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Discuss the benefits Canada has
derived from membership of the
British Empire, and the benefits
other countries of the Empire
have derived from Canada's member-
ship.

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Outline

- I. History of Canada as a member of the British Empire.
- II. Canadian Benefits as a member of the British Empire.
 - (a) Government
 - (b) Law
 - (c) Trade
 - (d) Industry
 - (e) Defence
 - (f) Culture, Tradition and Sentiment
- III. Benefits of other countries in the Empire resulting from Canada's membership.
 - (a) Industry and Trade
 - (b) Defence
- IV. Canada and her place in the World as a result of her membership in the British Empire.

Canada is an independent nation. This independence has been achieved by gradual evolution, from colonial status in earlier centuries to complete sovereignty in the twentieth, with the full concurrence and encouragement of the British Government at every stage. But Canada is not only an independent nation, but also a member of the vast and powerful British Empire of which she became a member in 1763 when supreme British sea power and the brilliant handling of her troops led to English conquest of French Canada. ^{13 ems} Even as the war lasted, Canada was under the military government of British Armed Forces, and after the Treaty of Paris, the "New Quebec" was placed under civil government consisting of Governor and Council. During this interim, Canada was left largely alone. Fortunately religious intolerance and racial prejudice were unknown for British laws were less severe than those of France and consequently the ¹²Canadiens were very content with the new rule. Now came the American Revolution, which each year threw a deeper shadow on British prestige in the Americas, but still the French Canadians remained loyal, even under "persuasive" American attack. During and after the war, the Loyalists poured into Quebec, and the colony became divided into British Upper Canada and French Lower Canada. This development led eventually to the demand for Responsible Government, which echoed, not only in Upper Canada, but in its French counterpart as well. But the new, united Government proved as unworkable as the old, and the Quebec Conference--whose members were later to be called Fathers of Confederation--


gathered to create the new Dominion of Canada. Complete Canadian^{independence} was, however, not yet achieved for power was still reserved for the Imperial Government. Now, one by one the other Provinces were admitted to the Dominion, and Canada, as it is known today, came into being. Years later, two world wars were destined to cause the rapid development and real independence of the great power--Canada.

"The people are under God, the original of all just power, - and the Commons of England - being chosen by and representing the people - have the supreme power in this nation." ¹ Herein lies the determination of the people of England to be the real ruler of the realm. We have seen that this was also true of Canada's long search for power, and as in all countries founded on British Parliament, the rule of the people is complete. Even in Canada where the end of the long struggle lies only a few years behind them, the people often accept the privilege of self rule as a God-given right. In Great Britain it has long been established that there is no limit to the power of Parliament. Also, in Canada, so long as it keeps within the sphere of action granted by the British North America Act, there is no check on the Canadian Government. When the Fathers of Confederation were drafting the Constitution, they provided for a Federal Parliament patterned closely upon that of Great Britain, and which was to have the same three parts; A House of Commons--here they used the same name--elected by all the voters in the country;

1. McWilliams, Margaret. This Canada. p.198.
Toronto : Dent, 1948.

a Senate--corresponding to the House of Lords--the members appointed by the Canadian Government; the King represented by the Governor-General. Although, as in England, no provision had been made for them in the Act, the Canadian Parliament adopted most of the British Parliamentary customs--most of all the Rights of the House of Commons. It is at the opening of Parliament that one first sees these customs in operation. Normally, the opening of Parliament, especially if it is a new one, is a colourful, even exciting event in Ottawa. The members of the House of Commons will have paid a visit to the Senate Chamber, where they have been instructed to elect a Speaker, for without one the members cannot do any business. Then, the formally elected Speaker takes the chair, a replica of the chair in ^{the} British Parliament, with the mace, also a replica of the mace in the British House of Commons, lying on the table before him. The Speaker is, as in British Parliament, entirely impartial, even though he is a member of the party in the majority, and President of the House of Commons. The most important part of our Government is the House of Commons, though, as we have seen, there are two other parts of Canadian Parliament. The first of these is the Senate, with definitely limited power, and the second is the Governor-General, still the symbol of power, though the real power lies in the Parliament or in those who elect it. Thus, our powerful machinery of Canadian National Life is a copy of the older British Parliament which has withstood the ages, and is, even today, a power.

Law comes from Parliaments. The law in all British Countries is based on a combination of the ancient English common law, and the amendments or additions made by Parliament. Now when each Canadian province became established, it, with the exception of Quebec, took as its law the law of England as it stood at the time of its formation. When the Dominion was created it took over these various laws and made them uniform for all of Canada. Canadian law is divided into three main branches: Criminal Law being the phase of Law which defines crimes, and provides for the trial and punishment of the persons committing them; Civil Law, the law which deals with disputes between individuals over rights or obligations under law; a third, and quite recent division of Law, Regulatory or Administrative Law, lying midway between Civil and Criminal Law. The impartiality and justice of Law in British Countries contributes greatly to the belief that the rule of Law and Order in Canada and other Empire Countries is more complete than elsewhere.



Canada, as an Empire country, has played a unique role in the history of the world. Among other things, Canadian Confederation was the first experiment of its kind in colonial history. It was the first time that a group of colonies united politically on their own initiative and with the blessing of the Imperial Government, to form a nation. As the nation grew it prospered. Trade relations were established, first with Great Britain and other members of the Empire, and then with other countries. Canadian wheat, minerals and other

materials began to find their way all over the world, and foreign commodities flowed into Canada from Britain and all parts of the globe. Up to the time of the first world war, however, Canadian foreign trade was comparatively small. At that time the larger proportion of Canada's exports consisted of food and raw materials. The war began the process by which her exports included manufactured goods, and, after the four years of war, her exports had increased six-fold. The second world war stimulated even more spectacular demands for her exports, and Canada is now the fourth trading nation of the world; third among Western Powers.

The very fact that Canadian trade is booming will lead us to believe that the same is true of industry, for the two are interdependent. Yes, Canadian Industry is a vast business which had its beginnings in the country's early days as a colony of the British Empire. Canada owes much to Britain in many fields, and, as in others, she provided for early Canadian Industry. At present, our national Industry is almost self-sufficient, for it embodies almost every phase of Industry, from the vast Pacific forests where lumbering is the great business, to the prairies where agricultural products dominate the Industrial scene, and the eastern provinces where mineral production and manufacturing are the chief occupations of Industrial importance. Canada is an Industrial nation, not yet fully developed, but with great future potentialities and wonderful past and present attainments.

The defence of early Canada and her people, was, as

were Trade and Industry, the accepted responsibility of the British. The Mother Country had, through the years of development, borne the cost of the country's defence, and was still sharing, as far as fighting forces were concerned, the cost of Naval Defence at the time of Confederation. England was now beginning to think that the colonies should have some forces to aid in their own defence. This, of course, could not be done without a common policy among the independent colonies, but with Confederation and the development of her Independence, Canada experienced a desire to control her own affairs. At this time then, she began to develop and to expand her defence system at home, and her armed forces abroad. Canada co-operated with Britain at different times to throw off the menacing yoke of aggression, until, during World War II, Canada's great achievements in all the fields of war work were a source of International as well as National pride.

The Empire embodies, not only Independence, but something more. It carries with its membership a practice of mutual confidence and co-operation in the full respect of the independence and individuality of each member. Canada is bound to the Empire by many intangible connections that run back into History; by a common concept of justice, law and order; by common economic interests; by a common law of freedom; by a common concern for the peoples of the Empire and the world at large. Our country has taken on some of those real but nevertheless intangible British Characteristics,

and is further linked to the Empire by mutual ideals of Religion and Morality. Canada, following in the illustrious footsteps of Great Britain, is now awakening a great interest in, and a pursuit of the fine arts. Culture is booming. Teacher exchange and the exchange of students (helped by many scholarships) is one of the more recent means of the communication of culture. Of hardly less importance is the development of news agencies, foreign broadcasting, television and cinema, which have, to some extent, strengthened the bond of unity between Empire countries. Very soon we will have an example of the British people throughout the world-- the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. In an age of change this ancient ceremony gives a sense of stability, and serves to express some of Britain's finest national feelings. Many Canadians are of British descent, and this, added to the fact that the same is true of many countries of the Empire, makes Canada sister country of many; daughter of the great Mother Country--England.

Canada, through her advances in many fields has benefited the other Empire Countries. Our Canadian Industry is a very national project, and yet it is also Internationalized for the vast Canadian surpluses are exported to all parts of the world, a large percentage going to Empire Countries. This overseas trade allows for, and promotes still greater expansion of rapidly developing Industrial ventures in Canada. Thus, Industry and Trade are interdependent and upon them to a large extent depends the economic stability of both the

exporting and the importing country. Necessarily, then, Canada exports as large a portion of her produce as possible—grain from the prairies, lumber and pulp and paper products from western Canada, food commodities and dairy products from the east, and a limited amount of machinery and manufactured goods from highly industrialized centers. This exchange of commodities influences the inter-relationship between Empire members, great or small.

Defence, upon which more than half of Canada's national expenditure is being made this year, is far more than a national problem. International and Inter-Empire defence and the development of it, has now become imperative. Although Canada has only recently developed her defence system to any great extent, she has contributed, on occasions, to the glory and victory of the Mother Country and the Empire. As early as 1833, Canada sent a company of voyageurs to help in the Egyptian Campaign, and later, in 1899, she sent forces to aid Great Britain at the outbreak of the Boer War. Later, though perhaps more to her own glory and the furthering of her personal safety, Canada, as we know, did more than credibly in the World Wars. At present, our forces are engaged in the Korean struggle and very recently Mr. Arnold Heeny, Canadian Speaker on the permanent council of NATO, has said that "there is every bit as much reason to send a Canadian Brigade to Indo-China...as to Korea." True, Canada did and is not fighting only for the Empire on these latter occasions, but by giving the lives of her men, she furthered and protected World

Freedom, and the Freedom and Independence of the British Empire.

Canada is first of the nations of the British Empire beyond the seas, strong in the equal partnership of two races; illustrious in peace and in war; a great guardian of the fruits of the earth; a mighty mother of men; wonderful in beauty; lovely in all her splendour. Her strategic position, as well as the expanding influence of two world wars, has had tremendous influence on Canada, but more so has her position as a member nation of the British Empire. As a member, Canada has had a far-reaching influence which would otherwise not have been hers; she is a special link in a world-wide chain bound together by moral, cultural and sentimental similarities as well as the more tangible bonds of trade, industry and defence. Canada has a special debt to Great Britain laying particular emphasis on the character of her people; her outstanding part in Canadian development through her pioneering, seafaring and economic and financial policies, and, withal her exhausting personal sacrifices toward the maintenance of freedom--political, social and spiritual. And so, even though Canada has become immensely more powerful and important than she had been years before, and even though she is now independent, it is her desire to remain a member of the Great British Empire which had given Canada a "second beginning", had helped her through the growing stage, and had then gladly relinquished her protective hold on the young country, allowing her to take her place as an Independent Power.

(Approx. 1,950 words)