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The State and Canadian Cultural Nationalism: Protecting Canadian Football

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ABSTRACT

In 1974, Canada's Liberal minority government introduced a bill designed to protect the Canadian Football League (CFL) from competition. It threatened jail for anyone who operated a football team in Canada having any connection with an American team or league. A particular conjuncture of factors prompted the government to act according to the rationale that protecting the CFL was critical to the national interest. Canadian football had become an identity marker that nationalists used to define the country and differentiate it from other nations. In the 1960s, post-war Canadian nationalism heightened concerns about Americanization as well as Quebec separatism. It also brought increasing state intervention, including cultural policies that grew in scope as they became more populist, from a government in a minority position facing a national unity crisis. In this research, the government's unprecedented intervention is explained, by contextualizing it historically within the cultural, economic, and political conditions of the time. When the Canadian Football League, a national sporting league that represented the nation, began to struggle, the stage was set for the most significant government intervention in the area of Canadian professional sport to date.

KEYWORDS

Canadian football; cultural nationalism; state protection; US cultural influence; post-WWII Canada

'It was so funny, I did introduce major pieces of legislation, but I'm not sure I had any which got my name in the papers as much as that one ... I was almost kind of flabbergasted'.¹ The Honourable Marc Lalonde was an elected Member of the Canadian Parliament for more than a decade, holding cabinet portfolios as Minister of Health, Minister of Justice, Minister of Energy, and Minister of Finance. He was involved in many controversial political issues, including the patriation of the Canadian constitution, radical health care reforms, and the implementation of the controversial National Energy Program.² However, none of these initiatives generated as much publicity as his sponsorship of protectionist legislation for Canadian professional football. In 1974 Canada's Liberal minority government introduced a bill designed to protect the Canadian Football League (CFL) from competition.³ It threatened jail for anyone who operated a football team in Canada having any connection with an American team or league.

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A particular conjuncture of factors prompted the government to act according to the rationale that protecting the CFL was critical to the national interest. Canadian football had become an identity marker that nationalists used to define the country and differentiate it from first the UK and later the US, one deemed all the more authentic for its populist roots. The game grew to be representative of the nation. In the 1960s, post-war Canadian nationalism heightened concerns about Americanization. A rise in Quebec-nationalism meant that the nation was also threatened internally. These threats resulted in increasing state intervention, including cultural policies that grew in scope as they became more populist, from a government in a minority position facing a national unity crisis.

In this research, the government's unprecedented intervention is explained, by contextualizing it historically within the cultural, economic, and political conditions of the time. In North America, American cultural imperialism was the result of the inexorable logic of continental cultural economics. However, nationalism dictated that Canada must have its own culture, and part of Canadian identity was constructed on the idea of resisting the American 'other'.⁴ When the CFL, a national sporting league that represented the nation, began to struggle, the stage was set for the most significant government intervention in the area of Canadian professional sport to date.

It was so important for the federal government to protect a form of culture while resisting American influence that Bill C-22, the Football Bill, was proposed at a time of significant economic upheaval with record inflation rates along with high unemployment and labour disruptions. The following will be examined in this research: the link Canadian football has with the nation, the rise of nationalism and government intervention in post-World War II Canada, and the details that led to Bill C-22.

Canadian Football and the Nation

Cultural practices commonly contribute to national identity. Therefore, it should not be surprising that sport has been used in nation-building around the world. Lacrosse, hockey, Canadian football and other outdoor activities were used to help construct the Canadian nation.⁵ Sport is positioned primarily as a form of popular culture that attracts the attention of a large part of the populace. A national sport can be effective in nation-building as it provides emotionally charged opportunities for citizens to express their local identity within the nation and identify with the nation.

Sport is often a source of national pride and identity, and such was the case with Canadian football. From the first games in 1861, Canadian football had nationalist overtones. The game evolved from English rugby and developed in Canada during the Confederation era of nation-building.⁶ Rugby football was introduced to the United States when a team from McGill visited Harvard campus in 1874. Cross border games continued between teams from Quebec and Ontario, and teams in the US, with these games contributing to the development of rules that differed from British rugby.⁷ A sense of a distinctly Canadian pastime led its early promoters and players to differentiate it from first, British rugby, and then American football by developing and defending unique rules for the game.⁸ The critical rules

differentiation came from a pursuit of national distinctiveness that discouraged continental integration.

Canadian professional football, at its highest level represented by the CFL, is the only professional sporting league with all its teams based in Canada and with a Canadian quota that ensures about half of each team's players are Canadian. The quota emerged as a residency requirement designed to maintain local representation on teams and attach these clubs to local communities.⁹ The Grey Cup game, the national championship of Canadian football first played in 1909, evolved into a national spectacle, a ritual that brought Canadians together on an annual basis. By the mid-1950s, teams from British Columbia to Quebec were challenging for the Grey Cup, reinforcing the idea of nation. Interest in Canadian football increased as measured by attendance and television ratings. The CFL grew to something that was recognizably a distinctly Canadian form of culture.

Postwar Canada, Nationalism, and State Intervention

In the 1950s, the popularity of Canadian football was reinforced by the new medium of television. Professional football in Canada was now a major spectator sport. Canadian-based teams were wealthy enough to sign top American players who had previously been earning a living in the NFL and attracted top US college talent with the promise of higher pay. Four of the first ten players in the 1953 NFL draft, Heisman Trophy winner Billy Vessels, Bob Marlow, Donn Moomaw, and Tom Stolhandkse, went to play in Canada. In 1954, more than 40 NFL players and draft choices opted to go north of the border, to join the dozens already playing there.¹⁰ Television helped Canadian football to grow, but it also introduced American football to the country. Canadian children of the 1950s grew up exposed to more American culture than any previous generation.¹¹ Perhaps it is not surprising that, with the inordinate amount of exposure to American culture, Canadian nationalism became associated with fears of loss of sovereignty, resistance to cultural and economic imperialism, and anti-Americanism.¹² In Canada, anti-Americanism had long been established, but the manifestation after the Second World War intensified.¹³ In addition to concerns about Canadian cultural sovereignty, economic sovereignty became a more prevalent political issue. In 1957, the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects reported that 'No other nation as highly industrialized as Canada has such a large proportion of industry controlled by non-resident concerns.'¹⁴ As a result, there was increasing apprehension over American influence.

Compared to economic nationalism, cultural nationalism was easier to pursue as it gratified nationalist sentiment without much political cost to the government or economic cost to the country. Cultural nationalism had the further advantage of being highly symbolic. Economic nationalism also did not arouse the passion of nationalists as much as cultural nationalism could. Lester B. Pearson's government, elected in 1963, concentrated its efforts on cultivating nationalism through culture and a new national flag, a powerful symbol to unite Canadians and fuel this intense nationalism.¹⁵ The height of state-sponsored nationalism in Canada occurred in 1967 with Canada's centennial celebrations and Expo '67. These events were both a boost to, and an expression of, the new nationalism. The rise in Canadian nationalism in

the 1960s and '70s was similar to the wave of nationalism that arose in Canada in the 1920s. That burst of nationalism was stimulated partially by pride in Canada's accomplishments in the First World War and resulted in attempts to construct a Canadian national spirit that was less British.¹⁶ However, the new concern in the 1960s and '70s was not distancing from the United Kingdom, but from the United States. During the '60s, Canadian nationalists' concerns about the United States continued to grow. America's war in Vietnam increased the distance between the two neighbours. Race riots, the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert and Martin Luther King Jr., and rioting at the Democratic convention in Chicago in 1968 provided further evidence to Canadians that the United States was not a nation to emulate.

While peak nationalism had emerged in English-speaking Canada, a similar situation had developed among the French in Quebec. The Quiet Revolution, which would profoundly change Quebec, was ushered in with the 1960 election of Quebec premier Jean Lesage. The rising separatist movement in Quebec meant uniting the nation was a growing challenge. The state was threatened both externally by Americanization and internally by a national unity crisis. In the national interest, the government sought to become more interventionist.¹⁷ This state intervention was supported by a leftward trend in politics that saw the state as a necessary counterweight to capitalist power. National independence depended upon an activist state; the state depended upon nationalism to legitimize its sovereignty.¹⁸

The Canadian state had gained experience and confidence in being more interventionist through directing the war effort during the Second World War. Keynesian economic ideas were increasingly influential in the post-war era, providing an intellectual rationale for greater government intervention. The 1943 Report on Social Security for Canada outlined the need for more comprehensive, universal social programmes and welfare services. Ultimately the federal government was involved in unemployment insurance (1940), family allowance (1945), mortgage-lending programmes (1946), old age pensions (1952), equalization payments (1957), and national health insurance (1957). Government intervention was by this time less controversial and more likely than ever before.

The government soon extended state intervention beyond economic and social programmes into the realm of culture, introducing policies designed to encourage French and English Canadian cultural producers and protect them from American competition. At first, federal cultural policies focused on high culture, including the establishment of museums and a Museum Act, a national film board to encourage the development of Canadian films, and the creation of the Canada Council to fund the arts. By the 1970s, cultural policies broadened to include various forms of popular culture.¹⁹ In his book *Canadian Content*, cultural historian Ryan Edwardson, lays out a three-phase chronological framework to understand post-war cultural policy.²⁰ The first period, Masseyism, as Edwardson refers to it, was characterized by an Anglophilic nationalism focused on high culture, including the funding of opera, theatre, and music through the Canada Council. The second period was more concerned with cultural industries associated with the mass media, including television, support for Canadian feature films and newspapers. The third and final period emphasized 'cultural industrialism' under the government of Pierre Trudeau

and included intervention into private cultural industries such as Canadian content quotas on radio and television, and support for book publishing and periodicals. The federal government began to subsidize commercial cultural producers, which set the precedent for the government intervening into the private sector to promote cultural nationalism. Subsidies for cultural industries, limits of foreign ownership in the print and media sector, and removal of tax exemptions for foreign advertising were some examples of government cultural activity. Edwardson's schema also provides a provisional framework for understanding the evolution of sport policy. Maseyism featured scant interest in sport. The new nationalism that developed in 1960s-Canada provided more fertile conditions for government intervention in sport and leisure activities. 'Cultural industrialism' featured government intervention in a wide range of areas including, eventually, Canadian football.

Post-War Intervention into Football

Pierre Trudeau's election as Prime Minister in 1968 ushered in Edwardson's third moment of Canadian cultural policy, 'cultural industrialism', which 'posited nationhood upon the success of cultural industries'.²¹ Under Trudeau, cultural policy would be used not just to promote national identity indirectly through supporting Canadian culture but very deliberately to promote national unity.²² Nationalism and resistance to Americanizing trends continued to be a focus for the federal Liberals. A Gallup poll found that more than two-thirds of Canadians felt the country had enough foreign investment.²³ Economic nationalism supplemented the state's cultural nationalism at this time. The Liberals attempted to Canadianize the economy and slow continental integration by establishing the Canada Development Corporation in 1971, designed to develop and maintain Canadian-controlled companies, and the Foreign Investment Review Agency in 1973, set up to screen foreign acquisitions. These were efforts to find counterweights to American power and work towards Canadian sovereignty.

In addition to economic intervention, Prime Minister Trudeau believed that sport could be used as an instrument of national unity to counter divisive forces.²⁴ In 1961, the government of John Diefenbaker had unanimously passed the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act, the first significant government initiative in the area of sport. While the Bill purportedly was concerned with health and fitness, the government seemed more interested in improving Canada's performance in international sport to increase prestige, contribute to national identity, and to quell the troubling national unity crisis.²⁵ This would mark the beginning of intensified government intervention into sport in Canada demonstrated by advisory reports, the establishment of national sporting organizations and sporting competitions, and a dramatic increase in funding for sport.²⁶

In 1968, the federal government produced a Task Force report on sport that concluded sport was a potent unifying force with the potential to provide commonality and bridge differences. The report argued that professional sport could be used to unite the country and act as 'an effective antidote to economic and cultural domination by the United States'.²⁷ The report raised concerns over the continental structure of professional hockey but singled out football as an example of a

professional sport contributing to national unity.²⁸ Though hockey was viewed as Canada's national sport, there were concerns that hockey at its highest level, the National Hockey League (NHL), was being Americanized.²⁹ After expansion in 1967, only two of the 12 NHL teams were Canadian-based, and by 1974, only three of the 18 teams were based in Canada.³⁰ Americanization started to undermine the mythical nation-building function of hockey in Canada. With Canada's national sport of hockey increasingly under American influence, there was fear that the CFL would follow suit.³¹ Historically, Canadian football had been influenced by the American game with American coaches and players recruited to Canada bringing their strategies and rules. The scrimmage from centre, the down system, and the forward pass were adopted from the American game in the 1920s. In the 1950s the Canadian game implemented the six-point touchdown, rules permitting blocking downfield, and changed the names of the positions to coincide with the American terms.³² However, these moves resulted in resistance opposing this Americanization.³³

Bruce Kidd, who would commence his long career as an academic at the University of Toronto in 1970, wrote in 1969 about the Americanization of sport in a series of magazine articles calling for federal government protection for Canadian sport.³⁴ American cultural influence hampered the ability of Canadians to use culture, including sport, to help construct identity. As nationalists warned that American cultural forces were inundating Canada, the realm of football seemed no exception. The political economy of football conspired against the CFL. The US-based National Football League (NFL) featured teams in larger metropolitan areas that generated a robust complex of media coverage, advertising, sponsorship, and media revenues. CFL teams generally served smaller markets with fewer resources to support franchises.³⁵ While Canadians might not have personally identified with American control of a cultural or manufacturing sector, the loss of either their local football team or the Grey Cup might affect them on a more personal level.

In 1966, Jake Gaudaur, President and General Manager of the CFL team, the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, had hired a management consulting firm to examine the CFL's operations. The confidential report confirmed the CFL's popularity was suffering as a result of Canadians' increased interest in the American NFL.³⁶ This was consistent with a report produced by Pierre Trudeau's government identifying American professional football as a threat to the CFL.³⁷

American leagues had already identified Canadian cities as potential locations for expansion, and politicians in Montreal were actively petitioning for an NFL franchise for the city.³⁸ The city's new Major League Baseball expansion team (Montreal Expos) was the first franchise in a major American professional sporting league outside the United States.³⁹ Professional baseball at the highest level had joined the continentalist NHL, and it was believed that a continental football league might not be far behind. The French-English divide was growing in the province of Quebec and also among football supporters. Surveys in Montreal indicated that English-speaking fans supported Canadian football while French-speaking fans preferred American football.⁴⁰ Canadian football was associated with the nation. With French-Canadian nationalism and separatist sentiment growing in Quebec, a sport tied to Canada was much less appealing. To fans of Canadian football, the potential loss of the Canadian game represented the loss of a distinctive feature of the Canadian way of life.

The Liberals held a slim minority after the 1972 federal election with 109 elected members, compared to 107 from the Progressive Conservative Party in the 264-seat parliament. As a result, the Liberals were dependent on the New Democratic Party (NDP), a democratic-socialist and nationalist party, for power. Trudeau recognized that he needed to cooperate with the NDP or risk having his government fall. As a result, the Liberals shifted to the left to maintain power and implemented some NDP proposals. The NDP pressured the government into a new national oil policy, and passing the Foreign Investment Review Act.⁴¹ Marc Lalonde was elected to the House of Commons in 1972 and was appointed Minister of National Health and Welfare, a portfolio at that time also responsible for sport. Trudeau had urged Lalonde, a bilingual, Oxford-educated Quebecer with political experience in the Liberal party, to run. Demonstrating how important the CFL's struggles were to the government, in the first week of his appointment, Lalonde met with Jake Gaudaur, who was now commissioner of the CFL.⁴²

The Establishment of the World Football League

Television helped professional sport expand in North America. A new basketball league, the American Basketball Association (ABA), had commenced operations in 1967, and in 1971 the creation of a new professional hockey league, the World Hockey Association (WHA), was announced. In October of 1973, Gary Davidson, responsible for organizing both the ABA and the WHA, announced the formation of the World Football League (WFL).

After the formation of the WFL was announced, CFL Commissioner Gaudaur immediately met with Lalonde, informing him that the WFL was a serious threat to the CFL.⁴³ The WFL included very wealthy owners with a plan to compete with the NFL by offering higher salaries that could lure many players from both the CFL and the NFL. Just weeks after this meeting, a Toronto-based WFL franchise, to be owned by John (Johnny) Bassett Jr. – son of John Bassett Sr., owner of the Toronto Argonaut CFL team – was announced. In addition to owning the Argonauts, Bassett Sr. owned the local Toronto television station, the television broadcasting rights for the CFL, and at one time was part-owner of the Toronto Maple Leafs NHL hockey team. The Toronto Argonauts, the oldest football team in North America, would soon be competing for the interests of football fans in Toronto. Bassett Sr., who had refused to give up his territorial rights when the CFL explored putting another team in Toronto, was now happy to give them up for a WFL team.⁴⁴ CFL administrators had enormous concerns about the new WFL franchise. The wealthy Toronto Argonaut team was the major contributor to the CFL's equalization fund, designed to financially help CFL teams located in smaller cities.⁴⁵ If the new Toronto team affected the Argos' bottom line, it would be felt by every CFL team. More of a concern, a successful American football team in Canada could open the door for the NFL to move into Canada.

The Liberal government was concerned about the future of the fragile Canadian league. The government's view was that the CFL, as an institution that reflected Canadian culture, should be protected.⁴⁶ This view was consistent with the federal government's recent promotion of Canadian culture while resisting American cultural

incursions.⁴⁷ In January of 1974, Minister Marc Lalonde stated that the WFL's effect on Canada would be discussed at Cabinet.⁴⁸ Lalonde then met with officials from the five western CFL teams.⁴⁹

On February 12, Cabinet granted the Minister of Health and Welfare permission to say publicly that the government viewed with disfavour the expansion of the WFL into Canada. Many provincial politicians came out strongly in support of federal government action.⁵⁰ On February 21, Lalonde spoke to the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs in Regina. 'Canadian Football matters. It is not just another form of entertainment ... it is your game, part of your lives' he stated. He spoke of tradition and Americanization, 'problems besetting the Canadian Football League are similar to many of our country's problems ... American influence threatening to turn what is ours into something that is less us and more them.' He concluded with '[w]e are trying to protect all that is Canadian.'⁵¹ The speech, and the government's position, made headlines across the country.

Lalonde's support of the CFL may have been political. In the spring of 1974, rumours began to circulate that Trudeau's minority government might fall, making a summer election a possibility. To earn a majority, the Liberals desperately needed to increase support in the west. This speech took place in Regina, in the middle of the Canadian prairies, the heartland of Canadian football. The Liberals had won only three of forty-five seats in the prairies. Supporting the league could increase voter support in the west, a traditional Conservative stronghold. Lalonde's speech came three months after Johnny Bassett announced Toronto's WFL team. The delay may have been an attempt to re-introduce this populist policy closer to a possible election date.

After his speech, Lalonde received letters and telegrams from many supporters, including mayors of six Canadian cities with CFL teams.⁵² The mayors of Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto, were not among those in support. Lalonde argued that, in thwarting the WFL, the federal government was merely being consistent. The government had imposed tariffs to protect other areas of Canadian business such as steel, textiles, chemicals, plastics, and dairy products. Lalonde argued that preventing American football from coming to Canada simply followed this pattern.⁵³ According to Lalonde, only two things could stop the government from moving to block the WFL: lack of public support or lack of support for the minority government in the House of Commons.⁵⁴ This last point underlined the importance of NDP support. In their minority position, the Liberals were dependent on at least some of the 31 members of the NDP to give them the necessary votes to pass legislation. If Lalonde was successful in garnering public support, it would be much easier to receive the backing of some members of the NDP.

It appeared that he had support from many provincial and municipal politicians; another important group that Lalonde would need support from was the media. Not surprisingly, the staunchly Liberal *Toronto Star* was the first paper to join municipal and provincial politicians in favour of federal government intervention.⁵⁵ Lalonde also received support from influential newspaper columnists from the *Globe and Mail*, while the *Edmonton Journal*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, and the *Montreal Gazette* all featured editorials in favour of federal government action.⁵⁶ Letters to the Editor in the *Toronto Star* were three to one in favour of Lalonde. The debate was coloured

by nationalistic overtones that equated the decline of the CFL with the loss of the country. On CBC radio, sport columnist Dick Beddoes stated the decline of the CFL 'brings [us] a bit closer [to] the collapse of Confederation.'⁵⁷ It was not just the media that supported the Liberal government. A poll by the *Hamilton Spectator* found 81 per cent of those surveyed in Hamilton were backing Lalonde, and the *Edmonton Journal* survey found 70 per cent in favour of Lalonde. A poll taken by Regina radio station CKCK found respondents were two to one in support of government intervention.⁵⁸ However, in politics there is always opposition. The conservative newspaper the *Toronto Sun* featured an editorial opposing the move.⁵⁹ Demonstrating the two solitudes that exist in Canada, the English press in Montreal was supportive, but an article in the French-language *Le Devoir* was not.⁶⁰

Not surprisingly, the Toronto WFL team, called the Northmen, was the main topic at the CFL annual meeting in Toronto. Apart from Toronto, every team representative except Montreal's was united in opposition to Bassett, citing him for conflict of interest for owning a team in the CFL, the Toronto Argonauts, while his son owned a team in the WFL.⁶¹ Bassett Sr. responded by purchasing a stake in his son's new WFL team and promptly selling the Toronto Argonauts to hotel chain owner Bill Hodgson.⁶² Groups in Calgary and Vancouver were also interested in WFL franchises, which reinforced the government's fear that, if one team was allowed, others would follow.⁶³ Johnny Bassett Jr. met with Lalonde twice in the first week of March in an attempt to change the cabinet minister's mind. After the meetings, Lalonde, more determined than ever, stated that 'Parliament will have to decide if we keep Canadian football alive or act like a bunch of colonials.'⁶⁴

Prime Minister Trudeau joined Lalonde in demonstrating his support for the CFL. Since his election, Trudeau had been in the stands for most Grey Cup games and encouraged cabinet ministers to attend as well. He was singled out by Commissioner Gaudaur for his enthusiastic support of the Grey Cup—attending luncheons, performing the ceremonial kickoff, presenting the trophy to the winning team, and doing whatever Gaudaur asked of him.⁶⁵ Even when the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ), a separatist group in Quebec, threatened his life should he attend the Grey Cup played in Montreal in 1969, Trudeau attended the game despite the objections of his security personnel.⁶⁶ On March 7, 1974, Trudeau rose in the House of Commons and promised his government would 'take whatever means are necessary' to protect the CFL.⁶⁷

Bill C-22: An Act Respecting Canadian Professional Football

On March 11, Lalonde outlined proposed legislation designed to protect the CFL. If the Bill was enacted, no professional football team would be allowed to play in Canada unless part of an entirely Canadian league. In addition, CFL teams would be required to have more Canadian players. The CBC, the public broadcasting network in Canada, had been airing NFL games across Canada, introducing the American game to Canadians. Lalonde's Bill would prohibit televising American football in Canada.⁶⁸ Lalonde suggested the Department of Manpower and Immigration could deny visas to Americans playing for any team not in an all-Canadian League. The Income Tax Act could be amended to prevent Canadian-based teams from

joining American leagues.⁶⁹ Furthermore, an Act of Parliament could be enacted to prohibit any foreign league from operating in Canada.⁷⁰ Lalonde had already been in contact with the Department of Justice, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Manpower and Immigration and had received support for his proposals. The memo stated that it was important that the government act swiftly and decisively.⁷¹ These dramatic proposals represented unprecedented Canadian federal government intervention into a professional sport.

Prime Minister Trudeau believed that protection of the CFL was no different than protecting other cultural areas such as film and publishing but was reluctant to pass legislation to ban an American sports league.⁷² Other members of Cabinet echoed his hesitancy.⁷³ Some opposed protecting a business dominated by American coaches, managers, and star players. The government had done nothing to protect the NHL from including more American teams or prevent Major League Baseball from including the Montreal Expos. Some Cabinet members supported the Bill because this was the only professional sporting league entirely in Canada. The history and tradition of the league were viewed by some as positives. The fact that it was a Canadian game resulted in support. While the CFL did feature rules mandating Canadian players, the rules of play were also different from the American game. The field was bigger which made the game more wide open, there were 12 players per-side, and the team with the ball had only three chances (downs) to make 10 yards to retain possession of the ball, which resulted in more passing. Differences in the timing rules made the game faster and differences in the kicking game resulted in more exciting, wide-open kick returns. Many felt the Canadian rules led to a more exciting game and of the nine major rule changes proposed for the WFL, five of them were rules in the Canadian game.⁷⁴ Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the feeling in Cabinet was that the loss of the CFL would be viewed as another example of a disappearing Canadian way of life.⁷⁵ Ultimately, Trudeau agreed with Lalonde that an Act of Parliament would be the best approach but hoped that the threat of legislation would be enough to frighten the WFL away.⁷⁶ The penalty for owners, operators and managers of non-compliant teams would be two years in jail.⁷⁷

Toronto Northmen team owner Johnny Bassett Jr. took his fight to the media. In a lengthy interview with the *Toronto Star*, Bassett threatened to sue the government.⁷⁸ Next he targeted the politicians.⁷⁹ John Bassett Sr., a very strong Conservative supporter, had run twice unsuccessfully for the party federally and his son stated the Liberals were targeting him for his father's political ties.⁸⁰ Johnny Bassett Jr. sent letters to people who had expressed interest in purchasing season tickets to his Toronto Northmen team, asking them to write to their Members of Parliament requesting support for the WFL in Canada. Bassett's lawyer Herb Solway sent a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau opposing the legislation and federal government interference. The letter stated that '[t]he supposed issue of nationalism is a bogus one. Football is no more Canadian culture than literature, poetry, ballet or music'.⁸¹ Solway's position was that Canadian football was not part of Canadian culture, while the federal Liberals were making exactly the opposite argument. The Liberal's view was consistent with years of Canadian cultural protectionism. Canadian football, like Canadian literature, poetry, ballet or music, was an important element of Canadian culture. As such, like those other forms of culture, it was worth protecting.

Solway sent a letter to every Member of Parliament arguing there was no need for legislation as Toronto could support two teams. He promised to support the CFL by blocking WFL expansion in Canada, preventing the WFL from being televised nationally in Canada, helping to fund the CFL, and honouring CFL player contracts. However, if legislation was introduced, the letter threatened that WFL teams would sign the CFL's top players.⁸²

In response to Solway's letter, a statement was released by the government. The statement read in part, 'we believe that Canadian football is a vital element in our culture, as are Canadian literature, poetry, ballet and music.'⁸³ The CFL responded with a fourteen-page letter of its own addressed to every Member of Parliament. Commissioner Jake Gaudaur effectively rebutted each of the points raised by the Northmen, but the heart of Gaudaur's argument was an appeal to patriotism.⁸⁴ He raised the contribution sport makes to nation-building and argued the CFL was 'unique Canadiana', controlled in Canada by Canadians, and featured teams in smaller Canadian centres, in contrast to the National Hockey League, which was only in a few larger Canadian cities and was controlled by American interests.⁸⁵ Canadian football was only played in Canada which resulted in support from many Canadians. Historically linking the state to Canadian football, he quoted Prime Ministers Diefenbaker and Pearson, who argued that Canadian football was an essential part of Canadian culture that united Canadians. He argued that, if unsuccessful, we 'will have lost 100 years of Canadian sporting tradition ... [t]he Grey Cup Game as one of Canada's greatest annual events will disappear with it, and whatever it has meant to Canada as an East-West unifying factor'.⁸⁶

While the nationalist argument was being made in support of the CFL, the league was not national in scope and demonstrated an obvious lack of inclusion. If Canadian football was to develop Canadian identity, it was an exclusive identity. Supporters of the league were primarily limited to English-speaking males in large urban centres. In Canadian football, exclusion of French Canadians, the working class, indigenous peoples, immigrants, and women helped produce an identity that was Anglophone, white, male and middle class.⁸⁷ While Atlantic Canada included teams and leagues at different levels, it was without team representation in the CFL. The demographic supporting Canadian football mirrored the segment of the population with cultural, economic, and political influence in Canadian society that was most concerned about fighting for a *Canadian* culture.

As the kick-off to a WFL season drew closer, the league had made headlines in Canada but needed to gain attention in the United States. The NFL's Miami Dolphins had won championships in 1973 and 1974. Three of the team's All-Star players, Larry Csonka, Paul Warfield, and Jim Kiick, stunned the sporting world when they signed three-year contracts worth a total of \$3 million with the Toronto Northmen, despite each having a year left on their NFL contracts. Csonka, earning \$60,000 in the NFL, signed a contract for \$450,000 per year, including a rent-free three-bedroom apartment in Toronto and a new luxury car each year.⁸⁸ *Time* magazine called the signing 'the deal that astonished the sportsworld'.⁸⁹ The move had provided the WFL with a measure of legitimacy. In response to the signings, a government spokesperson said the Bassetts are 'more stupid than we thought'.⁹⁰ Lalonde said after the signing, '[t]his more than ever strengthens my resolve to

force the Northmen out of Canada ... the Northmen will do all they can to damage the Canadian Football League'.⁹¹

The signing was designed not just to make headlines but was carefully orchestrated to pressure the government. Miami Dolphins owner Joe Robbie said that he was told that the players 'had to sign with Toronto immediately because the WFL is in serious trouble with the Canadian government, and [the team] wants to embarrass the government by getting the public against it'.⁹² Northmen General Manager Leo Cahill confirmed that signing the three superstars was intended to force the government to reconsider the legislation.⁹³ However, the contract signing seemed to galvanize more support for the Liberal government's position. Supportive editorials appeared in the national magazine *Maclean's*, the *Toronto Star*, and the national newspaper the *Globe and Mail*. Support was framed using nationalist platitudes: 'the CFL's Canadianness makes it worth preserving' and 'Grey Cup week is the nearest thing this often-disjointed country has to a unifying, national festival'.⁹⁴ Supportive editorials also appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*, *Windsor Star*, *London Free Press*, and *Ottawa Citizen*.⁹⁵ The *Toronto Sun* continued to be one of the lone dissenting voices as it featured an editorial opposing this policy. However, a column on the opposite page of the editorial expressed support for the Bill calling the Bassetts 'un-Canadian'.⁹⁶ Initially, the government had received support from the public in protecting the CFL; however public attitudes towards passing legislation were mixed. An *Ottawa Citizen* poll found two-thirds of respondents backed Lalonde, but a Gallup survey found that only 40 per cent supported the Liberal legislation and polls in Toronto showed a lack of support.⁹⁷ A slight majority of the Letters to the Editor in the Toronto papers opposed the proposed legislation. The divide between the two solitudes was evident again. Polls in Montreal suggested a lack of support for the legislation.⁹⁸ Lalonde was a guest on the national CBC radio show *Cross Country Checkup*, where almost two-thirds of callers supported the football bill. The CBC had organized a phone-in poll in conjunction with the radio show. More than 500 callers voted in just over an hour and seventy-one percent of callers were in favour of the legislation.⁹⁹

To date, the debate had focused on nationalism with economic factors surprisingly pushed aside. The CFL was economically fragile at best, but the argument could be made that it was worthy of federal protection because of the league's economic activity. Teams in the CFL employed thousands of people and contributed to the economy through employment and taxes, yet economics was never raised as a reason for protective legislation. The mantra had always been to save the league for reasons of national unity and cultural identity. An economic rationale for federal government support would have been in keeping with the government's cultural industrialism, the third phase in Edwardson's analysis of successive stages in Canadian cultural policy. For the government seeking public support, it may have been more effective to articulate this intervention as standing up to the Americans as opposed to subsidies for businesses. Now, in an attempt to gain support from the economic perspective, the Department of National Health and Welfare released evidence that the Toronto WFL team would result in a loss of more than one million dollars in tax revenue.¹⁰⁰ One last attempt was made to save the Northmen before the Bill was raised in the House of Commons. In his last-ditch effort Johnny Bassett Jr.

issued a press release inviting all CFL teams to join the WFL. This, he felt, was an opportunity for the Canadian league to increase its prestige by joining an American league. The idea was rejected.¹⁰¹

On April 10, 1974, Minister of Health and Welfare Marc Lalonde rose in the House of Commons and introduced Bill C-22: An Act Respecting Canadian Professional Football. The Bill emphasized the nation-building and cultural aspect of Canadian football. The final version of the Bill mandated an increase in the number of Canadian players on each team and called for CFL teams to be added in London, Halifax, Quebec City and Victoria.¹⁰² It also stated league games featuring a foreign team could not be played in Canada, and a Canadian team could not play a league game outside Canada. Punishment for non-compliance was to be a maximum of two years in jail for the franchise owner.¹⁰³

The Bill was proposed at a time of economic turbulence in Canadian society. The same day the Bill was introduced in the House, the highest ever peacetime increase in the Consumer Price Index was recorded. The country was plagued by inflation of 10.4 percent, gripped by a housing crisis that featured mortgage rates greater than 10 percent, and troubled by labour unrest that included numerous strikes or threats of job action by air traffic controllers, postal workers and fire-fighters. As the country was entering a time of economic turmoil, the federal government was preoccupied with professional football. There were seventeen items on the docket for debate, but the Liberals moved the Football Bill to highest priority.

On April 18th, during the second of the required three readings, Lalonde rose in the house. He spoke for more than one hour on the proposed Bill. Prime Minister Trudeau returned early from a vacation to support the Bill. Lalonde stated: '[i]n its own small way, this football controversy seems to epitomize the central dilemmas of our 100 years as a nation ... This, then, is one of our traditional dilemmas as Canadians: how to remain open to, but not dominated by, the influence of our great neighbour.'¹⁰⁴ Lalonde referred to the railway and broadcasting as examples of government intervention to create institutions and control or regulate foreign domination and implied that football was no different. Lalonde suggested that the reasons were straightforward. The CFL was the only wholly Canadian-controlled professional sports league; it consisted solely of Canadian teams, and the majority of its players were Canadian. It had deep roots in communities and demonstrated civic and provincial pride as a Canadian game. Furthermore, the Grey Cup was a key element in the creation of national unity and nation-building. 'Hockey got away from us a long time ago', he stated.¹⁰⁵

Lalonde wrapped Canadian football in the Maple Leaf flag and associated the Canadian Football League with historical events such as John A. Macdonald's National Policy and the building of the railway. During the debate, supportive MPs emphasized protecting Canadian culture. Canadian sovereignty, it was argued, was at stake. A vote against the Bill would be a vote against Canada. However, the opposition argued that the CFL was a business, not Canadian culture.

Subsequent debate meant that the House spent almost two hours discussing football on the first day. Parliamentarians were back the next day and debated the Bill for more than three hours. Despite social and economic concerns facing many Canadians, Parliamentarians were being inundated with mail on this issue.¹⁰⁶

During the second day's debates, the Bill was once again compared to historic government interventions in the areas of industry, communications, and culture in an effort to justify the government's role in seeking to protect Canadian sovereignty once more. The themes of the debate began to mirror those of historical debates on Canadian unity: West vs. East, the Rest of Canada vs. Quebec, and feelings of anti-Americanism.

On the third day of debate, parliamentarians debated football for another four hours. The delicate situation in Quebec was raised. It was suggested in the House by independent member from Quebec, Roch La Salle, that Lalonde would not have blocked a WFL franchise if the team was to play in Montreal.¹⁰⁷ René Matte, Social Credit MP from Québec, argued in the house that French-Canadians were not interested in football, so this was just an English waste of time.¹⁰⁸ For one of the only occasions in his career, the perfectly bilingual Lalonde made his introductory speech almost entirely in English, speaking mostly to English-Canada, and the west.

Many felt that devoting so much time to a debate on sport was absurd. Norval Horner, a Conservative MP from Saskatchewan, a province with an enthusiastic football culture, stated, '[t]he country is saddled with strikes. The railways are fifty-six million bushels behind in grain deliveries. People in the world are starving because we cannot deliver wheat ... and we talk about football.'¹⁰⁹ While the opposition Conservatives continued to raise the economic issues that were being ignored, the Liberals diverted attention to football.¹¹⁰

On the fourth day of debate, while the House voted in Ottawa, a rally organized by Toronto Fans for Football, a group supporting the WFL franchise, was held at Toronto City Hall. The group distributed bumper stickers that read 'Save the North(men)—Kick out Marxist government.'¹¹¹ For some, the debate was about an interventionist federal government imposing its will in a country that should value free enterprise.

The Liberals were in a minority situation, and support for the Bill in a House vote was not assured. On April 28th, at a time of economic dislocation, unprecedented inflation, and labour strife, the final vote on the Football Bill was 118 in favour and 92 opposed. With nineteen members voting in favour and three opposed, the NDP supported the Bill and the Liberal government. Except for one Toronto MP, all Liberals voted for the Bill, and two Conservatives voted in favour of the Bill. Despite the widespread belief, shared by Lalonde, that MPs from Montreal and Toronto would oppose the legislation, Toronto MPs voted fourteen to eight for the Bill, and all Montreal MPs voted in favour. The Bassetts were not in Canada for the vote. They were travelling to Buffalo, Louisville, Charlotte, Seattle and Memphis in search of a new home for their WFL football team.

The Election

One week after the vote on Lalonde's bill in the House of Commons, the Toronto Northmen administration announced that the WFL team was moving to Memphis. On May 7, Bill C-22 was approved by Committee. Just two days later, the government dissolved Parliament and called a general election. The bill had been approved by Committee but had not received Royal Assent and therefore was terminated with

the dissolution of Parliament. For it to be passed into law it would need to be reintroduced by the next government. The possibility of American professional football expanding into Canada still existed, but the bill was never reintroduced.¹¹² The immediate threat in the form of the Toronto Northmen had disappeared.

Some members of the media felt that pursuing such a contentious bill when the government was in a minority position was political suicide, but in the subsequent federal election, there was no backlash.¹¹³ The election took place two days before the Memphis Southmen won the WFL season's opening game in front of a crowd of more than 30,000. Like the Southmen, the Liberals were also victorious. The Liberals gained thirty-two seats and an increase of almost five percent of the vote to win a majority. West of Ontario, the number of elected Liberals increased from seven to thirteen. Even in Toronto, the Liberals won almost 80 percent of the seats. Voters did not penalize the party that saved the CFL.

The federal government introduced the most aggressive example of football protectionism during a time of great economic and social turmoil. Bill C-22 demonstrated that nationalism and national cultural institutions were prioritized over the relationship with Canada's southern neighbour. The debate it provoked demonstrated the ambiguities felt by many Canadians who, on the one hand, wanted to consume American culture – often viewed as superior, world-class – and, on the other hand, demanded protection for Canadian cultural institutions. The House supported the Bill to protect the Canadian border from another American incursion. There are several reasons why the federal Liberals moved to protect a professional sport that was reliant on American coaches and players.

Certainly, nationalism played a role. Centennial celebrations in 1967 and Expo '67 fed its growth, and Canadian nationalism continued to swell through the late 1960s and into the 1970s. Nationalists supported Canadian football because it had evolved over time along with the nation and developed a distinctly Canadian identity. The CFL reinforced the idea of nation better than any other sports league in Canada as it employed a Canadian content quota and was the lone professional sport with only Canadian teams. These facts strengthened the league's association with the nation when professional hockey seemingly had slipped away from Canadians. Canadian football, the Grey Cup and the CFL became symbols of the struggle for cultural sovereignty. These historical myths surrounding football proved very valuable to the government in maintaining public support for intervention. Long-existing fears of American economic and cultural imperialism motivated the government to act. The greater the impact of forces such as Americanization on communities, the more important national symbols and traditions become to counter these forces.

The rise in English-Canadian nationalism was accompanied by an increase in Quebec nationalism and concerns about national unity. As the separatist movement gained political traction in French-Quebec in the 1960s, the rejection of a Canadian sport could be seen as a distancing from the rest of Canada. While political separation was a complicated process, cultural distinctiveness was relatively easy to enact. Government intervention into professional football was seen as one way to unite French and English-speaking Canadians when this was becoming more difficult.

During the Second World War, the Canadian state grew in size and interventionist disposition as it directed the country's war effort. This disposition remained after

the war. During the 1960s, the federal government became even more active, introducing social programs that made Canada a welfare state. Then the government went further, introducing policies designed to protect Canadian culture and promote national identity and unity. In response to the national unity crisis, the government moved to provide more generous support to commercial cultural producers and implement or strengthen Canadian content quotas. This set the precedent for involvement in the private sector, including the CFL. This occurred when, on a global scale, government intervention into the area of professional sport was rare. However, support existed at that time for the government to intervene in the name of supporting a national institution while enjoying the political gains that could be realized by standing up against Americanization.

From 1972 to 1974, the minority Liberal government was dependent on the support of the left-of-centre NDP. It had been almost fifty years since a government tried to govern with such a small minority, and that government had lasted less than one year. Trudeau recognized that he needed to cooperate with the NDP or risk having his government fall. The NDP had nationalist sympathies and social democratic principles that encouraged an activist state. This situation resulted in the NDP pressing the Liberals to implement several forms of cultural and economic protectionism. As a result, the Liberals shifted to the left to maintain power and implemented some NDP proposals. The Liberals' 1974 football legislation could similarly be counted on to win the NDP's support. In addition, standing up to the Americans prior to an election may have garnered Liberal support from nationalists, just as supporting football could have been a strategy to increase votes on the football-mad Canadian prairies.

It is possible to see this intervention as a high-water mark of post-war interventionism, after which the Canadian government, beset by economic travails and shifts in the conventional wisdom about political economy, would never again risk expending political capital on a concern seemingly so peripheral to affairs of the state. The extent to which the government was prepared to go to prevent American football from crossing the border is surprising. Threatening to change laws affecting broadcasting, taxation, immigration, trade and commerce, and even threatening incarceration for association with an American league or team, represented much more drastic means of support than most forms of Canadian cultural protection.

Notes

1. Sean Fitz-Gerald, 'Lesser Known Bills', *National Post*, February 8, 2008.
2. In 1982, Canada amended and patriated its Constitution by transferring authority of the original constitution, the *British North America Act*, from the British Parliament to Canada's federal and provincial legislatures. This was an example of Canada seeking more independence from Britain.
3. A minority government in the parliamentary system is a government with more elected officials than the other political parties but without a majority of the seats in the house of parliament. Legislation can only be passed with the support of members of the legislature from other political parties. Minority governments tend to be less stable than majority governments as opposing members have a majority and can therefore bring down the government on a single issue and force a new election.

4. John Holmes, 'Canadian Foreign Policy', in *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 204; William Kymlicka, 'Being Canadian', *Government and Opposition* 38, no. 3 (July 2003): 357–85.
5. Gillian Poulter, *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Sport, Visual Culture, and Identity in Montreal: 1840–1885* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).
6. Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport 1807–1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987); Frank Cosentino, *The Grey Cup Years* (Toronto: Musson, 1969).
7. Ibid.
8. Sturrock outlines how the British game of rugby was immediately transformed into a Canadian game. See Douglas Sturrock, *It's a Try! The History of Rugby in Canada*. (Sturrock Consulting, 2018). See also Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport 1807-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987).
9. Cosentino, *Grey Cup Years*, 143.
10. The NFL draft meant that only the drafting team was allowed to sign a player, yet as many as a dozen teams in Canada could sign American players. Each Canadian team was limited to signing 6 Americans in 1950 but that number increased to 12 by the end of the decade resulting in increased demand. Mark Ford, '54, 40 or Fight', *The Coffin Corner* 24, no. 4 (2002): 1–4; Booton Herndon, 'Young Man, Go North!', *Sports Illustrated* (26 October 1959): 84–94.
11. Doug Oram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 92.
12. Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), Chapter 3.
13. Military conflicts during the 1770s and the War of 1812, as well as political disagreements including the Alaska Boundary dispute, fears of annexation and acculturation, and perceived overt militarism fed anti-American sentiment in Canada. See J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?: Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1997).
14. Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1957), 384.
15. Both Rao and Wright discuss this rise in nationalism. Govind Rao, 'The National Question in Canadian Development: Permeable Nationalism and the Ideological Basis for Incorporation into Empire', *Studies in Political Economy* 85 (Spring 2010): 149–78; Robert Wright, *Virtual Sovereignty: Nationalism, Culture and the Canadian Question* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2004).
16. Mary Vipond, 'The Nationalist Network: English Canada's Intellectuals and Artists in the 1920s', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 5 (Spring 1980): 32–52.
17. Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 186.
18. The author is indebted to Dr. Paul Litt for this interesting observation.
19. Bernard Ostry, *The Cultural Connection: An Essay on Culture and Governmental Policy in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).
20. Edwardson, *Canadian Content*.
21. Ibid., 18.
22. Marc Raboy, 'Pas de deux: Media Policy and Cultural Politics in Canada and Quebec', in *Media Policy, National Identity and Citizenry in Changing Democratic Societies*, ed. Joel Smith (Durham, NC: Canadian Studies Centre, Duke University Press, 1998), 96.
23. J.M. Bumsted, *The Peoples of Canada: A Post-Confederation History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 302.
24. Dwight Zakus, 'A Genesis of the Canadian Sport System in Pierre Trudeau's Political Philosophy and Agenda', *Sport History Review* 27, no. 1 (May 1996): 39.
25. Donald Macintosh, Tom Bedecki, and C.E.S. Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement since 1961* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).
26. Ibid.

27. Canada, *Report of the Task Force Report on Sport for Canadians* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1969), 5.
28. *Ibid.*, 22.
29. Bruce Kidd and John Macfarlane, *The Death of Hockey* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), 17–19.
30. The three Canadian-based teams were the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Montreal Canadiens, and the Vancouver Canucks.
31. Sean Hayes, 'Blue Jay Fever and other Sporting Formations of Canadian Nationalism' (MA Thesis, Carleton University, 1994), 139; John Valentine, 'Football, Nationalism, and Protectionism: The Federal Defence of the Canadian Football League' (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2016), 10.
32. Cosentino, *Grey Cup Years*, 236.
33. Robert Stebbins, 'Ambivalence at the Fifty-Five-Yard-Line: Transformation and Resistance in Canadian Football', in *The Beaver Bites Back? American Popular Culture in Canada*, ed. David H. Flaherty and Frank E. Manning (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993). For specific examples see Ted Reeve, 'They're at it Again!', *Maclean's*, September 15, 1931: 12, 42; Joe Krol as told to Allan Acres, 'They're Ruining Rugby', *Maclean's*, September 15, 1949: 13, 26; Hec Creighton as told to Trent Frayne, 'It's Time to Bring Back Canadian Football', *Maclean's*, November 1, 1954: 25.
34. Bruce Kidd, 'The Continentalization of Canadian Sport: Part 1: Hockey', *Canadian Dimension*, July 1969: 6–9; Bruce Kidd, 'The Continentalization of Canadian Sport. Part II: Football', *Canadian Dimension*, October/November 1969: 48–50; Bruce Kidd, 'Remember When Hockey was Canadian?', *Weekend Magazine*, March 20, 1971: 16–21. Years later, Kidd wrote about the role the Americanization of sport played in the disintegration of English-speaking Canada as a distinct community, see Bruce Kidd, 'Sport, Dependency and the Canadian State', in *Sport, Culture, and the Modern State*, ed. Hart Cotelon and Richard Gruneau (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 289.
35. According to the US Census, the 26 NFL teams in 1970 were located in cities with an average population of 1.5 million people, which is greater than the population of Montreal at 1.2 million which was the largest city with a CFL team. According to the Canada Year Book, the 9 CFL teams played in cities with an average population in 1970 of 440,00, less than one-third the population of the average NFL city.
36. Maggie Siggins, *Bassett: John Bassett's Forty Years in Politics, Publishing, Business and Sports* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Limited, 1979), 114.
37. John Munro, 'Problems facing the Canadian Football League and its future', Cabinet Conclusions, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6340, 1966. Library and Archives Canada.
38. David Naylor and Stephen Brunt, 'Touch down in T.O.', *Globe and Mail*, October 27, 2007.
39. Excluding the 1946–47 Toronto Huskies that played for one season in the Basketball Association of America.
40. Jim Proudfoot, 'Montreal Fans Okay U.S. Team', *Toronto Star*, November 29, 1972. The *Montreal Star* cites a survey from *Le Journal de Montreal* suggesting 95 percent of French-speaking football fans wanted an NFL team for Montreal. See John Robertson, 'CFL Stamped Minor League', *Montreal Star*, April 4, 1974.
41. Richard Gwyn, *The Northern Magus* (Markham, Ontario: PaperJacks, 1981), 148–9.
42. Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, April 18, 1974, 1565; Jake Gaudaur, *1973 Canadian Football League Annual Report*, 1974, 111.
43. Gaudaur, *1973 CFL Annual Report*, 113.
44. Bob Pennington, 'Two CFL teams in Toronto', *Sports International*, September 1974, 11; Denis Crawford, *The Life and Teams of Johnny F. Bassett: Maverick Entrepreneur of North American Sports* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Publishers 2021). As owner of the Toronto Argonauts, Bassett Sr. had territorial rights to the city of Toronto

- and had to waive these rights before another team would be allowed to be based in Toronto. In 1974 he refused to allow a second CFL team in the Toronto market, and then shortly after permitted a WFL team owned by his son.
45. In 1964, equalization payments were implemented to redistribute wealth from more financially successful teams, usually in larger markets, to the weaker teams, often in smaller markets.
 46. Canada, Health and Welfare Canada, 'Information Kit on the Canadian Football League - World Football League Controversy', AMICUS No. 16251714, Lalonde, 'Speech', 11–3.
 47. Canadian content regulations in broadcasting had been increased, a national film development corporation established, and protection for Canadian magazines and newspapers introduced.
 48. Gaudaur, *1973 CFL Annual Report*, 113.
 49. Jack Sullivan, *The Grey Cup Story* (Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1974), 199.
 50. Doug Fisher, 'Politics in Canadian football', *Windsor Star*, February 26, 1974.
 51. Canada, Lalonde, 'Speech'. Lalonde's appeal to nostalgia and tradition demonstrates the attitudes often associated with the CFL that have been explored by: C.G. Greenham, "'Super Bore": The Canadian Media and the Grey Cup-Super Bowl Comparison', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 34, no. 1–2 (2017): 65–80; and Ben Andrews and C. G. Greenham, "'National Responsibility": A History of Willful Nostalgia in the Canadian Football League', *Journal of Sport History* 47, no. 3 (2020): 226–42.
 52. The telegrams are contained in Canada, Health and Welfare Canada, Information Kit on the Canadian Football League – World Football League Controversy, AMICUS No. 16251714, 18 March 1974, Lalonde, 'Briefing Kit'.
 53. Jeffrey Goodman, *Huddling Up: The Inside Story of the Canadian Football League* (Don Mills: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1982), 166.
 54. John Gray, 'It would kill CFL Marc Lalonde claims', *Toronto Star*, February 22, 1974.
 55. 'Threat to Canadian Football', *Toronto Star*, February 23, 1974.
 56. Geoffrey Stevens, 'No impromptu outburst', *Globe and Mail*, February 23, 1974; Christie Blatchford, 'The Winter of Football', *Globe and Mail*, February 26, 1974; 'Hold that Line', *Edmonton Journal*, February 27, 1974; 'Football Tariff', *Ottawa Journal*, February 27, 1974; 'Political Football', *Montreal Gazette*, February 23, 1974.
 57. CBC Radio, *Cross Country Checkup*, March 17, 1974.
 58. 'Fans back Lalonde in survey', *Hamilton Spectator*, March 15, 1974; Lorne Harasen letter to Marc Lalonde, March 28, 1974, Fitness and Amateur Sport – Football – General, RG29, Vol. 1760, file 15-6-11 pt 3, Library & Archives Canada.
 59. 'Running Scared', *Toronto Sun*, February 25, 1974. John Bassett Sr. owned the *Toronto Telegram* newspaper until it folded in 1971. After it folded, many *Telegram* employees found employment at the *Sun*. See Charles Templeton, *Charles Templeton: An Anecdotal Memoir* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983), 172.
 60. Laurent Laplante, 'Jusqu'où ira M. Marc Lalonde?', *Le Devoir*, February 26, 1974.
 61. Eaton Howitt, 'A Disappointed Bassett offers Argos for Sale', *Toronto Sun*, February 22, 1974.
 62. Milt Dunnell, 'Johnny F. Out, Joe's Deal off', *Toronto Star*, January 22, 1974.
 63. Canadian Press, 'Vancouver-backed Calgary group seeks franchise in WFL', *Globe and Mail*, March 2, 1974; Dick Beddoes, 'Jake's Ottawa pitch', *Globe and Mail*, April 18, 1974.
 64. Canadian Press, 'Bassett fails to sway', *Globe and Mail*, March 13, 1974.
 65. Jake Gaudaur, *1970 CFL Canadian Football League Annual Report*, 1971, 5.
 66. 'Playing a Dangerous Game', *Engraved on a Nation*, TSN, Toronto. Broadcast date October 26, 2012.
 67. Bruce Cheadle, 'Feds Once Ready to Protect CFL', *Edmonton Journal*, November 16, 1995.
 68. Cabinet Documents, 11 March 1974, 772–69, 1974, RG2-2005 0418, Vol. 6440, Box 4, File 165–74, Library & Archives Canada.

69. The Income Tax Act could be changed to deter the attractiveness of investment for any franchise other than one in an all-Canadian league and deny certain expenses from being tax-deductible by owners of a Canadian-based team in a non-Canadian league.
70. Cabinet Documents, 11 March 1974, 120–67, 1974, RG2-B-2 2005 0418, Vol. 6440, Box 4, File 165–74, Library & Archives Canada.
71. Ibid.
72. Trudeau felt that cultural policy should promote Canadian offerings instead of banning foreign culture. Cabinet Meetings, March 14, 1974, ‘Protection of Canadian Football’, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6436, Library & Archives Canada.
73. Cabinet Meetings, March 21, 1974, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6436; Simon Reisman, Cabinet Document, 12 March 1974, 165/74, RG41-A-V-2, Vol. 872, File 1, 2, PG 7-6-1 Pt 2, 1971-1978, Library & Archives Canada.
74. Crawford, *The Life and Teams of Johnny F. Bassett*, 24.
75. Cabinet Meetings, March 14, 1974, G2, Privy Council Office, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6436, Library & Archives Canada. This lamenting the loss of a way of life is consistent with Greenham, ‘Super Bore’ and Andrews and Greenham, ‘National Responsibility’.
76. Privy Council Office, 1974/03/14, RG2, Series A-5-a, Volume 6436, ‘Protection of Canadian football’, Library & Archives Canada.
77. Cheadle, ‘Feds Once Ready’.
78. John Gault, “I’m going to fight,” says Bassett ‘The Little Guy’, *Toronto Star*, March 16, 1974.
79. Sullivan, *The Grey Cup Story*, 203.
80. Siggins, *Bassett*, 232.
81. Letter from Herb Solway, lawyer for Johnny Bassett, to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, March 29, 1974, Office of the Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare – Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch – Sports – Football, 1974/03-1975/01, RG29, Vol. 1571, Library & Archives Canada.
82. Ibid.
83. Canada, Health and Welfare Canada, ‘Briefing Kit’.
84. Beddoes, ‘Jake’s Ottawa pitch’.
85. Peter White, ‘Gaudaur Shows Restrained Satisfaction As House Approves Bill In Principle’, *Globe and Mail*, April 24, 1974.
86. Canadian Press, ‘Gaudaur Appeals to MPs to Protect CFL and “100 Years of Canadian Tradition”’, *Globe and Mail*, April 17, 1974.
87. Alan Listiak, “‘Legitimate deviance’ and social class: bar behaviour during Grey Cup Week”, *Sociological Focus* 7, no. 3 (August 1974): 13–44.
88. Mark Speck, *And a Dollar Short: The Empty Promises, Broken Dreams and Somewhat-Less-Than-Comic Misadventures of the 1974 Florida Blazers* (Haworth, NJ: St. Johann Press, 2011), 65.
89. ‘The Defection Deal’, *Time*, April 15, 1974, 68.
90. ‘Sleeper Play’, *Toronto Sun*, April 2, 1974.
91. Dick Beddoes, ‘By Dick Beddoes’, *Globe and Mail*, April 1, 1974.
92. Ibid.
93. Canadian Press, ‘Dolphins know WFL for real’, *Montreal Star*, April 1, 1974.
94. ‘Holding the line with Marc Lalonde’, *Maclean’s*, May 1974, 4; ‘Preserving the CFL’, *Globe and Mail*, April 9, 1974; ‘Blowing the Whistle on U.S. Football’, *Toronto Star*, April 11, 1974.
95. Tim Burke, ‘Three Cheers for Marc Lalonde’, *Montreal Gazette*, April 4, 1974; ‘WFL challenge defies Ottawa’, *Windsor Star*, April 2, 1974; ‘Lalonde set to return the kick’, *London Free Press*, April 2, 1974; ‘Keep it Canadian’, *Ottawa Citizen*, April 4, 1974.
96. ‘Sleeper Play’, *Toronto Sun*; True Davidson, *Toronto Sun*, April 2, 1974.

97. 'No to WFL', *Ottawa Citizen*, April 4, 1974; Gallup Canada Poll, Poll #365, May 1974; 'Northmen favored in poll', *Toronto Sun*, March 21, 1974; Dick Beddoes, 'By Dick Beddoes', *Globe and Mail*, April 27, 1974.
98. J. Pezzola, 'West will get best of Lalonde's decision', *Montreal Star*, April 2, 1974.
99. CC Radio. *Cross Country Checkup*. March 17, 1974.
100. Office of the Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare – Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch – Sports – Football, 1974/03-1975/01, RG29, Vol. 1571, newspaper article entitled 'Taxpayers Losers in Northmen deal', Library & Archives Canada.
101. 'CFL invited to join WFL: Bassett', *Globe and Mail*, April 18, 1974.
102. Despite these intentions expansion was never achieved and the percentage of Canadian players was not increased.
103. Canada, Bill C22: An Act Respecting Canadian Professional Football, 5. American based franchises in Sacramento, Baltimore, Shreveport, Las Vegas, San Antonio, Birmingham, and Memphis existed in the CFL from 1993 to 1995.
104. Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, April 18, 1974, 1562.
105. *Ibid.*, 1564.
106. Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, April 19, 1974, 1585.
107. *Ibid.*, 1602.
108. Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, April 22, 1974, 1633.
109. Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, April 19, 1974, 1594.
110. *Ibid.*, 1594; 1599. I am appreciative of an anonymous reviewer for this point.
111. Len Coates, 'Football Bill Opponents Held to a Draw at Forum', *Toronto Star*, April 25, 1974.
112. Privy Council Office, February 27, 1975, RG 19 – Vol 5798 File 5942-05. However, Cabinet did agree that Lalonde should meet with officials from the NFL and WFL to reaffirm the government's position.
113. John Gray, 'Football May Split Parties', *Toronto Star*, April 10, 1974.

Disclosure Statement

There is no potential competing interest to be reported by the author.

Notes on Contributor

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