

Toronto: THE CITY THAT WORKS



Thanks to a glowing account in the *Los Angeles Times*, Toronto has become known as "the city that works." While such a tribute seems flattering, Toronto indeed is a well-run, well-managed city.

What strikes most visitors first is that Toronto is clean. But this is not surprising since each year the city spends millions of dollars to plant flowers, manage parks, wash downtown streets every night and pick up litter.

And not only are the streets clean — they are also safe. Canada has strict gun control laws, and Toronto's low

crime rate compares most favourably with cities its size in Europe, the United States and other parts of the world. Toronto's police force is well-organized, works hard at maintaining its relations with the numerous ethnic communities, and has an excellent record for providing security at major events.

But what is one to make of this "new city" in the New World? At first glance, it may appear American with its ubiquitous grid of highways and buildings. Although Toronto is spread out like Los Angeles and has as many suburbs as Detroit, the comparison is superficial only.

Toronto's physical features include a natural harbour sheltered by sandy islands, backed by gently rolling, well-watered, fertile country.

For one thing, Toronto shows an architectural continuity, stretching outwards from the city's core, that is quite different from most American cities. It also displays a continuous canopy of green, formed in part by its extraordinary system of natural ravines, and in part by its unique urban forests in extensive low-rise residential neighbourhoods.

Toronto's name is of Indian derivation and means "place of meeting." Long before it was settled, aboriginal peoples passed through the area following a trail and canoe route that was a portage between lakes Ontario and Huron. The Toronto Passage, as it was known, was used by French explorer Étienne Brulé as early as 1615 and was popular with French fur traders.

During the 1780s, the United Empire Loyalists — American colonists who supported the British cause during the American Revolution — moved north and settled around the upper St. Lawrence River and lower Great Lakes. In 1834, the site was incorporated as the City of Toronto with an elected civic government.

With the arrival of the railways during the 1850s, the city's regional grasp was widely extended. Wholesale, banking and railway entrepreneurship grew accordingly, and Toronto was made the capital of the province of Ontario at Canadian Confederation in 1867.

From Wilderness to Global Village

After a century of steady growth, with heavy spurts of immigration in the years following the two World Wars, Toronto has blossomed — particularly over the past two decades — into a confident, attractive city.

Toronto is now Canada's largest city, with a population of more than 3.5 million.