



INDIGENOUS
RIGHTS
NOW!

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND THE STATE

1867 - Present

Aboriginal Lands

- Government is changing policies towards aboriginal peoples - **Canada needs more land**
- 1869 Bought Rupert's Land

Plans to settle colonists



The Metis & the Creation of Manitoba

- Federal government's **ideas are a threat** to many indigenous groups including the **Metis**
- Mixed cultural backgrounds of French and Aboriginal descent
- Metis is NOT just “mixed”; there are specific traditions and identities that happened over time

Louis Riel (1844-1885)

- Metis, Roman Catholic
- Went to school in Montreal before moving back to Manitoba



Louis Riel (1844-1885)

- Spoke **michif** (metis language), French, English, and other indigenous languages
- Had good understanding of English/Canadian culture and aboriginal cultures

Red River Rebellion/Resistance

- 1869: Riel stops surveyors from entering the territory
 - Seized Fort Garry (Winnipeg)
 - Organized elections and made **Provisional Government**
 - Creates list of rights to send to Ottawa
 - Land, religious, linguistic rights



Provisional Metis Government



Red River Rebellion/Resistance

- Riel orders death of Thomas Scott (Federal Government Land Surveyor)
 - Ontarians see Riel as a **murderer**
 - Quebecers see Riel as a **hero**

WHY???

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5YrtvO7FD>

Creation of Manitoba

- 1870 Ottawa accepts Metis' list of rights and adopt **Manitoba Act**
 - Promises some linguistic rights
 - **Bilingual province**, separate catholic/protestant schools, members of Canadian parliament
 - Later would abolish rights of francophone Catholics (sworn to uphold)



Numbered Treaties and Reserves

- To avoid another resistance, the government used **numbered treaties** to take indigenous lands
- Exchanged land for money



Numbered Treaties and Reserves

- Most Indigenous groups now live on **reservations**
 - Government owned land
- Pushed indigenous people away to allow for white colonization of the West



Beginning of a second rebellion...

- 1871 **British Columbia** added into Confederation caused more problems...
- Railway brought more settlers, forcing more indigenous peoples out



Beginning of a second rebellion...

- **Over hunting of bison** led to starvation and famine
- 1885 Cree Chief Big Bear calls for more autonomy and land on reserves

1885 Northwest Rebellion

- Metis didn't have ownership over lands in reserves (nor did any indigenous group)
- Louis Riel sent new list of rights to Ottawa to respect rights of indigenous peoples
 - Encouraged Metis to take up arms

1885 Northwest Rebellion

Ottawa didn't play
games...army came to capture
and **repress** the Cree and
Metis movements

Louis Riel hung in 1885 for high
treason, 8 others hung



The “Indian” Act 1876

- Goal: to **assimilate and eradicate** aboriginal peoples
- Encouraged to abandon languages, culture and traditional practices to integrate into Canadian society

Document 1 – Indian Act

In 1876 the Canadian government adopted the Indian Act, by which Aboriginal peoples were [then] considered as minors. From that time onward Aboriginal people can no longer exercise influence over official power ... In addition to [taking] lands occupied by Aboriginal nations the Canadian government aimed to assimilate the Aboriginal peoples ... to encourage them to abandon their language, cultures and traditional economic activities in order to integrate into Canadian society.

Christophe HORGUELIN et Maude LADOUCEUR, Panoramas, History and Citizenship Education, Secondary Cycle Two, Year 2, Vol. 1, (Montréal, Chenelière Éducation), 146.

The “Indian” Act 1876

- All aboriginal people considered **wards of the state** - can't make decisions for themselves
- THIS IS STILL A LEGAL DOCUMENT!

Aboriginal Peoples Today



- There is some progress...
- **Truth and Reconciliation** commission (residential school survivor stories, makes recommendations to improve relations)



Aboriginal Peoples Today

- Influential indigenous leaders continue to force the government to respect their rights and treaties
- PM Trudeau has promised change, but will it happen?

Aboriginal Demands Today

1. Political **autonomy**
2. Respect of indigenous culture
3. Respect of indigenous language
4. Respecting treaty rights



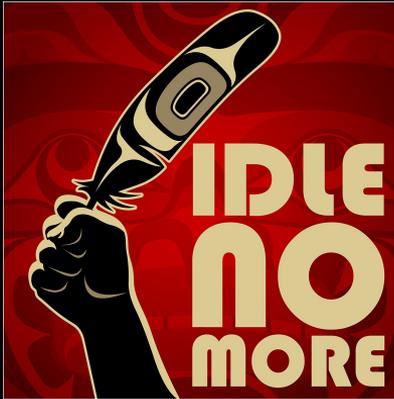
How do Aboriginal Peoples influence the State?



- Address **protests** to the United Nations
 - Based on human rights violations by the government of Canada
- Forming provisional governments at Red River

How do Aboriginal Peoples influence the State?

- Breaching peace
 - Idle NO More, **Oka Crisis 1990**, Dakota Access Pipeline, protests, blocking roads, etc.



Document 4

Aboriginal peoples increasingly rely on favourable international public opinion resulting from increased public awareness of Aboriginal issues. The reporting of events such as the Oka crisis in Québec, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples... human rights issues... have made Canadians more knowledgeable about Aboriginal matters.

John Roberts, *First Nations, Inuits, and Métis Peoples: Exploring their Past, Present and Future*, (Toronto, Emond Montgomery Publications Ltd.), p. 141-142.

What are the effects?

- Hanging of Louis Riel 1885
 - Quebec solidarity, leading to the creation of the Parti Nationale

The James Bay
and Northern Québec
Agreement



2

On November 22 . . . the largest public meeting ever seen in Québec was held on the Champ-de-Mars, in Montréal. From 40 000 to 50 000 people gathered to hear a steady stream of speakers. All expressed their solidarity with Riel and harshly criticized the federal government. Honoré Mercier, in a famous speech beginning with the words: "Our brother Riel is dead" called for the formation of a party that would unite all the forces of the nation.

Jacques Lacoursière et al., *Canada-Québec, 1534-2000*, (Sillery: Septentrion, 2000), 361. [Translation]

Document 1

In 1975, the Cree and the Inuit of Québec signed the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* with Québec and Ottawa, which authorized Hydro-Québec to construct dams on their territories in exchange for financial compensation and certain rights.

http://www2.canadiana.ca/citm/themes/aboriginals/aboriginals12_e.html#revision (Accessed Dec. 8, 2010)

What are the effects?

- **Northern Quebec Agreement 1975**
 - Deal with Northern Cree
 - Economically beneficial, they forced themselves to be part of the process
 - Took the Provincial government to court
 - **First modern land claim**

What are the effects?

- **Paix des Braves** 2002
 - Signed by Cree and Quebec Government
 - Partnership for land development
 - Compliance of principles of **sustainable development** and traditional lifestyles

Document 3

The *Paix des Braves* of 2002 made the Cree partners in the economic development of their region and secured them a sizeable income for 50 years in exchange for Hydro-Québec's right to construct dams along the Rivière Rupert.

Christophe HORGUELIN et Maude LADOUCEUR, *Panoramas, History and Citizenship Education, Secondary Cycle Two, Year 2, Vol. 2*, (Montréal, Chenelière Éducation), p. 160.



Inspiring News...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm8qzcV8qDs>

