

# Quiet Revolution



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- The Quiet Revolution (French: Révolution tranquille) was a period of intense socio-political and socio-cultural change in the Canadian province of Québec, characterized by the effective secularization of government, the creation of a state-run welfare state (état-providence), and realignment of politics into federalist and sovereigntist (or separatist) factions and the eventual election of a pro-sovereignty provincial government in the 1976 election. The Quiet Revolution typically refers to the efforts made by the Liberal government of Jean Lesage (elected in 1960), and sometimes Robert Bourassa (elected in 1970 after the Union Nationale's Daniel Johnson in 1966), though given the profound effect of the changes, most provincial governments since the early 1960s have maintained an orientation based on core concepts developed and implemented in that era.

- The Quiet Revolution began with the enacted Liberal provincial government of Jean Lesage, who was elected in the June 1960 provincial election, shortly after the death of Premier Maurice Duplessis, whose tenure was known by some as the Grande Noirceur (Great Darkness), but viewed by conservatives as epitomizing a religiously and culturally pure Québec.



- Prior to the 1960s, the government of Québec was controlled by the conservative Duplessis, leader of the Union Nationale party. Not all the Catholic Church supported Duplessis - some Catholic unions and members of the clergy criticized him, including Montreal Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau - but the bulk of the small-town and rural clergy supported him.
- Prior to the Quiet Revolution, the province's natural resources were developed mainly by foreign investors. In the spring of 1949, a group of 5,000 asbestos miners went on strike for three months. The 1949 Asbestos Strike found Québécois miners united against a nationalist foreign corporation. Political activist and singer Félix Leclerc described this phenomenon, writing, "Our people are the waterboys of their own country."
- In many ways, Duplessis's death in 1959, quickly followed by the sudden death of his successor Paul Sauvé, triggered the Quiet Revolution. The Liberal Party, led by Jean Lesage and campaigning under the slogans "Things have to change" and "Masters of our own house", a phrase coined by Le Devoir editor André Laurendeau), was voted into power within a year of Duplessis's death.
- It is generally accepted that the revolution ended before the October Crisis of 1970, but Québec society has continued to change dramatically since then, notably with the rise of the sovereignty movement, evidenced by the election of the sovereigntist Parti Québécois, the formation of a sovereigntist political party representing Québec on the federal level, the Bloc Québécois as well as the 1980 and 1995 sovereignty referendums. Some scholars argue that the rise of the Québec sovereignty movement during the 1970s is also part of this period.

# Education

- The Canadian Constitution of 1867 made education an area of provincial responsibility. Québec set up a Ministry of Public Instruction in 1868 but abolished it in 1875 under pressure from the Catholic Church. The clergy believed it would be able to provide appropriate teaching to young people and that the province should not interfere. By the early 1960s, there were more than 1,500 school boards, each responsible for its own programs, textbooks and the recognition of diplomas according to its own criteria.
- Following World War II, while most of the United States and Canada was enjoying a long period of prosperity and modernization, economic growth was slower in Québec.[citation needed] The level of formal schooling among French-Canadians was quite low: only 13% finished grade 11, as opposed to 36% of English Canadians. One of the most scathing attacks on the educational system was levelled by Brother Jean-Paul Desbiens, writing under the pseudonym of Frère Untel. The publication of his book *Les insolences du Frère Untel* (1960) quickly sold over 100,000 copies and has come to be recognized as having important impact on the beginning of the Quiet Revolution.



# Economic reforms

- Seeking a mandate for its most daring reform, the nationalization of the province's electric companies under Hydro-Québec, the Liberal Party called for a new election in 1962. The Liberal party was returned to power with an increased majority in the Legislative Assembly of Québec and within six months, René Lévesque, Minister of Natural Resources, enacted his plans for Hydro-Québec. The Hydro-Québec project grew to become an important symbol in Québec. It demonstrated the strength and initiative of the Québec government and was a symbol of the ingenuity of Québécois in their capability to complete such an ambitious project.[15] The original Hydro-Québec project ushered in an era of "megaprojects" that would continue until 1984, seeing Québec's hydroelectric network grow and become a strong pillar of the province.[16] Today, Hydro-Québec remains a crucial element to the Québec economy, with annual revenues of \$12.7 billion Canadian dollars, \$1.1 billion going directly into the province's coffers.[17]
- A new labour code (Code du Travail) was adopted in 1964. It made unionizing much easier and gave public employees the right to strike. It was during the same year that the Code Civil (Civil Code) was modified to recognize the legal equality of spouses. In case of divorce, the rules for administering the Divorce Act were retained using Québec's old community property matrimonial regime until 1980, when new legislation brought an automatic equal division of certain basic family assets between spouses.



# Federal politics

- Politics at the federal level were also in flux. In 1957, the federal government passed the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act. This was, effectively, the beginning of a pan-Canadian system of public health insurance.[33][34] In 1961, Prime Minister Diefenbaker instituted the National Hospital Insurance Plan, the first public health insurance plan adhered to by all the provinces. In 1966, the National Medicare program was created.[33]
- Federal politics were further influenced by the election of Pierre Elliot Trudeau in 1968.[35] The rise to power of arguably Canada's most influential Prime Minister was unique in Canadian politics.
- Before the end of the 1960s, Trudeau would pass the Official Languages Act (1969), which aimed to ensure that all federal government services were available in both of Canada's official languages.[37] By the end of the 1960s, Trudeau had also passed legislation decriminalizing homosexuality and certain types of abortion.



# Municipal politics

- Montreal municipal politics were also going through an important upheaval. Jean Drapeau became Montreal mayor on October 24, 1960. Within the first few years of his tenure, Drapeau oversaw a series of infrastructure projects, including the expansion of Dorval airport (now Montréal–Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport), the opening of the Champlain bridge and the renaissance of Old Montreal. He also oversaw the construction and inauguration of Place des Arts. Drapeau was also instrumental in the construction of the Montreal metro system, which was inaugurated on October 14, 1966. Under Drapeau, Montreal was awarded the 1967 International and Universal Exposition (Expo 67), whose construction he oversaw. He was also one of the key politicians responsible for National League of baseball granting Montreal a franchise, the now-defunct Montreal Expos. Another of Drapeau's major projects was obtaining and holding the 1976 Summer Olympics.

Thank you for your attention