

# **Challenges Faced by Aboriginal Peoples in Canada 20<sup>th</sup> Century Responses**

**Chapter One Notes for SS11 Students**  
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# Cultures Make Contact

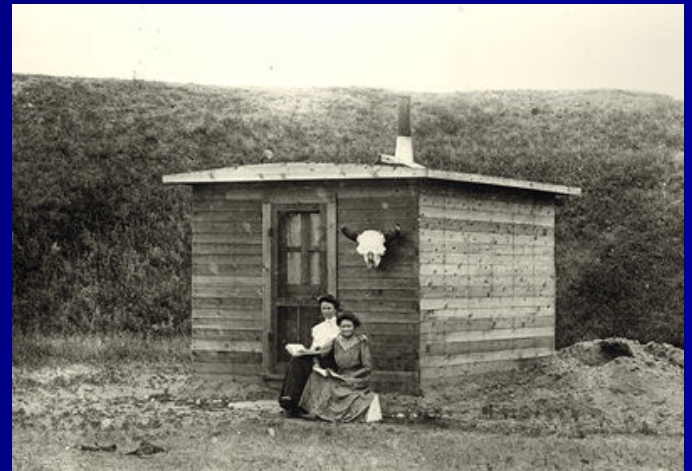
- The British North America Act created a confederation of four colonies in 1867. This confederation was named CANADA.
- Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario were the 'original four' - 1867.
- Manitoba joined the confederation in 1870.
- British Columbia joined Canada in 1871.
- Prince Edward Island joined Canada in 1873.
- Alberta and Saskatchewan joined Canada in 1905.
- Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949.
- Important Note: The BNA Act gave jurisdiction over Native lands to the Federal Government.

# Cultures Make Contact

- Many different Aboriginal societies, e.g., Maritime Indians, Great Lakes/St. Lawrence peoples, Plains Indians, Woodlands Indians, Coast Indians, Inuit, Métis lived in 'Canadian' territory.
- Indian societies used 50 separate native languages, and supported a wide range of belief systems, art, and technology.
- White traders appeared in the 1700's, with horses, ironware, and guns.
- Indians and traders began to exploit fur resources.
- Habitual economies experienced change, e.g., lower numbers of buffalo on the Prairies as a result of increasing white settlement.

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- Federal Indian Act passed in 1876.
- Treaties were made to open up the land for non-Indian settlement.
- Indians gave up land ownership rights.
- In return, Indians received tracts of land (reserves), money, gifts, services, and annual payments.



# Cultures Make Contact

- Eastern Treaties:

- > Peace and Friendship Treaties 1725-1779
- > Upper Canada Land Surrenders 1764-1862
- > Robinson-Huron 1850
- > Robinson-Superior 1850
- > Treaty 3 – 1873
- > Treaty 9 - 1905/1906
- > Williams Treaties 1923
- > Treaty 9 - 1929/1930

- Western Treaties:

- > Treaty 1 - 1871
- > Treaty 2 - 1871
- > Treaty 4 - 1874
- > Treaty 5 - 1875
- > Treaty 5 - 1908
- > Treaty 6 - 1889
- > Treaty 7 - 1877  
(Completes the take-over of prairie land from native people)
- > Treaty 8 - 1899
- > Treaty 10 - 1906
- > Treaty 11 - 1921

# Cultures Make Contact

- The impact of European civilization on aboriginal communities all but overwhelming.
- Disease caused great suffering, e.g., smallpox epidemics cut the Indian population in B.C. from 70, 000 in 1835 to 28,000 in 1885.
- Alcohol (an early trade item) contributed to many aboriginal deaths.
- The impact of inter-tribal warfare also intensified, as a result of the new availability of firearms.
- During the period 1870 to 1885 the native majority on the Canadian Plains had become a dominated minority.

# Religious Competition

- Native religion saw all living things as spirits, and that all things were created with a purpose by the Great Spirit.
- Shamans and missionaries competed for influence.
- Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries encouraged native families to become 'civilized', i.e., agriculture, literacy, European forms of dress, manners, medical practices, and household customs.
- Missionaries were the agents of cultural change for aboriginals; they undermined the natives' way of life.
- But missionaries also tried to protect natives from the worst aspects of white civilization, including disease and alcohol.

# The Indian Act/Lands Act

- Under the Indian Act the Indian agent had dictatorial control over reserves.
- Christian churches had similar control over reserve schools.
- State and church worked to eliminate the native way of life and replace it with a civilization they saw as superior.
- Residential schools, reserves, and enforced farming were part of a policy of assimilation.
- The Dominion Lands Act of 1872 allowed settlers who were male, 21 or older, or the heads of families to apply for a homestead of 160 acres upon payment of a \$10 registration fee. After three years of residence, settlers received title to the land.



# Changes in Indian Life

- Adjustment to a 'money economy'.
- Residential Schools separated Indian children from their parents.
- Residential schools banned use of tribal languages.
- Practice of native religious rituals was banned.
- Native children were taught to renounce their culture and history.
- Some Indian children did manage to make the adjustment to the 'new life'.

# Aboriginal Peoples

- Most Aboriginal people lived on reserves by the 1880's.
- Some reserve land transferred to homesteaders, miners.
- Native people often received poor land that was bad for farming.
- Disease, Residential Schools.
- Assimilation: Aboriginals expected to become 'European'.