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Quebec Under the Duplessis Government

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The Maurice Duplessis Government - 1944 to 1959
Political party: *Union nationale*

Development of Quebec's Economy

Economic Liberalism



Maurice Duplessis advocated for economic liberalism. Therefore, he relied on private enterprise and limited government intervention to develop Quebec's economy.

American companies were encouraged to establish themselves in Quebec through favourable conditions, such as tax reductions and low-cost forestry and mining concessions.

There were three main reasons for the rapid expansion of natural resource exploitation.
1. The Reconstruction of Europe
2. The Arms Race
3. The Consumption Boom

The arrival of American companies led to the creation of many jobs and the development of the Côte-Nord and Nouveau-Québec.

Continentalization of the Economy

Exploitation of resources in Quebec → Export of part of those resources to the United States

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Processing of resources in Canada and the United States → Assembly of products in Canada, in American subsidiaries

Politics

After World War II, the federal government wanted to retain the power to collect taxes.

Only Quebec and Ontario refused.

The Government of Canada was presenting itself as a welfare state, that is, a State that actively intervenes in the economic and social sectors to promote societal development and equitably redistribute collective wealth.



The federal government's welfare state was at odds with Duplessis's economic liberalism. Duplessis saw it as a threat to provincial autonomy.

Duplessis was a staunch advocate of provincial autonomy.



There was a rejection of federal government subsidies intended for hospitals and universities.

Adoption of the *fleurdelisé* in 1948

Tremblay Commission in 1953

Creation of a provincial tax in Quebec



Inauguration of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 to facilitate the transportation of goods between Canada and the United State

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Modernization of Agriculture

Duplessis implemented various measures to modernize the agricultural sector.



- Granted subsidies to help drain and dry out flooded arable land
- Maintained access to agricultural credit through *Crédit agricole* to make it easier for farmers to borrow money
- Adopted the Rural Electrification Act in 1945 to bring electricity to farms
- Expanded responsibilities for the Ministry of Agriculture



- Created the *Office des marchés agricoles* in 1956 to better regulate the sale of agricultural products

The Role of Religion

The Duplessis government championed social conservatism. He wanted to preserve traditional French-Canadian values, such as returning to the land and having large families.
For its part, the Catholic Church encouraged the population to submit to State authority.

- Until the 1960s, the Church was responsible for health care and education.
- That enabled it to maintain his power over the population. This heavy influence of the Church in political and social affairs is known as clericalism.
- Through his social conservatism, Maurice Duplessis gained significant support from the Catholic Church and from farmers. That enabled him to maintain his power over the population.



- 1946: Creation of the *Service de presse et de cinéma* by the Catholic Church.
- With the support of the State, the Church also left its mark on culture. It censored certain books and films when they conveyed messages or values that were inconsistent with those of the Church.

Opposition Groups

Unions

Maurice Duplessis's government strongly opposed unions.

- The government supported employers and business owners during labour disputes or strikes.
- Laws were adopted that limited or revoked workers' right to strike.

The Padlock Act



Introduced in 1937 to limit the activities of unions and the communist movement.

Intellectual and Artistic Domain



- Publication of *Refus global* in 1948. It rejected social conservatism and denounced the Catholic Church's hold over Quebec society.
- Founding in 1950 of the magazine *Cité libre*, which criticized conservatism and challenged the clergy's influence on public affairs.

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