World War.



The first meeting of the League of Nations (1920)

- The city of Geneva, Switzerland was chosen as the headquarters because it was generally neutral.
- Canada's membership marked an important step in its move toward **greater autonomy** from the UK.

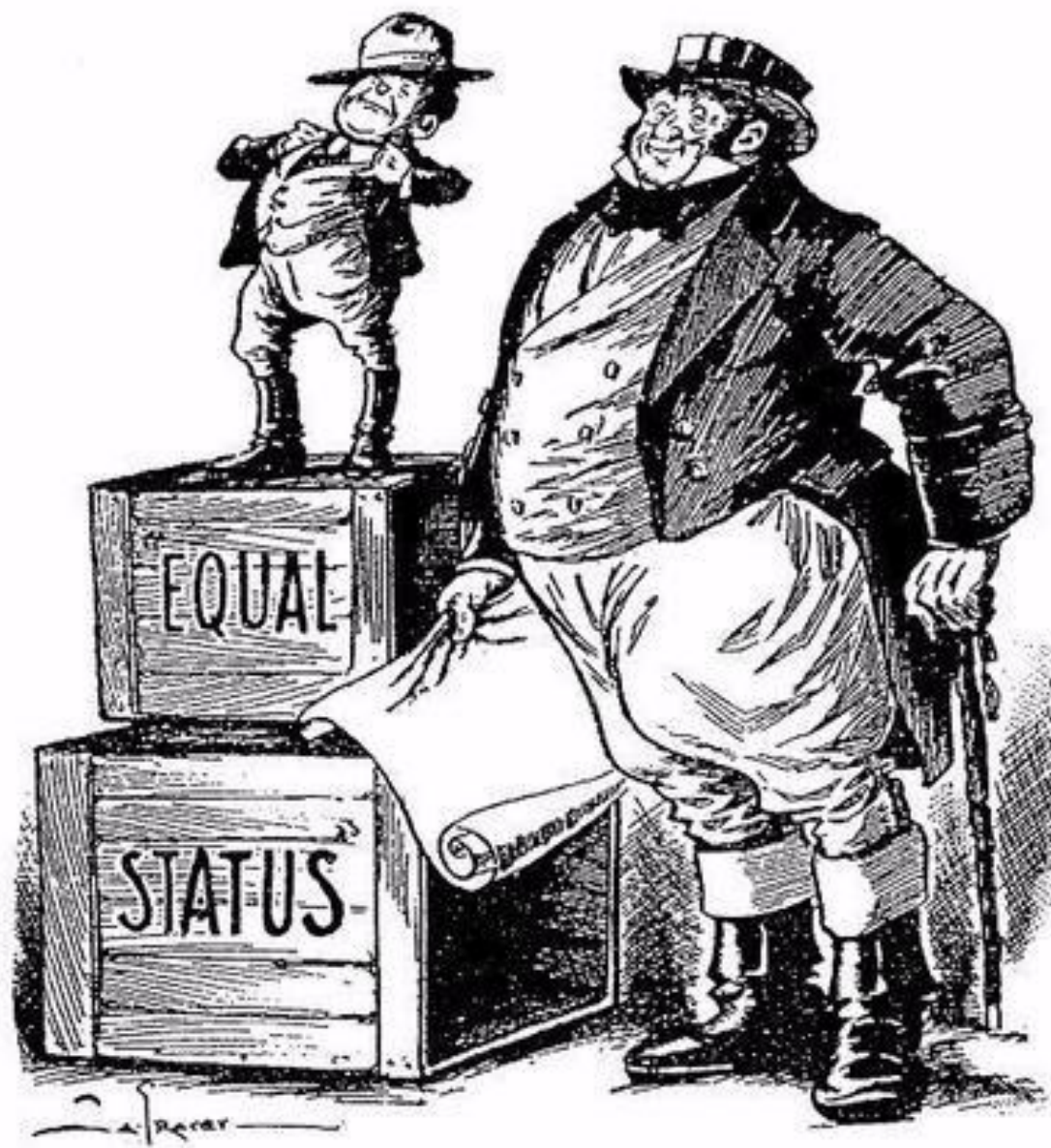


Canadian military support



4) Statute of Westminster (1931):

- Passed by the British Parliament, it officially recognized the legislative independence of the British dominions (like Canada)
- Canada gained **full autonomy over its internal and external affairs**
- HOWEVER, there remained a significant limitation: **British Parliament kept the right to modify the Canadian Constitution until 1982.**



Just as Big as Daddy

Canadian territory



Map of Canada in 1905

- The influx of immigrants to the Prairies led to the creation of 2 new provinces: **Saskatchewan and Alberta.**
- The territories of Québec and Ontario were expanded northward toward the Hudson Bay.

Canadian territory



Map of Canada in 1912

- Manitoba, Ontario and Québec requested that their borders also be extended northward, which was granted.

Governance of First Nations and Inuit populations

- **By the turn of the 20th century, Indigenous people:**
 - were a minority in Canada
 - were isolated in federally controlled reserves
 - malnutrition
 - lack of medical care
 - overcrowded housing
 - spread of serious diseases (like tuberculosis)
 - were trying to survive when the Canadian government wanted to assimilate them (their rights and their cultures were not recognized)
 - had signed treaties with the Canadian government that were often detrimental to them
 - were forced to send their kids to residential schools.
- **In the 1940s, they became more politically active, complaining about their living conditions and the government's failure to respect treaty agreements.**