

## *Aboriginal Status in Canada ~1900*

- government's goal was **assimilation**
  - abandon one's culture
  - adopt European living, language, and culture
- **reserves** were established
  - treaties were forced by aboriginal economic status
    - between 1880 and 1885, approximately 3000 plains First Nations died of starvation
    - were once the majority of the population, but by 1880 only constituted 3% of the population
      - disease (TB, smallpox, influenza, etc)
      - alcohol dependency
      - malnutrition
  - settle in one place
  - encouraged to farm (move from nomadic/seasonal life to sedentary)
    - given marginal land
    - often promised farming supplies would not arrive
    - no knowledge of farming and sparse and erratic training provided
      - set up for failure, although mostly unintentional
- **residential schools**
  - children taken away for education
  - forced to speak English
  - many were victims of physical and sexual abuses
  - families split up

- cultural practices banned
  - end of the **Potlatch** and Sundance
  - gov't contradicted own policies
    - wanted assimilation, but put people on reserves
  - forced elective councils on native populations
    - removal of the roles of women (clan mothers sometimes had role in selecting chiefs)
    - role of Elders greatly diminished
  
- first nations protest
  - **Allied Tribes of Canada** formed in 1927
    - goal was to protect hunting and fishing rights in BC
      - disbanded by the CDN gov't
  - relief organizations during the Great Depression assumed native ability to live off the land, despite protests to the contrary
  
- in lieu of all this, First Nations in Canada were eager to fight for their country in WWI (will learn about later)
  - First Nations had proud histories dealing with warfare
    - Francis Pegamegabow was Canada's foremost sniper in WWI (killed 500+)
    - Tommy Longboat was a marathon athlete who was injured 4 times at the front as a messenger runner
  - still were not treated as equals ☹

## *Immigration (1890-1914)*

- most European immigrants had easy access to Canada
- **Clifford Sifton** relaxed policies beyond the British
  - aggressive advertising in Europe (overheads)
  - *"I think that a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations with a stout wife and a half-dozen children is good quality"*
- with a lot of people, you could increase your country's prosperity
- encouraged settlement in the west
  - settlement actually gave Canada a claim to the land
  - Vancouver Island had only 3000 people living on it
  - no info for Fort Nelson, but we do know that over half were killed by a San Francisco gold miner with smallpox
- settlement generated business for railway and customers for eastern businesses
- cheap labour
- most people stayed in Canada vs. moving to the States
- there were some downsides...
  - ethnocentricity in the British
    - belief that all other races of people were inferior
      - threatened by different cultures and languages
      - immigrants became targets of discrimination
    - Sifton only wanted immigrants who were white and who could pass easily for "Canadian"
      - Germans were invited, but Greeks or Italians were not invited due to their skin tone

- Francophones worried about the population shift
  - if Montreal used to have 200,000 people (mostly Canadien) and 50,000 British immigrants get off the boats in one year and stay, soon the French will be a minority
- question of “melting pot” vs. pluralism
- in British Columbia:
  - increasing Chinese head tax (S.S.10...)
    - eventually turns into the Chinese Exclusion Act where all Chinese immigrants were denied
  - Japanese immigration severely restricted after 1907 race riots in Vancouver
    - **Asiatic Exclusion League** organized a 30,000 person “meeting” (lynch mob?)
      - feared Asians were taking jobs and destroying morals
  - total ban on East Indian immigration was imposed
    - created a law for immigration known as “**Continuous Passage**”
      - said that any immigrants from India had to come to Canada non-stop to be allowed in
      - simply a law to exclude – they honestly believed that no one could do it... well...
    - Sikhs on the **Komagata Maru** left India and followed the rules for continuous passage
      - arrived in Vancouver and was surrounded by police boats
      - stayed in Vancouver’s harbour for two months and was forced to turn around and go back to Asia
      - why?
        - simply, a “white Canada” did not want minorities in their country