



A Brief History of Daylight Saving Time

November 1st marks the end of Daylight Saving Time. Daylight Saving time (DST) has a long and winding history, and there is some argument over who invented the modern-day version.

Ancient civilizations practiced a form of it by adjusting their activities according to the sun. Benjamin Franklin mused the idea in a 1784 satirical essay, "An Economical Project for Diminishing the Cost of Light". George Vernon Hudson, New Zealand entomologist and astronomer, published a paper on seasonal time change in 1895. William Willett, an English builder conceived it in 1905 and published a pamphlet at his own expense, "The Waste of Daylight".

A politician took up Willett's proposal and in 1908 introduced a Daylight Saving Bill in the House of Commons, it faced strong opposition by many people, including farmers, and did not pass. DST was eventually introduced via the Summertime Act 1916, a year after Willett's death. According to the Curator of the Royal Observatory:

"When the clocks first changed in 1916, there were concerns that delicate striking clocks could be damaged by people trying to force the hands back an hour. Official warnings and guidelines were printed in newspapers and magazines to reduce the number of clock 'casualties'.

During the First World War, Germany and Austria-Hungary were already using DST as a wartime measure to conserve coal. It was eventually adopted by other European allies. After the war ended, many countries repealed the law, but recognizing the energy saving benefits, returned to

it during the Second World War.

During peacetime, DST has been enacted, repealed and replaced around the world. Although 40% of countries use DST, arguments to abolish or maintain it continue to this day.

DST came to Canada in 1908 by way of Port Arthur and Fort William (now Thunder Bay). At the time they were in the Central Time Zone. A local businessman suggested adopting Eastern time so local children could enjoy the extra hour of sun. Port Arthur adopted it in 1908 and Fort William followed suit in 1910.

In 1917 The Daylight Saving Act was enacted by the Dominion of Newfoundland, making it the first jurisdiction in North America to do so. The United States adopted it a year later. Six Canadian cities marked it prior to 1918: Brandon, Winnipeg, Halifax, Hamilton, Montreal, and St. John's.

Canada adopted it nationwide in 1918, and most provinces observe it. Saskatchewan uses Standard time year round and in 2019, British Columbia introduced legislation to make it permanent. The Yukon was the first region to switch to year-round DST in 2020.

The Ontario government is working to make DST permanent. [Bill 214, The Time Amendment Act](#), unanimously passed the second reading, however it can only become permanent if Quebec and New York State agree to it.

Will Ontario make Daylight Saving time permanent? We shall have to wait and see. For now, set your clocks back, check your smoke detector, and enjoy the extra hour of sleep!