

Victoria Day Canadian Statutory Holidays



On 29 May 1842, Victoria was riding in a carriage along The Mall, London, when John Francis aimed a pistol at her but the gun did not fire; he escaped. The following day, Victoria drove the same route, though faster and with a greater escort, in a deliberate attempt to provoke Francis to take a second aim and catch him in the act. As expected, Francis shot at her, but he was seized by plain-clothes policemen, and convicted of high treason. On 3 July, two days after Francis's death sentence was commuted to [transportation for life](#), John William Bean also tried to fire a pistol at the Queen, but it was loaded only with paper and tobacco and had too little charge. Edward Oxford felt that the attempts were encouraged by his acquittal

in 1840. Bean was sentenced to 18 months in jail. In a similar attack in 1849, unemployed Irishman William Hamilton fired a powder-filled pistol at Victoria's carriage as it passed along [Constitution Hill, London](#). In 1850, the Queen did sustain injury when she was assaulted by a possibly insane ex-army officer, [Robert Pate](#). As Victoria was riding in a carriage, Pate struck her with his cane, crushing her bonnet and bruising her forehead. Both Hamilton and Pate were sentenced to seven years' transportation.

Melbourne's support in the House of Commons



weakened through the early years of Victoria's reign, and in the [1841 general election](#) the Whigs were defeated. Peel became prime minister, and the [ladies of the bedchamber](#) most associated with the Whigs were replaced. In 1845, Ireland was hit by a [potato blight](#). In the next four years over a million Irish people died and another million emigrated in what became known as the [Great Famine](#). In Ireland, Victoria was labelled "The Famine Queen". She personally donated £2,000 to the [British Relief Association](#), more than any other individual famine relief donor, of the 19th century.

By 1846, Peel's ministry faced a crisis involving the repeal of the [Corn Laws](#). Many Tories—by then known also as [Conservatives](#)—were opposed to the repeal, but