

Indian Act

1876

DID YOU KNOW?

- That through the Indian Act, the Indian Agent's control could even extend into the private lives of Indians; for example, in inspecting Indian households for signs of untidiness.
- That in the smallpox epidemic of the 1860's, one of every three Natives died.
- That in 1880 the First Nations Traditional Fishery was created to regulate and limit the fishing for sustenance purposes only, no commercial fishing was allowed and it was forbidden to use traps, fish weirs and spears.
- That after 1872 Natives were not allowed to buy or get free land grants like the rest of the population.
- That in 1879 the Federal Government followed the United States example of segregation and pulled Native students from the public education system.
- That in 1880 an amendment was made to the Indian Act whereby any Indian completing a University degree lost his/her status. Any Indian who went to University was channeled into becoming a minister.
- That from 1884 to 1951 it was a criminal offense for Natives to practice their traditional culture in the form of feasts, potlatches and sundances.

In later years it was amended to the point that any gathering of Indians, other than a Christian church ceremony, could be labeled a potlatch and those present arrested and jailed.

- That between 1885 and 1936 a system of passes was instituted by which Indians in Western Canada were forbidden to leave their reserves for any purpose without a pass issued by the Indian agent.
- 1888 Fisheries Act allows Natives to fish for food but can't sell, trade or barter. All traditional fishing methods are banned.
- That in 1889 *The Federal Fisheries Act* was passed prohibiting Indians from selling fish or owning fishing licenses.
- That in 1893 Residential Schools were established The Superintendent of Indian Affairs stated: *"In boarding or industrial schools the pupils are removed for a long period from the leading of an uncivilized life and receive constant care and attention. It is therefore in the interests of Indians that these institutions should be kept in an efficient state, as it is in their success that the solution of the Indian problem lies."* Residential schools were closed in **the 1990's**.

According to the Indian Agent, D.C. Scott, the intent of the residential schools was "to kill the Indian in the child."

- 1894 Indians need a permit to fish for food.
- That in 1905 the B.C. Game Amendment Act introduced fines and imprisonment for violations concerning hunting, trapping and fishing.
- 1905 - the removal of Indian people from reserves near towns with more than 8,000 people.
- That in 1910 traditional fish weirs and spears were prohibited.

- That from 1910 to the 1950's there was a cut on the academia portion of residential schooling, and Native students were used as free labour to maintain schools.
- 1911 - expropriated portions of reserves for roads and railways to their public works and made an entire reserve away from the municipality.
- That between 1920 & 1922, and 1933 & 1951, Bill 13 was enacted allowing the authorities to enfranchise any native. An enquiry could be held into the fitness of a person for enfranchisement, and the agent could compulsorily enfranchise within two years. This occurred with or without the individual's permission. The Act also empowered authorities to take custody of Indian children without permission.
- 1920 - banned hereditary leaderships of bands.
- That in 1921 a potlatch was hosted by Dan Cranmer (Kwagiulth Nation) when a number of people were arrested and imprisoned. Over 600 ceremonial pieces were seized by the RCMP, and sold to the Royal Ontario Museum and the National Museum of Man in Ottawa.
- That First Nations people were not allowed to operate engine powered boats until 1923 in the north coast commercial fishery.
- That in 1927 Aboriginal B.C. law strips all First Nations people of the right to hire or consult a lawyer or represent themselves in court or in any community transaction.
- That between 1927 and 1951 a law was passed which made it an offense, punishable by imprisonment, to raise money for land claims in Canada.
- 1927 - prohibited anyone from soliciting funds for Indian legal claims without a special license.
- That in 1930 if an Indian was judged to be misspending or wasting his time by frequenting a poolroom, the poolroom owner and/or the Indian person could be fined or sent to jail.
- That in 1939 Income tax was applied to Indians working off reserve.
- That in the 1940's and '50's, South Africa sent a Commission to study Canada's reservation systems. They studied Canada's treatment of original people in order to create their own "reservations" under Apartheid.
- That the right to vote for Indians was withdrawn in 1872, and Indians could not vote in provincial elections until 1947, and in federal elections until 1960.
- That it was not until the early 1960's that a high school education became available for Native people on a provincial basis.
- That in 1960 Natives gain the right to vote in provincial and federal elections.
- The last federally run Residential School closed in Saskatchewan in 1996 and in British Columbia in 1984.
- That in 1985 Parliament passed Bill C-31, which removed the discriminatory clause against Native women, and allowed for reinstatement of persons who had lost their status.