



Chapter

10

Legacies of Imperialism

Chapter Focus

How does the past influence who you are today and how you live? There is no doubt that some decisions and actions taken by your parents and grandparents—perhaps before you were even born—still have an effect on your life. For example, would you be living in Canada if one of your ancestors had not decided to make the move here?

The legacies of the past are everywhere around us. Some of these legacies are positive—others are not. In Chapter 9 you read about how the policies and actions of the imperialist nations affected the development of Canada. You also read about some of the effects of these actions on Aboriginal peoples at the time. Today, many generations later, the consequences of these policies are still with us. In this final chapter of Part 2, you will have a chance to consider how these legacies of imperialism are affecting Canadian society.

Chapter Issue

What would be a fair and just response to the legacies of historical globalization? Your response to this Chapter Issue should help you to respond to the Main Issue for Part 2: *Should people in Canada respond to the legacies of historical globalization?* Along with your earlier response to the issue of identity and globalization, answering these questions should help you clarify your response to the Key Issue: *To what extent should we embrace globalization?*

reserve an area of land that is legally owned by the federal government but is set aside for the use of a specific First Nations group

residential school a boarding school set up for the purpose of educating and assimilating Aboriginal children

Key Terms

reserve
residential school
Indian Act
lobby group
Royal Commission
Statement of Reconciliation
self-government

Figure 10-1 Is confrontation an effective way to deal with the legacies of imperialism? In this chapter, you will have a chance to consider how Canada has reacted to some of the legacies of imperialist policies—unresolved land claims, social issues, living conditions on **reserves**, and the effects of **residential schools**.



Compare and Contrast Historical Experiences

What would be a fair and just response to the legacies of historical globalization?

In this chapter, you will look at current responses to past policies and actions of the Canadian government. In order to do this, you need to look at events the way a historian would.

One way historians link the past and the present is by comparing different historical events, or different accounts of the same event. Comparing and contrasting helps them to see patterns of cause and effect in history. For example, in this chapter you will be reading about residential schools that were set up for Aboriginal people in Canada. Australia is another country that had residential schools for the Indigenous peoples living there. Examining how the historical experiences in these two countries were similar and different can help us understand how imperialist policies were applied in different parts of the world and what the effects of these policies are today.

Your Task: Use the Internet to compare and contrast the residential school experiences of Australia’s and Canada’s Indigenous peoples. To remind yourself of how to use the Internet, refer to the Skill Path for Chapter 8 (pages 123–124). Then make generalizations about the effects of residential schools on both populations.

Step 1

Gather Information

Use the Internet to gather information about the two experiences you wish to compare. In our example, first find information about residential schools in Australia. Take notes to answer the following questions:

- When were they in place (approximately)?
- Who attended them?
- What was the purpose of the schools?
- What methods were used to achieve this purpose?
- What effects has the residential school experience had on former students, their communities, and their offspring?
- How have present-day governments responded to the legacies of these schools?

Then use information in this chapter and on the Internet to answer the same questions about residential schools in Canada.

	Australia	Canada
When		
Who		
Purpose		
Methods		
Effects today		



SKILL PATH

Figure 10-2 As a child, this Indigenous woman in Australia was taken away from her family by the government to attend a residential school. She never learned her Aboriginal language. Use the information in this chapter to compare her experience to that of Aboriginal children in residential schools in Canada.



Step 2

Make a Chart

Create a chart like the one at left to compare and contrast the two experiences. Use the questions in Step 1 as categories for your chart.

Step 3

Compare and Contrast

Look across each row of your chart. Write at least one statement for each column to compare or contrast. To compare, make statements about how the experiences of the two countries were similar. For example, "Both Australia and Canada set up a residential school system in order to encourage the assimilation of Aboriginal people." To contrast, make statements about how the two systems differed. For example, "While the Canadian government has apologized and agreed to a compensation package for former students, the Australian government still refuses to apologize, claiming the schools were set up for the Aborigines' 'own good.'"

Step 4

Draw a Conclusion

Read over the compare-and-contrast statements you made. What overall statement can you make to summarize what you learned about the two experiences you researched. For example, you might conclude that the two experiences were more similar than they were different.

In 1884, a system of residential schools funded by the Canadian government and run by churches was formed to encourage the assimilation of First Nations people into "Canadian" society. What do these articles suggest to you about how Aboriginal people are dealing with the consequences of residential schools? As you read more about these schools in the next sections, decide whether or not your conclusions based on these articles are accurate. ▼

Legacies of Imperialism Today

Question for Inquiry

- How could legacies of imperialism affect the long-term well-being of a people or society?

Taking time to heal

By *Kenton Friesen*

"I got the strap and I never knew what it was for. But you couldn't ask or you'd get more," said Agness Jack, a survivor of residential schools and conference coordinator for the Kamloops Indian Residential School Healing Conference and Reunion. She is organizing the healing conference ... to help people who went to residential schools discuss their experiences and begin on the path to healing...

Raven's Eye: The Aboriginal Newspaper of British Columbia and Yukon, July 31, 2001

Dream catcher

By *Marcia Kaye*

The school day begins not with the persistent clanging of a school bell but with the gentle rattle of a native shaker. The students, ranging from kindergarten-tiny to nearly full grown, arrange themselves in a circle on the floor. Sitting on the floor beside them are their four teachers, including the school's founder, Nicole Bell.

There's no "O Canada" or loudspeaker broadcasting announcements, but there is plenty of ritual: the kids light a candle and burn sage (for girls) or sweet grass (for boys), hold tobacco and give thanks, among other traditions you would never find in most public schools.

Chatelaine, November 1, 2003

Today, we see the effects of the past all around us. For example, parts of our systems of government and law came from the people who were here before us, including the English, French and, as you learned in Chapter 7, the Six Nations Confederacy. The Aboriginal people who helped sustain the fur trade, and who taught the European explorers how to survive in an unfamiliar land, played a role in creating the Canada we know today. Canada itself, as you saw in Chapter 9, was formed partly in response to imperialist forces at play in the 19th century.

But some legacies of the past are not as positive as these. The idea that one race is superior to another, and therefore has the right—and even duty—to control the other’s fortunes led to the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples, not only in Canada, but in many places around the world.

Of course, attitudes have changed—we no longer believe that one race is better than another, as the early newcomers from Europe did. Today most people would laugh if you suggested that it was the duty of the “white” races to “civilize” other peoples.

And yet, problems persist. Relations between First Nations and the Canadian government are often characterized by distrust and anger. Unresolved land claims issues have led to violent confrontations between First Nations and police in Oka (in Québec) and in Ipperwash and Caledonia (both in Ontario). Conditions on some reserves, especially in isolated communities in the North, are appalling. Overall, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people experience much higher rates of suicide, abuse, and alcoholism than do non-Aboriginal people. How can this be? What can we do? What *should* we do?

To begin our investigation, let’s look at one of the key imperialist policies put in place by the government in the 19th century and how it affects First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people today.



Figure 10-3 Land claim tensions have led to protest and conflict in Oka, Québec, and Caledonia and Ipperwash, Ontario. You will read more about these on page 166.

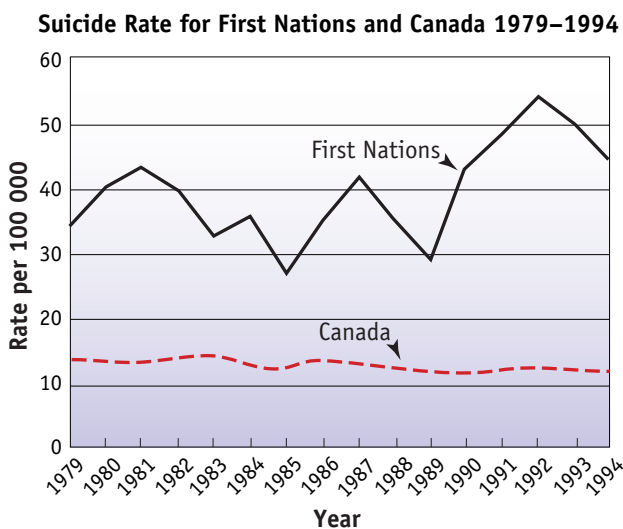


Figure 10-4 Suicide rates among First Nations and All of Canada, 1979–1994. As you read, think about how the rate of suicides among Aboriginal peoples may be related to legacies of historical globalization.

Indian Act an act passed by the Canadian government in 1876 and amended (changed) several times since, which makes “Indians, and the lands reserved for the Indians” the responsibility of the government.

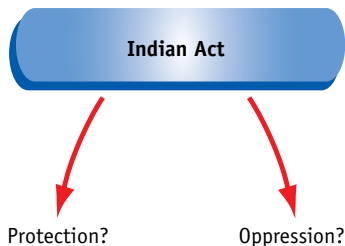


Figure 10-5 Read ahead for various perspectives on the affects of the Indian Act.

READING GUIDE

When text is accompanied by historical photographs or illustrations, ask three questions:

- What does this image show?
- What reason might the original photographer or artist have had for creating this picture?
- Why has the author chosen to include it here?



Figure 10-6 Students at the St. Peter’s Mission Indian Residential School in Grouard, Alberta, in the mid-1920s. What can you see in the picture that shows how these children are being assimilated into Canadian society? How would similar changes affect Aboriginal peoples in general?

Legacies of Residential Schools

You read in Chapter 9 that, after Confederation, the government passed the **Indian Act**, which defined who was considered an “Indian” and set out the laws regarding the treatment of First Nations on reserves. An Indian Agent, who was appointed by the government, was in charge of almost everything that took place on the reserve. Traditional forms of government were replaced by band councils, which had very little real power. To this day, the federal government still has responsibility over all reserves in Canada.

Most First Nations feel that the Indian Act treats them like children, regulating just about every aspect of their lives. Here are some examples:

- Until 1985, an Aboriginal woman who married a non-Aboriginal man lost her Indian status and could no longer live on the reserve.
- The Act limits the ability of First Nations to govern themselves, by placing the government in charge of their affairs.
- The Act does not allow inhabitants of reserves to own their own houses or land.

In 1884, the Canadian government amended the Indian Act to allow for the creation and funding of a system of residential schools. The schools, which were run by churches, were part of an organized effort to encourage First Nations to assimilate into “Canadian” society as quickly as possible.

For most of us, our first and most important source of information about our culture is our family. Schools also play a role in reinforcing what we learn about our culture at home. But what would it be like to be taken away from your culture at an early age? What if the purpose of school was to undo all that you had learned from your parents? This was the experience of many residential school students in Canada.

The schools attempted to assimilate students through a combination of education and Christianization (conversion to Christianity).

Aboriginal children across Canada were required to attend residential schools from the age of five or six until they were eighteen. Because the schools were usually far away from the children’s homes, students had to live at school during the school year, and they saw their families only in the summer, if at all. They were forbidden to speak any language other than English or French, depending on the school, and in many cases were taught that their culture was inferior. Discipline was strict. Students were often beaten for disobeying school rules, and in some cases were victims of serious physical abuse and sexual abuse. You can read about one student’s experience in residential school in the Voices feature that follows. As you read, think about how this student’s experience compares with your own experiences in school.

Perspectives on Residential Schools

Here is how one student, Flora Merrick, described her experience at the Portage la Prairie Residential School, which she attended from 1921 to 1932.

I was punished for speaking my own language and was always frightened and scared of what the teachers and principals would do to me. It was like being in prison.

During my stay at Portage la Prairie Residential School, I witnessed the injustices of beatings and abuse of other children, some of whom were my siblings. We were treated worse than animals and lived in constant fear. I have carried the trauma of my experience and seeing what happened to other children all my life.

I cannot forget one painful memory. It occurred in 1932 when I was 15 years old. My father came to the Portage la Prairie Residential School to tell my sister and I that our mother had died and to take us to the funeral. The principal of the school would not let us go with our father to the funeral. My little sister and I cried so much, we were taken away and locked in a dark room for about two weeks.

After I was released from the dark room and allowed to be with other residents, I tried to run away to my father and family. I was caught in the bush by teachers and taken back to the school and strapped so severely that my arms were black and blue for several weeks. After my father saw what they did to me, he would not allow me to go back to school after the school year ended.

Source: Testimony from the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/committee/CommitteePublication.aspx?SourceId=103645>.

- 1 How might this sort of experience affect a person's attitude toward authority?
- 2 How might being separated from your family at such an early age affect your sense of security? What problems might have occurred when children like Flora Merrick returned to their communities in the summer, after living in a different culture and language for such a large part of the year?



Figure 10-7 Residential schools in Canada. What geographic factors made it necessary for residential school students to live at the schools? What other reasons might the government have had for making students live away from their families?

Source: Prepared for Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada by Public History Inc. (Version: 2003-02).

Fast Facts

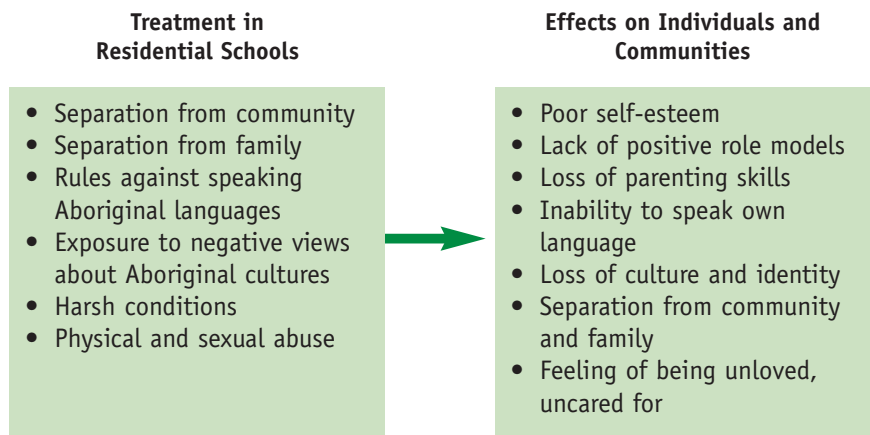
One hundred and thirty residential schools existed between 1884 and 1996. It is estimated that about 80 000 former students are still alive today. Why is it important that former students tell us about what went on at residential schools?

Effects of Residential Schools

The last government-run residential school in Canada closed its doors in 1996. By that time, some former students had already started to come forward with tales of physical and sexual abuse, loneliness, and even hunger at the schools. In 1990, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine became the first Aboriginal leader to come forward with his own tale of abuse at residential school. Soon, a flood of lawsuits were being launched by former students against the government and the churches that had administered the schools. (Note, however, that people had a wide variety of experiences at the residential schools.)

The residential schools did not succeed in assimilating Aboriginal people. They did, however, create great hardship and a variety of problems for many—not all—individuals who attended the schools and for the communities in which they live. For many students, for example, the early separation from their parents meant they learned few positive parenting skills, so the next generation has also been affected.

Figure 10-8 Effects of the residential school experience. Consider how the short-term effects listed in the right box could snowball into long-term effects. For example, if a student of the school lost fluency in his or her first language, how might that affect whether or not the next generation learns the language? In another example, feelings of being unloved can lead to depression, a condition that can lead, in turn, to social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse.



For many years, the government did not acknowledge the damage caused by its residential schools. Organized efforts on the part of Aboriginal **lobby groups** such as the Assembly of First Nations pressured the government into taking action. Think of an issue in your school or community that you believe needs to be addressed. Then organize a lobby group to pressure the proper authority—for example, your principal or the provincial government—to act on your concerns. Examples might include changes to the legal drinking age or voting age, or changes to school cafeteria food. Come up with a catchy name, logo, and slogan for your lobby group. Write a list of demands, and explain why you think these changes are necessary. Then plan what your group will do to bring these demands to people's attention. Consider petitions, demonstrations, and phone call or letter campaigns.

lobby group a group of citizens that band together to bring an issue or demand to the government and push for change; well-known lobby groups include Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Greenpeace, and the Council of Canadians

Multiple Perspectives

It's easy to look back and shake your head at the actions and ideas of the past. When you wonder how the government could have thought residential schools were a good idea, remember that it was not just the government that felt this way at the time. Although many people now feel the policy was misguided, the motives behind the schools may have been well intentioned.

Father Albert Lacombe was a Francophone priest who travelled west from Montréal in 1852. He developed a reputation for honesty, compassion, and justice, and was respected not only by Francophone and Anglophone homesteaders, but also by the Cree and Siksika people, who called him “the man of great heart.”

Lacombe witnessed the rising tension between the newcomers and First Nations over land, rights, and differing lifestyles. He came to the conclusion that the best way to help Aboriginal people to survive in the midst of so much change was to provide them with “structured learning in the activities of the newcomers.” In other words, send them to school to teach them European ways. The Voices feature that follows presents some other perspectives on the residential schools.



Figure 10-9 Father Albert Lacombe with two Siksika leaders, Crowfoot and his brother Three Bulls, in 1886. What reasons do you think Lacombe had for favouring residential schools?

Voices

Some Perspectives on Residential Schools

No one denies that some students suffered terrible abuse in the residential schools. But not everyone believes the consequences of the schools were negative for everybody, or that compensation is appropriate. According to former residential school teacher Bernice Logan,

We don't feel the church did anything wrong by taking these children and educating them. These schools were partly orphanages. Children with terrible home lives and children whose parents wanted them to come went to the schools.

Source: Bernice Logan, Founder, Association of Former Indian Residential School Workers, quoted in *Anglican Journal*, April 2003.

Still others point out that it is unfair to judge the government's actions from a modern perspective.

It was good teaching for survival in society. We learned reading, writing, history, science, as well as how to operate machinery and farm chores. I really appreciated being able to learn all that.

Source: Rufus Goodstriker, former residential school student, *Alberta Report*, 1998, http://www.taxpayer.com/main/news.php?news_id=2275.

- 1 Why do you suppose positive stories about residential schools get less media coverage than negative ones?
- 2 How do you think Flora Merrick would respond to each of these arguments about the residential schools? (You read Merrick's experience with residential schools on page 161.)

Examples of Legacies of Imperialism around the World

Canada is just one of many countries around the world that are dealing with the effects of historical imperialism. The colonizing countries brought many of their own ideas and their own cultures to their colonies. Everything from government and religion to sports, food, language, and music have been

influenced by the colonial powers that once ruled much of North, Central, and South America, Africa, and Asia. Some of these countries are still living with the challenges and opportunities that have been created by the legacies of historical imperialism. Here are a few examples.

Figure 10-10 Examples of legacies of imperialism ▼

Continent	Country	Colonized/Ruled By	Legacies
Africa	Tunisia	France (1881–1956)	Today, the majority of the newspapers in Tunisia are printed in the French language, and French radio and television programs are broadcast daily.
	Korea	Japan (1910–1945)	Anti-Japanese feelings are still very strong among many Korean people. To this day, many Korean historic, religious, and artistic artifacts are found in Japanese museums or homes. South Korea says that Japan still has 34 369 Korean artifacts. Some South Koreans try to steal back Korean artifacts.
Europe	Malta	Britain (1814–1964)	Malta is a representative democracy with a British system of government and administration and an elected House of Representatives.
	Ukraine	Soviet Union (1922–1991)	Many people in Ukraine today use Surzhyk, a combination of the Ukrainian and Russian languages.
North America	Mexico	Spain (1521–1821)	The Spaniards mistreated the Indigenous peoples of Mexico and took the best land for themselves, forcing many farmers into poorly paid wage labour. Today, parts of the impoverished Chiapas region of Mexico are occupied by the Zapatista Liberation Army. The Zapatistas call for land reform for farmers in Chiapas, most of whom are descendants of the Mayan people.
South America	Cuba	Spain (1511–1898)	Son music of Cuba is influenced by Spanish guitar and African rhythms.

- 1 a) Use a world map provided by your teacher to plot each of the colonized countries listed in the chart above. For each influence mentioned in the chart, think of a symbol to represent it (for example, you might use a fist to symbolize war or violence, and a music note to represent musical influences).
- b) Add these symbols to your map next to the appropriate countries. What does the map show you about the reach of the legacies of historical globalization?

Explore the Issues

1 Compare and Contrast.

- a) Do some research to find out what non-residential schools were like during the 1920s, when Flora Merrick was at the Portage la Prairie Residential School. Find out what forms of punishment were used and what rules students had to follow. Then use the steps in the Skill Path to compare and contrast Flora Merrick's account with your own findings. Based on this sample, in what ways were residential schools similar to and different from other schools at the time? **SKILL PATH**
- b) Now compare residential schools and other schools at the time with your own experience of school.

2 **Write a Letter.** Write a letter to your local Member of Parliament outlining your conclusions about the government's responsibility to address the modern-day effects of residential schools. Include two or three suggestions about how the government could possibly address these effects.

3 **Research and Compare.** Another result of historical globalization is the local history of immigration to Canada. Choose one example of an immigrant group to Canada (for example, farmers, Japanese, Chinese, Eastern Europeans) and research the challenges and opportunities they found when they first came to Canada. Compare their experiences with the experiences of Aboriginal peoples.

Responding to the Legacies

Question for Inquiry

- What strategies have been used to address the legacies of historical globalization and imperialism?

What response to poor conditions on reserves do you think the first article is proposing? What response do you think the auditor general would propose, based on the information in the second article?

Vice, corruption, delusion, and despair

By Dianne Rinehart

This week the government announced 700 000 new immigrants are desperately needed to fill jobs in Canada, and there are 5000 jobs waiting in Saskatoon alone.

At the same time, we read about an 87 per cent unemployment rate on the Kashechewan reserve, site of a boil-water advisory, dilapidated housing, and a despairing youth culture—kids who self-mutilate, are regularly flown out for addiction treatment, and turn to suicide as their only viable ticket out. ...

Hamilton Spectator, November 5, 2005

Aboriginal conditions worsening

By Mike De Souza

Canada's Aboriginal peoples continue to live in second-class conditions because of poor coordination, bad management, and excessive paperwork in more than \$8 billion worth of federal government programs, Auditor General Sheila Fraser said Tuesday.

While the substandard living conditions are getting worse, millions of dollars of public money are not being tracked adequately, Fraser said.

Calgary Herald, May 17, 2006

We've seen that imperialism, Eurocentrism, and the colonial nations' desire for economic gain have had a profound effect on the lives of Aboriginal peoples. Attitudes of cultural superiority, however well intentioned, led to insensitivity to the emotional, physical, spiritual, and

READING GUIDE

Jot down any questions you may have about what you are reading on a separate piece of paper. At the end of the chapter, return to your questions to see if they've been answered. If not, ask your teacher to help you with them.

Figure 10-11 In 2006, Caledonia, Ontario, became the site of another barricade. This time the violence was between protesters and residents of the town, whose lives had been seriously disrupted by the blockade. Why do you think First Nations protesters use blockades to draw attention to their land claims issues? Is there another way? ▼



cultural needs of First Nations peoples. Early governments had the idea that the way of Europeans was the best way, and felt the only hope for First Nations was to become like them.

Have things changed? Many people would say that governments today are better at recognizing and bridging cultural differences, and that the old imperialist ideas are a thing of the past. On the other hand, it's easy to be blind about our own failings—and even easier to point the finger of blame at our predecessors.

Let's look now at some examples of modern responses to Aboriginal peoples, and assess what has worked and what hasn't.

Military Responses

In the summer of 1990, Canadians woke up to discover—to their surprise—that armed Mohawks (historically known as the Kanien'kehaka) had barricaded a road near Oka, Québec. The Mohawks were protesting a planned golf course expansion onto land they claimed was theirs. When the Québec police arrived, the situation became violent. Bullets were fired by both sides, and one officer was killed. Tensions mounted, as both sides worked hard to resist using force. The photograph on page 156 shows a famous “stare-off” during that crisis between a Canadian soldier and Mohawk warrior. It would take 78 days for the barricades to come down.

Other violent incidents involving land claims protests took place in the years that followed. At Ipperwash, Ontario, the Stony Point band set up a roadblock and occupied land in a provincial park in 1995. They were protesting the fact that land taken by the army during the Second World War had not been returned to them, despite promises that it would be. Police moved in and, during the ensuing battle, one Stony Point band

member, Dudley George, was killed. (Band members demanded an inquest be held into the death, claiming interference from the higher levels of the provincial government. However, it was not until 2004, eight years later, that the inquest began.)

The land claim dispute was finally resolved in 1998. The land was returned to the band, and each band member received a cash settlement.

The violence at Oka, Ipperwash, and elsewhere shocked Canadians. To many, it seemed to come out of nowhere. But to the First Nations groups involved, the violence was the result of decades—even centuries—of negotiation and frustration.

Taking Another Path

In response to the violence at Oka, the Canadian government established a **Royal Commission** on Aboriginal Peoples, which was to recommend

- ways to advance Aboriginal self-government
- appropriate compensation for past abuses

The commission took six years to prepare its report. During that time, it travelled across the country, listening to the testimony of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. The commission also urged a new attitude in responding to issues associated with Aboriginal peoples:

After some 500 years of a relationship that has swung from partnership to domination, from mutual respect and co-operation to paternalism [behaving like a father by setting limits] and attempted assimilation, Canada must now work out fair and lasting terms of coexistence with Aboriginal people.

Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Looking Forward, Looking Back," http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/rpt/lk_e.html.

Among the commission's recommendations are the following:

- creation of an Aboriginal parliament as another level of government
- setting up of an independent tribunal to settle land claims
- increasing funds for health care, housing, education, and employment
- creation of an Aboriginal university
- a \$2 billion increase in spending on Aboriginal peoples, to \$8 billion per year

In 1998, two years after the commission released its report, the federal government issued a **Statement of Reconciliation** in which it apologized to Aboriginal peoples for many of the abuses of the past, including those related to residential schools.

The Response to Residential Schools

The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples contained the stories of many former students of residential schools. These stories made plain the tragic effects the schools—and the government's policies of assimilation—had had on some Aboriginal people and some Aboriginal communities. But a settlement was a long time in coming, as the timeline on the next page shows.

The timeline shows the range of responses to the legacy of residential schools. Criminal charges were laid and some of the abusers were sent to jail. There was also an agreement to provide financial compensation (money paid for damage that was done) to former students. In this same agreement, money was made available for First Nations community projects and for setting up a commission to gather information about residential schools and educate the public. But there are still many former students whose cases have not been resolved and who are awaiting financial compensation or criminal justice.

Royal Commission a committee appointed by the federal government to investigate and write a report about a specific topic



Visit the *Living in a Globalizing World* website for links to information about the Friends of the Lubicon. Use the site to find information about the land claims of the land claims of the Lubicon First Nation.

1. Summarize
 - who the Lubicon are and where they live
 - issues the Lubicon First Nation have with the government
 - government response
 - actions the Friends of the Lubicon have taken
2. Would you consider participating in any of these actions as a way of responding to a legacy of historical globalization? Why or why not?

Statement of Reconciliation an official acknowledgement of wrongs committed against Aboriginal peoples, and a pledge to address those wrongs

Figure 10-12 Timeline of government responses to the residential schools

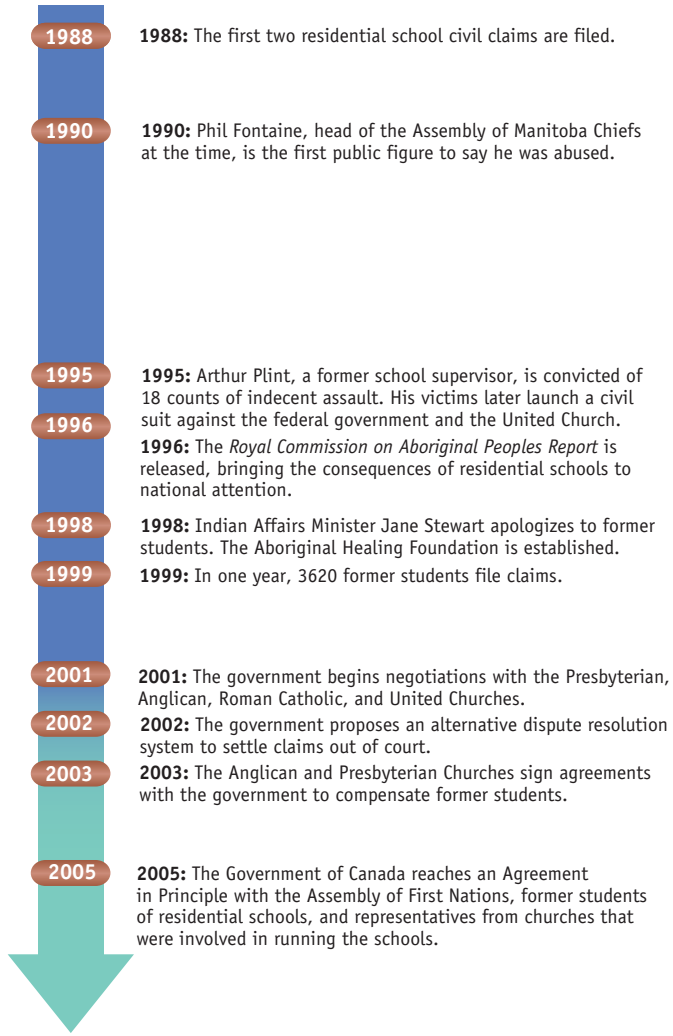


Figure 10-13 In the 1960s, the government began closing down the residential schools. When a local First Nations group objected to the closing of the Blue Quills school at St. Paul, Alberta, the government handed it over to the First Nations Council. Today, Blue Quills operates as a First Nations college, offering courses in computer technology, trade, leadership, and arts programs. Why might Aboriginal people feel it is important to have control of their own education system in this way?



Another long-term response to residential schools is that many Aboriginal communities have re-taken responsibility for their own education. Band-run schools have been set up on several reserves around the country. These schools, although government funded, are managed by Aboriginal people, who hire staff and decide what is to be taught. Language and culture are important parts of the education provided at these schools. The T’lialagi’lakw School run by the Wakashan [wuh-KAH-shun] in Alert Bay, British Columbia, is an example of a band-run school. Its student body includes both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Another step that groups of Aboriginal people have taken to resist assimilation is to reclaim the names that they had given themselves before the arrival of Europeans. The Europeans, unable to pronounce many of these names, often used French or English names. In the past few decades, Aboriginal peoples have been insisting on using their original names. For example, Siksika was the name of one of three nations that Europeans referred to collectively as the Blackfoot nation (the other two nations were the Piikani [bee-GUN-ee] and Kainai [KY-ny]). Since the word *Siksika* means “black foot” and this nation was the first to meet fur traders, the name Blackfoot was applied by the Europeans to all three nations. Although they still collectively call themselves Blackfoot, the individual nations, including the Siksika, have gone back to using their original names.

1. How did giving First Peoples French or English names contribute to the assimilation of their cultures?
2. What is the significance of Aboriginal peoples returning to their original names?

The Churches' Response

Many of the lawsuits launched by former students of residential schools also named one of the four churches that had administered the schools. At first, the government's policy was to name the churches as co-defendants in all the cases in which they were named. In some cases, the financial burden of fighting these legal battles led some dioceses and religious communities to go bankrupt, sometimes even before any money actually got to the victims.

Critics felt that this burden was unreasonable for churches to bear. They argued that the churches were, in most cases, carrying out the policies of the government. Furthermore, they asserted that forcing churches into bankruptcy was not in anybody's best interest. Others, especially those who were victimized by individual members of the clergy, felt strongly that the churches must bear responsibility for the past actions, regardless of the consequences.

Three of the four churches involved in the residential schools have apologized directly to Aboriginal peoples for their role in the schools. Many have also made other gestures of reconciliation, including healing programs, workshops, and dialogue with First Nations. For example, the pilgrimage at Lac Sainte-Anne, Alberta, was started in 1889 by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a Roman Catholic order that was very involved in running the residential schools in Alberta. The gathering, which takes place on the site of a traditional meeting ground for Aboriginal traders, has become the largest Aboriginal gathering in Canada, with 40 000 pilgrims arriving every year. In 1991, the Order apologized for its role in the abuses that occurred at the schools. As a sign of good faith, it has handed over the administration of the Lac Sainte-Anne pilgrimage to Aboriginal organizers.

Web Link

Go to the *Living in a Globalizing World* website for links to the text of the United Church's apology.

What do you think Bill Phipps means when he says, “The truth is, we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors, and therefore, we must also bear their burdens”? Do you agree with this statement?

Figure 10-14 The pilgrimage at Lac Sainte-Anne, Alberta, July 25, 1999. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate have handed over administration of the pilgrimage to Aboriginal organizers. What impact might this gesture have had on former students of residential schools?



READING GUIDE

When you finish reading each paragraph, make sure that you understand the main idea and the facts that support it. How does the information in the paragraph at right change your ideas about the Chapter Issue?

FastFacts

According to Survival International (an international Indigenous rights organization), one northern community, Davis Inlet, has the highest per capita suicide rate in the world. Why might poor living conditions be connected to a high suicide rate?

Responding to Living Conditions on Northern Reserves

Today, about 30 per cent of Canada's First Nations live on reserve lands set aside for them by the government. For some, the reserves were set up as part of the terms of treaties signed by Aboriginal people and the Canadian government in the 19th century. In many parts of the North, however, the move to settled communities took place more recently, in the 1950s. Missionaries and government officials encouraged Aboriginal people in the North to give up their nomadic life when the caribou on which they relied became scarce. Many felt they had no choice but to agree. But the sudden change in their way of life was very hard on many communities. In addition, the settlements were often located in remote areas that offered few opportunities for employment. In some cases, the government did not live up to its promises to provide essential services and housing for the communities.

Today, while some Northern reserves have managed to develop the economic and social supports they need to function as independent communities; others are in trouble. Substandard housing, overcrowding, poor infrastructure, high unemployment, and inadequate schools are just some of the problems they face. Social problems such as alcoholism, family abuse, and suicide also occur much more frequently on reserves than in the general population.

Crisis at Kashechewan

Approximately 1900 people live on the Kashechewan Reserve in Northern Ontario. The level of unemployment is at about 87 per cent, due to the lack of job opportunities in the region. The reserve was built by the government in 1957. The community is located on a flood plain, and is often subjected to spring flooding. Band Elders say that the government ignored their advice to locate the settlement farther upstream, because the government believed the supply barges would not be able to reach the community. In the present location, the water treatment plant provided by the government is located downstream from the sewage lagoon, causing high levels of *E. coli* bacteria and the need for frequent boil-water advisories. The high chlorine levels needed to keep the water clean have caused boils, rashes, nausea, and a host of other health problems among residents. For years, the community has requested that it be relocated and that its water problems be fixed, but it was not until 2005 that the story became headline news across the country and a spotlight shone on the problems facing the reserve. Consider the following list of events:

- **April 2005:** Forty members of the community are evacuated after spring flooding causes sewage to back up into their houses.
- **October 2005:** Drinking water is found to be contaminated. The media pick up the story and for a few weeks Kashechewan makes daily headlines. The sudden media attention brings an admission of failure from Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin, pledges of hundreds of



Figure 10-15 Kashechewan is located in northern Ontario.

millions of dollars to relocate the community, an evacuation, and the deployment of the Canadian army.

- **November 2005:** The cost of relocating the Kashechewan Reserve to higher ground is estimated at \$300 million and is expected to take up to five years to complete. The issue is still in the media spotlight, and the federal government agrees to finance the project.
- **January 2006:** A fire in the reserve's jail leads to the death of two men who were locked in the cells. A police officer who tried to open the door for them is badly burned. The cells were padlocked because the door locks did not work. The community's earlier requests for a new jail building had not received any response.
- **April 2006:** The community is evacuated again owing to flooding.
- **June 2006:** Jim Prentice, the Indian Affairs Minister for the Conservative government that was elected in January 2006 announces that there is not enough money to carry through with the relocation of the community. The announcement receives very little media attention.

So, what needs to be done to fix these problems? Is the government responsible? Critics feel that the amount of money required to improve the situation is too great, and that Aboriginal people should be encouraged instead to move to urban areas where jobs are more plentiful and services such as health care and education are easier to deliver. Others feel that the difficulties faced by many Aboriginal communities are in part the logical outcome of the lack of control these communities have had over their own affairs. They agree with the Royal Commission that moving toward **self-government**, accompanied by appropriate support from the government of Canada, is the real solution. The Voices feature on the following page expresses these two points of view.

Web Link

Visit the *Living in a Globalizing World* website for links to information about the Kelowna Accord, an \$8 billion agreement signed by the Liberal government and Aboriginal leaders in November 2005 to combat Aboriginal poverty. The deal was later abandoned by the newly elected Conservative government. Which areas of the Accord would you advise the present government to adopt? Why?

self-government Aboriginal people gaining control over key elements in their own communities, such as the courts and education



◀ **Figure 10-16** These boys are standing in front of a home in Kashechewan. What evidence can you see in this photograph of the poor conditions on reserves mentioned in the text?

Voices

Two Views of Self-Government

The following editorial was written in the aftermath of a fire on the Kashechewan Reserve in which two men died.

... In purely monetary terms, Ottawa has been enormously generous to reserve Indians—cutting large cheques every time a new crisis emerges. ... But the manner in which these funds are administered, effectively bribing Aboriginals to live in remote communities with no jobs, no economic prospects, and no real democracy, is cruel. The sad truth is that the most humane thing to be done with places like Kashechewan is for them to be abandoned and their inhabitants integrated into urban job centres. As the latest tragedy shows, the preposterous fantasy that self-government will cure such communities ... is literally killing Canada's natives.

Source: Editorial, *National Post*, January 11, 2006.

This speech by Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine presents his views on why self-government is so important to improving life on reserves.

I am sure many Canadians ask themselves, why does poverty among First Nations continue to persist? ... Haven't we thrown enough money at the problem already?

...

Poverty can only be undone by dismantling the structures that created it in the first place (structures like the Indian Act). We must recognize that this also means that it will be necessary to replace this with a commitment to new structures, structures that recognize and implement the jurisdictional [legal] responsibilities of First Nations governments.

Source: Assembly of First Nations Leader Phil Fontaine, Opening remarks at First Ministers Meeting, November 24, 2005.



Figure 10-17 Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine. Based on what you've read so far in this chapter, evaluate why he feels that structures like the Indian Act are responsible for the poverty on Aboriginal reserves.

- 1 Compare Phil Fontaine's and the *National Post*'s proposed causes of and solutions to the poverty and social problems on reserves. Which of these points of view seems more reasonable to you? Discuss with a small group. Refer to the Skill Path in Chapter 4 (pages 55–56) to review good team-working skills.

Explore the Issues


- 1 **Write a Journal.** A diary or journal entry is a personal account of events as experienced by an individual. It is a great way to keep track of family history. Write a series of three diary or journal entries that may reflect the point of view of a member of the Kashechewan First Nation. The entries should span the period from April 2005 to the present. Try to give a sense of how your life has been affected by the events and media interest, and by the responses of the government.

- 2 **Compare and Contrast.**
 - a) With a small team, conduct research into two reserves—the Tsuu T'ina [tsoo-TIN-uh] Reserve outside Calgary and one reserve of your team's choice—and copy and complete a chart using the headings shown below.
 - b) Without judging the reserves, compare and contrast their approaches. Analyze what factors may contribute to their approaches being the same or different. **SKILL PATH**

Reserve	Location	Steps Taken to Deal with the Effects of Colonization	Economic Opportunities (employment, sustainable industry)	Steps Taken to Access Opportunities of Globalization

Chapter Summary and Reflection

Apply and Extend Ideas

- 1 With a small group, complete the following tasks:
 - Decide on an Aboriginal celebrity who would be a good spokesperson for a campaign dealing with an issue affecting Aboriginal people in Canada today.
 - Write a song lyric, using the tune from an existing protest song, that would be effective in getting information about the problem across to Canadians in all parts of the country.
 - Record or perform (perhaps using karaoke) your song for the class.
- 2 You will be working in pairs for this assignment. Your objective is to investigate how Aboriginal people lived before contact with Europeans. This assignment should give you a very clear understanding of how much life has changed for the Aboriginal people of Canada. Use the links on the *Living in a Globalizing World* website to get started with your research.
 - a) Decide where in Canada you will live.
 - Explain the climate of this area.
 - List the possible food sources.
 - Explain the tools you will use to hunt and where these tools came from (for example, what the tools are made of and how you made them).
 - b) Choose one Canadian First Nation on which you will model your community and find out how the community is structured. Create a diagram of your community. Show where the homes are located, what the land is used for within your community, and so on.
 - c) Explain how the family is structured (for example, who is in charge, the role of each family member, and so on).
 - d) Write or illustrate a comparison between your life today and the one you would have lived 400 years ago and you outlined in a), b), and c). Explain how these changes happened.

Practise Your Skill

- 3 Research the following recent disputes over Aboriginal rights:
 - Gustafson Lake, BC
 - Oka, Québec
 - Ipperwash, Ontario
 - Caledonia, Ontario
 - Burnt Church, Nova ScotiaCompare these situations with the Lubicon case, which you researched on page 167. Use the skill of comparing and contrasting historical experiences that you learned in this chapter's Skill Path.

What conclusions can you draw about Canada's treatment of unresolved land claims? Form a small group to discuss your findings.

SKILL PATH

Reflect on the Chapter Issue

In this chapter, you examined various consequences of historical globalization and imperialist policies toward Aboriginal people that are still affecting us today. You analyzed various responses to the legacies of unresolved land claims, poor conditions on reserves, and residential schools. You are now ready to respond to the Chapter Issue: *What would be a fair and just response to the legacies of historical globalization?* As you may have gathered from the chapter, the legacies of historical globalization come in many forms, and for each there are many ways to respond. With your class, choose one legacy of historical globalization that hits close to home. For example, perhaps you know of an unresolved land claim in your region. First have a class brainstorming session to generate a variety of possible responses to this legacy. Consider responses that could be taken by a government, your class, or an individual. Evaluate the various possibilities and decide, by consensus, on the responses that you agree would be fair and just.

This exploration will help you complete the development of a personal point of view about the Main Issue for Part 2: *Should people in Canada respond to the legacies of historical globalization?*