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## orty Years of Canadian Citizenship

**T**his year Canada salutes its citizens by celebrating the 40th anniversary of Canadian citizenship. A country of some 25 million, Canada wishes to recognize its multicultural, multiracial citizenry who have come from all over the world to enrich its society.

It may seem contradictory that a nation that just celebrated its 120th birthday of Confederation can also be having a 40th anniversary of citizenship. Since 1947, Canadians have legally been citizens of their own country. Before 1947, however, Canadians were considered to be British subjects.

Pressure from Canadians during and after the Second World War made it clear that they wanted a way to show their pride in Canada as an independent nation. This led to the drafting of a distinctly "Canadian" Citizenship Act which came into force on January 1, 1947. The Act was a major step in completing the gradual transition from colony to sovereign nation.



Countries have different attitudes to citizenship. In some parts of the world it is an asset jealously guarded by those whose families have possessed it for many generations, and recent arrivals cannot fully share it. In Canada quite the opposite is true, as new immigrants can, within a period of a few years, apply for and, in most cases, obtain citizenship.

Only Canada's native peoples have lived in the country for thousands of years. All other Canadians are either descended from

### Citizens in the making.

immigrant stock or are immigrants who have come from all parts of the world.

Canada recognizes and appreciates this strong cultural diversity which is an integral part of its citizenship. Citizens are encouraged to maintain links with their cultural heritage while sharing and supporting Canadian rights and obligations. Such links with origins enrich Canada both culturally and economically.