

CLB 7 – September Question

Name:

Date:



CLB 7 – Diversity in Canada

Unity in Diversity

John Buchan, the 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, was a popular Governor General of Canada (1935-40). Immigrant groups, he said, “should retain their individuality and each make its contribution to the national character.” Each could learn “from the other, and ... while they cherish their own special loyalties and traditions, they cherish not less that new loyalty and tradition which springs from their union” (Canadian Club of Halifax, 1937).

English and French

Canadian society today stems largely from the English-speaking and French-speaking Christian civilizations that were brought here from Europe by settlers. English and French define the reality of day-to-day life for most people and are the country’s official languages. The federal government is required by law to provide services throughout Canada in English and French.

Today, there are 18 million Anglophones-people who speak English as a first language-and 7 million Francophones-people who speak French as their first language. While the majority of Francophones live in the province of Quebec, one million Francophones live in Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba, with a smaller presence in other provinces. New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province.

The **Acadians** are the descendants of French colonists who began settling in what are now the Maritime provinces in 1604. Between 1755 and 1763, during the war between Britain and France, more than two-thirds of the Acadians were deported from their homeland. Despite this ordeal, known as the “Great Upheaval,” the Acadians survived and maintained their unique identity. Today, Acadian culture is flourishing and is a lively part of French-speaking Canada.

Quebecers are the people of Quebec, the vast majority French-speaking. Most are descendants of 8,500 French settlers from the 1600s and 1700s and maintain a unique identity, culture and language. The House of Commons recognized in 2006 that the Quebecois form a nation within a united Canada. One million **Anglo-Quebecers** have a heritage of 250 years and form a vibrant part of the Quebec fabric.

The basic way of life in English-speaking areas was established by hundreds of thousands of **English, Welsh, Scottish** and **Irish** settlers, soldiers and migrants from the 1600s to the 20th century. Generations of pioneers and builders of British origins, as well as other groups, invested and endured hardship in laying the foundations of our country. This helps explain why Anglophones (English speakers) are generally referred to as *English Canadians*.

Becoming Canadian

Some Canadians immigrate from places where they have experienced warfare or conflict. Such experiences do not justify bringing to Canada violent, extreme or hateful prejudices. In becoming Canadian, newcomers are expected to embrace democratic principles such as the rule of law.

Diversity in Canada

The majority of Canadians were born in this country and this has been true since the 1800s. However, Canada is often referred to as a *land of immigrants* because, over the past 200 years, millions of newcomers have helped to build and defend our way of life.

Many ethnic and religious groups live and work in peace as proud Canadians. The largest groups are the English, French, Scottish, Irish, German, Italian, Chinese, Aboriginal, Ukrainian, Dutch, South Asian and Scandinavian. Since the 1970s, most immigrants have come from Asian countries.

Non-official languages are widely spoken in Canadian homes. Chinese languages are the second most-spoken at home, after English, in two of Canada's biggest cities. In Vancouver, 13% of the population speak Chinese languages at home; in Toronto, the number is 7%.

The great majority of Canadians identify as Christians. The largest religious affiliation is Catholic, followed by various Protestant churches. The numbers of Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and members of other religions, as well as people who state "no religion" are also growing.

In Canada the state has traditionally partnered with faith communities to promote social welfare, harmony and mutual respect; to provide schools and health care; to resettle refugees; and to uphold religious freedom, religious expression and freedom of conscience.

Canada's diversity includes gay and lesbian Canadians, who enjoy the full protection of and equal treatment under the law, including access to civil marriage.

Together, these diverse groups, sharing a common Canadian identity, make up today's multicultural society.

Review Question:

Which Governor General said immigrant groups "should retain their individuality and each make its own contribution to the national character"?

- David Johnston
- the Viscount Alexander of Tunis
- Michaëlle Jean
- Baron Tweedsmuir, John Buchan