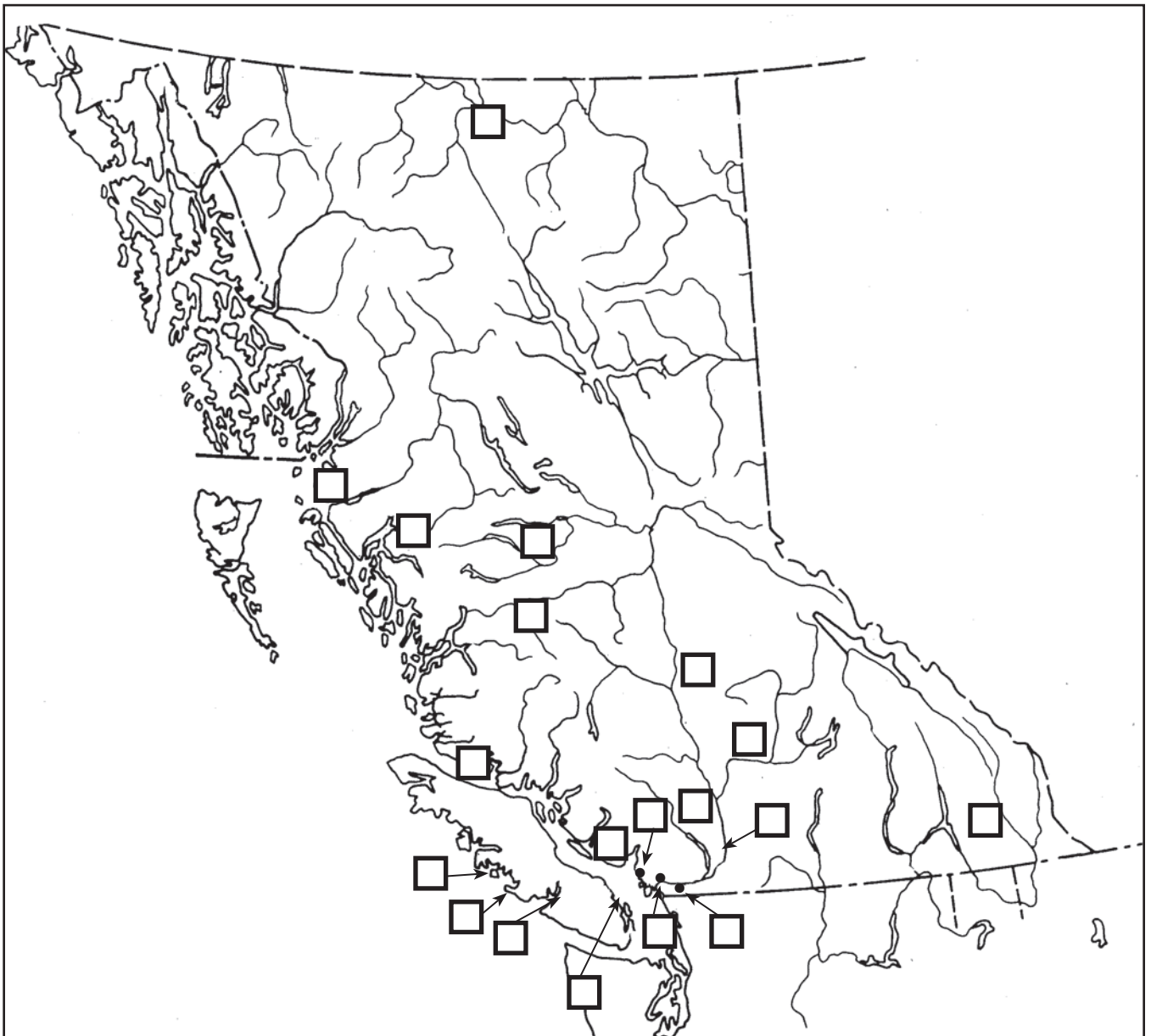


What Do You Know About Indian Residential Schools?

See what you know about Indian Residential Schools before we learn more about them.

1. What were Indian Residential Schools?
2. Why were First Nations children sent to Indian Residential Schools?
3. Who paid for the schools?
4. Who ran the schools?
5. What were some of the experiences of children at these schools?
6. When did the last Indian Residential School close?
7. What were some of the effects of Indian Residential Schools on First Nations people?
8. Why do you think it might be important to learn about Indian Residential Schools?

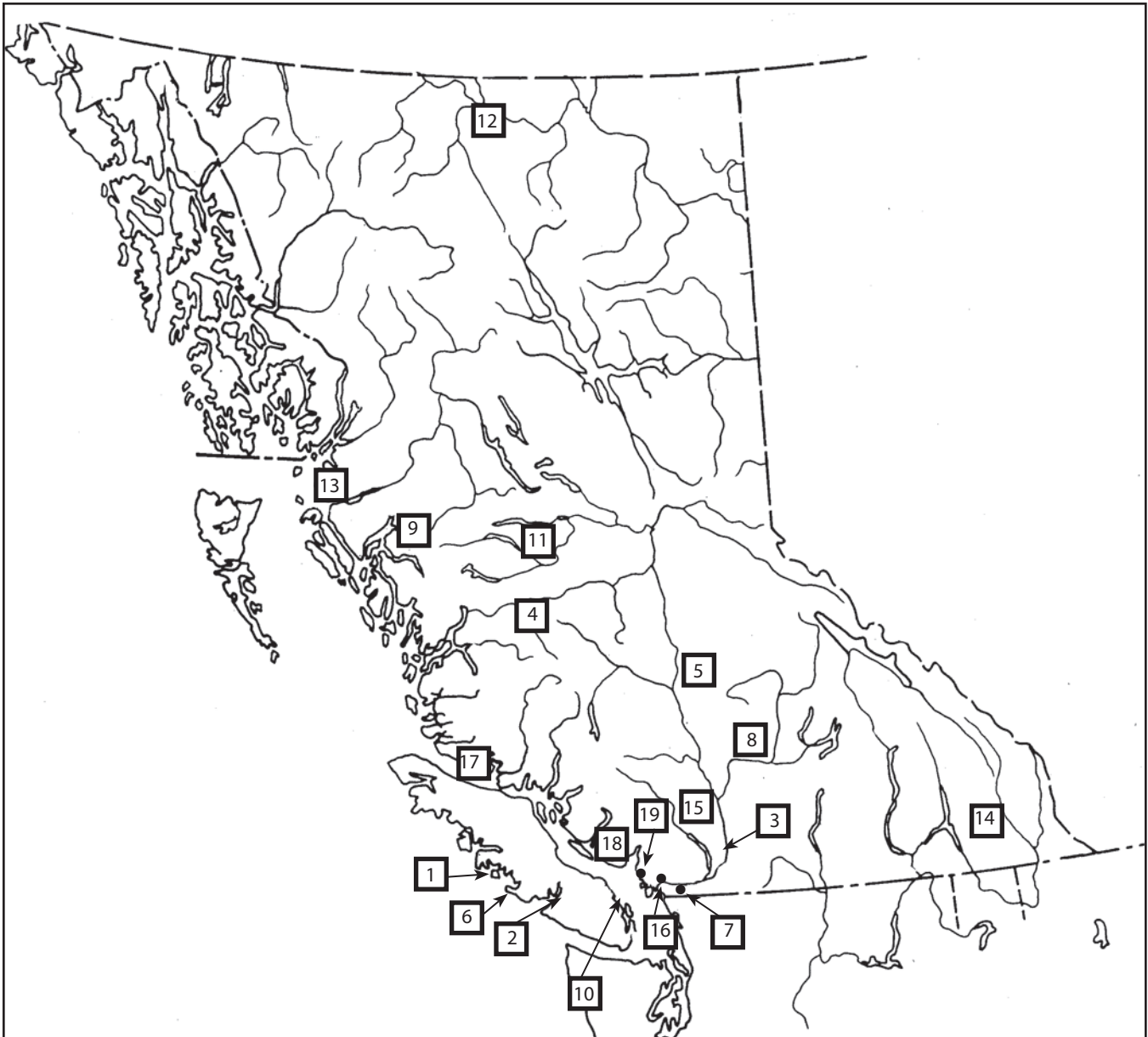
British Columbia Indian Residential Schools



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Ahousat / Flores Island (P/UC 1901-1939) | 11 Lejac (RC 1910-1976) |
| 2 Alberni (M/UC 1891-1973) | 12 Lower Post (RC 1940-1975) |
| 3 All Hallows, Yale (A 1900-1918) | 13 Port Simpson / Crosby Home for Girls (M/UC 1874-1948) |
| 4 Anahim Lake Dormitory (1968-1977) | 14 St. Eugene's / Kootenay (RC 1898-1970) |
| 5 Cariboo / St. Joseph's / William's Lake (RC 1886-1981) | 15 St. George's, Lytton (A 1901-1979) |
| 6 Christie / Clayquot / Kakawis (RC 1900-1983) | 16 St. Mary's, Mission (RC 1863-1985) |
| 7 Coqualeetza (M/UC 1888-1940) | 17 St. Michael's, Alert Bay (A) |
| 8 Kamloops (RC 1890-1978) | 18 Sechelt (RC 1912-1975) |
| 9 Elizabeth Long Memorial, Kitimaat (M/UC 1893-1941) | 19 St. Paul's, North Vancouver (RC 1889-1958) |
| 10 Kuper Island (RC 1890-1975) | |

A = Anglican Church M/UC = Methodist, later United Church
 P/UC = Presbyterian, later United Church RC = Roman Catholic Church

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THE PROBLEM WITH DAY SCHOOLS: AN INDIAN AGENT’S VIEW FROM 1911

This is part of a report written by Thomas Deasy to the Superintendent of Indian Education in 1911. Deasy was the Indian Agent at Masset, Haida Gwaii from 1910 - 1924.

In compliance with your instructions, I have the honour to submit the following with reference to the Haida nation. It has been my good fortune to spend over half a century in British Columbia, and, during that long period, the Indian and his ways received a great deal of attention. From the Kootenay country, to the coast of Washington, I have seen the Indian in his native home. For many years after Confederation, the majority of Indians knew little of our ways, and the endeavours to uplift them. Some, even today, take little heed of the influences at work for their betterment, choosing rather to walk in the footsteps of their forefathers.

Not so the Haidas. We have men in the Haida nation who can take their places in any community. They received an education at the industrial schools fostered by the government. We have five stores on the Massett reserve all owned by members of the band. One of the Indians built a schooner, navigated it for years, carrying the mails to the islands. A number speak English fluently and are endeavouring to aid their brethren. We have town councils, elected as is done in any of the cities. All are ready and will to “advance.” So much for the grown members of the two communities [Masset and Skidegate].

We now come to the children of to-day and the means of making them the Haida nation of to-morrow. Few are receiving the education that their fathers obtained. The industrial and boarding schools are too far away from the Queen Charlotte Islands. Indians, like other people, desire to keep in touch with their children. The educated Indians we have on our reserves were, in a majority of cases, raised in schools near their homes. The members of the Massett band went to Metlakahtla school, which, I understand, has been closed. The Skidegates go to Coqualeetza, which is a great distance from Queen Charlotte Islands. There are no industrial or boarding

schools in this vicinity.

When I visit the Indian day schools, knowing that all the opportunity they have to grow up and meet the thousands who are pouring into our country, is the few hours teaching they receive for five days of the week, I feel that the Indian cannot take his place in the years to come. The people of these reserves go away to the fishing grounds and the canneries during the summer months. Their schools are then closed and what they learn during the few short months of the winter is not sufficient to place them on an equality with their white brethren in an educational way.

When a white child goes to his home, the father and mother talk to him in the language that he will use through his life. His surroundings are the best. Everything tends to advance the white boy. Not so the Indian. Four hours at school – twenty hours with his parents – talking the Haida language and continuing in the ways of the Indian. Five months at the day school, seven months wandering round with the parents, in the canneries and towns, learning nothing that is useful, and seeing a great deal that the young should avoid.

We must give the clergy of these reserves great credit for the manner in which they have Christianized the Indians. In the few years the missionaries have been with the Indians the results are astonishing. From heathendom to what the Indians are today has been more rapid than with any other people. It is the same wherever I have been throughout the province. The missionaries are eager to teach the gospel to the Indian; the native is willing to learn.

The day school, as we have it on our reserves, will never place the coming generation on the same level with those who received their education in the industrial and boarding schools. It is “results” we are all

looking for. The effect of education upon reserve life has been the advancement of our Indians almost beyond comprehension. The middle-aged Indians, who were pupils in the industrial schools, are foremost in all good work on the reserves.

It would add most materially in this province, where the reserves are the best portions of land for agricultural purposes, if some means could be devised to educate the young in farming and gardening. In visiting the schools, one finds that a number will read and write very well; but how many of them understand the meaning of the words they use? What the Indian requires is a good, practical education. The farm and garden, carpenter work, boat-building – in fact any outside occupation – would be better for the children than simply to try to teach them to master the English language.

It is proverbial of the Indian that he will not chastise the young. The children rule in the home, and there is little or no restraint. In the school-houses the teacher must be careful how they punish. On our reserves the Indians live in small colonies and are related, one to the other. Seldom will one of a tribe marry a member of another tribe. An offence to one family means that a number will resent. There is no great incentive for the young to learn our language. They receive no prizes and the school-house is not what the Indian children have been accustomed to.

In this agency, it must be remembered, the Indians have been far removed from the whites. The missionaries and teachers controlled them until they went to the fishing grounds and canneries. Now, with the settlement of the islands, there is a danger which faces young and old. Just so long as the Indian can be kept under certain restraint and associates little with the whites, Japanese and Chinese, there is hope for him. If we can keep them on their reserves, in their homes, they will not be in the way of temptation.

All the young need is an incentive and encouragement – the paternal care of the white and to be taken from the environment that goes so far to keep them backward in the march of civilization. The Indian day school will not accomplish this object. In a country like ours, where “the fittest survive,” the Indian must be able to compete with the thousands now flocking to our shores. The Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands realize that they are receiving special attention from the Department of Indian Affairs, and they are grateful; but our work is only beginning and their increasing numbers indicate that we have a task that will show results in the future well-being of a people who, in the years of their forefathers, were the guardians of the country which one of our leading statesmen recently described as “the sentinel islands between Asia and America.”

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers 1912 No. 27 pp388-390

Background: This document is an excerpt from a report sent by Indian Agent Thomas Deasy of the Queen Charlotte Agency to his superiors in the Department of Indian Affairs. It was published in the Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, in the 1912 Sessional Papers for the year ending March 1911. It was probably written in 1911 shortly after Deasy was appointed as Indian Agent in the newly formed Queen Charlotte Agency, with headquarters at Masset, Haida Gwaii.

Thomas Deasy (1857-1936), born in Portsmouth England, came to the colony of British Columbia with his father, who was one of the Royal Engineers who were stationed at New Westminster. His family later moved to Victoria where he worked as a printer and fire chief. He took the position of Indian Agent at the age of 53, from 1910 to 1924. He had a forceful personality and strong Christian principles. He was known to consult frequently with Chiefs and Elders, but maintained his role of protecting and correcting the First Nations people in his agency. He wrote “The Indians must have a guiding hand with them. The duties of an Indian agent shows that they cannot progress unless under the strictest of discipline.”

The Goals of Indian Residential Schools

Why were Indian Residential Schools created? The government, the churches and the Canadian public had a number of goals for the schools. Here are some comments made at the time the schools were created. Others are excerpts from *They Came for the Children*. You can look up the excerpts in the book to find more detail.

Read these comments to uncover some of the main goals. Which do you think were the most important goals for the Canadian government, for the churches, and for the Canadian people?

1. In 1887, Lawrence Vankoughnet, the deputy minister of Indian Affairs, justified the investment in residential schools by claiming that Aboriginal children who went to day schools “followed the terrible example set them by their parents.”
(*They Came for the Children*, p. 10)

2. When the system was expanded in northern Canada in 1954, the federal government’s Sub-Committee on Eskimo Education concluded: “The residential school is perhaps the most effective way of giving children from primitive environments, experience in education along the lines of civilization leading to vocational training to fit them for occupations in the white man’s economy.”
(*They Came for the Children*, p. 12)

3. The importance of denominational schools at the outset for the Indians must be obvious. One of the earliest things an attempt to civilize them does, is to take away their simple mythology, the central idea of which, to wit, a perfect spirit, can hardly be improved on. ... To disturb the faith, without supplying a better [one], would be a curious process. (Davin Report 1879 p. 14)

The type of education Davin was advocating would undermine existing spiritual and cultural beliefs, and it would be wrong, he said, to destroy their faith “without supplying a better” one; namely, Christianity. (*They Came for the Children* p. 10)

4. We are glad to see that the education to be extended to the Indians is to be of the right sort. It is to be a practical education. The position which the pupil is to occupy after he leaves school is to be kept continually in sight. He is to be taught to work with his hands so that when he is sent into the world he will be able to earn his bread by engaging in some useful and steady occupation. We see, too, that while he is serving his apprenticeship to civilization the Indian educationalists think that the pupil should be separated as much as possible from old and degrading associations. They prefer boarding schools to day schools. They want to have the child all to themselves for a few years.
(Editorial in the *British Colonist*, February 22, 1889)

5. [In the United States] the industrial school is the principal feature of the policy known as that of “aggressive civilization.” ... The experience of the United States is the same as our own... The child who goes to a day school learns little, and what little he learns is soon forgotten, while his tastes are fashioned at home, and his inherited aversion to toil is in no way combated. (Davin report, 1879, page 1-2.)

6. One year after the 1885 Northwest Rebellion, Indian Affairs school inspector J.A. Macrae noted, “It is unlikely that any Tribe or tribes would give trouble of a serious nature to the Government whose members had children completely under Government control!”
(*They Came for the Children*, p. 13)

7. Duncan Campbell Scott worried in 1910 that “without education and with neglect the Indians would produce an undesirable and often dangerous element in society.” (They Came for the Children, p. 13)

8. Nineteenth century missionaries believed their efforts to convert Aboriginal people to Christianity were part of a worldwide struggle for the salvation of souls. This belief provided justification for undermining traditional spiritual leaders (who were treated as agents of the devil), banning sacred cultural practices, and attempting to impose a new moral code on Aboriginal people by requiring them to abandon their traditional family structures. (They Came for the Children, p. 15)

9. Kamloops Industrial School

This excellent institution, established by a paternal Government to elevate the Indian races, is situated on a lovely spot on the South Thompson River, the buildings themselves being of modern design and admirably suited for the education, both social and intellectual, of the aborigines who are wards of the nation. ...

We look far into the future and see the little girls – now clustering about the Christian ladies who are teaching them the lessons of life – becoming wives and mothers, and inculcating those truths which are the blessed inheritance of the white man, uplifting and broadening their character and aims; while one need not be a prophet to predict that the day is not far distant when some of the boys who are now climbing the rough road to learning will emulate their fellows in the Northwest who have made names for themselves in the history of their native land.

(Editorial in Vancouver Daily World, July 22, 1890, p. 2.)

10. As the years have gone by the purpose of Indian education has become clearer, and the best means to be employed to reach the desired end are becoming apparent. It is now recognized that the provision of education for the Indian means an attempt to develop the great natural intelligence of the race and to fit the Indian for civilized life in his own environment. It includes not only a school education, but also instruction in the means of gaining a livelihood from the soil or as a member of an industrial or mercantile community, and the substitution of Christian ideals of conduct and morals for aboriginal conceptions of both.

To this end the curriculum in residential schools has been simplified, and the practical instruction given is such as may be immediately of use to the pupil when he returns to the reserve after leaving school. (Duncan Campbell Scott, in *Canada and Its Provinces*, Doughty and Shortt, 1914, p. 616)

11. To both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, Aboriginal spiritual beliefs were little more than superstition and witchcraft. In British Columbia, William Duncan of the Church Missionary Society reported: “I cannot describe the conditions of this people better than by saying that it is just what might be expected in savage heathen life.” Missionaries led the campaign to outlaw Aboriginal sacred ceremonies such as the Potlatch on the west coast and the Sun Dance on the Prairies. (They Came for the Children, p. 15)

12. While church and government officials would have their differences, their overall commitment to civilizing and Christianizing Aboriginal children gave rise to an education system that emphasized the need to separate children from their culture, impose a new set of values and beliefs, provide a basic elementary education, and implant Europe’s emerging industrial work discipline. (They Came for the Children, p. 16)

The Indian Act

The Indian Act is a set of laws that defines the administrative relationship between First Nations and the Government of Canada (and by extension, all Canadians). Originally it put complete control of First Nations education, culture, politics and economics in the hands of the government. It is still in effect today, although its implementation is interpreted through Section 35(1) of the Constitution Act.

Sample Clauses from the Indian Act

Which of these clauses do you think are still in effect today?

1. The Act determines who has Indian Status and who does not, creating status and non-status Indians
2. Definitions: “person” means an individual other than an Indian.
3. Definitions: “school” includes a day school, technical school, high school and residential school.
4. Indians who attend university are automatically “enfranchised,” that is, their Indian status is taken away.
5. Every Indian child between the ages of seven and fifteen years who is physically able shall attend such day, industrial or boarding school as may be designated by the Superintendent General for the full periods during which such school is open each year.
6. When a Status Indian dies, the government has complete power over his or her will and inheritance: 42. (1) Subject to this Act, all jurisdiction and authority in relation to matters and causes testamentary, with respect to deceased Indians, is vested exclusively in the Minister and shall be exercised subject to and in accordance with regulations of the Governor in Council.
7. The Minister may apply the moneys that would otherwise be payable to a child who is attending residential school to the maintenance of that child at that school.
8. Anti-Potlatch law: Section 114: Every Indian or person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the “Potlatch” or the Indian dance known as the “Tamanawas,” is guilty of a misdemeanor, and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months and not less than two months.
9. Every person who gets money from an Indian for “raising a fund or providing money for the prosecution of any claim which the tribe or band of Indians to which such Indian belongs... shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty not exceeding two hundred dollars and not less than fifty dollars or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two months.
10. The Minister may enter into agreements with religious organizations for the support and maintenance of children who are being educated in schools operated by those organizations.
11. The Minister may appoint persons, to be called truant officers, to enforce the attendance of Indian children at school, and for that purpose a truant officer has the powers of a peace officer.
12. Indians are not allowed to vote in municipal, provincial or federal elections.
13. Whoever sells or supplies to any Indian any kind of intoxicant shall be liable to imprisonment for one month to six months, with or without hard labour, and be fined not less than fifty nor more than three hundred dollars.
14. Where it is proven in court that any Indian, by inordinate frequenting of a poolroom either on or off an Indian reserve, misspends or wastes his time to the detriment of himself, his family or household, shall be forbidden to enter such poolroom for one year.

Sample Clauses from the Indian Act

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. In effect 2015
(section 2) | 1. The Act determines who has Indian Status and who does not, creating status and non-status Indians |
| 2. Repealed 1951 | 2. Definitions: "person" means an individual other than an Indian. |
| 3. In effect 2015
(section 122) | 3. Definitions: "school" includes a day school, technical school, high school and residential school. |
| 4. Repealed | 4. Indians who attend university are automatically "enfranchised," that is, their Indian status is taken away. |
| 5. Repealed | 5. Every Indian child between the ages of seven and fifteen years who is physically able shall attend such day, industrial or boarding school as may be designated by the Superintendent General for the full periods during which such school is open each year. |
| 6. In effect 2015
(section 42) | 6. When a Status Indian dies, the government has complete power over his or her will and inheritance: 42. (1) Subject to this Act, all jurisdiction and authority in relation to matters and causes testamentary, with respect to deceased Indians, is vested exclusively in the Minister and shall be exercised subject to and in accordance with regulations of the Governor in Council. |
| 7. In effect 2015
(section 115d) | 7. The Minister may apply the moneys that would otherwise be payable to a child who is attending residential school to the maintenance of that child at that school. |
| 8. Repealed 1951 | 8. Anti-Potlatch law: Section 114: Every Indian or person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas," is guilty of a misdemeanor, and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months and not less than two months. |
| 9. Repealed 1951 | 9. Every person who gets money from an Indian for "raising a fund or providing money for the prosecution of any claim which the tribe or band of Indians to which such Indian belongs... shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty not exceeding two hundred dollars and not less than fifty dollars or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two months. |
| 10. In effect 2015
(Section 115c) | 10. The Minister may enter into agreements with religious organizations for the support and maintenance of children who are being educated in schools operated by those organizations. |
| 11. In effect 2015
(Section 119-6) | 11. A truant officer may take into custody a child whom he believes on reasonable grounds to be absent from school contrary to this Act and may convey the child to school using as much force as the circumstances require. |
| 12. Repealed | 12. Indians are not allowed to vote in municipal, provincial or federal elections. |
| 13. Repealed | 13. Whoever sells or supplies to any Indian any kind of intoxicant shall be liable to imprisonment for one month to six months, with or without hard labour, and be fined not less than fifty nor more than three hundred dollars. |
| 14. Repealed | 14. Where it is proven in court that any Indian, by "inordinate frequenting of a poolroom either on or off an Indian reserve, misspends or wastes his time to the detriment of himself, his family or household, shall be forbidden to enter such poolroom for one year. |

Consequences of Colonization

First Nations communities experienced many types of loss as a result of colonialism.

Some of the main causes of these losses are colonization; racism; settlement; Indian Act; and Indian Residential Schools.

Record ways that these causes brought about the following cultural losses.

1. Loss of children from communities.
2. Loss of life due to unknown diseases.
3. Loss of land and resources which were the foundations of First Nations life.
4. Loss of spiritual and sacred places on the land, which were not only taken away, but desecrated.
5. Loss of language and cultural traditions.
6. Loss of self-reliance and independence.
7. Loss of opportunity and potential.

The Story of Residential Schools

This book tells a painful story.

This is a story of loss.

For Canada, this is a shameful story.

It is also a story about the response to a sacred call.

It is a story about Canadian colonialism.

It is a complicated story.

It is a story of humility and the possibility of change.

Most importantly, this story is a tribute to Indigenous resilience: a determination not just to endure, but to flourish.

It is a story about how, in crucial ways, our schools failed all of us.

This is a story of destruction carried out in the name of civilization.

This is our story and Canada's story.

This story is not over.