

## GLOSSARY

### Aboriginal

In legal terms, Aboriginal is the umbrella term for all Indigenous Canadians under the terms of the Constitution Act, 1982. Aboriginal peoples are comprised of First Nations (or Indians), Inuit and Métis, three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. In general usage Aboriginal is an alternative term for First Peoples, First Nations, or Indigenous people of Canada.

### Boarding School

Not to be confused with private boarding schools of Great Britain and other countries. Boarding schools, first mentioned officially in the Indian Act in 1894, were residential institutions built on a reserve to serve the students of the local community. One government official writing in 1897 described them as “an advance on Reservation Day schools, where children could be removed from home influences and have the benefit of civilized surroundings without being taken away from their parents’ sight” (Indian Affairs RG 10 v6039 f 160-1-1 p 40-41). They generally received less funding than Industrial schools (\$60 per student compared with \$72 for industrial schools in 1897). Boarding schools in British Columbia included All Hallows, Yale; Elizabeth Long Memorial, Kitimaat; and Crosby Home for Boys and Girls, Port Simpson. Boarding schools ceased to exist in practical purposes in 1920, when all schools were termed Indian Residential Schools, although the term continued to exist in the Indian Act until 1951.

### Day School

A school located in a reserve community, similar to a public school. Children lived at home with their families. At first local schools were established by church missionaries. Eventually they were included in the Indian Act and funded by the federal government. They continued to be run by churches until the 1950s, when the Department of Indian Affairs became responsible for their operation. Indian Day Schools continued into the 1970s, until they became band run schools or were incorporated into a nearby provincial school district.

### Department of Indian Affairs (DIA)

For most of the last 150 years, the branch of the federal government responsible for Status Indians was called the Department of Indian Affairs. It moved to different ministries from time to time. From 1873 Indian matters were part of the Department of the Interior. In 1880 the Department of Indian Affairs was created as a separate branch under the Department of the Interior, and the Minister of the Interior was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. In 1936 it was moved to the Department of Mines and Resources. In 1949 moved the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In 1965 it became its own ministry, called Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). This later became Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). In 2019 the department was split into Indigenous Services Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.

### Indian

From the earliest times of colonization, the Indigenous people of North America was re-

ferred to by outsiders as Indians. Today the preferred word is First Nations, although some Indigenous people still use the term *Indian* within their own communities. In terms of these curricular resources, *Indian* is used in historical and legal contexts. For example, it is the Indian Act which still has legal and governmental importance today. For further discussion, see *First Nations 101*, p. 161.

### **Indian Act**

The Indian Act is the body of laws that relate only to Canadians who are recognized as Registered Indians. Since its creation in 1876, it has controlled many aspects of economic, cultural, educational and personal lives of First Nations people. However, it is still the only government document that recognizes the special status of First Nations peoples and communities. It allows for certain rights including health services, education, subsidized housing and exemption from taxes in certain situations, but all in exchange for land and other rights. Many of the earlier restrictive sections of the act, such as the Potlatch ban and not being allowed to vote, have been removed, but there are still many active and archaic clauses that continue to govern lives of First Nations people.

### **Indian Agency**

An administrative unit of the Department of Indian Affairs. Each province was divided into regions called agencies, usually based on geographical and linguistic groupings. Each agency had an Indian Agent who was responsible for the status Indians within that agency. The number and location of agencies changed over time. The first agencies in British Columbia were created in 1881, with six agencies. By 1913, there were fifteen agencies. (See a map of those agencies at [www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/testimonies/](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/testimonies/).) Indian agencies continued to operate until 1969.

### **Indian Agent**

The Indian Agent was the local representative of the Federal Government and the Department of Indian Affairs, and was responsible for administering the Indian Act on the reserves in his jurisdiction. Agents held a great deal of power in the daily lives of First Nations people, and approved or vetoed any actions of band councils. Most details of what might be considered municipal governance had to pass through the Indian Agent. Any items funded by the department, such as side walks or school supplies had to be ordered through the agent. In some agencies people could not leave their reserve without a permit from the Indian Agent. Some agents tried to be proactive for the First Nations in their agencies, as far as the Indian Act allowed. Much depended on the character and beliefs of the individual agents; some were more enlightened than others. Until 1910, BC Indian Agents reported to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs of British Columbia. After that they reported to officials in Ottawa.

### **Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement**

This legally binding agreement reached through the courts in 2005 was the impetus for subsequent actions, including financial compensation for survivors, the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and money dedicated specifically to the healing process. It came about as the result of the Government of Canada facing an overwhelming number of court cases seeking and awarding financial compensation for survivors. Following the

Agreement in Principal, which was signed in November 2005, a lengthy judicial process followed in which nine provincial and territorial courts held separate hearings to certify the class action suit in their jurisdictions, and approve the final settlement. In British Columbia the hearing was held in the Supreme Court of British Columbia before Chief Justice Brenner in October 2006 and is referred to as *Quatell v. Attorney General of Canada*. Chief Justice Brenner's conclusions, based on testimony of BC speakers, formed the major catalyst for the federal government to eventually deliver its apology in 2008.

### **Industrial School**

An Industrial school was an early form of residential school. It was based on the British Industrial Schools which were established in the mid 19th century to deal with poor, neglected or delinquent children and teach them a practical trade. It combined the Victorian values of social improvement and productive labour, as well as the abiding goal of Christianity and civilization for Aboriginal children. In British Columbia most Indian Residential Schools began as Industrial Schools. The term was dropped in 1920 when all schools where First Nations students were housed were termed Indian Residential Schools (although the term Industrial school persisted in the Indian Act until 1951.)

### **Intergenerational Legacy**

The lasting effects of Indian Residential Schools that are passed on from one generation to the next. Even though people may not have attended residential schools, they can still be impacted through the experiences of their parents and grandparents who attended an Indian Residential School. These intergenerational legacies can include loss of language and culture, disrupted parenting skills, or cycles of abuse.

### **Reserve**

A Reserve, as defined by the Indian Act, is “a tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band.” Generally a First Nations Band has a number of parcels of land associated with it. The main community is established on one of the reserves, and the resources of other reserve lands may be used by the First Nation. For example, many First Nations have fishing sites that have been set aside as reserves. In general, federal law, not provincial, applies to reserve lands. Reserves were first created in BC by the Indian Reserve Commission in the 1880s and 1890s, and further under the McKenna-McBride Commission of 1916. They were generally selected by government officials, usually with little consultation, from the traditional territories of each Band. Note that in the United States the term “reservation” is used, while in Canada the term is “reserve.”

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2008. Thousands of survivors, their families and others across Canada made statements to document memories of the schools and their impacts. An Interim Report was released in 2012. The Final Report was delivered in 2015 including 94 recommendations for future action. The statements, documents and other materials are housed at the National Research Centre on Indian Residential Schools at the University of Winnipeg, where the work of the Commission will be carried on.