

Telegrams: Within Canada, telegrams are sent over Canadian National and Canadian Pacific lines and can be handed in at railway stations, bus and airport terminals and hotels. If you telephone your message, you will be billed for it at a later date. The basic rate for a telegram in Canada is based on a 10-word message. Charges for night-letters and day-letters, which are cheaper, are based on a 50-word message. Charges for cables sent outside Canada are based on a fixed cost a word, including the address.

(i) Some Social Customs

Learning the customs of a people takes time, and most of these will have to be learned through association with Canadians. However, the following points may be useful for you to know at the start of your stay in Canada.

Most people in Canada attach much importance to punctuality. It is customary for invitations to be answered promptly, and for appointments to be kept. If you have promised to go to a home or to meet someone, you should do so at the time agreed on unless you send word that you cannot keep your appointment.

After receiving hospitality, it will be appreciated if you phone or send a "thank-you" note to your host or hostess. The Eastern custom of taking a gift when visiting a home for the first time is very gracious, but it is not necessary and could become expensive. It is quite proper to accept an invitation from someone you have never met if this has been arranged by a mutual acquaintance. Although the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays have no significance for many overseas students, you should not feel that you are invading a family circle when invited to spend the holiday with friends. Guests in Canadian homes often offer to help with the dishes and overnight guests make their own beds.

In minor things, it is good to conform to the customs of the people among whom you are living, but it is important to keep your own standard of values. For instance, if religious beliefs or personal preferences prevent you from eating certain foods or from drinking alcoholic beverages, you should not be embarrassed to explain this to your hostess.

In Canada, relations between the sexes are quite informal. This freedom may sometimes be misinterpreted. For instance, if a man and woman share a seat on a train or bus, they may talk to each other but this should not be taken to indicate that either wishes to continue the chance acquaintance. Similarly, on campus, when men and women invite each other to join in various social activities, it need not imply sustained interest.

Most Canadians believe in equality between the sexes, but forms of courtesy in this country have traditionally given women preference. A woman goes through a door before the man who is escorting her. When a man and woman walk together, the man walks on the side nearest the street. A man usually rises when a woman enters a room, and takes off his hat when greeting women.

Further information about life in Canada and at a Canadian university can be obtained from individual universities and campus organizations.