



Lecture 4

Canada's Historical Geography

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Introduction

- Canada as a young and an old country
- Three influential events:
 - The arrival of the first people in North America
 - The colonization of North America by France and England
 - The influx of people from Central Europe and czarist Russia
- Tensions between regions and groups: 4 faultlines

The First People

- Archeologists estimate North America's first people were Old World hunters who arrived via the Beringia land bridge 40,000 years ago
 - The Great Melt began around 15,000 years ago
 - The Old World hunters migrated into the heart of North America
- Two theories of diffusion in North America
 - The Corridor theory
 - The Sea Route theory

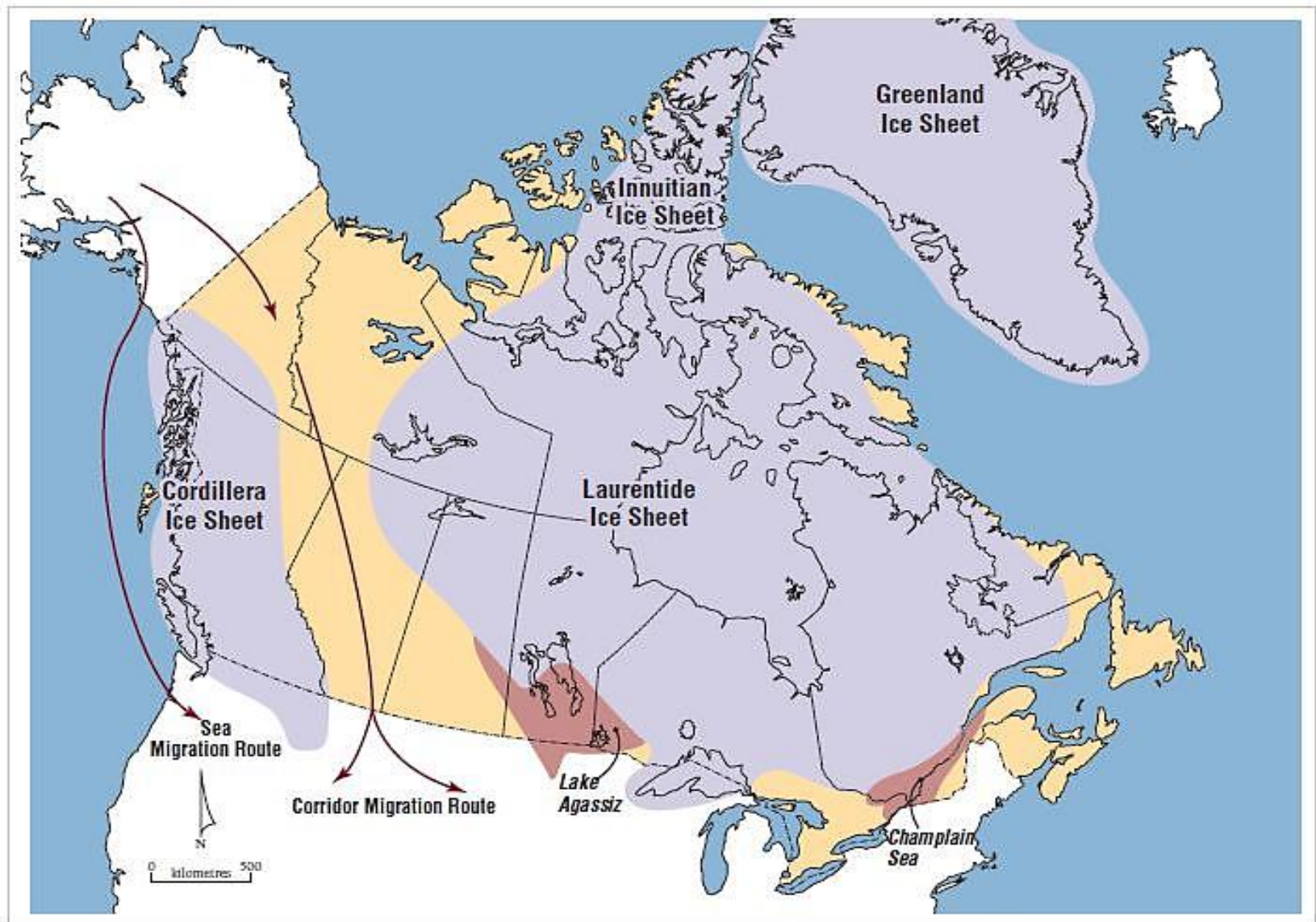


Figure 3.1 Migration routes into North America

Archaeologists originally believed that the Corridor Route allowed the descendants of the Old World hunters to reach the heart of North America. More recently, the Sea Route has gained favour because it explains how human beings could have arrived south of the ice sheet before the Great Melt created the ice-free corridor between the two ice sheets. During this Great Melt, huge amounts of fresh water surged to the oceans while some formed huge glacial lakes such as Lake Agassiz. As explained in Vignette 2.6, however, the Champlain Sea was not a glacial lake but an extension of the Atlantic Ocean into the isostatically depressed valley of the St Lawrence River.

The First People, cont'd

- Paleo-Indians
 - Descendants of the Old World hunters
 - Devised fluted spear points, dating 11,500 BP
 - Three groups:
 - Clovis culture 11,500 to 10,500 BP
 - Folsom culture 11,000 to 10,200 BP
 - Plano culture 10,000 to 8,000 BP

The First People, cont'd

- Link between geographic territory and hunting societies marked development of Paleo-Indian culture areas
- Culture areas distinguished by:
 - A common set of natural conditions that resulted in similar plants and animals
 - Inhabitants who used a common set of hunting, fishing, and food-gathering techniques and tools

The First People, cont'd

- Indians
 - Most archaeologists believe Algonquians (Cree, Ojibwa) are direct descendants of Paleo-Indians
 - The Athapaskans represent a distinct culture
 - Hunting big-game animals
 - Trade
 - Spread of agriculture

The First People, cont'd

- Arctic Migration
 - People were able to occupy the Arctic Lands after the melting of the ice sheets and with the development of sea-based hunting
 - Paleo-Eskimos 5,000 BP
 - Dorset culture 3,000 BP
 - Thule culture 1,000 BP

The First People, cont'd

- Initial contacts
 - Europeans considered the New World terra nullius or empty lands, despite the fact that the descendants of Old World hunters occupied North and South America
 - There may have been as many as 500,000 Indians and Inuit living in Canada at the time of first contact
 - Population declined due to loss of hunting grounds to European settlers, spread of new diseases, and conflicts

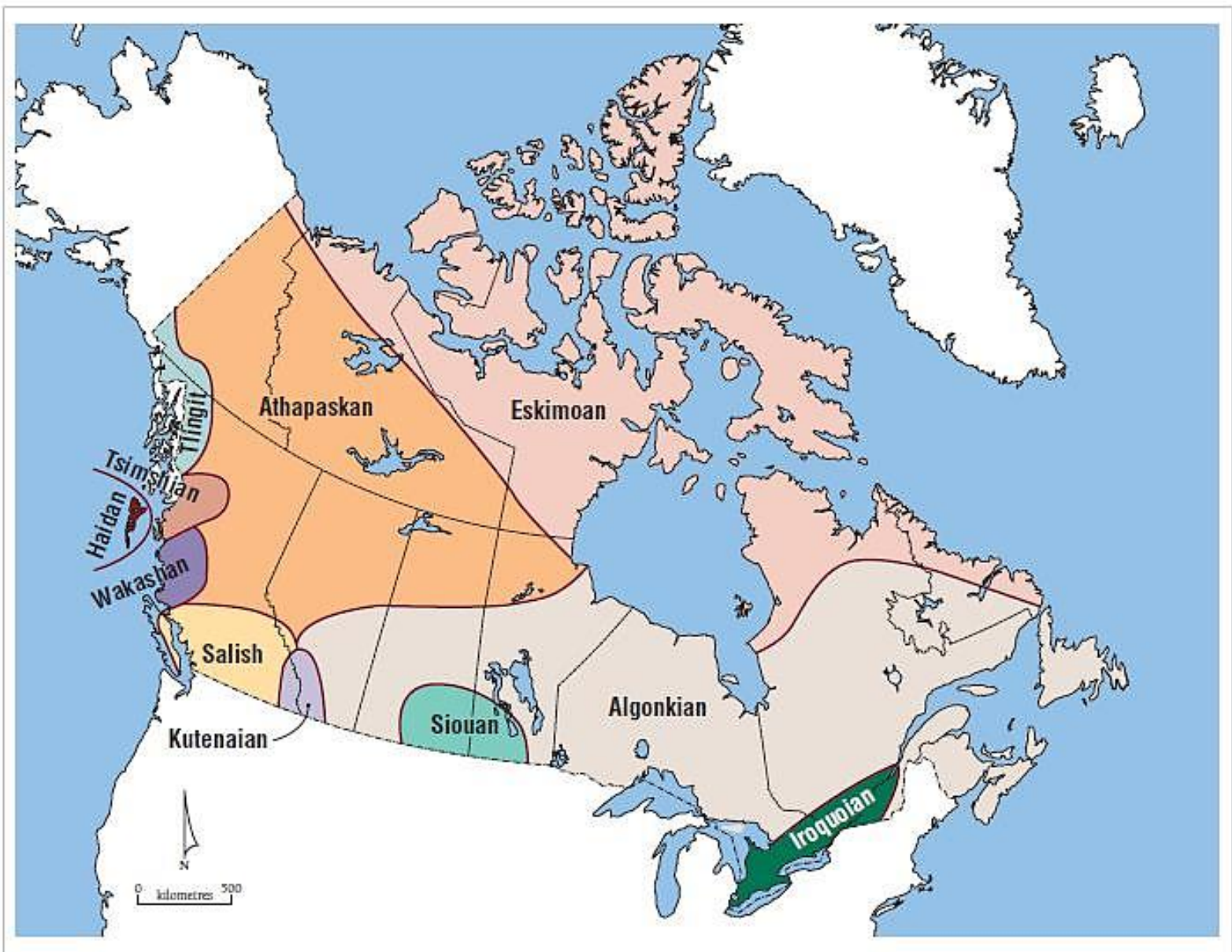


Figure 3.3 Aboriginal language families

Aboriginal peoples in Canada form a very diverse population. At the time of contact, there were over 50 distinct Aboriginal languages spoken. These languages formed 11 language families, five of which were in one natural cultural region, the Northwest Coast. Following contact, language loss was swift. By the end of the twentieth century, only three Aboriginal languages, Cree, Inuktitut, and Ojibwa, had over 20,000 speakers.

The Second People

- Colonization of North America by the French and the British was the second major development in Canada's early history
- Establishment and development of New France
 - Québec City was the first permanent settlement in Canada, founded in 1608
 - By 1750, the French Canadians constituted most of the population in New France
 - Progressive impacts on first peoples

The Second People, cont'd

- British conquest of New France
- First major wave of British immigrants: Loyalists fleeing American War of Independence (1775–83)
- Threats of America's Manifest Destiny, the War of 1812, and American and British expansion
- Second major wave of British and Irish immigrants occurred in first half of 19th century



Photo 3.4

The American Revolution (1775–83) divided the residents of the Thirteen Colonies. With the defeat of British forces, those British subjects who did not support the revolutionary cause were forced to leave, losing their property and sometimes their lives. Considered traitors by Americans, Loyalists were often subjected to mob violence.

The Second People, cont'd

- The two waves of British immigrants greatly changed Canada
- Demographic balance of power shifted from a French-Canadian majority to an English-speaking one
- By the 1860s, Canada's ethnic character varied by region

The Second People, cont'd

- Confederation (1867) involved joining of four colonies: Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Québec), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick
- Varying perspectives on Confederation
 - Britain: essential to withstand American annexation
 - Québec: concern for language, religion, culture
 - Maritimes: economy oriented to sea not Central Canada



Ron Garnett/AirScapes.ca

Photo 3.6

The confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers is known as the Forks. Today, the Forks lies in the heart of Winnipeg. In times past, the strategic location of the Forks provided Plains Indians with ready access by canoe to the lands south of the forty-ninth parallel and to the vast western interior. In 1738, the French explorer La Vérendrye established Fort Rouge at the Forks. With the founding of the Red River Settlement in 1812, the Forks became its focal point.

Table 3.2 Population of the Red River Settlement, 1869

Ethnic Group	Population Size	Population Percentage
Whites born in Canada	294	2.5
Whites born in Britain or a foreign country	524	4.4
Indians	558	4.7
Whites born in Red River	747	6.2
English-speaking Métis	4,083	34.1
French-speaking Métis	5,757	48.1
Total Population	11,963	100.0

Source: Adapted from Lower (1983: 96).

The Second People, cont'd

- Separation of British and French represents greatest challenge to national unity
- Two visions:
 - Confederation about two founding peoples (French and English) vs. collection of equal provinces in the context of British dominance

The Third People

- In early part of 20th century, Western Canada was settled in large part by neither English-Canadian nor French-Canadian farmers
- Settlement of West followed:
 - Ottawa obtaining land of Hudson's Bay Company (1870)
 - The Dominion Lands Act (1872)
 - Completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (1885)

The Third People, cont'd

- Massive immigration of Europeans linked to policies of Clifford Sifton
- Perceived importance of settlement:
 - Counter threat of American expansion
 - Desire to establish agricultural (grain) economy
 - Turned attention to people of Central Europe, Scandinavia, and czarist Russia

The Third People, cont'd

- Implications for French/English character of the country? For First Nations?
- Sifton's immigration policy changed the face of Canada
- Cultural/linguistic difference later became powerful force for multiculturalism and pluralism in English-speaking Canada

Territorial Evolution of Canada

- British North America Act (1 July 1867)
 - United 4 colonies into the Dominion of Canada
- Expansion of territorial extent
 - Within a decade after Confederation, Canada became second-largest country in the world

Territorial Evolution of Canada, cont'd

- Evolution of national boundaries
 - Adjustment of boundaries (Canada–US border)
 - Aboriginal rights
- Evolution of internal boundaries
 - Extended boundaries and the creation of new provinces and territories

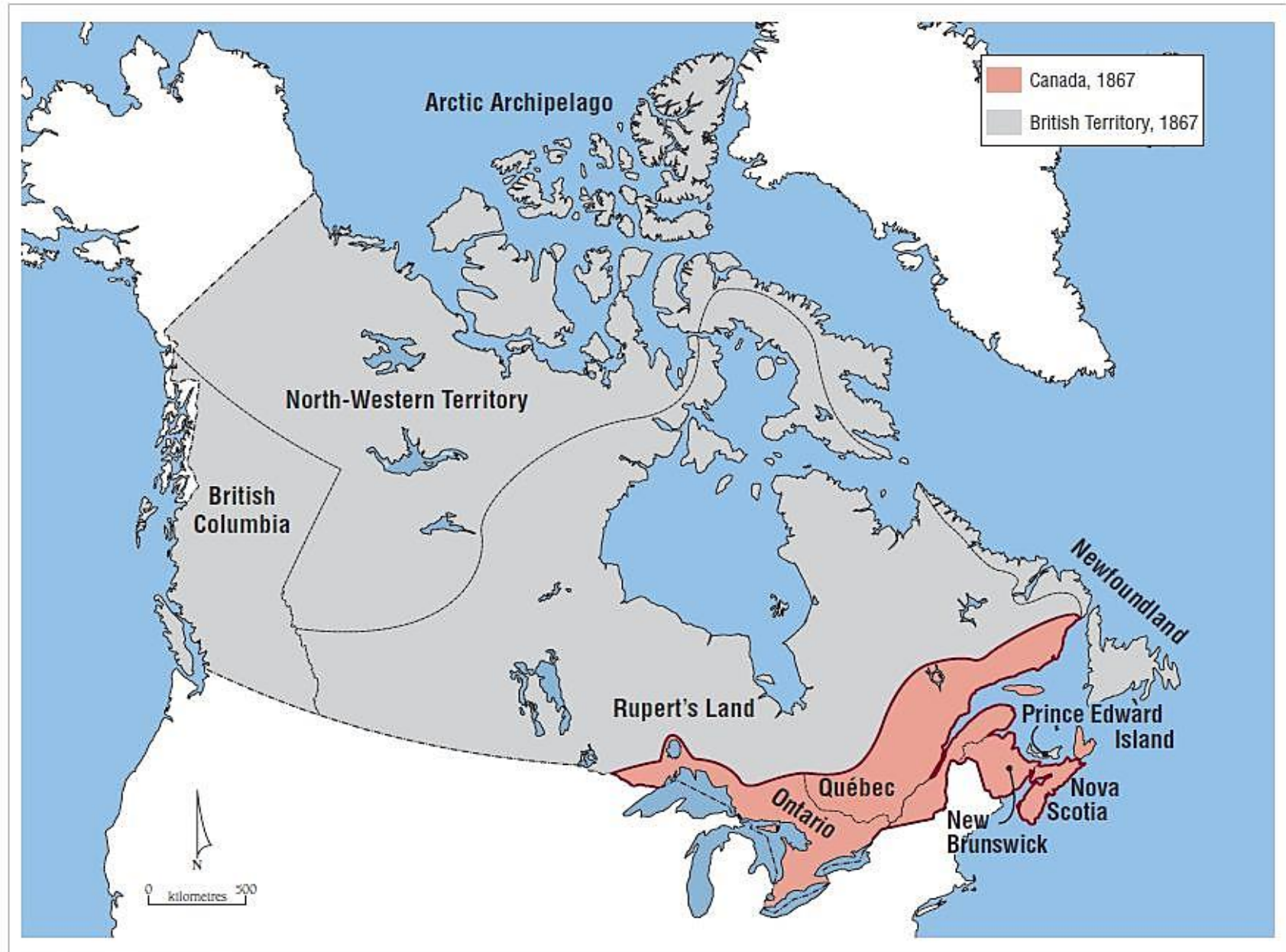


Figure 3.4 Canada, 1867

At Confederation, Canada was only a fraction of its current territorial extent. The Hudson's Bay Company controlled most of British North America, including Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory.

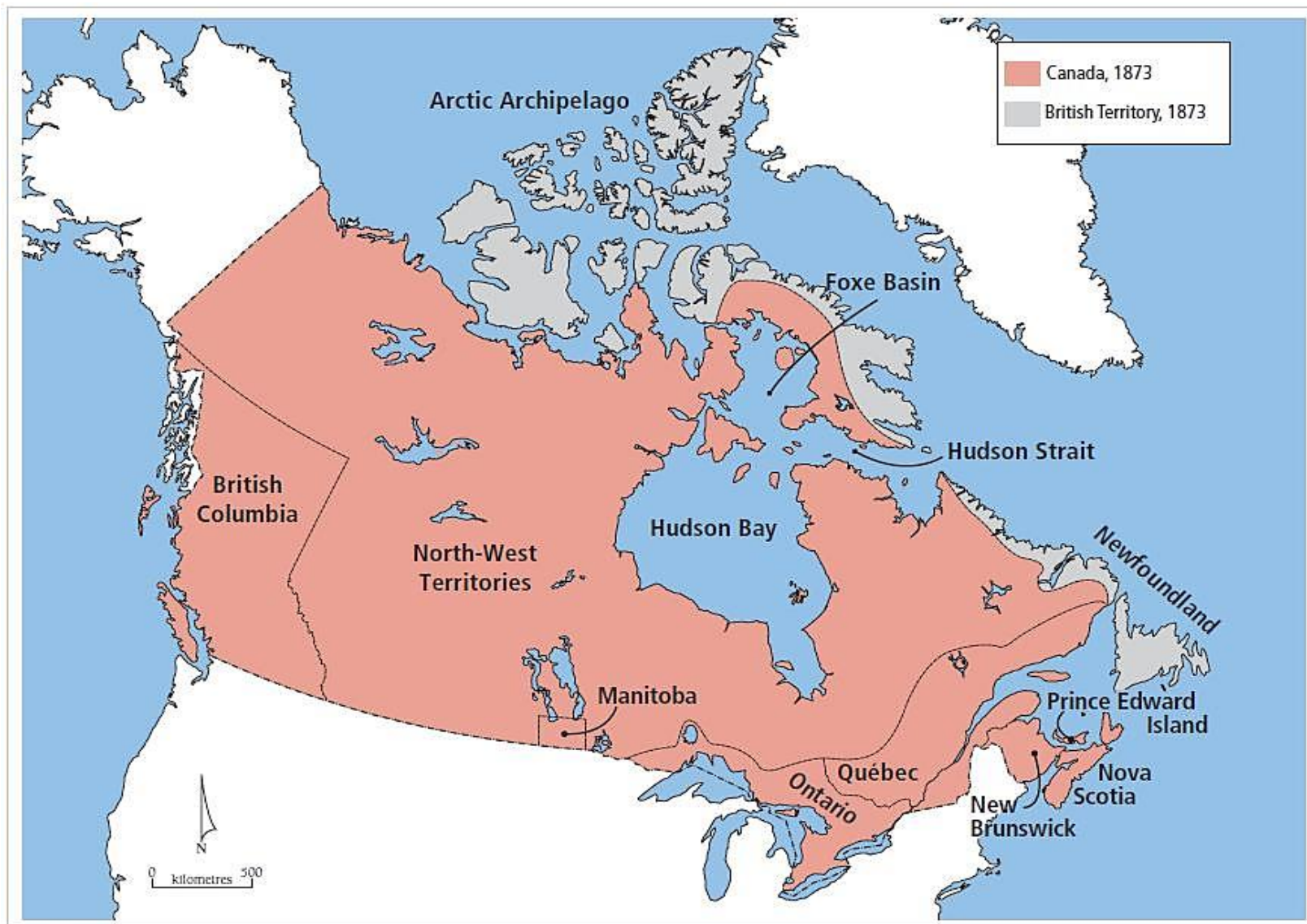


Figure 3.5 Canada, 1873

Canada's geographic extent increased between 1867 and 1873. During that short span of time, Canada had obtained the vast Hudson's Bay Company lands (including the Red River Settlement and a small part of the Arctic Archipelago whose streams flow into Hudson Bay and Foxe Basin) as well as two British colonies (British Columbia and Prince Edward Island). For the North-Western Territory and Rupert's Land, the Crown paid the HBC £300,000, granted the Company one-twentieth of the lands in the Canadian Prairies, and allowed it to keep its 120 trading posts and adjoining land. In 1870, these lands were renamed the North-West Territories. In 1880, Britain transferred the Arctic Archipelago to Canada. The details of this transfer are found in Vignette 3.4.

Table 3.11 Population by Colony or Province, 1841–1871 (%)

Colony/Province	1841	1851	1861	1871
Ontario	33.0	41.1	45.2	46.5
Québec	45.0	38.5	36.0	34.2
Nova Scotia	13.0	12.0	10.7	11.1
New Brunswick	9.0	8.4	8.1	8.2
Manitoba				< 0.1
British Columbia				< 0.8
Total per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: McVey and Kalbach (1995: 38). © 1995 Nelson Education Ltd. Reproduced by permission. www.cengage.com/permissions

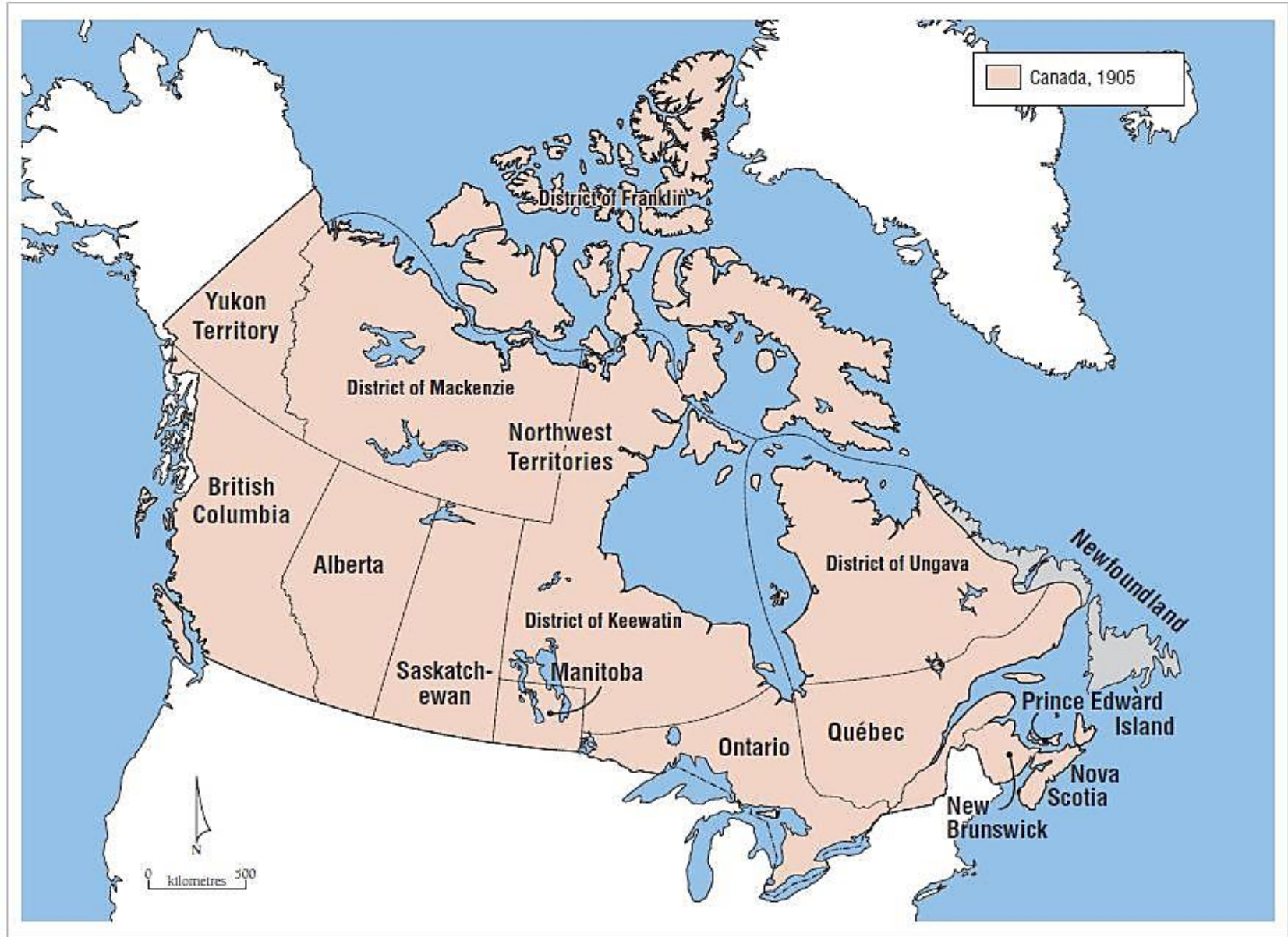


Figure 3.6 Canada, 1905

By 1905, two new provinces (Alberta and Saskatchewan) and two territories (Yukon and the Northwest Territories) were created out of the North-West Territories and the Arctic Archipelago, which was ceded to Canada in 1880 and later formed the District of Franklin. As well, the provinces of Ontario, Québec, and Manitoba expanded their boundaries into the former North-West Territories.

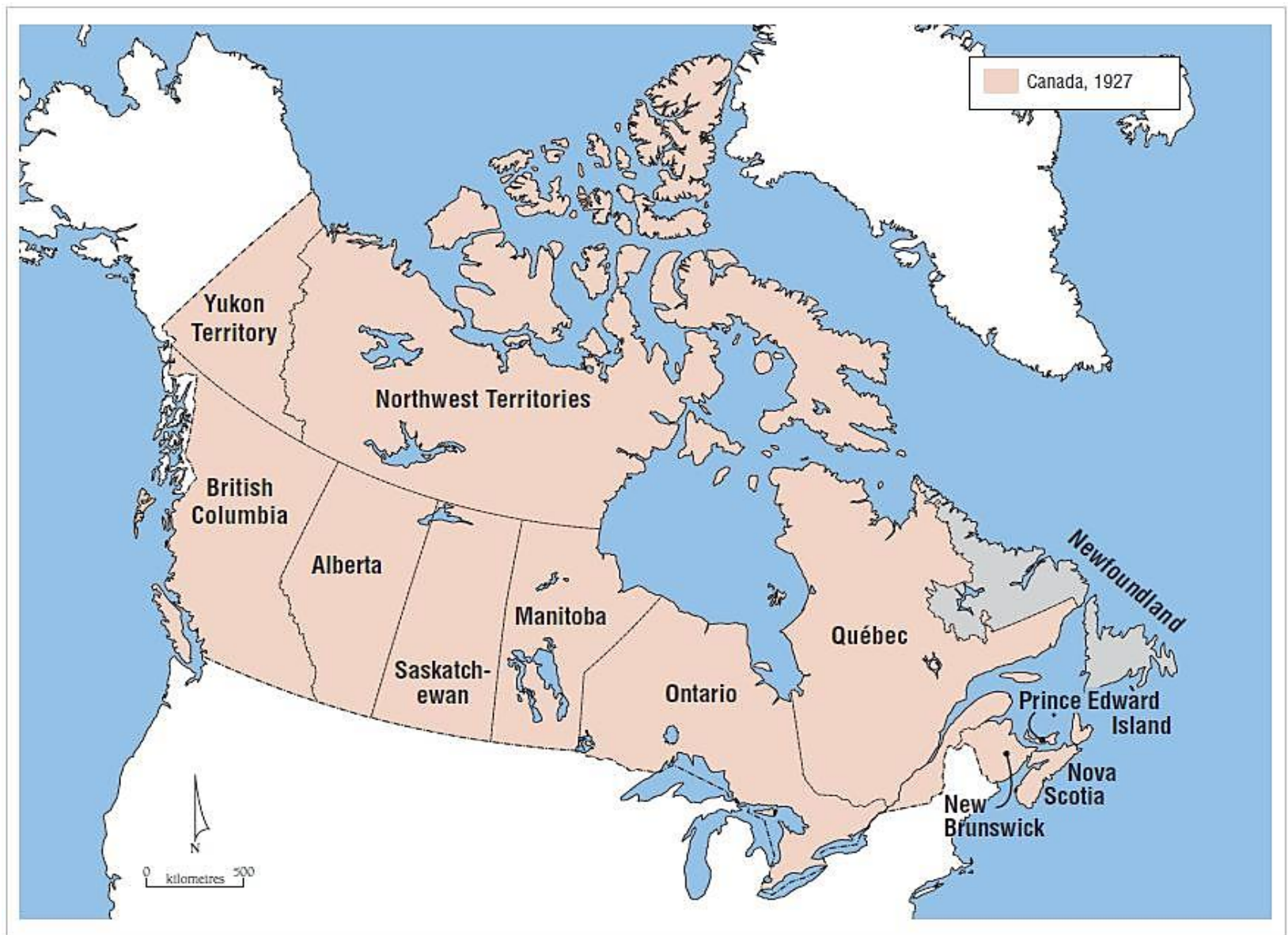


Figure 3.7 Canada, 1927

The complicated history of Lower Canada and Newfoundland provided ample justification for both parties to claim the land between the Northern Divide and the coastal strip associated with the fisheries. In 1927, the Privy Council of the British Parliament ruled in favour of Newfoundland by selecting the watershed boundary, a decision that dated back to 1670 when King Charles II created Rupert's Land. In 1912 Ontario, Québec, and Manitoba gained additional northern lands to reach their current geographic size.

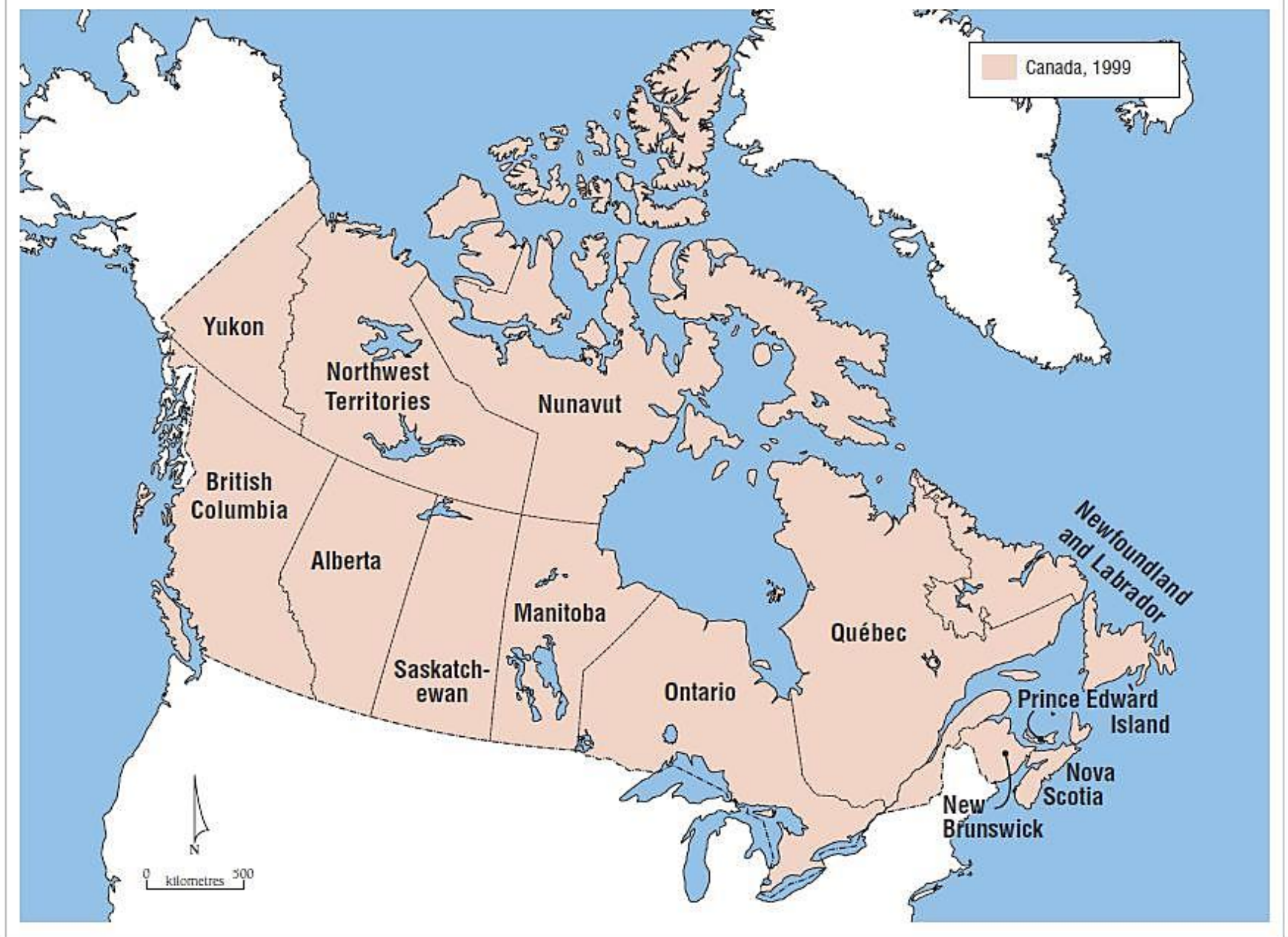


Figure 3.8 Canada, 1999

On 1 April 1999, Nunavut became a territory.

Table 3.4 Timeline: Territorial Evolution of Canada

Date	Event
1867	Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia unite to form the Dominion of Canada.
1870	The Hudson's Bay Company's lands are transferred by Britain to Canada. The Red River colony enters Confederation as the province of Manitoba.
1871	British Columbia joins Canada.
1873	Prince Edward Island becomes the seventh province of Canada.
1880	Great Britain transfers its claim to the Arctic Archipelago to Canada.
1949	Newfoundland joins Canada to become the tenth province.

Table 3.5 Timeline: Evolution of Canada's Internal Boundaries

Date	Event
1881	Ottawa enlarges the boundaries of Manitoba.
1898	Ottawa approves extension of Québec's northern limit to the Eastmain River.
1899	Ottawa decides to set Ontario's western boundary at the Lake of the Woods and extend its northern boundary to the Albany River and James Bay.
1905	Ottawa announces the creation of two new provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan.
1912	Ottawa redefines the boundaries of Manitoba, Ontario, and Québec, extending them to their present position.
1927	Great Britain sets the boundary between Québec and Labrador as the Northern Divide. Québec has never accepted this decision.
1999	A new territory, Nunavut, is hived off from the Northwest Territories in the eastern Arctic.