

# ▶ *News In Review*

## Resource Guide

**SEPTEMBER 2008**



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# *News in Review*

## Resource Guide

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September 2008



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### ***News in Review, September 2008***

#### **1. Putting a Tax on Carbon**

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#### **2. China and the Olympic Games**

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#### **3. Canada's Residential School Apology**

(Start: 30:54; Length: 18:58)

#### **4. Boom Times in Saskatchewan**

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### NiR Study

#### Modules

Using print and video material from archival issues of *News in Review*, teachers and students can create thematic modules for independent assignments, and small group study.

### Related CBC Videos

Other videos available from CBC Learning; see the back cover for contact details.

### PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON (Start: 00:00; Length: 13:26)

This summer, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion introduced a plan to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. The plan would place a new tax on carbon. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives immediately attacked the plan, calling it a tax grab that would make gasoline even more expensive. In this *News in Review* story we'll look at the carbon tax debate and explain why it could become a big election issue.

#### NiR Study Modules

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Going Green to Fight Global Warming  
October 2007  
Dangers of Global Warming, May 2007  
A Call for Action on Climate Change  
March 2007  
The Big Melt: Canada's Changing Arctic  
September 2006  
After Kyoto: Trying to Cool the Planet  
February 2006  
Kyoto: The Battle Lines Are Drawn  
December 2002  
Canada's Long, Hot Summer, September 2002  
Ice Station SHEBA: The Warming Arctic  
September 1998

Cutting Emissions: New Fuels for Cars  
February 1998  
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March 1992  
The Clean Air Act, December 1990

#### Related CBC Videos

*Crude Awakening*  
*Land of Fire: Searching for Natural Gas Hydrate*  
*The Ghosts of Future's Past: Tom Berger in the North*  
*When is Enough, Enough?*  
*When Less is More*

### CHINA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES (Start: 13:26; Length: 17:28)

On August 8, the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games opened in the Chinese capital of Beijing. For the Chinese government the Games were not just a chance to host the biggest sporting event in the world, they were also a chance for the country to showcase its achievements as a rising global power. In this *News in Review* story we'll look at whether they succeeded and what happened when the Games got underway.

#### NiR Study Modules

Tibet, China, and the Olympics, May 2008  
Beijing 2008: A Momentous Decision  
September 2001  
The Salt Lake City Olympics, March 2002  
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March 1998  
Hong Kong: Back to China, September 1997

Special Olympics: Taking Part, April 1997  
Deng Xiaoping: China at the Crossroads  
April 1997  
The Olympics: Games People Play  
September 1996  
The UN Women's Summit: Two Weeks in China, October 1995  
China Today: A Correspondent's View  
September 1994

#### Related CBC Videos

*China Rises*  
*Half the Sky: Women in China*

## **CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY (Start: 30:54; Length: 18:58)**

In June, the Government of Canada apologized to Aboriginal Canadians for the way they were treated in residential schools. Thousands of Aboriginal children were forced into government-financed schools where many suffered physical and sexual abuse. In this *News in Review* story we'll look at that sad chapter in Canadian history and at the moving ceremony in the House of Commons.

### **NiR Study Modules**

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November 1996  
Native Claims: Growing Frustrations  
October 1995  
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December 1992  
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*Generations: Crowfoot Dynasty*  
*Reaching Out: Sandy Bay, SK*  
*Residential Schools*  
*Stolen Children*  
*Violation of Trust*

## **BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN (Start: 49:52; Length: 13:25)**

After many lean years Saskatchewan has suddenly become an economic powerhouse. Soaring prices for oil, potash, wheat, and other products have brought new prosperity to the province. In this *News in Review* story we'll look at how these boom times are changing the lives of the people who live there.

### **NiR Study Modules**

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November 2007  
Boom Times: Alberta's Red-hot Economy  
May, 2006  
Metal Mania: Canada's Mining Boom  
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December 2005  
Energy Shock: The Rising Price of Oil  
November 2004  
Rising Oil Prices: The New Energy Crisis  
April 2000

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*Generations: 100 Years in Saskatchewan*  
*Geologic Journey*  
*Legacy: The Will to Survive*



Sections marked with this symbol contain content suitable for younger viewers.

# PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON

## Introduction

### Focus

The Liberal Party of Canada, under its leader Stéphane Dion, has proposed a nationwide carbon tax to help reduce the amount of carbon emissions produced in this country. The party's plan, the Green Shift, will be a key plank in the Liberal platform in the upcoming election. This *News in Review* module examines the Liberal proposal, some of the reasons why it was developed, and the reaction of the governing Conservatives and other interested parties. We also look at the new British Columbia carbon tax, in some ways a model for the Liberals' Green Shift.

### Further Research

The (U.S.) Carbon Tax Center has an article on its Web site listing the major arguments for a carbon tax as the best way to put a price on carbon emissions at [www.carbontax.org/issues/carbon-taxes-vs-cap-and-trade/](http://www.carbontax.org/issues/carbon-taxes-vs-cap-and-trade/).

As of the end of August 2008, it seemed inevitable that Canada would be having a federal election sometime in the fall—and probably as early as October. One of the key issues in that election will be climate change. For the Liberal Party, climate change will be a central issue of their campaign.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion concluded some time ago that the environment was one issue where the Liberals could readily distinguish themselves from the governing Conservatives. Dion served as environment minister in an earlier Liberal government, and environmental policy remains an area of great interest to him—one in which he believes he has considerable expertise.

Dion and the party gave a great deal of attention to developing a policy to address what they feel is one of Canada's biggest needs: finding a way to significantly reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Dion wanted a policy that would do three things: put a price on carbon emissions, produce a dramatic reduction in those emissions, and be completely distinct from the proposals of the governing Conservatives for reducing such emissions.

For Dion, the solution was a carbon tax—a fixed amount per tonne of carbon emitted by individuals and industries as a result of burning fossil fuels. The carbon tax is one major method of affixing a cost to carbon emissions and is an instrument already used by some European countries. The Liberals call their proposal to bring in such a carbon tax the Green Shift.

It is not a solution that came readily to Dion. At the time of the Liberal leadership convention in 2006, he was opposed to the idea. The one Liberal

candidate supporting a carbon tax at that time was Michael Ignatieff—and his support for it was tepid at best.

Nonetheless, by early 2008 Dion was clearly warming to the idea of a carbon tax. Helping him make the change was a surprise proposal by British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell and his ruling Liberal Party. They indicated that they would introduce Canada's first real carbon tax in their next budget. (For a description of the B.C. Carbon Tax, see "B.C.'s Carbon Tax Plan: The FAQs" on page 12 of this guide.)

While the details differ somewhat from the Green Shift, B.C.'s carbon tax shares one important feature with Dion's proposal. It is intended to be revenue neutral. This means that the new tax on fossil fuels will be offset by tax breaks in other areas—especially in personal income taxes and in corporate taxes.

The expectation is that taxpayers will find that the carbon tax does indeed raise the price of things like gasoline and heating fuels, encouraging them to use less of these products. On the other hand, they will be compensated by reduction in other taxes—meaning that the government will not be taking in additional revenue from the carbon tax.

Other developments also encouraged the Liberals to move on a carbon tax. Once again some of the provinces took the lead. Feeling that the federal government was abdicating its responsibilities in the battle against climate change, Quebec and Ontario signed a memorandum of understanding to limit the amount of greenhouse gases their industries will be permitted to emit. Companies emitting more than permitted will have to pay a fee to those companies that are under the limits.

### Further Research

A copy of the complete Green Shift document is available at [thegreenshift.ca/pdfs/green\\_shift\\_book\\_en.pdf](http://thegreenshift.ca/pdfs/green_shift_book_en.pdf).

And four provinces along with seven U.S. states have become partners under the Western Climate Initiative (WCI – [www.westernclimateinitiative.org](http://www.westernclimateinitiative.org)). This will be a “cap-and-trade” mechanism for greenhouse gas emissions similar to European models. As described by *The Globe and Mail* (July 24, 2008): “The program would grant each participating province (British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec) an allocated and declining cap for each year from 2012 to 2020, set in advance. Those caps have not yet been set, but would be based on population, electricity consumption and production, and economic activity—not on current efficiency, the WCI report says. As such, the most efficient provinces in 2012 could sooner sell credits to other regions, creating a revenue stream.” The four provinces involved have 80 per cent of Canada’s population and are responsible for 49 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions.

Dion also believes that voters are prepared to back his new plan. Certainly, there have been indications that Canadians are ready to support some sort

of carbon tax. On November 29, 2007, *The Globe and Mail* reported: “A recent GlobeScan poll found that four out of five Canadians favour raising taxes on energy sources that cause climate change if other taxes are reduced by the same amount.” At that time, the environment and climate change were the top issue for Canadians.

But rising energy costs and a faltering economy have made their impact on voters. Recent polls show that the environment is now third on the list of voters’ concerns. Whether Dion and the Liberals can focus voters on the issue and their proposal during the coming campaign remains to be seen. Many Liberal Party members fear that it is the right proposal at the wrong time.

Nevertheless, Dion has proposed what to many was, until recently, unthinkable—a national carbon tax for Canada. He has concentrated the attention of many Canadians on the real cost of greenhouse gas emissions and has begun a debate that may well continue for some time.

### For Discussion

Some economists have noted that the recent increase in the cost of gasoline has had a noticeable impact on the amount of oil consumption in North America. They argue that there is no need for a carbon tax because, as prices rise, market forces will ensure that people cut back on the use of fossil fuels. Do you agree or disagree with this point of view? You may want to revisit this question after watching the video and its description of the effects of the mid-1970s oil crisis on the American automobile industry.



# PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON

## Video Review

Answer the questions in the spaces provided.

1. a) What is the initial amount of carbon tax per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions under the Liberal proposal?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What is the amount after four years?

2. a) What would be the increase in home heating costs for an average family using heating oil?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What is the increase for a family using natural gas?

3. What are some of the ways in which the carbon tax would be offset?

4. How does Prime Minister Stephen Harper describe the plan?

5. What does the National Round Table on the Environment, a government advisory body, suggest a carbon tax would lead to?

6. Why do all three of Canada's northern territorial leaders argue that a carbon tax would be an unfair burden on northerners?

7. According to Kelly Crowe, what has happened to greenhouse gas emissions as climate talks have become more intense?

8. Danny Harvey says we are hardwiring two dependencies into Canadian suburban design. These are:

a) a dependence on \_\_\_\_\_  
and

b) a dependence on \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the current source of most of the cheapest energy?

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10. How has the average fuel efficiency of automobiles changed since 1986?

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11. How long did it take Canada's fuel efficiency legislation for automobiles to be proclaimed into law?

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12. What changes do economists say are needed to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

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### **For Discussion**

Many members of Stéphane Dion's own caucus have criticized him (at least privately) for insisting on releasing his Green Shift proposal at a time when oil prices were rising significantly. Others have praised him for sticking to his principles even in a politically difficult time.

Would you describe Dion's position as principled or foolish? Explain.

Do you think Canada's role in climate change will be a key debate in the upcoming election?

If the Liberals lose the next election, do you think they will continue to back carbon taxation as party policy?

# PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON

## *The Problem with Carbon*

### Quote

“Economists have understood for nearly a century that a fundamental flaw in our market economy is its failure to fully account for impact on the environment. Indeed, in most of Canada, carbon is released into the atmosphere without any charge (and with few regulatory restrictions). That’s despite the fact that global warming will impose massive costs on society—as is already being witnessed in B.C.’s devastated pine forests, Ontario’s lowering Great Lakes, and the Arctic’s melting permafrost.”  
— Clive Mather, Nancy Olewiler, and Stewart Elgie (*The Globe and Mail*, November 29, 2007)

Why a carbon tax? The answer is very straightforward. A carbon tax is one way of putting a price on the real cost of burning fossil fuels—a cost that is far higher than the price paid by consumers and businesses when they purchase that fuel.

Since 2007, when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its latest reports, there have been few people who doubt the reality that the Earth is warming and that human activity is playing a significant role in that warming. The IPCC, made up of hundreds of the world’s leading climate scientists, claims with over 90 per cent certainty that the human contribution to climate change is significant.

The human contribution is caused by the release of gases that result from the burning of fossil fuels. There are six trace gases created by human activity, but by far the most significant contributor to the greenhouse effect is carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). It is the release of carbon dioxide that is being targeted by the proposed carbon tax.

CO<sub>2</sub> is the most dangerous of the greenhouse gases because it persists for many years in the atmosphere. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is currently 380 ppm (parts per million), a 33 per cent rise since the start of the Industrial Revolution. Scientists believe it could reach a figure double that of the pre-industrial level within a few decades.

### **Carbon, Climate Change, and Canada**

Canada is already feeling the effects of climate change. One has only to look to the Arctic Ocean and its ever-decreasing ice cover to recognize that change is taking place.

Most climate scientists believe that average temperatures in Canada are on the rise, and that, no matter what action we take now, they will continue to rise until at least 2025. If no action is taken, and temperatures continue to rise, scientists expect some dramatic results.

Among them:

- A drop in the amount of ice cover in the Great Lakes (a result of warmer air and water), causing greatly increased evaporation
- A reduction in snow cover by mid-century everywhere in Canada except the Arctic
- An increase in the intensity of storms across Canada from the Pacific
- Increased drought in already dry regions

At current levels of carbon dioxide, the global temperature will rise 1.8 to 4.0 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. This increase will be even greater in the higher latitudes, including Canada. René Laprise, a specialist in regional climate modelling at the University of Quebec’s Montreal campus told CBC News: “These temperature increases could exceed 10 degrees [Celsius]. Warming on average in Canada would increase four to six degrees Celsius, with a smaller change in the south and an increase of 10 degrees in the north” ([www.cbc.ca/news/background/climatechange/unreport-2007.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/climatechange/unreport-2007.html)).

While it would seem very much in Canada’s interest to become a leader in carbon abatement practices, this country is currently one of the leading per capita emitters of greenhouse gas. The boom in oil sands development and the generation of coal-fired electricity have both contributed to a steady increase in these emissions.

**Quote**

"The reality is that the climate system counts molecules. The number of CO<sub>2</sub> molecules going into the atmosphere is what drives the climate system and that is the number that has to be addressed globally. You have to do that in a way that actually addresses the emissions per se, not relative to something else." — Gordon McBean, chairman of the Canadian Foundation for Climate Change and Atmospheric Science, *Toronto Star*, February 2, 2007

**G8**

G8 is the short name for the group of eight leading industrialized countries: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, the United States, Canada (since 1976), and Russia (since 1998).

Environment Canada has reported a 39.4 per cent increase in greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta between 1990 and 2004. By 2005, Alberta had seven of the 10 biggest industrial polluters in Canada, and its industries ranked first in greenhouse gas production in the country. Second only to Alberta was Ontario, the manufacturing centre of the country.

In the period from 1990 to 2005, when Canada was committed to reducing greenhouse gases under the Kyoto Protocol, greenhouse gas emissions actually rose by 25 per cent. This was the biggest percentage increase among all the G8 countries.

**Analysis**

1. Would you accept taxation as a way to reduce carbon emissions? Why? Why not?
2. How would your family likely respond to a tax on carbon? Why?

Carbon emissions are a major problem worldwide. The problem is expected to increase as the demand for fossil fuels increases, especially in developing nations. The only real solution to slowing and stopping global warming is to decrease the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. A carbon tax—and one large enough to ensure that fossil fuels are expensive to use—is one of the methods proposed to deal with this problem. Carbon taxes have proven valuable in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in some European countries but are very new to Canada.



## PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON

### *B.C.'s Carbon Tax Plan: The FAQs*

#### Further Research

The official Web site describing B.C.'s new carbon tax program is at [www.smartchoicesbc.ca/EN/home/](http://www.smartchoicesbc.ca/EN/home/).

#### Further Research

For information on the Quebec carbon tax visit the CBC Web site at [www.cbc.ca/canada/montreal/story/2007/06/07/carbon-tax.html](http://www.cbc.ca/canada/montreal/story/2007/06/07/carbon-tax.html).

*Is the British Columbia carbon tax the first Canadian carbon tax?*

Not completely. In 2007 Quebec decided to collect a carbon tax from the province's petroleum companies. The tax was set at 0.8 cents per litre on gasoline and 0.9 cents per litre on diesel fuel. The tax raises about \$200-million per year. B.C.'s tax is intended to have a much greater impact on the province's greenhouse gas production.

*What is being taxed?*

The plan applies to pretty much all fossil fuel products. It includes gasoline, diesel, natural gas, coal, propane, and home-heating fuel.

*How much is the tax?*

The tax began on July 1, 2008, and the charge is currently \$10 per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions. Over the next four years the amount will rise by \$5 per tonne. In 2012 the tax will be \$30 per tonne.

*How will the tax affect the price of gasoline, for example?*

Initially, the price of gasoline rose by about 2.3 cents per litre. In 2012, the tax will be bringing in about 7.24 cents per litre.

*What will be the increased annual energy costs for the average household?*

The increased cost in the first year of the program is expected to be about \$200.

*How much money will the carbon tax raise?*

The tax is expected to raise about \$1.8-billion over the first three years.

*How will the money be used?*

The B.C. plan is designed to be revenue neutral. This means that the money will not be used for government spending programs. It is to be used for tax cuts in other areas.

*How might this tax shifting work?*

The government will likely use some of the money to lower personal and corporate income taxes. It may also use some of the funds to invest in clean air technology development by universities and corporations.

*Has such tax shifting been used successfully by other governments?*

Consider this example from *The Globe and Mail* (November 29, 2007): "The canonical example is Germany. In 1999, it began to phase in higher taxes on electricity, gasoline, fuel oil, and natural gas. The government used the new tax revenues to finance reductions in social security contributions from both employers and employees. The reforms included special protections for vulnerable industries and low-income individuals to ensure they weren't disproportionately affected (an important lesson for B.C. to follow). The result: 250 000 new jobs and a reduction of 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in 2003 alone (equivalent to taking five million cars off the road)—and a significant step toward the much deeper cuts needed to prevent dangerous climate change."

*Are there winners and losers under the new carbon tax?*

As the plan stands, consumers are expected to pay about one-third of the

tax but receive almost two-thirds of the tax benefits. Businesses will pay two-thirds of the tax but get only about half of what they pay back in the form of tax cuts and benefits. Northern B.C. residents also argue that they, as major fossil fuel users, will spend far more than their southern B.C. counterparts on the carbon tax.

*How have consumers and others reacted to the carbon tax?*

Reaction to the tax by B.C. residents has been mixed, but more positive than negative. Environmental organizations have united behind it. Many consumers have been won over by the revenue-neutral aspects of the tax and by a \$100-

per-person “Climate Change Dividend” that the government offered every B.C. resident in its 2008 budget.

Among those opposed to the tax are some northern residents, suburban commuters, and businesspeople. Somewhat surprisingly, the provincial New Democratic Party, to the dismay of environmentalists, voted against the legislation.

*Is the carbon tax expected to have an impact on British Columbia’s economic growth?*

The B.C. government has estimated that the cost this year will be \$167-million in lost economic growth. This amounts to a reduction of about 0.1 percent per year.

## **For Discussion**

*The Globe and Mail* (March 10, 2008) suggests that one of the really significant aspects of the B.C. plan is its tax shifting, “that is imposing a tax on carbon while reducing other taxes so that consumers and businesses still have money to spend on more energy-efficient cars, homes, appliances, and so on.” Is it realistic to expect that consumers will use these tax reductions to spend more on energy efficiency? Why or why not?

# PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON

## *Dion's Green Shift/Harper's Turning the Corner*

### Further Research

More information and copies of both plans are available on the Web. *Turning the Corner* is available at [www.ec.gc.ca/doc/virage-corner/2008-03/541\\_eng.htm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/doc/virage-corner/2008-03/541_eng.htm). See also the government Web site *ecoACTION* at [www.ecoaction.gc.ca/index-eng.cfm](http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca/index-eng.cfm). *The Green Shift* is available at [thegreenshift.ca/pdfs/green\\_shift\\_book\\_en.pdf](http://thegreenshift.ca/pdfs/green_shift_book_en.pdf).

### Further Research

An excellent description of the process of carbon sequestration is available from the CBC at [www.cbc.ca/news/background/kyoto/capturing-carbon.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kyoto/capturing-carbon.html).

The Liberals' Green Shift is a response to the current official Canadian plan for reducing carbon emissions. Called *Turning the Corner*, the plan was developed by the Conservative government under Stephen Harper and released in April 2007. Further details were released in March 2008.

What follows is a brief description of each of the plans.

### Turning the Corner

*Turning the Corner* targets industrial emitters, who are responsible for about 51 per cent of the greenhouse gases emitted in Canada. It is unique in that it has regulations to deal with air pollution as well as fossil fuel emissions. It has three major aims when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions:

- To force industries to reduce those emissions
- To set up an emissions trading market so that industries that meet and better their targets can sell credits to those that exceed theirs
- To establish a market price for carbon

The list of industries affected includes ([www.ecoaction.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/20070426-13-eng.cfm](http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/20070426-13-eng.cfm)):

- electricity produced by combustion
- oil and gas (including oil and gas, oil sands, and pipelines)
- forest products (including pulp and paper and wood products)
- smelting and refining (including aluminum, alumina, ilmenite [titanium], and base metal smelting)
- iron and steel
- cement, lime, and chemical production
- some mining sectors (including iron-ore, pelletizing, and potash)

The plan is intended to produce an absolute reduction in emissions by 2012, and a 20 per cent reduction (compared with 2006 levels) by 2020. The long-term target sees emission levels reduced by 70 per cent in 2050.

It is important to note that *Turning the Corner* sets targets based on units of production (sometimes called intensity targets). This means that an industry, if it is experiencing strong growth, may reduce the number of emissions it produces per unit; but, because of its growth, actually emit more carbon than before the plan went into effect. This is especially of concern in industries like oil sands development. To counter this possibility, the government is insisting that ways must be found to sequester carbon emissions from industries like the oil sands.

### The Green Shift

The Liberal Green Shift is a direct tax on fossil fuels whose burning results in the emission of greenhouse gases. As proposed it applies to coal, oil, and gas, but not to gasoline, which is already subject to a federal excise tax.

The tax would begin at \$10 per tonne of carbon emissions, rising to \$40 per tonne in the fourth year of the plan. The cost to an average household is estimated at \$225 to \$250 per year.

The tax, once fully implemented in Year 4, would raise over \$15-billion.

The tax is designed to be revenue neutral. The money raised would be returned to individual taxpayers through tax cuts or credits. The personal income tax rate for those in the lowest income bracket would be cut from 15 to 13.5 per cent; the middle bracket from 22 to 21 percent; and the highest from 26 to 25 per cent.

### Further Research

For a detailed analysis of some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two plans to reduce carbon emissions in Canada, see "Jack Mintz: Regulation vs. Taxes," published in the *Financial Post*, at <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fpcomment/archive/2008/06/27/jack-mintz-regulation-vs-taxes.aspx>.

Canadians living in the North and rural Canadians, both of whom are more dependent on fossil fuels, would receive a larger tax break. Business and corporate taxes would also be cut. Businesses involved in green technologies and research would receive an additional break.

Noteworthy is the fact that the Liberals intend to use some funds from the plan to implement aspects of their anti-poverty agenda. Among the measures proposed are:

- a guaranteed income supplement for as many as 500 000 poor families
- an increase in the guaranteed income supplement for senior citizens
- an increase in the child tax benefit supplement
- \$5-billion to be spent over five years to improve Aboriginal living conditions (as promised by the Kelowna Accord, which was repudiated by the Conservative government)

### For Discussion

1. Which plan do you favour to reduce carbon emissions: a legal limit on emissions, or a carbon tax on emissions? Why? (Senior students may wish to consult the article by Jack Mintz before the discussion).
2. Some observers have commented that the Liberals have weakened their case for a carbon tax by tying revenue from the tax to their anti-poverty agenda. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?



# PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON

## Other Voices

### Further Research

To stay informed about the position of Canada's major political parties on environmental issues, consider a visit to their official Web sites: Conservative: [www.conservative.ca](http://www.conservative.ca), Liberal: [www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca), NDP: [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca), Bloc Québécois: [www.blocquebecois.org](http://www.blocquebecois.org), Green Party: [www.greenparty.ca](http://www.greenparty.ca).

Reaction to the Liberal Green Shift proposal has, as you might imagine, been mixed. While the next election will really determine whether it ever becomes government policy, all kinds of individuals have been eager to express their views. Among them was the Prime Minister, who didn't mince his words.

On June 21, 2008, *The Globe and Mail* summed up Harper's views: "Prime Minister Stephen Harper said yesterday the Liberals' so-called green shift would 'screw everybody across the country,' comparing leader Stéphane Dion's carbon tax to the national energy program of the 1980s. After previously labelling Mr. Dion's plan 'insane' and 'crazy,' Mr. Harper continued to firebomb the Liberal proposal with indelicate language."

Liberals, of course, were incensed. Deputy leader Michael Ignatieff responded on their behalf: "This man is the Prime Minister of the country. It's undignified and it's an insult to the intelligence of Canadians," he said. "We've had the grease spot, we've had attack ads, and now we have 'crazy,' 'insane' and 'screw.' This is not the language of debate, this is the language of insult."

Here are some other responses to the Green Shift's proposals.

### From Politicians

John Baird, federal environment minister (*The Globe and Mail*, May 12, 2008): "It's a gas-tax increase. It's a tax on home-heating fuel. It's a tax on natural gas for people to heat their homes and hot water tanks. It's a tax on electricity. It's just one big Dion Liberal tax grab."

Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party (*The Globe and Mail*, May 23, 2008): "Those advocating a carbon tax suggest that by making the cost of certain things more expensive people will make different choices, but Canada is a cold place, and heating your home really isn't a choice. We shouldn't punish people, and that's what a carbon tax does."

Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party (*The Globe and Mail*, May 9, 2008): "If the Liberals do this and they're the first federal political party other than the Green Party to call for a carbon tax, I'll be saying 'good for them.'"

Bill Boyd, Saskatchewan Energy and Resources Minister (*The Globe and Mail*, June 28, 2008): "It's going to dramatically impact upon our economy and we're just not in favour of it in any way."

John Godfrey, Liberal MP (*The Globe and Mail*, May 12, 2008): "You cannot have both a fight against climate change and cheap gas. This is not possible. You have to pick one."

### From the Private Sector

Deryk King, chairman and chief executive officer of Direct Energy (*The Globe and Mail*, February 11, 2008): "Most business leaders in Canada now recognize that business must act to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We also recognize that there is a price attached to that action. Carbon abatement is fast becoming just another cost of doing business. It is a corporate responsibility."

“A carbon tax is not a good mechanism for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A much better, more effective route is a cap-and-trade system with auctioned allowances, under which government sets the future target for emissions—the cap—and turns to free-market mechanisms to achieve those targets.”

Stephen Hazell, executive director of Sierra Club Canada (*The Globe and Mail*, May 21, 2008): “The carbon tax has a huge advantage over cap-and-trade in that it can be put in place very quickly and deliver results very quickly, whereas cap-and-trade, it’s taken Europe decades to get that one figured out.”

Janice MacKinnon, professor of public policy at the University of Saskatchewan (*The Globe and Mail*, June 11, 2008): “As we look to the future there are important debates we must have about the best way to put a price on pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions,

while keeping Canadian companies competitive in an international marketplace.

“If we do adopt a national carbon tax, we will need to look carefully at how it can be implemented without fuelling regional alienation and federal-provincial confrontation. If the Liberals do propose a federal carbon tax, they must keep these issues in mind, and not promise already skeptical voters an income tax cut they may not be able to deliver.”

Derek DeCloet, business columnist (*The Globe and Mail*, June 7, 2008): “The hard truth—and if politicians were devoted to telling the truth, they’d say this—is that if the people of the United States, Canada, and the rest of the developed world really want lower energy costs, there’s only one solution that’s guaranteed to work, a policy so simple, it can be described in two words: Use less.”

## Follow-up

Read through the quotations and make two lists—positive and negative—of the various aspects of a carbon tax given in the views of its proponents and opponents. On the basis of these statements, is there a strong case to be made one way or the other? If you had to vote on this issue, would you support or oppose a tax on carbon?

# PUTTING A TAX ON CARBON

## *Activity: The Debate*

Will the Green Shift plan work for Canadians? Will it actually lead to a reduction in Canada's greenhouse gas production? Or is it just another tax grab that will, as the Prime Minister suggests, "screw" all Canadians?

Here is your chance to take a side on this significant election issue. But before you argue your case, it's time to do some research and gather arguments and information.

### **The Topic**

Resolved, that Canada should adopt a carbon tax to assist it in lowering its greenhouse gas emissions.

Teams should consist of two members arguing each side of the question. Each team should have a four-minute opening argument and be allowed a two-minute rebuttal.

Here are some sources that may be consulted to help in developing arguments:

### **Neutral (more or less)**

1. [www.cbc.ca/news/background/kyoto/carbon-tax.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kyoto/carbon-tax.html)
2. [http://thegreenpages.ca/portal/ca/2008/06/carbon\\_tax\\_or\\_cap\\_and\\_trade.html](http://thegreenpages.ca/portal/ca/2008/06/carbon_tax_or_cap_and_trade.html)
3. [www.green-business.ca/index.php/Features/Carbon-tax-or-trade.html](http://www.green-business.ca/index.php/Features/Carbon-tax-or-trade.html)
4. [www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=552899](http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=552899)
5. [www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20080609/carbon\\_tax\\_080609/20080609](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20080609/carbon_tax_080609/20080609)

### **Pro**

1. [www.thegreenshift.ca/default\\_e.aspx](http://www.thegreenshift.ca/default_e.aspx)
2. [www.davidsuzuki.org/files/climate/Briefing\\_Note\\_-\\_BC\\_Budget\\_2008.pdf](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/files/climate/Briefing_Note_-_BC_Budget_2008.pdf)
3. <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/06/02/jack-mintz-on-the-carbon-tax-the-best-of-a-costly-lot.aspx>
4. [http://pubs.pembina.org/reports/BC\\_Carbon\\_Tax\\_Reality\\_Check.pdf](http://pubs.pembina.org/reports/BC_Carbon_Tax_Reality_Check.pdf)

### **Con**

1. [www.ndp.ca/page/6440](http://www.ndp.ca/page/6440)
2. <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Politics/2008/08/21/6527446-cp.html>
3. [www.conservative.ca/EN/1091/100824](http://www.conservative.ca/EN/1091/100824)
4. [www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/govrel/news.cfm?story=80295](http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/govrel/news.cfm?story=80295)

The outcome of the debate will be determined by a vote of the entire class.

# CHINA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## Introduction

### Focus

This *CBC News in Review* story highlights the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, held in Beijing, China, and their impact on the host country and the rest of the world.

### Did you know . . .

In 1984 and 1988, Canada won more medals than in Beijing, but these Games suffered from massive political boycotts. See "Politics and The Olympics" on page 28 for more.

### Further Research

To learn more about these events, consider visiting the following Web sites: Government of China: <http://English.gov.cn>, International Olympic Committee: [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org), Canadian Olympic Committee: [www.olympic.ca](http://www.olympic.ca), and Vancouver 2010: [www.vancouver2010.com](http://www.vancouver2010.com).

On August 24, 2008, the XXIX Olympic Games came to a dramatic end in the huge Bird's Nest Stadium in Beijing, China. An impressive display of fireworks illuminated the skies as over 90 000 spectators and millions of television viewers worldwide watched in awe. The members of the Olympic teams from over 200 countries surged enthusiastically into the stadium. Some waved flags while others captured the moment on cell-phone cameras. Karen Cockburn, who won a silver medal in the women's trampoline event, proudly carried the Canadian flag. Canada's team had a special reason for celebrating, as its medal total rivaled the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games.

As the Olympic Torch, which had burned continuously for the 16 days of the contest, was extinguished, Spanish tenor Plácido Domingo and Chinese soprano Song Zuying sang a duet celebrating international goodwill, and a human mountain of dancers took down the "Memory Tower," which had simulated the flame. To China and the world, it appeared that the Beijing Olympic theme of "one world, one dream" had been realized.

Meanwhile, London, poised to host the next Summer Games, in 2012, staged a sister show from a trademark double-decker bus, starring rock legend Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin fame, popular singer Leona Lewis, and soccer superstar David Beckham. Shortly after the closing ceremony, Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), proclaimed the Beijing Games a total success, both for the host country and the world. Noting that the global television audience for the contest had risen 20 per cent since

the 2004 Olympics in Athens, he stated, "China has learned about the world, and the world has learned about China. It has been a long journey since our decision in July 2001 to bring the Games to China, but there can now be no doubt we made the right choice."

For a proud Chinese people and their leaders, the Olympics were undoubtedly a great success, in terms of both the sporting events themselves and the impact of the Games on the international scene. China's Olympic team had won 51 gold, 21 silver, and 28 bronze medals—more than any other country, including such former Olympic powerhouses as the United States and Russia. The level of competition had also been higher than in previous contests, with 43 world and 132 Olympic records falling. An unprecedented 2 173 events in 625 competing sessions were staged, resulting in the awarding of 308 gold medals. American swimmer Michael Phelps and Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt became international sports celebrities after their outstanding performances in the pool and on the track. And in a poignant moment that captured the true Olympic spirit of friendly competition, Nino Salukvadze, the Georgian bronze-medal winner in the 10 metre air pistol event, embraced silver medallist Natalia Paderina of Russia at the same time as their respective countries were waging war against each other. (See the October 2008 issue of *News in Review* for more about this war.)

But beyond the drama on the fields of competition, the Games had also been a dramatic success for China as it assumed its position as the emerging superpower of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. China's leaders had spared no expense in financial and



**Did you know . . .**

China spent a reported \$42-billion to host the event. China welcomed 500 000 visitors and 11 000 athletes to its first-ever Olympic Games.

human resources to ensure that the Games were an awesome spectacle for both their own citizens and the millions of foreigners who either attended the Games in person or viewed them on television. Over \$40-billion was spent on developing the infrastructure, including many new athletic venues and an impressive subway system. A concerted effort was made to deal with the country's serious pollution problem. The Games themselves were also relatively untouched by the kind of political conflicts and controversies that had marred previous contests.

Calls for an international boycott over China's policies in Tibet and its poor human rights record went unheeded. The senseless murder of the relatives of the coach of the U.S. volleyball team by a deranged individual shortly before the opening of the Games momentarily raised questions about security but failed to have a lasting negative impact. A dispute over the age of China's women gymnasts caused some complaints among competing teams but was downplayed by IOC authorities. And the promise of a "protest park" near the Olympic site where demonstrators could draw attention to their causes went unfulfilled as the authorities denied all of the applications made for it. But these were minor disruptions in what were otherwise an extremely well-organized and impressive Olympics. In the words of Liu Qi, the head of the Beijing organizing committee, the Games were "a testimony to the fact that the world

has rested its trust in China. They were a grand celebration of sport, of peace, and of friendship."

With the Games over, it remains to be seen what their lasting implications will be on a rapidly changing China and its relationship with the broader international community. Individual Chinese citizens had the opportunity to host visitors from around the world and learn more about the freedoms enjoyed by those from Western countries. One of the consequences of the Games could be an increase in demands for freedom of expression, especially via new means of communication such as the Internet, which a younger generation of Chinese people has enthusiastically embraced. There may also be calls for a lessening of the heavy hand of the governing Communist Party and a move toward greater democracy. On the other hand, the regime's claim that only a highly centralized and disciplined political authority could have ensured the success of such a mammoth project may shore up its popular support among the over one billion Chinese people. For ordinary citizens of China, the Olympics were a great source of national pride and global recognition of their country's growing economic, political, and military dominance on the international scene.

Source: "Summer Games closed," "Olympic host China strikes gold," and "IOC head Rogge satisfied with China's Olympics," *Toronto Star Online*, August 24, 2008, <http://olympics.thestar.com>

## To Consider

1. Why did both Chinese and international observers consider the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games to have been such a great success? What is your personal opinion of the success of these Olympic Games?

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2. What concerns were raised prior to and during the Games about possible disruptions or political conflicts impacting negatively on them? Did any of them have such an effect?

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3. Why were the Games so important for China? What do you think their main impact will be on China and its relationship with the rest of the world?

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4. Briefly describe your favourite moments from the Beijing Summer Olympic Games.

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# CHINA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## *Video Review*

### **Did you know . . .**

The number 8 is an especially lucky number in Chinese tradition. The Games were “five times lucky” because they opened at 8:18 of the eighth day of the eighth month in the year 2008. In Beijing, 16 000 couples chose to be married on that auspicious day.

### **Archives**

To enjoy footage of Canada in earlier Olympic contests, visit the CBC Digital Archives at [www.cbc.ca/archives](http://www.cbc.ca/archives) and explore using the term *Olympics*.

Watch the video and answer the questions that follow.

1. What three things about China made holding the Olympics in that country a complicated affair?

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2. In what respects are young Chinese today different from the generation that took to the streets of Beijing in political protests demanding greater democracy in 1989?

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3. a) What is the name of the architect who designed the impressive Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium in Beijing?

b) What is his attitude toward the Games and the Chinese government responsible for holding them?

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4. Why was the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics such a source of pride for people of Chinese background living in Canada and other countries?

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5. Who were the two main athletes who attracted world attention at the Beijing Games? In what sporting events did they excel?

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6. Who was the first Canadian athlete to win a gold medal at the Games?

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7. a) How many individuals and groups applied for permits to stage legal protests at the Beijing Games?

b) How many of these applications did the Chinese government approve?

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**Did you know . . .**

The most famous Canadian in China is Mark Roswell, of Toronto. He speaks fluent Mandarin and is a wildly popular comedian known as Dashan. His name means Big Mountain, and he was privileged to carry the Olympic Torch during its route in China.

8. What is different about the way the athletes enter the closing ceremony of the Games from how they enter the opening ceremony? What is the origin of this tradition? How does it exemplify one of the goals of the Olympics?

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9. In what ways did the closing ceremony point to the fact that London will host the next Summer Olympics, in 2012?

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10. What country and city will host the next Winter Olympic Games, in 2010?

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**For Discussion**

After watching the video, form groups with your classmates to discuss the following:

1. From what you saw in the video, explain why the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics were such visually impressive events.
2. How does China's contemporary reality reflect both its ancient traditions and the forces of modernization that are transforming the country today?
3. With your classmates, discuss the following quotations from the video and state how you personally respond to them:

"[My parents'] first consideration used to be what society wanted them to do, what's best for the country. Now it's different. We're just thinking about what is best for us. A generation ago, China's young people wanted democracy and change. Today they want money, new cars, and better jobs. Priorities have shifted; politics are for politicians. Many haven't even heard of the events of Tiananmen Square, and those who have don't necessarily agree with what the protestors did." — Shang Hun

"The Chinese government was very corrupt at the time. I think what the students did was an important thing, but they were too radical. We just want to make money and after we get money, we want something else. It's hard to be completely satisfied." — Zu Guoning

"I have no commitment to China. If I have a little commitment, it is to life itself but nothing to China." — Ai Wei Wei, architect who designed Beijing's Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium

# CHINA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## *China: Profile of an Awakening Dragon*

China is the world's most populous country and an emerging global superpower. It is also the nation with the world's longest continuous history and culture, stretching back over 4 000 years to its founding by the Emperor Xin, who gave the country its name. Since 1949, the Communist Party has governed China, and under its firm leadership, the country's economy has expanded dramatically over the past few decades. Its population stands at 1.3 billion, according to the latest (2007) United Nations estimate, and its capital city is Beijing, the host of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. Shanghai is its largest city and a growing centre for China's rapidly developing economic and commercial life. The main language spoken is Mandarin Chinese, but Cantonese is widely used in the south, and there are also many other regional dialects. The major religions are Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Christianity. However, under Communist rule public religious expression has not been widely encouraged. However Confucianism, more of a philosophy of living than a religion, pervades much of Chinese society, with its emphasis on education, hard work, personal responsibility, respect for elders and concern for the common good.

The average life expectancy of a Chinese man is 71 years; for a woman it's 75 years. China's unit of currency is the yuan renmimbi, with 6.5 yuan worth one Canadian dollar. China's main exports are manufactured goods, especially textiles, clothing, electronic products and weapons. Its GNP per capita is USD\$1 740, according to a 2006 World Bank estimate. The country's head of state is President Hu Jintao, who was elected to the post in

2003 by the National People's Congress, China's highest legislative body. He was re-elected to the office in 2008. China is a one-party state, where the Communist Party exercises supreme authority without facing the challenge of any legal political opposition. The country's leaders reject Western charges that their regime is undemocratic, pointing out that governing such a huge and diverse country requires rigid control and supervision, especially at a time of great economic and social transformation. At the same time, they claim that the country is gradually moving in a more democratic direction, with its citizens enjoying greater access to consumer goods and information from other parts of the world.

China has been hailed as the economic success story of the new century, and it is modernizing and developing its economy at a truly phenomenal rate. For many Chinese, this economic growth has brought with it increasing prosperity and opportunity, but the benefits have not been equally spread among the population. The gap between rich and poor has widened dramatically, giving rise to the observation that China's claim to be an egalitarian communist society is far-removed from its contemporary reality. China entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a poor, underdeveloped country under the domination of the Western powers, and was nicknamed "the sleeping dragon." After a tumultuous series of events, including the 1911 revolution that overthrew the reigning Manchu dynasty and ushered in a republic, the 1931 Japanese invasion that brought massive destruction to the country, and the ensuing civil war between the Communists under Mao Zedong and their nationalist rivals, the victorious

**Did you know . . .**

The Communist Party of China actually has a special division for its members who are millionaires.

Chinese Communist Party proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Before a rapturous crowd in Beijing, Mao defiantly proclaimed to the world that "the Chinese people have finally stood up."

Mao became the all-powerful leader of the new regime until his death in 1976. Under his rule, many ambitious projects were introduced to modernize and develop the country while at the same time maintaining a rigid communist system. The so-called Great Leap Forward of the 1950s and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the 1960s were sweeping, radical attempts to alter the country's economy and society. However, these came at a great cost, with tens of millions of people losing their lives in the process. After Mao's death, a new generation of more pragmatic and moderate leaders took charge. In 1978 Communist Party chairman Deng Xiaoping instituted a policy of free-market economic reforms. Under Deng and his successors, China's economy has grown by at least 10 per cent per year; its industrial production has expanded at an even higher annual rate: 17 per cent. As of 2008, China's economy is second in size only to that of the United States. By 2020 it is expected to become the world's largest economy.

After decades of self-imposed exclusion from the global economy under Mao's ironclad communist regime, the new China has enthusiastically integrated itself into international trade and commerce. Its share of world economic output has risen fourfold over the past 30 years. Deng and his successors continually emphasized the "four modernizations"—agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defence—and China has seen impressive growth in all of these fields. In 2001, China joined the World Trade Organization ([www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)). Since then the export sector of its burgeoning

economy has risen to a quarter of its GNP, a five-fold increase from 1978. Imports have also risen, and China is now the world's largest importer of raw materials. In addition, China is becoming an emerging military superpower. This fact has aroused some concern among foreign-policy analysts in the U.S. who fear a looming confrontation between the two nations sometime in this century, possibly over trade and economic rivalry for natural resources.

This breathtaking process of economic and social transformation has brought in its train both positive and negative consequences for China and its people. A new generation of Chinese millionaires is enjoying the fruits of prosperity, and a wave of consumerism and love of all the latest Western material goods and fads are sweeping many parts of the country, especially in the major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. At the same time, however, hundreds of millions of Chinese have so far not seen their lives improve substantially. They continue to eke out a very marginal existence, particularly in the countryside. The rush to modernize the country has led to serious environmental degradation in many parts of China, leading to some concerns in the West about high pollution levels in Beijing and their negative impact on the staging of the Olympic Games. In addition, there are widespread allegations of rampant corruption among governing Communist Party officials, who are accused of taking bribes from foreign investors to promote economic development. Many young Chinese are becoming increasingly restive over the regime's refusal to permit greater freedom of expression, and over its controls of new communications media such as the Internet. Religious sects like the Buddhist Falun Gong experience harsh repression, and China's heavy-handed policy toward Tibet and the western region of Xinjiang, home to the



**Quote**

"China is like my mom and Canada is like my lover." — Chinese-Canadian Diana Zhang (*Toronto Star*, August 8, 2008)

country's large Islamic Uighur minority, has been the target of much international criticism.

China's leaders are hoping that in hosting the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing they were able to present a positive image of their country to the world and showcase the impressive advances it has made in its economy and society. They brush aside international criticism of their poor human rights record and lack of democratic freedoms as unwarranted interference in the country's internal affairs, pointing out that China refrains from levelling similar attacks at aspects of Western society that it finds unappealing. For most ordinary Chinese citizens, the fact that their nation hosted the Olympics is a source of great national pride. This is also true for the millions of people of Chinese background who now live in other countries, including Canada.

By opening their rapidly changing country to throngs of foreign visitors and global media outlets during the Games, both China's leaders and its people hope that the international community came away with a favourable view of the country and the impressive economic and technological progress it has made over the past few decades. This is especially true in sports, where China hoped to rival the United States as the country with the highest medal count at the Beijing Games. At the same time, however, the leadership ran the risk of growing restiveness and dissent among the population as it became more exposed to Western societies and the freedoms their citizens enjoy, some of which are still difficult to exercise in China.

Source: "China's economic miracle: The high price of progress," CBC News In Depth: China, [www.cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca)

**To Consider**

1. Why is China's economic progress over the past three decades such an impressive phenomenon?

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2. In what respects is it true to say that China is the emerging superpower of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

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3. What are some of the positive and negative consequences of China's economic development?

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# CHINA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## *Politics and the Olympics – Past and Present*

Despite the widely held view that international sports competitions like the Olympic Games are no place for political conflicts, both the 2008 Beijing Games and their predecessors have been the scene of serious controversies and unfortunate incidents. According to Professor Rob Ruck, a sports historian at the University of Pennsylvania, “there is an irony that we tend to think that sport should somehow transcend politics, but it rarely does. Sport is infused with politics.” And Ruck’s observation is especially true for the Olympics, which bring together teams of athletes from over 200 of the world’s nations for an intense period of competition, highlighting their country’s prowess in sports as well as the political differences between them.

The ancient Olympic Games, which began in 776 BCE at Olympia, were originally designed as a way of bringing together the Greek city-states for peaceful competition. As a result, any wars being fought by participating cities were suspended for the duration of the contest. The founder of the modern Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a French nobleman, had been sickened by the carnage of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. He hoped that his resurrection of the Games in the 1890s might serve as a peaceful alternative form of international competition. Unfortunately, de Coubertin’s dream proved to be a failure during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Games had to be suspended during the course of the two World Wars.

Since the end of the Second World War, international political rivalries such as the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union have cast a long shadow over some Olympic

Games. In addition, they have frequently been sites for the expression of other global conflicts and disagreements. Here is a selection of some Olympics of the past, profiling how politics and sports proved to be inextricably connected during the contests.

### **Berlin, 1936**

Nazi Germany and its leader, Adolf Hitler, were the proud hosts of the 1936 Summer Olympics in the capital city, Berlin. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) had granted Germany the right to host the Games prior to Hitler’s rise to power in 1933, and there was considerable international opposition to holding them there after the brutal face of the Nazi dictatorship was revealed to the world. According to David Wallechinsky, vice president of the International Society of Olympic Historians and author of two books on the history of the Games, there were plans for alternative Games in Barcelona, Spain, during the summer of 1936. However these had to be cancelled when the Spanish Civil War broke out. Sensitive to international criticism of his regime’s domestic policies, in particular its persecution of German Jews, Hitler ordered that public expressions of anti-Semitism should be suspended for the duration of the Games and hoped that the international community would see only the positive face of the Nazi state, especially the prowess of its Olympic team. But the Nazis’ racist ideology encountered a serious embarrassment when African-American athlete Jesse Owens won a gold medal in the 100 metre sprint. An outraged Hitler left the Berlin Olympic Stadium in disgust. Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels even went so far as to make

the ridiculous claim that the IOC should not permit black athletes to run against whites, arguing that Africans were closer to wild animals than people, and should therefore be competing against cheetahs or panthers, not fellow human beings.

Nonetheless, the 1936 Berlin Olympics were undoubtedly a propaganda triumph for Hitler and the Nazis. The regime's official filmmaker, the notorious Leni Riefenstahl, produced an impressive documentary of the Games, entitled *Olympiad*, which is still appreciated today for its cinematographic merits, despite its odious underlying celebration of the Nazi state and its racist ideology.

### **Mexico City, 1968**

Mexico was the first and to date the only Latin American country to host the Olympic Games. Its ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was keen to use the opportunity to present a positive image of the country to the world. Unfortunately, the Games were held during a period of intense international upheaval, with major demonstrations occurring worldwide over the United States and its war in Vietnam. Students were protesting against their governments in France and other European countries, and in Mexico itself a radical student movement was unhappy over the PRI's undemocratic policies. In addition, in late August 1968 the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had triggered widespread international protest. In the United States, Americans had been traumatized by the increasingly violent course of the African-American movement for civil rights and the assassinations of two major political figures: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

A mere 10 days prior to the opening of the Games, Mexican troops fired on a peaceful gathering of students at Tlatelolco, just outside Mexico

City, killing over 250 demonstrators. Despite this outrage, the IOC refused to consider suspending the Games, or even criticizing Mexican authorities for the massacre. But during the Games themselves, a dramatic protest that was covered worldwide on television occurred when two black American athletes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, raised their fists in the "Black Power" salute while receiving their Olympic medals in the track and field competition. The outraged IOC president, Avery Brundage, ordered the U.S. team to send the two athletes home or risk expulsion from the Games. According to Wallechinsky, these events highlight the double standard the IOC follows when dealing with political controversies at the Olympics. "You can shoot down 250 people in the street, but don't ruin the medal ceremony. People are completely oblivious to the fact that people were massacred in the streets of Mexico City. It shows how images and the media can create our perception of an international event."

### **Munich, 1972**

International terrorism marred the Munich Games of 1972, the first held in Germany since 1936. Eleven Israeli athletes and their coach were taken hostage by the radical Palestinian group Black September and lost their lives in a bungled attempt to rescue them. This horrific event cast a shadow over the Games and highlighted the severity of the political conflict between Palestinians and Israel in the Middle East. Israel vowed to avenge the slaying of its athletes and authorized an elite hit squad of its renowned Mossad secret service agents to track down those responsible for the atrocity and eliminate them. Recently American filmmaker Stephen Spielberg dramatized these events in a major motion picture entitled *Munich*.

### Quote

"We speak out for a free press, freedom of assembly, and labour rights, not to antagonize China's leaders, but because trusting its people with greater freedom is the only way for China to develop its full potential."  
— President George W. Bush (*Toronto Star*, August 7, 2008)

## International Boycotts in Montreal, Moscow, and Los Angeles

The first serious international boycott to strike the Olympics took place in 1976, when Montreal was the host of the Games, a first for Canada. A number of African countries withdrew their teams in protest over the IOC's refusal to suspend New Zealand after its rugby team's tour of South Africa. At that time South Africa itself had been suspended from competition over its racist policy of apartheid, which prevented black South African athletes from competing in the Games.

But a far more serious boycott, involving almost every Western country, struck the Moscow Games four years later, when 65 countries, including the United States, Canada, and most of Western Europe, refused to participate in protest over the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan a few months earlier. In retaliation, the U.S.S.R. and the nations allied to it, including most of Eastern Europe and Cuba, did not send teams to Los Angeles in 1984. As a result, both of these Olympics were the victims of Cold War hostilities, impacting on the medal results. The Soviet Union and its allies dominated the 1980 Games, while the United States won a record number of medals in Los Angeles in these two lopsided Cold War-era Olympics.

## Beijing 2008

China was the proud host of the 2008 Games, and its leaders planned to use the opportunity to showcase their country

and its dramatic progress. But a few months before the opening of the Games, Chinese troops violently suppressed an uprising in Tibet, leading some Western critics to call for a boycott of them. China was also being attacked for its poor human rights record at home and its refusal to intervene against the Sudanese government in the ongoing massacres in Darfur. Just prior to the opening of the Games, U.S. President George W. Bush issued a harsh rebuke to China's leaders on these and other issues, echoed by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The Beijing Games should prove to be a major introduction to Westerners for the Chinese people, who are hungry for change. According to Susan Brownell, an anthropology professor currently researching the Games at Beijing Sports University, "the Beijing Olympics mark the moment in human history when China is incorporated into the world system to a degree never seen before. Because of the intense interaction and high level of collaboration with the outside world required to organize the Games, many Chinese people are just now realizing that their old way of doing things did not reach international standards—and that they did not understand the West as well as they thought they did."

Source: "Let the politics begin: Olympic Games often reflect historic events in the wider world," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. August 6, 2008, <http://post-gazette.com>

## Inquiry

1. Why do many people believe that international sporting events such as the Olympic Games are not the place for politics? Do you think this view is realistic? Why or why not?

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2. Do you think that the dream of the founder of the modern Olympics that the Games would help to replace war as a means of international competition has any chance of becoming a reality in the future? Why or why not?

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3. In what way did either domestic or international political conflicts impact on the Olympic Games in

a) Berlin

b) Munich

c) Montreal

d) Moscow

e) Los Angeles

4. How do you think China's hosting of the 2008 Summer Games in Beijing will affect that country's political system and its relations with the West? Do you think this would be a positive development for China and the rest of the world? Why or why not?

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# CHINA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## *Canada's Achievement at Beijing*

### **Did you know . . .**

An actual Olympic gold medal is worth about \$200 as of September 2008. Each Canadian gold-medal winner receives \$20 000 for the achievement.

Canada's Olympic team performed credibly at the Beijing Summer Olympic Games. Despite a slow start, this country's athletes brought home a total of 18 medals—three gold, nine silver, and six bronze. This was Canada's best Olympic showing since the 1992 Barcelona Games. According to Chris Rudge, the CEO of the Canadian Olympic Committee ([www.olympic.ca](http://www.olympic.ca)), this positive result means that Canada is moving in the right direction in terms of its international sports objectives, but also that a great deal more has to be done to realize the potential of our athletes. As Rudge noted, "this is a point on a continuum. If we don't carry on from what we've accomplished here and we don't build on this in the future . . . we will have done a disservice to the Olympians of the future."

Canada's medal haul places the country 19<sup>th</sup> in overall Olympic standings, which the IOC bases on the total number of gold medals each country wins. But the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) uses a different standard, counting equally all medals won. In this scenario, Canada came in 13<sup>th</sup> place, tied with the eastern European nation of Belarus, formerly a part of the Soviet Union. This represents a 50 per cent increase over the 12 medals Canadian athletes won at the Athens Games in 2004, which were relatively disappointing for this country's Olympic team.

Canadian sports authorities like Rudge believe that this country possesses a rich pool of potential Olympic-level competitors. In his view the problem lies in identifying likely talent and providing the necessary resources to groom it to international levels of competition.

As he notes, "all the good ideas in the world don't mean anything if you don't have the raw material there to get to the top. We need to get more athletes into the system." This involves greater funding, by both government and private sponsors, and the development of state-of-the-art training facilities, especially in southern Ontario, where over a third of the total Canadian population resides.

The COC uses a "conversion rate" to measure the performance of Canada's athletes in international competitions such as the Olympics. According to this, there were 27 Canadian competitors who finished in the top five of their respective world championships in 2007. The 18 medals won at the Beijing Games translate into a 67 per cent conversion rate. In Athens there were 35 Canadians in the top five of their competitions in 2003 who accounted for 12 medals; the conversion rate was only 34 per cent. Thus, according to this formula, Canada's team has doubled its competitive advantage between the Athens and Beijing Games, a cause for much satisfaction among COC officials.

Rudge hopes that the positive results from Beijing will encourage more public- and private-sector support for our athletes and a greater effort to identify and train potential Olympians. As a first step, he has called on the federal government to increase its annual support for sports from \$24-million to \$30-million. He also hopes that Canada will be successful in its bid to host the Pan American Games.

Source: "Medal haul solid base for Canada to build on," *Toronto Star Online*, August 24, 2008, <http://olympics.thestar.com>

## **Analysis**

1. Do you think that Canada should be proud of the achievements of its Olympic team in comparison with the results that other countries achieved at the Beijing Games? Why or why not?
2. What steps do you think Canada could take to improve the performance of its athletes in international competitions such as the Olympics?
3. Identify some of your favourite Canadian athletes who won medals at the Beijing Games and briefly profile their achievements.
4. Do you think that Canada is doing enough to identify and train potential Olympic-level athletes from a young age? Why or why not?

# CHINA AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## **Activity: Planning for the Olympics in Vancouver**

Form groups of four or five to evaluate what you think were the factors that made the Beijing Olympics a success and what could have been done to make them even better. Apply these evaluations to the next Winter Olympics, to be held in Vancouver in 2010, and use them as the basis for a note to the organizers of the Vancouver Games, suggesting what lessons you think they could draw from the Beijing Games. You may contact the organizers of the 2010 Winter Games at [www.vancouver2010.com/en](http://www.vancouver2010.com/en).

You may use an organizer similar to the one below to structure some of your ideas.

Use the following criteria for consideration in your note:

1. What are the main differences between the Summer and Winter Olympics with respect to how the host nation and city can plan and organize for them?
2. How does Canada differ from China with respect to how it can respond to the challenges and responsibilities involved in planning and organizing an Olympic contest?
3. What advantages do you think Canada has as a potential host nation for the Winter Olympics?
4. What were the achievements of the last Winter Olympics Canada hosted, in Calgary in 1988?

### Organizer

Positive Features of 2008 Summer Games	Negative features of 2008 Summer Games

# CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

## Introduction

### Focus

For over 100 years Aboriginal children were taken from their families and shipped off to residential schools where the goal was to “kill the Indian in the child.” This *News in Review* story examines the history and legacy of residential schools as well as the apology delivered to the Aboriginal community by the Prime Minister on behalf of all Canadians.

### Definition

*Assimilation* means to absorb a minority group into a majority group by having the minority group accept the culture and characteristics of the majority culture. This may be done peacefully or forcibly.

Imagine you are just six years old when an agent of the government arrives at your door and tells you to pack your things because he is taking you away to school. Your parents look away, knowing that the law of the land gives the agent the authority to take you. You are confused but comply and are taken to a faraway place where you are forbidden to speak your native language or demonstrate any aspects of your heritage. Instead you are subject to a foreign curriculum with a religious emphasis that is a far cry from what your parents and grandparents would have taught you. But this is not the worst of this imaginary scene. Imagine having no one to turn to when you are afraid. Imagine seeing your friend beaten for no reason at all. Imagine seeing a friend taken away by an adult and then imagine a profound look of distress on their face when they return. Next, imagine you are the one who is beaten and you are the one who is taken away by the adult. If you can harness the power of your own sense of empathy and truly feel what was imagined above then you have caught a glimpse of what it was like for many Aboriginal students who attended residential schools in Canada.

For over 100 years, Aboriginal children were taken from their parents and shipped off to Indian Residential Schools. Over 150 000 students attended Canada's residential schools from the 1870s into the 1970s. The majority of schools were run by religious organizations. Their goal was to “kill the Indian in the child.” Mainstream Canadians saw themselves as superior to their Aboriginal counterparts and exercised that superiority in a variety of different ways. The schools were poorly built, maintained, and equipped. The curriculum was designed to assimilate Aboriginal children into mainstream culture and turn them into labourers.

Some critics have called this process attempted genocide. On another even more sinister level, the students were devalued as people at every turn. Some students were beaten for speaking in native dialects. Others were beaten for not paying attention in class. Many others were beaten for no reason at all. And, tragically, some schools became a haven for sexual deviants who preyed on the children to satisfy their perverse desire for power and domination.

For the most part, Aboriginal students did not bring these abuses to the attention of the authorities. Why would they? The government's plan to assimilate First Nations children into mainstream culture was a policy that many Canadians either endorsed or didn't care about. Children who were beaten were not going to get the support of the school administration or the police because there was a commonly held opinion at the time that if children were beaten by an adult they must have done something to deserve it. In terms of sexual abuse, the children were caught in a trap; any accusation against a priest, nun, or teacher was likely to fall on deaf ears. A best-case scenario would see the accusation ignored; a worst-case scenario would mean an escalation in the abuse.

Students who graduated from Indian Residential Schools held onto or suppressed many of these painful memories until the abuse of children was thrust into the national spotlight. In 1989 Canadians learned that some Christian Brothers had been routinely abusing non-aboriginal orphan boys at Mount Cashel orphanage in St. John's, Newfoundland. A year later, Phil Fontaine, who would eventually lead the Assembly of First Nations, pointed the finger at the residential school system. He revealed that he had been physically and sexually abused when he was a student at a

### Further Research

To understand more of this tragic story, consider a visit to the Web sites of The Assembly of First Nations ([www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)), the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs ([www.aicn-inac.gc.ca](http://www.aicn-inac.gc.ca)), The Indian Residential School Agreement ([www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca](http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca)), the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission ([www.trc-cvr.ca/indexen.html](http://www.trc-cvr.ca/indexen.html))

### Did you know . . .

By the late 1970s most residential schools had closed down. The last school, which was almost completely First Nations run, was closed in 1996.

residential school. The tide was turning; no longer were residential school students willing to sit on their memories of abuse. They began to demand justice. Eventually, over 10 000 lawsuits were filed against the Canadian Government and the churches that ran the schools.

Litigation proceeded slowly, and the victims wondered if they would ever receive compensation for the abuse they suffered. In the meantime, even more disturbing details began to surface. Some schools tattooed their students with an identification number. When the tuberculosis epidemic struck Canada in the 1930s, sick students were not separated from healthy ones, leading to a disproportionate number of child deaths in the residential school system. How many died is uncertain because no one has been permitted full access to the school records. A dark chapter of Canadian history was slowly emerging, and people were shocked at its content.

The Canadian government eventually realized it could not stave off the lawsuits any longer. In 1998, the Liberals offered residential school students an apology for the abuses they suffered and the role the government played in establishing the schools. Many felt the apology did not go far enough. Negotiations were pursued in earnest at the turn of the century and, by 2006, an agreement between the residential school students, the government and the churches was struck. In the largest class-action lawsuit settlement in Canadian history, all residential schools students were to receive \$10 000 and an additional \$3 000 for each year they

were in school. This amounted to an average payout of about \$25 000 to the over 80 000 surviving residential school students. Those suffering emotional, physical, or sexual abuse could apply for more compensation, to a maximum of \$275 000. The government put aside \$2-billion to handle the costs of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA).

The IRSSA called for more than just compensation. It also called for the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission to unveil the history and legacy of the residential school system as well as a formal apology from the government in the House of Commons. In June 2008, the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission began its five-year mandate, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper stood in Parliament and issued the much-sought-after apology. “The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long,” he said to residential school students, some of whom were in the House to hear the apology. “The burden is properly ours as a government and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential school system to ever again prevail” (*The Hill Times*, June 16, 2008).

It is likely that every nation has something in its past that is shameful. The important thing is to learn from that sense of shame and to guarantee that attitudes change, society evolves, and the dignity of all citizens is maintained. Hopefully this will be the legacy of the residential school experience.

## To Consider

1. Were you able to “imagine” the scenario put forth in the first paragraph? In two or three sentences, describe your reaction to the scenario.
2. What evidence is there in the article that supports the idea that Aboriginal children were seen as inferior by the people running residential schools?
3. Make a point-form list of the key components of the IRSSA.

# CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

## Video Review

1. Why did Prime Minister Harper apologize to Aboriginal Canadians in the summer of 2008?

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2. How many people attended residential schools over the course of their history? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What were residential schools designed to do? What did the government hope would happen to Aboriginal children as a result of their residential school experience?

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4. a) Why do you think the government chose to separate Aboriginal children from their family and heritage?

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b) How did the children react to being separated from their families? Provide an example from the documentary.

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5. What evidence is there in the documentary that the goal of residential schools was to "destroy the Indian in the child"?

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6. What effect did residential schools have on Aboriginal culture? Describe some of the negative social effects of the residential schools within the Aboriginal community.

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# CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

## *Timeline*

Read the following timeline and complete the activity that follows.

**1620-1680** Catholic clergy establish the first boarding schools for Aboriginal youth in New France.

**1820s** Protestants, Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists begin to share responsibility for Aboriginal schools.

**1847** Egerton Ryerson conducts a study of Aboriginal education for the superintendent of Indian affairs. His conclusions form the blueprint for future Indian residential schools. Ryerson recommends that Aboriginal youth be subject to a largely British, Christian curriculum with a focus on getting graduates ready to work in farming once they have completed school. The schools would be overseen by the government, with the religious denominations running the schools.

**1860** Indian Affairs is transferred from Britain to the Province of Canada. The emphasis shifts from turning Aboriginals into farmers to assimilating them through education.

**1931** Residential school education reaches its peak, with close to 130 schools operating across Canada.

**1974** Band councils take over education programming in many residential schools. Staffing shifts away from the clergy as Aboriginals eventually comprise 34 per cent of residential school employees.

**1975** Federal and provincial governments move away from residential schooling in favour of native-run schools.

**1979** With only 15 residential schools still operating in Canada, the Department of Indian Affairs introduces initiatives to make the remaining schools more

culturally aware of the needs of Aboriginal students.

**1986** The United Church of Canada formally apologizes to Canada's Aboriginal population for the role they played in running residential schools.

**1989** Non-aboriginal orphans at Mount Cashel Orphanage in Newfoundland make allegations of sexual abuse against the Christian Brothers who ran their school. This case shines a spotlight on residential schools across Canada.

**1990** Phil Fontaine, leader of the Association of Manitoba Chiefs, courageously shares his experience of physical and sexual abuse with the public. Later, he meets with representatives of the Catholic Church and demands that the church acknowledge the physical and sexual abuse suffered by students at residential schools.

**1991-1994** The Roman Catholic order called the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Anglican and Presbyterian churches offer formal apologies to Canada's First Nations people for their role in administering residential schools.

**1996** The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, or RCAP, makes over 400 recommendations designed to improve the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the federal and provincial governments. One chapter of the commission's report is dedicated to residential schools. In the same year, the last federally run residential school is shut down in Saskatchewan.

**1997** Phil Fontaine is elected national chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

## Archives

To see an audio-visual presentation on residential schools visit the CBC Digital Archives at [www.cbc.ca/archives](http://www.cbc.ca/archives) and explore the file "A lost heritage: Canada's residential schools."

**January 7, 1998** The federal government introduces a comprehensive plan based largely on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Government of Canada issues an apology to students who suffered physical and sexual abuse at residential schools as well as an apology for its role in the formation and administration of the schools.

**2001** The federal government negotiates with the Anglican, Catholic, United, and Presbyterian churches to design a compensation plan for Aboriginal residential school students. Eventually, the government agrees to pay 70 per cent of the settlement costs to former students who can prove their claims.

**2002-2003** The Presbyterian Church and Anglican Church agree to share compensation costs with the government for former students claiming sexual and physical abuse. The Catholic Church (which ran 70 per cent of the schools) does not agree to pay compensation. Instead, in 2008, they agree to give \$25-million to a healing and reconciliation fund.

**May 30, 2005** Discussions begin between the federal government and Aboriginal leaders to find a fair and lasting settlement to the residential school issue.

**November 23, 2005** Ottawa announces a \$2-billion compensation package for Aboriginal Canadians who attended residential schools. Over 80 000 people find themselves eligible for an average settlement of \$25 000, with victims of abuse given the opportunity to appeal for larger settlements. A month later, the compensation is approved by Canada's courts, and the first payments begin to flow to victims in September 2007.

**April 28, 2008** Justice Harry LaForme, an Ontario judge and member of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, is appointed chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The commission's mandate is to study the residential school system, reporting on its history and commemorating its victims. Less than a month later, Claudette Dumont-Smith, a health professional, and Jane Brewin Morley, a lawyer, are added to the panel. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission begins its work on June 1, 2008.

**June 11, 2008** Prime Minister Stephen Harper formally apologizes for Canada's participation in the creation and administration of a school system designed to destroy Aboriginal culture.

Sources: "Time of residential schools" ([www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-timeline-residential-schools.html](http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-timeline-residential-schools.html)); "Ottawa, Catholic Church renegotiate residential school payout," CBC News, January 15, 2008

## Activity

Using two different highlight markers, perform the following task:

In one colour highlight the timeline items that clearly had a negative impact on Aboriginal culture.

In a second colour highlight the timeline items that showed a positive movement away from the "kill the Indian in the child" spirit of the residential school system.

## Follow-up

Use the timeline to write a brief history of the residential school controversy.

# CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

## *The Government Apologizes*

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered the following apology to Aboriginal Canadians in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history.

In the 1870s, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools.

Two primary objectives of the residential schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.

These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal.

Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child."

Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

Most schools were operated as "joint ventures" with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, or United churches.

The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities.

Many were inadequately fed, clothed, and housed.

All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents, and communities.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools.

Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools, and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian residential schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage, and language.

While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.

The legacy of Indian residential schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today. It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered.

It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures.

Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

The Government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation.

Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian residential schools system.

To the approximately 80 000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions, that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you.

Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long.

The burden is properly ours as a government, and as a country.

There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail.

You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time, and, in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey.

The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

We are sorry.

In moving toward healing, reconciliation, and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian residential schools, implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement agreement began on September 19, 2007.

Years of work by survivors, communities, and Aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.

A cornerstone of the settlement agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian residential schools system.

It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other, and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities, and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.

## Activity

Write a 250-word letter to the Prime Minister (giving him feedback on his apology.) Highlight the areas of the speech that you found most meaningful or areas of the speech that you think needed more attention.

You can send your comments by e-mail to [pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca) or write (no postage stamp required) or fax the Prime Minister's office at:

Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa  
K1A 0A2  
Fax: 613-941-6900

# CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

## *Truth and Reconciliation*

In May 2006, the Canadian government settled the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. Facing a potential legal and financial disaster, the federal government needed to find a way to settle the more than 10 000 lawsuits filed against it by victims of abuse at federally funded and church-run Aboriginal residential schools. Liberal Frank Iacobucci worked with legal representatives of Aboriginal groups and the churches to iron out a deal that came to be known as the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). The agreement provided financial compensation in the amount of \$10 000 for all living residential school students, with an additional \$3 000 provided for each year an individual student attended the school. The average payout would be in the neighbourhood of \$25 000. Students who suffered physical or sexual abuse were eligible to apply for a greater settlement, to a maximum of \$275 000. Of the over 80 000 Aboriginal people entitled to participate in the agreement, only 5 000 opted out of the IRSSA.

A key component of the IRSSA was the formation of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (IRSTRC) designed to give Aboriginal residential schools students a chance to tell their stories. It became evident from the time that the first stories of abuse began to reach the Canadian public consciousness that the Aboriginal population was seeking two things: justice and healing. The trauma of the residential schools experience has been a major contributing factor to the high level of alcohol and drug addiction

in Aboriginal communities. In an effort to heal some of the scars prevalent within the Aboriginal community, native leaders called on the government to form and fund a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in an effort to give residential schools survivors a chance to tell their stories. Over the course of its five-year mandate, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will:

- compile a historical record of the residential school system
- write a report about their findings that includes recommendations to the Canadian government on how to deal with the legacy of the residential school system
- establish a research centre to act as a permanent resource for Canadians seeking to understand the nature and legacy of the residential schools system
- host seven events across Canada designed to promote awareness of the residential schools system and its legacy
- participate in a Commemoration Initiative that pays tribute to residential schools students

On June 1, 2008, the IRSTRC started its work under the direction of commission chair Justice Harry LaForme, an Ontario judge and member of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, and his fellow commissioners Claudette Dumont-Smith, a health professional, and Jane Brewin Morley, a lawyer. Their goal is to help the Aboriginal community bring closure to this sad chapter in Canadian history. It is also the hope of the commission that it will be able to shed greater light on what really happened in Canada's residential schools.

### Questions

1. What is the IRSSA? How did the IRSSA help students who attended residential schools?
2. What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? What is its mandate?



# CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

## In Their Own Words

The following quotations are from people personally connected to the residential schools issue. Read each one and complete the activity at the end.

“The boarding school disassociates the Indian child from the deleterious home influences to which he would otherwise be subjected. It reclaims him from the uncivilized state in which he has been brought up.” — The Department of Foreign Affairs (Annual Report, 1889), explaining the rationale for removing Aboriginal children from their families (*The Globe and Mail*, October 22, 1996)

“I tried for the last 10 years to write what happened to me at the residential school. I only got as far as my life before residential school.” — Sylvia Gould, former student at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, on her difficulty confronting painful school memories (*CBC News*, May 12, 2008)

“I remember a nun shaking me because I was running in the hallway. She shook me so hard, her nails dug into my arm. I have those scars a long, long time.” — Rose Wawatie Beaudoin says this as she rubs her arms, remembering an incident when she attended a residential school in Kenora (*Toronto Star*, June 12, 2008)

“I left here like a dysfunctional person. I didn't know anything about love, caring, and sharing. Every night your mom and dad would have tucked you in bed. You don't get that when you're here. Nobody loved you. If you had a sad moment, you just suffered it out.” — Geronimo Henry, recounting his time at a residential school in Brantford, Ontario (*The Globe and Mail*, June 12, 2008)

“I remember the first day I went to Mission School. You never fully understand the loneliness until you experience it.” — Archie Little, reflecting on being separated from his family (*Wind Speaker*, January 2001)

“I got crying under the blankets at night over my buddy's death. You were not allowed to cry for him, and you couldn't even spend a day at home mourning your buddy. . . . That young boy was an innocent boy. He couldn't have been any more than 11.” — Gilbert Johnson on the death of his boyhood friend Mitchell Joseph in testimony before the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Hamilton Spectator*, July 10, 2008)

“This was our Holocaust. They did not kill us physically, but they killed us emotionally and spiritually.” — Mary Anne Nakogee-Davis, a victim of sexual abuse by a priest at the residential school she attended (*The Globe and Mail*, October 19, 1996)

“They used to make us sit on their laps. They used to hit us with rollers, pinch us, hit us in the head. Lots of girls got abused.” — Mary Anne Boulette on her experiences at a church-run school on the Bloodvein First Nation (*Hamilton Spectator*, May 1, 2008)

“I think what happened to me is what happened to a lot of people. It wasn't just sexual abuse; it was physical and psychological abuse. It was a violation.” — Assembly of First Nations Chief Philip Fontaine, speaking about his residential school experience (*The Globe and Mail*, October 22, 1996)

“They knew bloody well that these people were doing harmful things to innocent people. And instead of protecting the innocent people who were supposed to be in their care, they protected the offender, and that’s disgraceful.” — Dr. William L. Marshall, one of the world’s foremost authorities on the treatment of sexual offenders, on the actions of the church in their decision to protect clergy from prosecution (*Windspeaker*, April 2001)

“It’s life threatening: ‘If you say anything you’re going to die.’ That’s a threat. If I would have said something at that time [of the abuse], I wouldn’t be talking to you. And even if I had said something it would have went on deaf ears because the priests and nuns, the whole system, didn’t want news going out to the public and the communities.” — John Okemow of the Driftpile First Nation, reflecting on his experience in a residential school (*Windspeaker*, March 2005)

“We have experienced a devastating loss of traditional culture and way of life compounded by loss of language, identity and spirituality, and with it, the corruption of our own history, place names, relationship names, rites of passage, self respect, and pride.” — Brian MacDonald, principal of Onion Lake First Nations Kihew Waciston School (*Windspeaker*, December 2007)

“We are to be in the beginning of a spiritual movement, a movement of truth, a movement of justice, a movement of accountability that is more than just a program or media presentation. It’s a people kind of thing that’s more than just the sum of its parts. I really believe that what we’re seeing is something that has real power to transform people’s lives and ultimately societal structures.” — Native Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald, at a meeting promoting the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Wind Speaker*, April 2008)

### **Activity**

Pick three quotes that you feel capture the heart of the residential school controversy. Explain each of your choices in three to five sentences. Be prepared to share your thoughts in a class discussion.

# CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

## **Activity: Who is responsible?**

Residential schools were essentially a partnership between the Canadian government and the nation's Christian churches. While the government assumed the funding and overall administration of the schools collectively, the churches assumed responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the schools, which included curriculum development and staffing. The Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches each played a part in running residential schools in different regions across Canada. When residential schools students started making allegations of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, the government and churches scrambled to figure out who would assume responsibility for the abuse should the students win their lawsuits.

### **Your Task**

Your task is to examine the residential schools issue and decide who needs to accept responsibility. You will do this in the following role-play activity.

1. Form a group of four; two people will play the role of the government and two will play the role of the churches.
2. Research the residential school issue using the information found in this *News in Review* story or by visiting [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca) (search: *residential schools*). The CBC Digital Archives at [www.cbc.ca/archives](http://www.cbc.ca/archives) also have a range of powerful audio-visual material.
3. Prepare a 250-word statement that demonstrates why your group (either the government or the churches) is not responsible for the abuses at residential schools. Avoid blaming the other side in your statements.
4. Connect with another group and read your statements to them. They will play the role of judges and decide who they feel needs to take responsibility for the abuses at the residential schools. Then switch things up. Listen to the other group's statements and you can decide who needs to take responsibility. Note: You don't need to pick one side or the other; instead you could decide that the responsibility should be shared.

### **Notes:**

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# BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN

## Introduction

### Focus

This *News in Review* story focuses on the economic boom occurring in Saskatchewan. Commonly referred to as “Saskaboom,” this previously quiet province is reaping the rewards of high prices for oil, potash, wheat, and other products. This story will explore the many people and economic sectors benefiting from the boom as well as some of the challenges resulting from this rapid growth.

### Did you know . . .

In 1931, Saskatchewan was the third most populous province in Canada, behind only Ontario and Quebec. Depression and a weak economy contributed to eight decades of decline.

If you don’t live in the province of Saskatchewan, you might picture a quiet province famous for its flat farm fields that seem to stretch on forever where relatively little happens. After all, for years the province has struggled with high levels of unemployment and a declining population. But in the past few years, the picture has changed.

This year, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are expected to lead the country in economic growth. In Saskatchewan, high prices for oil, potash, uranium, farm equipment, wheat, and other crops have turned this quiet prairie province into an economic powerhouse. The housing and construction industries are booming, and high paying jobs are plentiful. The province is making so much money right now that if it was a country, its economy, on a per-person basis, would make it the fifth richest in the developed world.

A big chunk of this prosperity is linked to oil. Saskatchewan is Canada’s

second largest producer of oil. Although oil was found in the province 50 years ago, at that time the easy crude was extracted and the rest was left behind. The remaining oil was considered to be too difficult to reach. But technology has changed, and the world’s thirst for oil has continued. As a result, the energy companies have returned to the province and are now extracting the oil left behind. Scott Skatsburg, the CEO of Crescent Point Energy, estimates that \$10-billion will be spent to extract the remaining oil.

Some observers are concerned that the economic boom in Saskatchewan will lead to some of the problems currently being experienced by oil-rich Alberta. But others argue that Saskatchewan’s economy is more diversified than Alberta’s, so the province should be able to avoid some of the problems facing Alberta. Time will tell.

## To Consider

1. What are some of the specific benefits that might be experienced by teenagers and young adults because of the economic boom in the province?
2. When an economy is booming, how are non-profit services like education and health care affected?
3. Would you consider leaving your home province for another province that was booming? Why or why not?

# BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN

## Video Review

### Did you know . . .

The province's name comes from the Saskatchewan River, whose name comes from its Cree designation: *kisiskā ciwani-sīpiy*, meaning "swift-flowing river."

### Further Research

In 2005, Saskatchewan celebrated its centennial as a province. A special Web site ([www.cbc.ca/sask100](http://www.cbc.ca/sask100)) was designed to present a range of material about the province.

### Pre-Viewing Activity

In a small group, record words and images that come to mind when you hear the word *Saskatchewan*. When you are finished, compare your ideas with at least one other group. Think about how the ideas of students living outside Saskatchewan might differ from those living inside the province.

### Video Review

Respond to the following questions as you watch the video.

1. Record the factors that have contributed to "Saskaboom."

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2. Explain how the boom in the oil industry has affected the economy of Saskatchewan.

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3. Why is the oil industry booming now, given that oil was discovered over 50 years ago?

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4. What specific impact is the boom having on construction and urban development?

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5. Explain how the boom is having a positive and negative impact on housing in the province.

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6. a) What impact might "Saskaboom" have on the province's Aboriginal population?

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b) Why is this important?

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### **Post-Viewing Activity**

Return to the small group you were part of at the beginning of this lesson. Re-read the notes you made in response to the word *Saskatchewan*. Update those words and images now that you have viewed the video. What are the major changes in your pre- and post-viewing ideas? Did you have a number of changes or not? Why do you think that was so?



# BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN

## *Portrait of a Province*

### Quote

William Francis Butler was a military officer during the first Riel Rebellion. In his book *The Great Lone Land* (1872), he described the prairie skies and landscape as follows:

"No ocean of water in the world can vie with its gorgeous sunsets; no solitude can equal the loneliness of a night-shadowed prairie: one feels the stillness, and hears the silence, the wail of the prowling wolf makes the voice of solitude audible, the stars look down through infinite silence upon a silence almost as intense. . . . One saw here the world as it had taken shape and form from the hands of the Creator. Nor did the scene look less beautiful because nature alone tilled the earth, and the unaided sun brought forth the flowers."  
— "Seven Wonders of Canada" ([www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/wonder\\_prairie\\_skies.html#didyouknow](http://www.cbc.ca/sevenwonders/wonder_prairie_skies.html#didyouknow))

### The Land

Saskatchewan became a province in 1905. Of the 10 provinces in Canada, Saskatchewan ranks fifth in terms of total land area. The most notable geographic feature of the province is its vast sweeping prairies. The beauty of the prairies is striking. So much so, that the prairie sky was selected as one of the Seven Wonders of Canada in a CBC contest in 2007. But it is also a province with beautiful forests and a number of major lakes and rivers, including the Athabaska, Churchill, and Saskatchewan Assiniboine.

### The Weather

Saskatchewan experiences some of the most extreme weather in Canada. Residents often have to endure temperatures that drop to minus 50 degrees Celsius in winter and peak at 40 degrees Celsius in summer. The province experiences torrential rain and flooding, drought, lightning storms, hail, dust storms, blizzards, and tornadoes in the summer.

In fact, the worst cyclone in Canada's history struck Regina on June 30, 1912. The funnel cloud was more than 400 metres wide and obliterated everything it touched. Houses, churches, and office buildings were destroyed, and trains were pulled from their tracks. Twenty-eight people were killed by the cyclone, and hundreds were injured. Over 500 buildings were destroyed, and the total damage amounted to \$4-million (1912 dollars).

### The People

Saskatchewan is Canada's sixth most populous province, with a population of about one million people. Most people

live in the southern half of the province, with about 65 per cent of them in cities. Of these, 202 340 live in the province's largest city, Saskatoon, while 179 246 live in the provincial capital, Regina. Other major cities are Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Swift Current, and North Battleford.

The province has one of the largest Aboriginal and Métis populations in the country, currently accounting for about 15 per cent of the province's residents. By the year 2050, that percentage is expected to climb to about 33 per cent. Many of the rest of the province's residents are the sons and daughters of pioneers who moved to Saskatchewan decades ago to farm the land. These groups included many Eastern European immigrants, including Ukrainians, Germans, Irish, and Scots. Like other parts of Canada, Saskatchewan is now home to a diverse, multicultural population.

### The Government

The Saskatchewan provincial legislature has 58 members. The present government is formed by the Saskatchewan Party, which holds 38 seats in the legislature. The remaining 20 seats are held by the New Democratic Party.

Politically, the province is characterized by a dramatic urban-rural split: the federal and provincial New Democratic parties dominate in the cities, while the Saskatchewan Party and the federal Conservatives are stronger in the rural parts of the province.

On November 7, 2007, the people of Saskatchewan elected the Saskatchewan Party and made its leader, Brad Wall, the province's 14<sup>th</sup> premier. Only 43

**Further Research**

Visit the Web sites of the Saskatchewan government at [www.gov.sk.ca](http://www.gov.sk.ca) and Tourism Saskatchewan at [www.sasktourism.com](http://www.sasktourism.com) to learn more about the province.

years old, Wall was born and raised in Swift Current. Before entering politics he owned and operated two businesses. Many observers believe that because of his business background he will be able to do a good job managing Saskatchewan's economic boom.

**The Economy**

Agriculture has been the foundation of the province's economy for decades, resulting in boom and bust years, as

demand for food crops fluctuated, and extreme weather wiped out some planting and harvesting seasons altogether. But more recently, the economy has diversified. Saskatchewan is a major player in the oil industry and is the world leader in uranium and potash exports. The province is the nation's second highest producer of beef cattle and has become a force in the mining industry.

**Activity**

Arrange yourselves into small groups or four of five students. Imagine that you work in the Saskatchewan tourism industry. What aspects of the province would you feature in promotional material to get people to visit the province? Record these aspects, and if you have time, create a sample brochure or Web page that highlights the features you selected.

# BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN

## Food Production

### Did you know . . .

Saskatchewan farmers had so many lean years that the province was often termed “next year country” for a brighter future that never seemed to come.

### Quote

“I spent two years travelling around rural India and I watched how people were adding dairy food and meat to their diet. And I came back and said, ‘the real shortage out there isn’t oil anymore. The real shortage is food.’”  
— Donald Coxe, global portfolio strategist for the Bank of Montreal (*The Globe and Mail*, January 4, 2008)

One of the key elements driving “Saskaboom” is the increased demand for wheat, corn, canola, and other food crops. Saskatchewan is the country’s largest producer of wheat, and is often referred to as “the breadbasket of the world” because of the key role it plays in providing wheat and other crops not only to Canada but globally. Farmers try to produce higher yields of crops from their existing farmland and, as a result, need the help of mineral fertilizers. Fertilizers can increase yield production by about 30 per cent. One of the ingredients necessary in fertilizer is potassium (or potash). Saskatchewan happens to be the world’s leading producer of potash and therefore plays a critical role in the production of food for Canada and the world.

### Growing Demand for Food Crops

Canadian farmers produce much of the world’s wheat and cereal grains. Globally there is increased demand for these grains and, as a result, their value has skyrocketed. This has resulted in a cash windfall for most large-scale farmers. For the first time in decades, Canadian farmers are making big profits and are able to reinvest money in their farms and equipment. This has also resulted in a boom for companies that make agricultural equipment, seeds, and fertilizer.

There are a number of reasons for the increased demand for grains:

### Booming Economies of India and China

As the economies of India and China continue to develop, more and more citizens are becoming wealthy. These citizens consume more food than those who have less money, and, in particular,

consume more meat. When more meat is eaten, more animals have to be produced for market. Animals bred for human consumption are fed large amounts of grain so that they grow quickly. As the demand for meat rises, more forests and grasslands have to be cleared to create grazing land for animals. This means that there is increased pressure on existing farms to grow more grain.

### Biofuel Production

As the world becomes increasingly concerned with climate change, people are looking at alternatives like biofuel to reduce the world’s dependence on oil. Biofuels are produced from crops such as corn. As an increasing number of crops are being diverted to make biofuel, there is an increased demand for crops like corn and other cereal grains. Although many people are now starting to challenge the movement to biofuels, it is currently big business. Some industry analysts estimate that 30 to 50 per cent of corn produced in the United States is being diverted into ethanol production.

### Bad Weather

Another reason there has been an increased demand for wheat and other grains is that bad weather wiped out crops in many parts of the world in 2007. For example, Bangladesh was hit by a cyclone and serious flooding that resulted in the loss of most of the country’s food stocks. A significant drought in Australia led to the loss of a great deal of wheat. Flooding in many parts of West Africa resulted in destroyed and rotted crops.

### Potash

To grow food crops, soil must have a good balance of three mineral ingredients: nitrogen (N), phosphate

**Did you know . . .**

China actually grows six crops in one year and is currently experimenting with the possibility of squeezing eight crops out of one season. This type of intensive farming requires a huge amount of potash and other nutrients to enrich the soil.

**Quote**

"Potash has a 1 000-year supply in the ground in Saskatchewan, and it has more than 70 per cent of the world's unused capacity." — Paul D'Amico, analyst for TD Newcrest (*The Globe and Mail*, January 4, 2008)

(P), and potassium—also known as potash (K). Most of the potassium in any given crop is in its straw, or residue. But in many parts of the world, Asia in particular, two or three crops a year are harvested. Farmers must remove all of the crop residue immediately to make way for the new crop. In some cases, a new crop is planted the same day the old one is harvested.

This type of intensive farming results in a decline in the nutrients of the soil. In some places you can add little bits of potash to enrich the soil, but in other areas where crops such as sugar cane, rice, corn, cotton, and palm oil are grown, farmers need to use large amounts of potash to ensure a successful yield. When proper amounts of fertilizer are used, crop yields increase by at least 30 per cent.

**Follow-up**

1. Explain why there is a growing demand for wheat and other food crops throughout the world.
2. If you had \$1 000 to invest in the stock market, would you want to invest in wheat or potash? Explain your choice.

This is where Saskatchewan comes in. Saskatchewan contains the world's largest deposits of potash. Potash is a potassium-rich salt that is mined from underground deposits left behind when giant seas evaporated millions of years ago. Potassium is essential for all plant, animal, and human life. Applied as potassium chloride, potash strengthens plants and aids in water retention, improving yields, disease resistance, and transportability.

Potash is a limited resource; there just isn't that much of it. This makes it an incredibly valuable resource. Saskatchewan has an excellent infrastructure and has easy access by rail to the mid-continental United States, the world's largest market for potash. All indicators point to an increased demand for potash in the future, so it likely will remain an incredibly profitable resource.

# BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN

## *Energy Production*

### Quote

"Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, who was elected last November, has frequently said Saskatchewan and its vast supply of uranium could be to nuclear power what Saudi Arabia was to oil."  
— Jennifer Graham  
(*Canadian Press*, June 17, 2008)

Another key element driving the boom in Saskatchewan is the world's growing demand for energy. Saskatchewan is the world's leading producer of uranium and Canada's second biggest producer of oil, resulting in an economic windfall for the province.

### Uranium

In Canada, most of us are used to having electricity available at any hour, any day of the year. But in many parts of the world, citizens only have access to electricity for part of the day. In other parts of the world, factories are shut down one day a week because there isn't enough electricity to power them. These countries want to continue to expand industrially and economically, so they need more electricity. For many of these countries, nuclear power is often the only option for electricity.

Currently, more than 400 nuclear power plants are in operation throughout the world. These plants require uranium to produce energy, and Saskatchewan is the leading producer of uranium in the world. As the demand for electricity grows, profits for the Saskatchewan uranium industry grow too.

Currently about half the uranium being used in nuclear power plants comes from mined uranium. The other half comes from nuclear weapons stockpiles. When the supply of uranium from more than 10 000 nuclear warheads dries up, the world will look to places like Saskatchewan for its supply.

Some critics are concerned about the environmental impact of the Saskatchewan uranium mining industry. The Green Party of Saskatchewan, for example, states that uranium mining has resulted in the production of at least 40 million metric tonnes

of radioactive waste in northern Saskatchewan. (Source: The Green Party of Saskatchewan Web site at [www.gogreenregina.com/Nuclear\\_Connections.html](http://www.gogreenregina.com/Nuclear_Connections.html)) The Green Party warns that this waste is leaching into lakes and rivers, contaminating fish and wildlife and northern native lands. The Green Party estimates that the toxic wastes that result from uranium mining will remain dangerous for 300 000 years.

### Oil

Oil has been called "black gold" for a long time now. The world's dependence on oil continues, despite concerns about climate change. Although some experts predict the world's supply of oil will be all but exhausted in 40 years, the developed world has been reluctant to make serious changes in energy use and continues its love affair with the car. Because many people in the developing world want what those in developed nations already have, it is expected that the demand for oil will continue to increase, rather than decrease, ensuring that oil will be a serious source of revenue for those places that have it.

In Canada, talk of oil tends to focus on the province of Alberta (although oil off the coast of Newfoundland is starting to bring economic advantages to that province). To date, Alberta has made the greatest fortune from its oil reserves. Canadians from across the nation have flocked there for jobs. And although the scope and speed of the development of Alberta's oil sands have set off alarm bells, production continues at an astonishing pace.

But now there is a new player on the scene: Saskatchewan. Although oil was found in the province 50 years ago, at that time the easy crude was

extracted and the rest was left behind. The remaining oil was considered to be too difficult to reach. But technology has changed, and energy companies have returned to the province to drill down and sideways to extract the oil left behind. Scott Skatsburg, the CEO of Crescent Point Energy, estimates that \$10-billion will be spent extracting the remaining oil.

As oil production has increased, so has the rest of the economy. Workers flock to the province to land jobs in the oil industry. New homes are constructed to accommodate the workers. The workers spend money on everything from food and home furnishings to cars. The spin-off impact on the provincial economy is huge. With oil having hit \$100 a barrel on the world market, profits are expected to continue to flow.

### **Follow-up**

In small groups, imagine that you work for an urban planning department in Saskatchewan. You are seeing people flock to the province for jobs in the energy sector. Outline the steps you will take to accommodate these workers. What will they need from the local economy? What changes might need to be made in your province's infrastructure (e.g., roads)? What controls might you want to put on urban development, if any (e.g. for every new road built, a bike path must be built)? Be prepared to share your final report with your classmates.



# BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN

## *The Great Equalization Debate*

### Further Research

To learn more about the details of the Equalization Program and federal transfers to provinces, visit the Ministry of Finance Web site at [www.fin.gc.ca](http://www.fin.gc.ca).

With its recent economic boom, Saskatchewan has moved from being a “have not” to a “have” province in Canada. This means that the province no longer receives equalization payments from the federal government.

### What is Equalization?

Simply put, equalization is one of five federal programs through which Ottawa transfers money to the provinces and territories to try to ensure that every province has roughly the same capacity to pay for basic public services. The equalization program is worth about \$12-billion. The value of all five federal transfer programs in 2007 was just over \$51-billion. All provinces, except for Ontario, have received equalization payments in the past.

### The History of Equalization

Equalization payments in some form have been around since Canadian Confederation, when the federal government had most of the taxation powers. The federal government made transfer payments to the provinces to cover their needs. A formal system of equalization payments was introduced in 1957, mainly to help the struggling Atlantic provinces, which were seeing low rates of growth and high rates of emigration to Central Canada.

### Analysis

1. If a province loses one dollar for every dollar it makes from the sale of its natural resources, why should provinces bother to develop their resources? What advantages, if any, can the province gain from economic development if it results in reduced equalization payments?
2. Some economists argue that equalization payments are similar to welfare payments made to individual citizens. Why might this statement bother “have not” provinces?
3. What would happen if we did not have equalization payments in Canada?
4. Is your province a “have” or a “have not” province? Why?

Equalization payments have generally been criticized by leaders and residents of the wealthy provinces. The premiers of oil-rich Alberta, and Ontario, with its large manufacturing and service sectors, have criticized a perceived drain on local finances. Money is collected for equalization payments by federal taxation and is collected regardless of whether or not the province is a “have” or “have not” province. The difference is whether the provincial government receives money from the federal treasury. Residents of Alberta and Ontario are not necessarily taxed more by the federal government. However, since those provincial governments receive fewer total dollars per capita from the federal government than “have not” provinces, they are required to collect more taxes from their residents than otherwise would be required if the equalization program did not exist.

Normally, under the equalization scheme, equalization payments are reduced a dollar for every dollar increase in a province’s treasury. Under the current formula, a “have not” province loses a dollar in equalization for every dollar it makes from royalties off the sale of its natural resources, therefore creating a disincentive for developing those resources.

# BOOM TIMES IN SASKATCHEWAN

## **Activity: Pros and Cons of a Boom**

### Further Research

To learn more about the Quint program, consider a visit to [www.quintsaskatoon.ca](http://www.quintsaskatoon.ca). The program is termed *Quint*, meaning “five” in Latin, because it represents the five communities of Caswell Hill, King George, Pleasant Hill, Riversdale, and Westmount.

She certainly never thought she would be homeless. Saskatoon resident Laura Berube had run a small business for years. But when her business went bankrupt she decided to return to school. While she was in school, rents started rising all over the city because of the economic boom. Her rent jumped by \$200. As a student living on student loans, the single mother simply couldn’t afford to pay her rent anymore. She and her daughters found themselves homeless.

Berube was one of the lucky ones, however. She had family in the area, and she and her daughters were able to move from home to home for about six months while she finished school. But it was a hard way to live, and there was a great deal of instability in their lives. Berube felt like she was a bad mom, even though she knew that returning to school was the best way to secure the family’s future.

Berube was able to move her family into a home because of a government program called Quint. Quint buys run-down houses and resells them, arranging low-cost mortgages for people who couldn’t normally afford to buy. But the economic boom in the province has put a great deal of pressure on the Quint program. The program used to buy and resell 20 affordable houses a year. But it has been unable to secure a home for the last 18 months because of the skyrocketing price of homes in the province.

### Activity

In small groups, copy an organizer like the one below into your notebooks. For each of the categories, record two or three positive impacts of the economic boom and two or three negative impacts of the boom. You may want to review this *News in Review* story again, or conduct additional research, to help you complete your organizer.

Category	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Construction industry		
Employment rates		
Personal income		
Real estate		
Poverty and homelessness		
The environment		
Roads and infrastructure		

# News in Review Index

A list of the stories covered last season and to date in the current season is provided below.

The complete chronological index for all 18 seasons of *News in Review*, and a subject-oriented index listing *News in Review* stories appropriate for various subject areas can be accessed through our Web site at [www.cbc.ca/newsinreview](http://www.cbc.ca/newsinreview). Hard copies of these indexes can also be obtained by contacting CBC Learning.

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The Seven Wonders of Canada  
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## MARCH 2008

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The Campaign for the White House  
Cyber Thieves and Identity Theft

## APRIL 2008

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Kosovo Declares Independence  
Restoring Peace to Kenya  
Coming Home to Newfoundland

## MAY 2008

Rising Food Prices Threaten Millions  
Changing Canada's Immigration Rules  
Tibet, China, and the Olympics  
Making Money by Going Green

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Image credit: NASA

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