

Canada, Britain and the Commonwealth



Will the patriation of the Canadian Constitution from London to Ottawa and the severing of this last colonial link adversely affect Canadian relations with Britain or the Commonwealth? By all accounts quite the contrary. The colonial anachronism had long since lost all significance and become no more than a potential irritant. With its removal the way is clear for even stronger bonds of affection and mutual respect between Canada and Britain, and continued close involvement by Canada in, and support for, the Commonwealth. The Queen of Great Britain remains also the Queen of Canada, fulfilling the desire of the great plurality of Canadians and the unanimous wish of the Prime Minister and all ten provincial premiers.

Had the bonds of affection and esteem between Britain and Canada been strained by the animated debate in Westminster? Public opinion in Canada reflected no such suggestion when the Falklands hostilities broke out. A Gallup Poll of 12 June revealed more than 88 percent of Canadians having an opinion unequivocally backed the British position that the Argentine forces on the islands should be removed. Canada was among the first nations to ban imports from Argentina. Prime Minister Trudeau declared that 'we are one hundred percent behind the British', and after the liberation of the islands on 14 June the Canadian House of Commons sent a unanimous message of congratulations to the British government and people.

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