

Land-Claims History

AS YOU READ

Through land claims, Aboriginal peoples assert many of their rights as indigenous peoples in North America. Claiming land rights is akin to claiming rights to culture and self-determination. Through land, groups are often better able to ensure their cultures' future.

Pages 118–121 explore the early history of land claims in Canada. Review the major concepts you have read about in the textbook so far, such as Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal title, inherent rights, land rights, treaty rights, self-determination, self-government, and sovereignty. Make a list of these concepts and be sure you understand each. As you read, consider how these ideas relate to land claims. Make notes each time you see a connection between what you are reading in this section and what you learned earlier.

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF LAND CLAIMS STRETCH BACK TO THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION OF 1763. THE PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZED ABORIGINAL TITLE TO THE LAND AND ESTABLISHED THE CROWN'S EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO

negotiate the “extinguishment” of that title.

Over the next century and a half, the government and many First

Nations signed treaties. In the government's view, these gave the Crown ownership of Canada. In return, the Crown promised to reserve land for the First Nations and to provide them with payments of cash and goods, ongoing support in areas such as education, and continued traditional use of the lands covered by treaties.

Large areas of the country, along with the many people living there, were completely left out of the treaty process. For example, no Métis or Inuit groups signed any treaties. Some First Nations were also left out. Many of these groups argue that they still hold legal title to their traditional lands. Even groups that did sign treaties sometimes contend that the government failed to honour its obligations, or to uphold promised land rights.

Through land-claims negotiations, Aboriginal groups and governments (both federal and provincial) try to resolve these disputes.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 continues to loom large in Canada today. When Canada patriated its constitution in 1982, Aboriginal peoples made sure the constitution protected their rights as affirmed by the Royal Proclamation.

Gkisedtanamoogk, of the Wabanaki First Nation from Burnt Church, New Brunswick, participates in a land-claims demonstration outside the Supreme Court on June 21, 2001. Protestors laid hundreds of blankets on the lawn. What statement do you think the protestors were trying to make with the blankets?



THE NISGA'A NATION PETITION

When British Columbia became a province in 1871, the federal government planned to aggressively pursue treaties there, just as it had across the prairies. But B.C.'s first lieutenant-governor, Joseph Trutch, had other ideas. He did not believe that First Nations had land rights and advised Canada's prime minister,



Nisga'a Chief Israel Sgat'iin, shown here in a robe of silver-tipped grizzly bear, was a staunch defender of his nation's traditional lands. In 1886, he had two government surveyors "escorted" out of the Nass Valley. "These are our mountains and our river," he reportedly said.

John A. Macdonald, not to pursue treaties in B.C.

The Nisga'a Nation of northwestern B.C. has spearheaded Aboriginal land-rights activism in Canada. In the 1880s, the Nisga'a sent delegations to Ottawa and Victoria to defend their land rights, but got no response. In 1890, they established the Nisga'a Land Committee to defend their interests.

In 1913, the committee sent a formal petition to the British government. The petition argued that the Nisga'a had never surrendered their land under the terms of Britain's Royal Proclamation of 1763. It called for negotiations.

The petition marked an important event in Canada's history: the first time a First Nation used European law to argue for its rights.

LAND CLAIMS: A LOADED TERM?

In the Cree language, a land claim is described as *kâwi ta tipeyih tamihk askiy* (to own the land again). In Blackfoot, a land claim is *iihtai'tsskao'pistsi ksaahkoistsi i'tomoootspistsi* (fighting for lands that were taken away from us.) However, many Aboriginal peoples reject the term *land claims*. They see land as their inherent Aboriginal right, not something they need to claim and defend.

That said, land claims are an historical, political, and legal reality in Canada. The term has widespread use, even among those who reject its validity. By using it in this book, we do not intend any negative reflection on Aboriginal beliefs or aspirations.

... [T]he term "Land Claim" is itself both a misleading title and an insult to First Nations. If there is any doubt as to ownership, the benefit of the doubt must go to the original owners — the First Nations. Why should we have to claim our own lands? The burden of proof of legal title or interest in First Nations lands must rest with Canada.

— Six Nations of the Grand River Territory,
"Inadequacies of the Federal Land Claims Policies"

REFLECTION

What is your opinion of the term *land claim*? Do you agree with the perspective of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory? Explain your answer.

However, the British government referred the problem back to Canada's government — and little happened.

LAND CLAIMS AND THE INDIAN ACT

In terms of land claims, the 1876 Indian Act has had two lasting effects. In the act, the federal government made itself the arbiter of who qualified as a Status Indian. For years, the federal government



refused to recognize land claims from anyone except Status Indians. This disqualified Inuit people, Métis people, and First Nations people without status under the Indian Act.

The Indian Act also established roadblocks for First Nations people who qualified to submit land claims. For example, in 1927, partly in response to the Nisga'a petition, the federal government amended the act to make it illegal for First Nations to raise money to pursue land claims. This restriction remained in place until 1951.

THE CALDER CASE

After 1951, revisions to the Indian Act meant that First Nations could once again organize to pursue land rights. In 1955, the Nisga'a re-established their land committee, re-naming it the Nisga'a Tribal Council.

In 1967, the council launched a court battle that became known as the Calder case, named after council president Dr. Frank Calder. The Nisga'a contended that they still held legal title to their traditional lands, since they had never signed a treaty. Their case went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. However, the court could not reach consensus on the validity of the Nisga'a claim and ended up rejecting it on a technicality.

In its ruling, however, the court declared that, in the absence of an agreement in which the Crown explicitly stated its intention to extinguish title to land, Aboriginal peoples could still hold rights to land and resources. This meant Aboriginal title legally pre-existed any declarations by the Crown regarding sovereignty.

CEDED AND NON-CEDED LANDS: WHERE ARE THEY?

Treaties cover many parts of Canada. The Canadian government generally considers these areas **ceded lands** — given up by First Nations. In the government's view, this was the point of treaty making and in keeping with the intentions of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

Many First Nations believe, however, that their ancestors did not understand that treaties were aimed at ending their Aboriginal title and rights to land. They believe that their ancestors saw the treaties as agreements to share some of their land for certain purposes, such as agriculture, while retaining inherent rights to the land. They also argue that, according to oral tradition, the written treaties fail to accurately reflect important verbal agreements that were part of the negotiations. In their view, First Nations have never given up Aboriginal rights to their lands.

A large part of Canada remains outside any treaty. These are **non-ceded lands**, areas

Aboriginal peoples never made agreements to share. These lands include some of Canada's most remote regions, which have not experienced the pressures of settlement and development like those that triggered treaty making in other parts of Canada.

These lands also include most of British Columbia, which includes some of Canada's most populated urban centers. British Columbia is an exceptional case in Canada and an important focus of this chapter.

REFLECTION

Using a blank map of Canada, block out the territory covered by Canada's historic treaties. These treaties are shown on a map on page 25. As you work through this chapter, continue to block out territories covered by land-claims agreements. Use different colours for historic treaties and modern treaties.



The *Calder case* is the first of many significant court cases First Nations have used to support their rights claims. This photograph shows Nisga'a leader Frank Calder speaking to media after a meeting in 1973 with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chretien.

As a result, the *Calder case* was far from a defeat for Aboriginal land rights. Before the *Calder* ruling, the federal government held the position that Aboriginal title did not exist as a legal concept. This allowed it to turn a blind eye to Aboriginal land rights in large sections of the country. The Supreme Court's recognition of Aboriginal title required new respect for Aboriginal land claims — and a new commitment from governments to settle them. Governments could no longer claim exclusive authority to make decisions concerning Aboriginal lands.

In 1973, the federal government announced a revised land-claims policy, and the following year it created the Office of Native Claims, which could, for the first time, negotiate land-claims settlements based on unextinguished Aboriginal title. The meaning of this development is the topic of the next section, pages 122–134.

LOOKING BACK

Re-read Dr. Joseph Gosnell's speech from pages 108–110 and write in your journal about the significance of the Nisga'a land claim to other Aboriginal land claims in Canada.

THE EVOLUTION OF FEDERAL POLICY ON ABORIGINAL LANDS

1763	Royal Proclamation recognizes Aboriginal title to land in the West and gives the Crown the exclusive right to negotiate the extinguishment of Aboriginal title	1760
1876	Indian Act forbids selling or leasing reserve land to any group except the Crown	1780
1889	Indian Act revision gives the federal government more control over management of reserve land, including the ability to lease reserve land over band council objections	1800
1913	Nisga'a petition is the first land claim in Canadian history	1820
1927	Indian Act revision makes it illegal for First Nations to hire a lawyer (without the government's permission) to pursue claims against the federal government	1840
1951	Indian Act revision removes restriction on First Nations legal action against the federal government	1860
1967	Nisga'a Tribal Council sues the federal government in what became known as the <i>Calder case</i>	1880
1973	Supreme Court ruling on the <i>Calder case</i> finds that Aboriginal title exists in Canadian and Aboriginal law	1900
1974	Federal government launches the Office of Native Land Claims	1920
1981	<i>In All Fairness: A Native Claims Policy</i> gives more flexibility to land-claims negotiators	1940
1982	Constitution Act recognizes Aboriginal rights and gives modern land-claims agreements the same protection as treaty rights	1960
1985	Coolican Report criticizes the federal government's policy of requiring the extinguishment Aboriginal title and rights in land-claims settlements	1980
1986	Federal government revises claims policy and removes requirement that rights and title be extinguished in land-claims settlements	2000
1990	Oka crisis results in changed attitudes towards many Aboriginal rights issues	
1990	Federal government revises claims policy, removing six-claim limit on the number of claims it will negotiate at one time	
1991	Federal government revises claims process to improve efficiency and creates the Indian Specific Claims Commission and the Indian Claims Commission to review land claims rejected by the federal government	
1998	<i>Gathering Strength — Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan</i> affirms the federal government's understanding that treaties, both historic and modern, are a key basis for the future relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown	

First Nations Land-Claims Issues

AS YOU READ

First Nations with status under the Indian Act often have different perspectives on land issues and land claims than other Aboriginal peoples. Status First Nations people also differ from one another in these perspectives, but they tend to share many key concerns. Different perspectives are the result of different histories, cultures, and current political and economic situations in Canada. This section deals with the land-claims process and the issues affecting First Nations land claims. As you read, make a list of key issues that affect these land claims. What makes some claims easier to resolve than others? What approaches seem to work best in settling claims?

ABORIGINAL GROUPS LAUNCH LAND CLAIMS WHEN THEY BELIEVE THEY ARE ENTITLED TO MORE LAND THAN THEY HAVE. INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA DEFINES TWO MAIN TYPES OF LAND CLAIMS:

- **Comprehensive land claims** flow from Aboriginal rights and title that, like the Nisga'a territory, have never come under treaties or other legal agreements. The settlement of a comprehensive land claim is considered a modern-day treaty.
- **Specific land claims** arise when First Nations believe the government has not properly fulfilled treaty or other legal obligations.

OFFICE OF NATIVE LAND CLAIMS

In response to the Calder decision, the federal government launched the Office of Native Claims (ONC) in 1974. The ONC was to handle both specific and comprehensive land claims. Formation of the ONC



Review the excerpt from the Constitution Act on page 80 to find where modern land-claims agreements are mentioned. How does the constitution support the rights gained in historic and modern treaties?

represented a major step in the government's recognition of Aboriginal rights. However, government policy still sought to extinguish Aboriginal title to the land, rather than to share or accommodate it. In order to settle claims, Aboriginal groups had to agree to give up their Aboriginal title. The federal government wanted to achieve a degree of "certainty" that any settlements they reached would be final. They did not want to face additional claims in the future.

The ONC's first seven years resulted in only two successfully concluded comprehensive land claims, one with the James Bay Cree and one with the Naskapi in northern Quebec. In 1981, the federal government updated and expanded its land-claims policy in a document titled *In All Fairness: A Native Claims Policy*.

The new policy gave negotiators a bit more room to manoeuvre. They could now grant First Nations title to their own reserve lands and partial rights to other land — for hunting and fishing, for example. The policy also offered First Nations more authority to administer their own affairs, though it stopped short of full self-determination. The policy failed to address the needs of Aboriginal peoples without reserve lands.

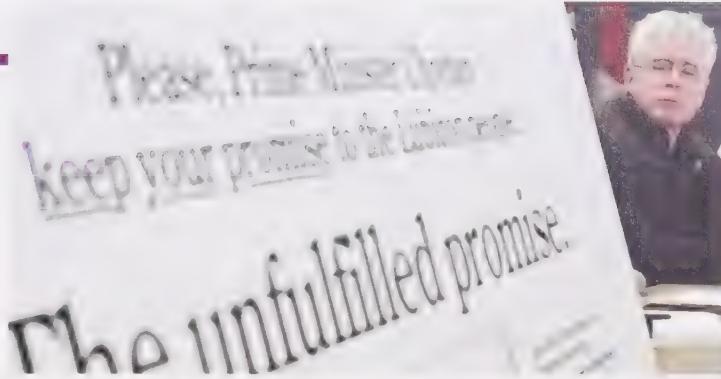
In 1982, parliament enshrined Aboriginal rights in Section 35 of Canada's new constitution. Constitutional amendments in 1983 made it clear that modern land-claims agreements would have the same status as other treaties. Although Quebec refused to participate in the new constitution, it passed provincial legislation affirming these land rights.

THE COOLICAN REPORT

Some Aboriginal groups criticized *In All Fairness: A Native Claims Policy* for its continued emphasis on extinguishing Aboriginal title to lands outside reserves. They also felt that the government remained committed to assimilating Aboriginal peoples, rather than helping them preserve their societies and cultures.

In 1985, the federal government appointed a task force to re-examine the government's land-claims policy. The Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims, headed by Murray Coolican, met with Aboriginal representatives across Canada. It recommended sweeping changes to federal policy in its report *Living Treaties, Lasting Agreements* — better known as the Coolican Report.

The report criticized the approach of the past as fundamentally flawed. This approach offered cash and reserves in exchange for extinguishing Aboriginal title. "To date," stated the document, "treaties and modern settlements have provided neither the finality desired by governments nor the guarantee for the future desired by Aboriginal peoples."



Many non-Aboriginal Canadians support Aboriginal land claims, often from principles of fairness and justice, echoing the Coolican Report's findings. In this photograph from 2003, singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn asks Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to settle a land-claim promise the prime minister made to the Lubicon Lake Cree in 1993.

The report urged Ottawa to build "living," lasting partnerships with Aboriginal peoples, instead of limited, final settlements. Furthermore, it recommended that the federal government consider political, social, and cultural issues in negotiating land claims, in addition to economic issues.

In 1986, the federal government responded to the Coolican Report's findings by removing the requirement that land-claims settlements extinguish Aboriginal title. This change made it possible to settle several long-standing claims that had been hung up on this one requirement.

Aboriginal peoples have never accepted the notion that the price of their well being in the land of their ancestors was the abandonment of their cultural distinctiveness and special Aboriginal status. Through centuries of social and economic hardship and a sustained government policy of assimilation, their deep sense of Aboriginal identity has remained remarkably strong, and their communities have survived.

Canada still has an opportunity to make lasting agreements with Aboriginal peoples based on the recognition and affirmation of their Aboriginal rights and with respect for their unique and enduring place in Canadian society.

— *Living Treaties, Lasting Agreements* (Coolican Report)

THE LAND-CLAIMS PROCESS

To launch a comprehensive claim, an Aboriginal group must research its case and submit evidence to the federal government through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Specific claims in the western provinces go to Specific Claims West, which is the part of INAC responsible for settling specific claims in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Yukon.

The government then reviews the claim and decides if it has legal merit.

If the government accepts the claim, it begins negotiating with the Aboriginal group to settle it. Provincial or territorial governments participate as well, because the lands in dispute often fall within their jurisdictions.

If the government rejects a comprehensive claim, the Aboriginal group can ask the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) to review the decision. The ICC was created by the federal government in 1991. It is an independent body that can hold public inquiries into land claims rejected by the federal government. It also sometimes mediates in disputes between the government and Aboriginal groups. The Indian Specific Claims Commission (ISCC), also recreated in 1991, reviews issues surrounding specific claims.

If an ICC or ISCC review fails and the Aboriginal group wishes to continue their claim, it may have to file a lawsuit against the government.

Court battles carry huge costs — potentially crippling to an Aboriginal group — and can take years. They also create winners and losers, a situation that can lead to frustration and confrontation. The federal government and most Aboriginal groups place a high priority on negotiating land claims whenever possible.

Comprehensive Claims

According to government guidelines, comprehensive claims must meet the criteria that follow:

- The Aboriginal group is, and was, an organized society.
- The Aboriginal group has occupied its territory since time immemorial. Its occupancy was “an established fact” when European nations asserted their claim on the territory.
- The Aboriginal group occupied the territory mostly to the exclusion of other organized societies.
- The Aboriginal group continues to use and occupy the territory for traditional purposes.
- The group’s Aboriginal title and rights have not come under any treaty, or become restricted by other lawful means.

Comprehensive claims are highly complex. It can take years for all sides to reach a final agreement. In the first three decades of the government’s claims policy — from 1973 to 2003 — only fifteen comprehensive claims reached resolution.

COMPREHENSIVE CLAIM: THE ALGONQUINS OF GOLDEN LAKE FIRST NATION

The Algonquins of Golden Lake First Nation put forward its comprehensive land claim in 1985, stating its claim to 3.6 million hectares in southeastern Ontario. Two historic treaties cover the region, but neither treaty involved the Algonquins of Golden Lake.

In 1772, just nine years after the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the First Nation sent its first petition to the Crown protesting the loss of its lands. More than two centuries later, in 1983, it delivered its twenty-ninth petition. In each document, the First Nation insisted that it had never surrendered its traditional lands and so it retains title to those lands.

It is safe to say that the Golden Lake claim posed fewer complications in 1772. Today, the area they claim includes one of Canada's largest military bases, CFB Petawawa. It also covers Algonquin Provincial Park and the entire National Capital Region — including Parliament Hill. More than one million people now live in the area, and 59 per cent of the land is privately owned.

The Ontario government began negotiations with the First Nation in 1991, and the federal government joined them in 1992. In 1994, the three parties issued a "Shared Objective" statement to give people a sense of where the talks might ultimately lead. Since then, the statement has served as a guide for the negotiations.

Of course, it is one thing to share an objective and it is another thing to reach it. Land-claims negotiations often involve a lot of stops and starts — sometimes with years in between. Nearly a decade after releasing the statement, the negotiators still had not begun to iron out the specific details of a final agreement. Even optimistic observers do not expect a settlement until 2009.

REFLECTION

What is happening with the land claim now? To find out, enter *Algonquin land claim* into an Internet search engine.

Shared Objective

...We are committed to achieving a just and equitable settlement of the longstanding claim of the Algonquins of Golden Lake First Nation, and in doing so, we intend

- to avoid creating injustices for anyone in the settlement of the claim;
- to establish certainty and finality with respect to title, rights, and interests in the land and natural resources with the intention of promoting stability within the area and increasing investor confidence;
- to identify and protect Algonquin rights;
- to protect the rights of private landowners, including their rights of access to and use of their land;
- to enhance the economic opportunities of the Algonquins with the intention of also benefiting and promoting general economic and commercial opportunities in the area;
- to ensure that Algonquin Park remains a park for the appropriate use and enjoyment of all peoples;
- to establish effective and appropriate methods and mechanisms for managing the lands and natural resources affected by the settlement, consistent with the principles of environmental sustainability; and
- to continue to consult with interested parties throughout the negotiation process and to keep the public informed on the progress of negotiations.

— Joint statement by the Government of Canada,
the Government of Ontario,
and the Algonquins of eastern Ontario





In September 2003, the Siksika First Nation used oral history as evidence to present and settle a specific land claim with the federal government. The case involved a 1910 land surrender that left the Siksika First Nation with less land than it had been promised by the government. In this photograph, Minister for Indian and Northern Affairs Robert Nault is signing the agreement with Chief Stimson. The First Nation received \$82 million in financial compensation — money that will be placed in a trust fund for future community projects.



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Specific Claims

According to the federal government, reasons for filing specific land claims include

- unfulfilled treaty or Indian Act obligations, including unfulfilled treaty land entitlements
 - illegal sale or expropriation of First Nations land
 - failure to fairly compensate First Nations for land expropriated, sold, or damaged by the government
 - mismanaged trust accounts or leases of reserve land to third parties

The history behind each specific claim is unique. In some cases, groups never received the land promised to them. For example, some First Nations never received reserves, even though they signed treaties that promised them.

I remember our head chief, when approached some years ago about surrendering his reserve, replied in this way. He bent down and plucked a handful of grass and, handing it over, said "This you can use." Then, bending down with his right hand, he picked a handful of earth and pressed it to his heart and said "This is mine and will always be mine for my children of the future." ...

— Akay-Na Muka (James Gladstone), Kainai First Nation, in his first speech in the Senate on August 13, 1958

Some First Nations selected a reserve, but received too little land. The numbered treaties determined the size of reserves based on a per-person calculation. Sometimes First Nations had bigger populations than the government accounted for.

In contemporary times, some First Nations populations have grown, putting a strain on reserves originally allocated for fewer people. In addition to natural growth, some First Nations populations have expanded considerably because of people reinstated by Bill C-31 and other government actions.

From 1885–1918, the Canadian government actively pursued a policy of land expropriation to further its immigration drive and to build roads and railways. Under Clifford Sifton and then Frank Oliver, the office of the Superintendent of the Interior and Minister of Indian Affairs pushed many of its Indian agents to convince First Nations to surrender land. Some First Nations agreed or were forced to agree.

Many First Nations also lost land after World War I, when the government took over land to give to veterans.

Some First Nations lost these lands without any compensation. Others were compensated, but at less than market value. These piecemeal

losses add up to a lot of land: by the 1950s, Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan and Manitoba had lost almost one third of the land originally set aside for their reserves.

Specific land claims are more common than comprehensive claims. As of September 2003, according to Indian and Northern Affairs, 252 specific claims had been settled and 112 more were in negotiation. To help deal with the volume of claims, the government created a “fast track” process in 1991. This

gave the Director General of the Specific Claims Branch the authority to settle any claims up to \$500 000.

Despite some improvements to the process, many First Nations remain frustrated by the length of time it takes to settle claims, by the costs involved in pursuing claims, and by the growing backlog of claims waiting for review. The Assembly of First Nations estimates that it will take 150 years for the government to catch up, unless the process can be improved dramatically.

RESEARCHING SPECIFIC LAND CLAIMS

On March 31, 1958, the Michel Band ceased to exist when the whole band was enfranchised under Section 110 of the Indian Act. As part of the government’s enfranchisement policy, band members lost their reserve, which was about 24 kilometres northwest of Edmonton.

In 1985, descendants of these band members and their supporters formed a group called the Friends of the Michel and filed a specific claim with the federal government for “invalid surrenders of reserve land.”

To what extent have First Nations in Alberta made gains through land claims?

WHAT TO DO

1. Using the library, Internet, and this textbook, research two land claims from Alberta. You may choose to find the status of the Michel Band’s claim or one of the land claims that follow:
 - Lubicon Lake Cree Land Claim
 - Woodland Cree Settlement
 - Loon River Settlement
 - Nakoda (Stoney) Submission
 - Siksika (Blackfoot) Submission
 - Mountain Cree Submission
 - Blood-Cardston Claim
 - Peigan Nation Claim
2. Your research should investigate the main events and issues of each claim, including if, how, and when they were settled. If they are not settled, explain why. You might want to create a timeline of important events.
3. Examine each land claim in terms of the benefits or proposed benefits for the communities involved.
4. Create a PowerPoint™ presentation to explain each claim. Include graphics, such as maps or photographs. Your presentation should provide a summary comparison of the two claims and should be no longer than twelve slides.
5. Present your project to the class.

Thinking About Your Project

As a class, discuss the similarities and differences among the land claims presented.

Issues for Investigation

Obstacles to Settlements

Fair settlements for land claims pose many challenges, such as assessing the precise entitlement, choosing lands, or agreeing upon fair compensation for lands. Third party interests must be accommodated. Third parties might be innocent people whose homes or businesses are on disputed land. Some third parties may even be other Aboriginal groups.

In addition, First Nations are forced to negotiate with a government that has relatively unlimited resources at its disposal. The system also puts the federal government in the awkward position of reviewing and validating claims made against itself. In the land-claims game, the government is both a player and the referee.

SASKATCHEWAN'S URBAN RESERVES

Some First Nations are finding innovative ways to develop their communities through agreements with provincial or municipal governments.

Since the early 1980s, several First Nations in Saskatchewan have established urban reserves through agreements with municipal governments. Municipal governments have powers delegated from the provincial government.

The first urban reserve in Saskatchewan was the Opawikoscikan reserve — established in 1982 in Prince Albert by the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. This reserve, and others established later in Saskatoon, Yorkton, and Fort Qu'Appelle, is unlike urban reserves in other provinces. Most urban reserves began as rural reserves and became part of municipalities as a result of urban sprawl or annexation of lands by the municipality. In Saskatchewan, urban

reserves are the result of First Nations communities buying land in municipalities and converting the land into new reserves.

Most urban reserve lands belong to First Nations that have other land bases outside the municipality. Some urban reserves were created by purchasing lands and buildings. Most were created from lands once owned by the federal government and given to First Nations communities to satisfy past treaty entitlements.

Urban reserves have the same legal status as rural reserves. In most cases, the First Nation with an urban reserve signs an agreement with the municipality that deals with law enforcement, taxation, and municipal services.

In recent years, some First Nations in other provinces have drawn up plans to create their own urban reserves. Many First Nations see them as a way to promote economic self-sufficiency by providing more diverse sources of income and employment for their members. In turn, this could lead to better self-governing possibilities.



The Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation settled a specific land claim in December 1993. It received \$62.4 million, most of which was earmarked to purchase additional land. Since then, the First Nation has created many urban reserves that serve a variety of purposes, such as this school on the edge of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

REFLECTION

How might Saskatchewan's urban reserves be a model for other Aboriginal peoples as they pursue land claims and self-government goals?

PROFILE

JOE WEASEL CHILD

Siksika First Nation

For sixteen years, Joe Weasel Child, Land Claims Manager for the Siksika Nation of southern Alberta, has pressured the federal government to make good on its treaty promises.

After countless legal battles, delays, and legislative setbacks, is he ready to give up? Not by a long shot. According to Weasel Child, the victories along the way have been sweet, despite the many challenges.

"From the start, our leaders signed the treaty with false understanding. They were told they were signing a peace treaty and that Her Majesty the Queen wanted to set aside a place for them to live, protected from the Europeans coming into Canada," Weasel Child explains. "They signed Treaty Seven in 1877, but by 1892, our nation was already suffering relinquishment of land."

In the early 1900s, the First Nation's situation got worse. At this time, there was a general effort among Indian agents on the prairies to sell reserve lands. By the 1950s, half of the Siksika's 621.6 square kilometre parcel of land was sold — at half the fair market price.

The nation then lost another 10.7 hectares of prime land near Castle Mountain, not through a land sale, but through deceit. According to Weasel Child, "Since the prairie land we were initially given had no timber on it, we were given a parcel in the mountains so we could have wood for building houses. Later, we were told the land had burned."

If government officials thought this news would prompt the First Nation to give up ownership of the parcel, it was mistaken. For several decades, the Siksika Nation tried to have its ownership

of the land formally recognized and protected by the government, but to no avail. Only recently have representatives of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and Parks Canada agreed to enter into negotiations to finally settle the matter.

The First Nation has had some success already with land claims. In 1992, mineral rights to a 4860-hectare parcel were restored to the Siksika Nation. In 1998, they settled three land claims, amounting to approximately 10 per cent of the land that had been sold. The nation still has an outstanding land claim for 46 575 hectares, along with claims for ammunition and livestock promised in 1879.

The loss of land has left the Siksika Nation, which has 6000 members, with an overcrowding and unemployment problem on their reserve.

"Today we have twice the population we had at treaty signing, but only half the land. That makes it tough for band members who would like to move back to the reserve. There is a four to five year backlog in housing here," says Weasel Child.

REFLECTION

In what ways did the Siksika First Nation lose sections of the reserve lands it was promised in Treaty Seven? What specific problem does Weasel Child identify as resulting from this land loss? Use proper community protocol to invite a local band council member to your class. Ask him or her to discuss how unfulfilled treaty promises affect his or her First Nation today or how resolution of a land claim has benefited the community.



Joe Weasel Child is being interviewed here in front of Castle Mountain.

SPECIFIC CLAIM: BIGSTONE CREE NATION

In 2001, the population of the Bigstone Cree Nation (BCN) in Alberta was approximately 5805. Most of the BCN's members now live in one of six main communities in northern Alberta.

In the nineteenth century, however, the Bigstone Cree lived in extended-family groups of two to five families each. These groups used a large territory in their circular seasonal migrations — a huge piece of what is now Alberta. These groups did not all have a sense of common political identity.



In 1899, when government officials negotiated Treaty Eight at Wabasca, many First Nations participants had to put aside their traditional systems of political and social organization to meet the needs of treaty negotiations. Different groups were sometimes labelled as members of the Bigstone Cree, even if this label had nothing to do with traditional kinship ties or other alliances. This somewhat arbitrary grouping meant it took many years for the BCN to adjust and organize itself politically to negotiate effectively with the federal government.

A second problem affecting the BCN's treaty rights is that the government had no way of getting an accurate population count at the time of the treaty negotiation. The government met and negotiated with people who happened to be in the Wabasca area at the time.

Further complicating the situation, the federal government gave many First Nations the option of either taking treaty or taking scrip. People who took treaty became Status Indians. Those who took scrip gave up their treaty status and received scrip entitling them to either 240 acres (97.1 hectares) of land or \$240 in cash. By 1901, 235 members of the BCN had taken treaty and 106 had received scrip.

At that time, few settlers showed interest in moving to northeastern Alberta. As a result, the treaty commissioners saw no need to set aside reserve lands right away. They decided to put off a formal land survey until later, when non-Aboriginal settlement began to interfere with traditional land use.

In 1913, the Department of Indian Affairs finally surveyed land for a reserve. In the meantime, more people had come forward to join the BCN or to accept scrip. Many people in outlying areas, however, did neither. They simply carried on with their traditional lives, hunting and trapping.

In the 1920s and 1930s, fur markets declined. Many of those who had not felt any need to take treaty now came forward. These groups were added as adhesions to the population of the BCN, again without consideration of natural alliances and kinship patterns.

It became increasingly clear that the size of the 1913 reserve could not accommodate the BCN's population. In 1925, leaders began to request additional reserve land. In 1937, the Department of Indian Affairs ruled that the BCN was entitled to an additional 11 585 hectares, but for some reason only a portion of this land was set aside for them.

More than half a century later, in 1989, the BCN filed a specific land claim. It argued that the 1913 and 1937 surveys both failed to provide enough land for the group's actual population.

In the BCN's view, the government never fulfilled its treaty obligations. Furthermore, the claim argues, any effort to correct the treaty land entitlement should take into account the BCN's population growth to the present day.

Treaty Eight promised 128 acres (51.8 hectares) per person. Based on the BCN's current population, that adds up to a big reserve: about 300 800 hectares. The BCN reserve is currently 21 170 hectares. In other words, the BCN believes it is owed a further 279 630 hectares.

The federal government initially rejected the claim. It said the government had fulfilled its obligations under Treaty Eight, based on the earliest official population survey in 1909. According to those figures, the BCN has all the land it is entitled to.

The BCN appealed this decision to the Indian Specific Claims Commission (ISCC). Before the ISCC could complete its inquiry,



While waiting for a resolution of its claim, the Bigstone Cree Nation called for a freeze on further commercial activity on Crown land it identified as part of its traditional territory. When that failed to happen, it put up "No Trespassing" signs, sparking a dispute with oil and gas contractors. Based on what you can read in this sign, what sources of authority does the First Nation use for its territorial claim?

however, the federal government changed its policy towards treaty land entitlement claims. In 1998, it decided to reverse its earlier decision and accept the BCN land claim for negotiation.

In February 2002, the BCN released a position paper on its claim. The paper includes a summary of historical events from the band's perspective and an outline of the benefits it hopes to achieve in an eventual settlement. In addition to land and cash compensation, it also seeks a greater stake in managing the area's many natural resources, including gas, oil, and forests.

REFLECTION

What is the current status of the Bigstone Cree Nation's land claim? For an update, you can visit the BCN's Web site at www.bigstonecree.com. Research another unsettled specific land claim in Alberta. Summarize the history and issues involved. If possible, invite a member of a community involved in a land claim to speak to your class.

PATHS TO RESOLUTION

It is easy to understand why First Nations sometimes become frustrated by the land-claims process. Many have waited centuries for justice. When appeals and legal action fail, First Nations have sometimes felt pressed to take more direct action to assert their rights.

The Cardston Blockade

In the early hours of July 21, 1980, members of the Kainai First Nation blockaded an access road near Cardston, Alberta, with a large tipi. They wanted to draw attention to an outstanding land claim their nation had pursued for years.

Although the intentions of the First Nation were peaceful — they just wanted the federal government to agree to negotiations — the situation escalated to a more heated

In early 1980, Alvin Many Chief was one of several young Kainai men who ran from Blackfoot Crossing, where Treaty Seven was signed, to Ottawa carrying a sacred bundle that contained land-claim documents and earth from the Kainai reserve. The group was frustrated with years of stalling by federal government officials with regard to the nation's land claim. Many Chief currently teaches school on the Blood reserve.



What still bothers me most about the blockade was that the RCMP gave an order to bring in an armed SWAT team. We were asking in peace for clarification of our land claim and this justified bringing in trained, armed officers? How did they see us? Why did they think they would have to go that far? I always thought to myself, isn't this Canada, that is supposed to be multicultural and accepting of different cultures? Do we treat First Nations less humane than everyone else? It was really tough to see our Elders, who were there in support of us, physically restrained.

— Alvin Many Chief, Kainai First Nation

conflict. On July 26, the RCMP used dogs to break up the blockade, and several protesters were arrested during the physical confrontation. The blockade was over in a few days, but the land claim remains unsettled.

The Oka Crisis

Canada's most famous confrontation over land claims happened in 1990. The small town of Oka, near Montreal, wanted to expand its municipal golf course. It proposed clearing a wooded area, known locally as "the Pines," to make way for an additional nine holes. However, the nearby Haudenosaunee community of Kanesatake viewed the Pines as sacred ground and had long claimed it as traditional territory.

The land that Cardston sits on is part of the "Big Claim" that has not been settled. This claim extends south almost to the Canada-U.S. border. As far as I know, the Cardston Blockade was supposed to bring attention to the outstanding claim — the fact that it wasn't being settled. All of us members of the tribe were always told by our Elders that the Mormons had leased the land for ninety-nine years and that this lease had expired before the blockade occurred. The people of Cardston deny that there ever was a lease agreement signed. Originally Red Crow agreed to let Charles Ora Card and his Mormon settlers *maahkitsstoyimsaiksi* (to camp there for the winter). This is what I was told.

— Makai'stoo (Leo Fox),
Kainai First Nation

In fact, their claim to the land had been unresolved for almost 300 years. In 1717, without consulting Haudenosaunee residents, France's King Louis XV granted a section of land about 30 kilometres west of Montreal to a religious order. Disputes over title to this piece of land have been ongoing since that time, sometimes erupting in violence. Official land claims in 1975 and 1986 had been turned down by the federal government. By 1990, tensions were high surrounding the land claim and government attitudes towards Kanesatake claims.

When months of negotiations between the town of Oka and Kanesatake residents seemed to be going nowhere, Oka officials walked out. The town announced that it would begin development of the golf course. The federal government showed no signs of intervening, so some Kanesatake residents decided to take matters into their own hands. They began by barricading a dirt road that ran through the Pines.

Kanesatake residents were not united in this decision. The community had long been divided politically between people supporting democratically elected chiefs and people supporting chiefs selected according to longhouse traditions of the Six Nations Confederacy. Both leadership systems had been competing in the community for decades, causing deep divisions.

Traditionalist members of the community supported the longhouse chiefs and the Warrior Society, which led the movement to build the barricade.

The town responded to the barricade with a court injunction to



International news crews clamoured to speak to Kanesatake and Kahnawake residents during the Oka crisis. Here Paris-Match journalist Michel Paynard speaks to Helene Gabriel, a spokesperson for the Haudenosaunee. Traditional Haudenosaunee governance practices include important roles for women. The degree to which traditional practices should be followed has been a cause of considerable controversy at Kanesatake before, during, and after the Oka crisis.

have it removed. Although they were cautioned to use diplomacy in implementing the injunction, the provincial police stormed the barricade. In the fight that broke out, a police officer was shot and killed.

This launched a seventy-eight-day armed standoff between Kanesatake residents, their kin from Kahnawake, the police, and, eventually, the Canadian Armed Forces. People around the world watched, transfixed, as the crisis unfolded. The Haudenosaunee at Kahnawake responded to events at Kanesatake by blocking the Mercier Bridge, an important connection between Montreal and outlying communities such as Chateauguay. In one of the ugliest moments of the standoff, groups of Chateauguay residents threw rocks and shouted derogatory insults as cars of Kahnawake residents left the community. The cars were filled mostly with Elders, women, and children.

Since Oka, governments and the First Nations involved have worked to build and maintain an atmosphere of sensitivity and mutual respect. This finally resulted, in December 2000, in a land governance deal for Kanesatake.



Six Nations leader Billy Two Rivers (to the left of the stop sign) is shown here supporting a Lubicon Lake Cree protest in 1987 at a road blockade that prevented logging and oil trucks from passing. The Lubicon were demanding royalties from the profits made on their land.

(Names of others pictured are not available.)

Lubicon Lake Cree

For many years, the Lubicon Lake Cree were overlooked by the outside world. Their traditional lands were in a remote and inaccessible part of northern Alberta. In the late 1970s, however, an all-weather road was built into their territory and oil exploration began. When they saw the environmental damage being done to their lands, the Lubicon Lake Cree resisted the changes. They wanted to preserve their land and way of life.

The community began to build a global network of organizations and individuals to help them with legal matters, boycotts, lobbying, and negotiations.

Indigenous Knowledge

First Nations have used a variety of methods to pursue their land claims: negotiation, lawsuits, blockades, media pressure, and armed resistance. Each method has benefits and drawbacks. With a partner, describe as many benefits and drawbacks for each method as you can. Do more research on the history of the Kanesatake land claim and details of its settlement or the Lubicon Lake Cree's outstanding claim. Analyze the methods used in each case. What conclusions can you draw?

They received much international attention during the 1988 Olympics in Calgary. The Olympic Torch Relay was sponsored by Petro-Canada, one of the oil companies responsible for damaging traditional Lubicon land. The Lubicon Lake Cree organized demonstrations to greet the relay as it moved across the country. Lubicon Chief Bernard Ominayak followed the torch and issued press releases to the media about his nation's situation.

Following the Olympics, the Lubicon Lake Cree settled an agreement with the Alberta government to establish a reserve, but the federal government refused to negotiate other issues with the First Nation.

In 1989, the Alberta government awarded a large paper company the timber rights to a section of traditional Lubicon land. The community and its supporters began an international boycott against the company in 1991. The boycott ended in 1998 after the company decided to end timber cutting on Lubicon lands until the nation's land rights were settled. Negotiations with the federal government have been ongoing since 2000.

LOOKING BACK

Before moving on to the next section, be sure you can describe each of the following concepts with at least one specific example: ceded land, non-ceded land, comprehensive land claim, specific land claim. What are some of the obstacles to settling a land claim?

Métis and Non-Status First Nations Land Claims

MÉTIS AND FIRST NATIONS
PEOPLE WITHOUT STATUS
MAKE UP A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION
OF CANADA'S ABORIGINAL POPULA-
TION. Many of these people grapple
with economic and social hardships
in the midst of a society that views
them as neither Aboriginal nor part
of mainstream society.

NON-STATUS LAND CLAIMS ISSUES

Most Aboriginal leaders dispute the government's right to legislate who does and does not belong to various groups of Aboriginal people. They wonder why, for example, someone cannot claim their Aboriginal ancestry and the rights that accompany that ancestry simply because his or her great-great-grandfather decided to accept scrip. They wonder why someone is denied rights because of who his or her mother or grandmother decided to marry.

They point to people like Stephen Kakfwi. This prominent Dene leader, a former premier of the Northwest Territories, is the son of two full-blooded Dené Tha' parents. However, because his grandfather gave up his status to own property and open a business, Stephen Kakfwi is officially considered a non-Status Indian by the federal government.

When the federal government passed the Indian Act in 1876, it had to decide to whom that law would apply. It decided that, for the purposes of the act, an *Indian* was "Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; any child of such person; any

AS YOU READ

Some people describe Métis people and First Nations people without status as "Canada's forgotten people." Despite their Aboriginal heritage, the government has treated them, until recently, as part of Canada's general population.

Many Métis people and First Nations people without status see land claims as their best hope for economic stability and cultural survival. They want to emerge from the shadows and claim their rights as Aboriginal peoples.

As you read pages 135–142, consider how the land claims of Métis people and First Nations people without status differ from those of First Nations people with status and treaty rights. What factors make Métis and non-status land claims difficult to address?

We the Métis and non-Status Indians, descendants of the "original people" of this country, declare

- That Métis nationalism is Canadian nationalism. We embody the true spirit of Canada and are the source of Canadian identity.
- That we have the right to self-determination and shall continue, in the tradition of Louis Riel, to express this right as equal partners in Confederation.
- That all native people must be included in each step of the process leading to changes in the Constitution of Canada.
- That we have the right to guaranteed representation in all legislative assemblies.
- That we have the inalienable right to the land and the natural resources of that land.
- That we have the right to determine how and when the land and resources are to be developed for the benefit of our people and in partnership with other Canadians for the benefit of Canada as a whole.
- That we have the right to preserve our identity and to flourish as a distinct people with a rich cultural heritage.
- That we have the right to educate our children in our native languages, customs, beliefs, music, and other art forms.
- That we are a people with a right to special status in Confederation.

... We whose purpose in life is tied to the land have become a landless people. We have come to be seen as squatters on our own land. We will never give up our right to the land and its natural resources. To forsake the land is to forsake ourselves.

— Native Council of Canada, *Declaration of Rights* (1979)

From an Aboriginal perspective, treaty rights are not linked to registration under the Indian Act — but the federal government will not admit that. Most historic treaties (and there are over 500 of them) contain the phrase “and their descendants” or an equivalent phrase in the section dealing with to whom the treaty applies. None of them contain the term “registered” or even specifically exclude Métis — although the Indian Act does both. Since a treaty, by definition, cannot be unilaterally altered by one party or by unilaterally imposed legislation, all descendants of Indians involved in treaties technically have treaty rights. But the federal government consistently refuses access to those rights by unregistered Indians and Métis.

— Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

woman who is or was lawfully married to such person.”

By defining who would be considered an Indian, the government also decided who would not be considered one. If a person was not on their lists, the Indian Act did not apply to them. These early lists generally coincided with individuals belonging to First Nations that signed treaties. Individuals with treaty rights were generally the same as those with status under the Indian Act. As far as the federal government was concerned, these were the only individuals to be included in its legislation, programs, and services.

Over time, due to the scrip process, involuntary enfranchisement, loss of status through Indian

The awkwardness and inconsistencies of federal legislation that defines who is and is not considered a First Nations person can be seen in the situation of people like Stephen Kakfwi, a prominent Dene leader who is officially a non-Status Indian in the eyes of federal legislation. Situations like Kakfwi's are common in every First Nations and Métis community across the country. Kakfwi is shown here with his wife, Marie Wilson.

Act rules, and mistakes that occurred in creating the Indian register in 1951, many people lost their status or never gained status, even though they were as eligible as others.

Today, most First Nations people with treaty rights also have status. However, people with status do not necessarily have treaty rights. For example, people who regained status through Bill C-31 do not necessarily have membership in a band, which is usually required to receive treaty rights. This is a highly controversial and difficult issue for First Nations today. It comes down to a conflict between individual and collective rights. An individual might be morally and legally entitled to belong to their band (and receive the benefits that come with band membership, such as living on a reserve), but a band might claim the right to restrict the size of its membership to match its resources. A band that already faces a housing shortage for long-term members of its community will have a difficult time accepting new members reinstated by federal legislation.

However the situation is solved leads to injustice. Either individuals do not receive benefits they are entitled to receive or whole communities might see their benefits eroded. There are no simple solutions. The problems result from decades of colonial policies and laws. Even if the federal government today completely backed away from any role in deciding who is and is not a status First Nations person, the legacy of its historic involvement would remain.



LEGISLATION AND IDENTITY

One of the most fundamental rights of self-determination is the right to identity. First Nations people considered non-status according to the Indian Act are in a different legal position from many other First Nations people, including some members of their own families.

However much legislation affects a person's rights and privileges, it is not their identity. Much of a person's identity is personal — a part of themselves that involves their culture, language, family, friends, relationships, experiences, values, and spirituality. How do issues of self-identity complicate rights issues for First Nations people?

Your Project

- Choose one of the following topics to explore the idea of identity:

Topic A: Research and read stories by Aboriginal writers who explore the concept and meaning of identity. While reading, consider these questions: How important is official (government) recognition to the author or narrator? If it is important, explain why. According to the stories, what aspects of culture are critical to a person's identity? Create a dramatic presentation of your ideas about identity and those presented in the stories you read. Use creative devices such as music, voice, light, and gestures to express yourself.

Topic B: Write a poem or short story that represents important components of a person's identity. Think about factors such as name, culture, family and kinship relationships, ancestry, language, and so on. Prepare a dramatic reading of your work, incorporating some of the creative devices suggested in Topic A.

If you don't have status as an Indian, are you an Indian? Can a bureaucrat change a person's race, his or her very genetic makeup, with a stroke of a pen? Can a judge suddenly turn you into something you're not with a carefully worded decision from the bench?

... [M]aybe the best definition of a non-status Indian is this: an Indian person that some wise guy in Indian Affairs has decided to throw into some artificially constructed category where the government can then deny his or her rights.

The more we ponder on this the more convinced we become that the term "non-status Indian" is one of the most ridiculous creations of the Canadian bureaucracy of all time.

And that's saying something.

— Editorial, *Windspeaker* (October 2003)

As it stands now, I am a status person under section 6.2 of Bill C-31. My two girls are not Native in the government's eyes. They have one-quarter Native blood. Do I tell my daughters that they are not Native because the government says it's so? No, I don't think so.

— Connie Chappell, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Topic C: Create a painting, sculpture, collage, or other work of art to represent your own sense of identity. What type of media would best express your ideas? Display your work for the class, along with a brief statement that points out the key features of and rationale for your design.

- After listening to and viewing your classmates' projects, hold a class discussion about the important features that make up a person's identity. Are there different kinds of identities? For example, are there some identities that are legislated by government and others that are personal? How do issues of identity impact people's emotions, rights, and life opportunities?



Adrian Hope, also known as The Senator, was a well-known Métis leader in the early days of political activity by Métis communities in Alberta. He and leaders like Stan Daniels, leader of the Métis Association of Alberta, are credited with a resurgence of Métis land rights activism in the 1970s. This activism resulted in a settled land claim in 1990.



MÉTIS LAND-CLAIMS ISSUES

The land rights promised by the Manitoba Act and Dominion Lands Act were never fulfilled for most Métis people. The vast majority of Métis and First Nations people who took scrip never received the land they were entitled to receive.

Those who did receive land found their communities widely scattered. The federal government refused to handle Métis claims to land on a collective basis, which would have provided blocks of land large enough to accommodate whole communities. Such a land base would have assisted Métis people in preserving their social and cultural ties. Instead, the federal government would deal only with individual Métis people, a policy that facilitated scrip fraud and speculation.

Many Métis people who had been displaced from their lands in Saskatchewan and Manitoba moved farther west in search of a new start. Many settled in and near communities around Alberta, such as St. Albert, Lac La Biche, Lac Ste Anne, Whitefish, and Victoria (an historic Métis settlement). Some of these people settled before 1870, some after the Red River Resistance in 1870, and still more after the 1885 Resistance in Saskatchewan. The displaced Métis families re-established their communities, basing



Having a land base where many members of a cultural community can live together facilitates the continuity of traditions such as weaving the Métis sash (shown in this photograph). What other Métis traditions might be preserved at the Métis Settlements?

Why are traditions more difficult to maintain among widely dispersed community members?

them on traditional pursuits such as farming and annual buffalo hunts. The most significant Métis hunt in Alberta was the Edmonton Hunt, which involved French-speaking Métis people from Lac La Biche, Lac Ste Anne, and St. Albert.

As in earlier Métis history, most of these settlers did not receive title to their land. They established land-holding systems like that at Red River, each farm stretching back from riverfronts. In some cases, families even settled next to the same families they had lived near at Red River.

Once again, however, history seemed to destined to repeat itself. As non-Aboriginal settlement continued in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Métis families were forced to move from their homes.

The Métis Population Betterment Act

During the Depression of the 1930s, conditions for many Métis people in Alberta had reached a crisis point.

Organizers, such as Adrian Hope, travelled by boxcar around the province to speak with Métis communities about forming a farming association to bring pressure on governments to ease the problems faced by Alberta's Métis population. On one of his trips, Hope slept under Edmonton's High Level Bridge and travelled to Calgary with eighty cents for expenses.

In 1932, Joseph Dion, Malcolm Norris, Felix Calahoo, Peter Tomkins, and James Brady formed the Métis Association of Alberta. This group decided to resolve the issues that faced their people once and for all. Instead of petitioning the federal

government, as so many Métis communities had done in the past, they decided to pursue their land rights with the provincial government. In addition, the association pressured the provincial government for education, medical care, and free hunting and fishing permits.

In 1934, the Alberta government responded by appointing a commission to study the matter. The Ewing Commission recommended the creation of Métis farming colonies on Crown land, under the supervision of the provincial government. This led to the passage, in 1938, of the Métis Population Betterment Act. The act defined a Métis person as someone "of mixed white and Indian blood, but not ... an Indian or treaty Indian as defined by the Indian Act."

A committee of Métis and government representatives selected lands for the twelve new settlements. In 1943, the Métis Betterment Trust Fund was established to manage income from resources taken from Métis Settlement areas. Adrian Hope recalls "In 1942, we had sat down with Dr. W. W. Cross (then Socred [Social Credit party] minister of public welfare) and began talking about what would happen if we found coal or gold on the settlements. Who would get the money? 'Well, it will be put into the Métis trust fund,' replied the minister."

Although it wasn't gold and coal, the Métis Settlements did have a wealth of resources in oil and gas. However, the approximately \$30 million that the province received by the 1970s for this wealth did not go into the trust fund. Adrian Hope was on hand to fight the injustice,

beginning in 1961. In 1969, with Stan Daniels, president of the Métis Association of Alberta, he helped launch the first lawsuit against the provincial government to reclaim the resource revenue.

In 1988, the Alberta government settled the lawsuit with \$310 million in financial compensation, title to Métis Settlement lands, and legislated self-government.

Before the Depression, we used to sell everything we raised and live on the leavings. But in the "dirty thirties," there was no market for any of our produce. Whatever we raised we ate, so actually we lived better than we had in the twenties. We had lots of cream and butter and we butchered a pig or sheep once in a while. We were short of clothes, because we had no money to buy them, but we ate well....



Maurice L'Hirondelle

In the early 1930s, the Métis people began to organize so they could get a better deal from the government. As the Depression continued through the thirties, the Métis people were in terrible shape. A lot of them couldn't pay taxes and lost their land — not only the Métis, but lots of other people too — usually because they couldn't pay the mortgage payments they were saddled with. I don't know how many times we lost our land because of taxes during the thirties. We were just making enough money to buy the bare necessities and the councillor for our district was not in our favour, so he didn't give us much roadwork to pay our taxes. We pretty well had to pay in cash. Then the Métis people organized to see if we could get some land where we could settle without being kicked out.... After the land was set aside, the people who had no place to go and had no land were able to move onto this land and build themselves homes. At least you could build a cabin and there was a lot of timber, a lot of moose and fur-bearing animals and good farm land.

— Maurice L'Hirondelle, East Prairie Métis Settlement

MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS

In July 1989, eight Métis Settlements (Buffalo Lake, East Prairie, Elizabeth, Fishing Lake, Gift Lake, Kikino, Paddle Prairie, and Peavine) and the Province of Alberta signed the Métis Settlements Accord. The agreement gave the Métis Settlements ownership of their lands, self-government, and the right to share revenues from the development of natural resources on their lands. The accord took effect in November 1990 when the Province of Alberta passed into law an amendment to Alberta's constitution.

This amendment, the Métis Settlements Act, created local governments for each of the settlements and a collective government in the form of the Métis Settlements General Council (MSGC). Each of the governments established by the act now has powers and privileges the province cannot change without consent of the settlements. The members of each settlement elect five-person councils. These councils run local programs and services and have the power to pass bylaws in matters such as health, safety, welfare, public order, pest control, business regulation, water, sewage, local development, and land-use planning.

Council bylaws are approved by council members and a majority of settlement members present at public meetings. This system gives all settlement members the right to express

their opinions directly on issues that come before their settlement council. Settlement councils and their bylaws are accountable to their members and the MSGC.

The MSGC includes five councillors from each of the eight settlements and four executive members who are elected by the MSGC. The MSGC holds title to all settlement lands and is responsible for matters that affect the collective interests of the settlements. It has the power to enact General Council Policies in areas such as membership, resource development, taxation, and regulation of hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and land use. General Council Policies have the same status as other provincial laws and must conform to the regulations of the Métis Settlements Act.

The Métis Settlements also have a forum for resolving disputes among members. The Métis Settlements Appeals Tribunal deals with disputes over land, land access, leases, and membership. The tribunal includes representatives from all the settlements. Tribunal decisions are made by interpretations of Métis Settlement legislation and regulations, settlement council bylaws, General Council Policies, and traditional customs. In some cases, the tribunal relies on interpretations of decisions by Alberta courts, provincial legislation, and expert opinion.



The Métis Settlements have the only legislated Métis governments in Canada and are the only Métis communities with title to their land. The Métis Settlements Accord, shown being signed here in 1989, was a significant moment in Métis rights.

REFLECTION

How did having a land base make self-government possible for the Métis Settlements? Now that the settlements have title to their land, what kinds of options will they have in terms of economic development? How does Métis Settlements self-government compare to other forms of self-government you studied in Chapter Three?

A NEW ERA IN MÉTIS AND NON-STATUS RIGHTS

Métis and First Nations people without status have long been caught in a jurisdictional struggle between the federal and provincial governments. The British North America Act gave the federal government responsibility for “Indians and lands reserved for Indians.” The federal government argues that this clause means Indians *on* lands reserved for Indians. In other words, they accept responsibility for First Nations people who live on reserves. In this argument, all other Aboriginal people are under provincial jurisdiction.

The Supreme Court has ruled that Inuit people are to be included in this section of the British North America Act 91 (24), but there is no

ruling on Métis people and First Nations people living off reserves or who are not eligible to live on reserves.

In practice, the federal government has assumed responsibility for Métis people in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut, but not south of the 60th parallel. They argue that Métis people in the provinces are a provincial responsibility because Métis rights in those provinces were extinguished through the scrip process.

Despite recognition in the Constitution Act of 1982, Métis people still do not benefit from the same levels of programs and services offered to other Aboriginal peoples. Furthermore, with the exception of people at the Métis Settlements,

... And this “new beginning” comes at a time when there is a new reality for the Métis Nation and all governments in Canada. I speak of course of the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in [the Powley case]. Not only did the highest court in this land unequivocally affirm that the Métis people have existing constitutionally protected rights, the law is very clear that all governments have an obligation to ensure Métis rights are recognized and accommodated in this country.

Powley is just another affirmation of the Métis Nation’s unique history, identity, culture, and special relationship to our lands. As a distinct people, we hold the inherent right of self-determination and aspire to fully implement Métis self-government within the Canadian federation.

For centuries, we have struggled with Canada on the battlefield, in the political arena, and in the courts to defend our nationhood, our lands, our rights and our culture...our people have never given up their rights or determination to be self-governing.

Unfortunately, the written and unwritten policies of Sir John A. Macdonald and

successive unsympathetic governments continue to haunt our relationship with Canada. Today, we are still witness to the shameful legacies of these policies:

- No one in the federal government, not even the Federal Interlocutor, has a mandate to negotiate with us.
- The Métis Nation is the only Aboriginal people that is still largely a landless people within our own homeland.
- On-going jurisdictional bickering between Canada and the provinces has left us in limbo as our children and communities fall farther behind other Canadians.
- An on-going strategy attempts to deal with Métis as individuals rather than respecting our collective rights and well-established self-government structures.

— Speaking notes of Audrey Poitras at the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable (April 19, 2004)



Audrey Poitras

they do not have access to a secure land base.

The federal government has been slow to resolve Métis and non-status rights issues. In 1985, the government created a position for a Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. This was the first time Métis and First Nations people without status had an official point of contact in the federal government to whom they could address their concerns.

Responding to the Supreme Court's 2003 Powley decision is a

priority for the Federal Interlocutor's office. In April 2004, the government allocated approximately \$10 million for Métis organizations to help them further develop their membership lists, especially in terms of individuals who might have harvesting rights according to standards set in the Powley case.

Constitutional recognition of Métis status and the Powley decision have led to a new era in Métis rights. In this new period, negotiations with the federal government will likely play a significant role.

COMPARING MÉTIS RIGHTS

How do Métis land rights in Alberta compare to Métis rights in other parts of Canada?

WHAT TO DO

1. With a partner, research the terms of the Manitoba Act and Alberta's Métis Population Betterment Act and Métis Settlements Act. In your own words, prepare a summary of the Métis land rights given by each act.
2. Compare the three acts and answer the following questions: What was each act's immediate impact on the lives of Métis peoples? What is each act's long-term significance? Did each act fulfill its stated purpose?
3. Now choose a group of Métis people from outside Alberta. Research your selected group and compare its culture and land rights with that of Alberta's Métis population. The Manitoba Métis Federation, for example, has launched a major land claim on behalf of former scrip holders. Settlement of this claim could have enormous implications for Métis people across the West.
4. Answer the following questions: How and why do Métis land rights vary? How do the issues that face each group compare? What organizations are most active in asserting Métis land rights?

5. Prepare a written report of your analysis that is no more than three pages long. If you prefer, instead of a written report, you and your partner may give an oral presentation that should last no longer than 10 minutes.

LOOKING BACK

Before moving on to the next section, be sure you can answer the questions that follow: What are the bases of Métis land rights? What are the bases of non-status First Nations land rights? Why have some Métis and non-status First Nations people formed alliances to deal with rights issues? How do their rights compare to those of First Nations people with status and treaty rights? What issues stand in the way of Métis and non-status First Nations land claims? What gains have Métis people made in resolving land claims?

Comprehensive Land-Claims Settlements

COMPREHENSIVE LAND-CLAIMS NEGOTIATIONS ARE LONG AND COMPLEX. NEGOTIATIONS FOLLOW SIMILAR STAGES TO THOSE FOR SELF-government agreements. First, the parties involved develop a Memorandum of Understanding, which affirms the commitment of everyone involved to the negotiations. Then, negotiators develop a Framework Agreement, in which they agree upon the issues to be discussed, the process for discussing them, and deadlines.

Negotiators then work on an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP), which is the longest stage in the negotiation process. An AIP is based on the issues identified in the Framework Agreement and contains all the agreements that will form the final settlement. The last stage is the Final Agreement, which contains the details of negotiated settlements on all issues, including resources, financial benefits, self-government, and land ownership. The Final Agreement must be ratified by the Aboriginal group or groups involved, the province or territory, and Canada. Parliament then passes legislation that makes the Final Agreement valid.

These Final Agreements are explicitly protected by the Canadian constitution. Significantly, if self-government is part of the land-claim settlement process, aspects of self-government agreements are also constitutionally protected.

AS YOU READ

Pages 143–155 explore some of Canada’s settled comprehensive land claims and the complex issues that confront negotiators. As you read, make notes about the following aspects of each claim history: What Aboriginal groups and levels of government were involved? When did the claim begin and end? What prompted the Aboriginal group or groups to file a claim? What issues most concerned them? How was the claim resolved?

SETTLED COMPREHENSIVE CLAIMS

- 1975 The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
- 1978 The Northeastern Quebec Agreement
- 1984 The Inuvialuit Final Agreement
- 1992 The Gwich’in Agreement
- 1993 The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
- 1993 Council for Yukon Indians Umbrella Final Agreement
- 1995 The Vuntut Gwich’in First Nation
- 1995 The First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun
- 1995 The Teslin Tlingit Council
- 1995 The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
- 1997 The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation
- 1997 The Selkirk First Nation
- 1998 The Tr’ondëk Hwéch’in First Nation
- 2002 The Ta’an Kwach’an Council
- 1994 The Sahtú Dene and Métis Agreement
- 2000 The Nisga’a Agreement

REFLECTION

Visit the Indian and Northern Affairs Web site at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca for the most recent listing of settled and outstanding comprehensive land claims, background information on all the claims, and details of final agreements. You will need to refer to this Web site for a project at the end of this section.

JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA), signed in 1975, was the first major agreement between Aboriginal peoples and Canada's government in nearly seventy years.

In many ways, it resembled the numbered treaties signed in the late 1800s. The Cree and Inuit peoples of northern Quebec agreed to surrender their Aboriginal title to a large territory. In return, they received some land, cash compensation, and ongoing economic support.

However, the JBNQA also broke new ground. It gave the Cree and Inuit a greater role in governing their lands, economy, and society. It also promised them a voice in negotiations for future industrial development in their traditional territory.

What Triggered Negotiations?

For two centuries, northern Quebec was part of Rupert's Land, under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The HBC transferred the land to Canada in 1869.

In 1898 and 1912, parliament expanded Quebec northward and eastward, creating the province's current boundaries. When Quebec took control of its northern territories, it became responsible for settling land-related issues with the First Nations and Inuit peoples living there.

For decades, that did not happen. Quebec had little interest in developing the north and so felt little pressure to address the land question. First Nations and Inuit peoples continued their traditional ways of life based on hunting, trapping, and fishing.

Then, on April 30, 1970, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa announced a massive hydroelectric project. The James Bay Hydroelectric Project would reconfigure the waterways and flood a huge area of northern Quebec.

Immediately, Cree and Inuit peoples affected by the proposed dam began to organize opposition to the project. Twenty-two-year-old Billy Diamond, a newly elected chief, quickly emerged as a vocal Cree spokesperson.

In 1973, the Indians of Quebec Association went to court to try to stop the project. It argued that the First Nations and Inuit peoples affected by the project had never surrendered title to their land, and that Quebec had failed in its obligation to negotiate with them. The court agreed and issued an injunction to stop the project.



The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, signed in 1975, is considered Canada's first modern treaty.

Negotiating the Agreement

An appeal overturned that injunction just a week later, but by then negotiations to settle the dispute had already begun. In addition to Diamond, main negotiators included Grand Chief Ted Moses for the Cree and Charlie Watt of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association.

Work resumed on the hydroelectric project and Aboriginal leaders began to realize that they

could not stop it. This put them under great pressure to reach a deal. "We were going to make the best of a bad thing," Diamond said.

They focused attention on the disruption the project would cause to their communities and way of life. They demanded compensation and recognition of their rights.

In 1975, they signed the JBNQA. The agreement included nearly \$134 million for the Cree and more

BUILDING THE OUJÉ-BOUGOUMOU CREE NATION

For much of the twentieth century, the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree saw their traditional way of life gradually disappear. Forestry and mining companies moved into their territory, forcing them to relocate their village seven times in fifty years. Meanwhile, the government refused to recognize them as a distinct First Nation.

That began to change in 1975, when the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) included the "Chibougamou Cree." The community eventually gained band status under the Indian Act and renamed itself the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation.

In 1989, the Quebec government agreed to make a financial contribution to the construction of a permanent village for the community. The federal government joined the project in 1992.

The resulting village includes a school, daycare centre, cultural centre, self-government headquarters, Elders' residence, youth centre, and church. The community runs its own housing program, building affordable homes and rental units for residents. The entire village gets its heat from a central plant fuelled by waste sawdust from nearby sawmills. The resulting heat is distributed by underground hot-water pipes.

In 1995, the Oujé-Bougoumou received an award from the United Nations as one of fifty communities that "[demonstrate] positive and practical solutions to difficult problems, and



The Oujé-Bougoumou hired renowned architect Douglas Cardinal to work with them to build their village. With labour from the community, they constructed public buildings inspired by the First Nation's traditional tipi-like dwelling, the astchiiugamikw.

[have] inspiring lessons to offer to other communities and to the United Nations."

The community still struggles with depleted resources and wildlife due to clear-cutting, and with social problems left over from the decades before settlement of the JBNQA. However, Chief Sam Bosum believes that the "Oujé-Bougoumou can be an inspiration for indigenous peoples everywhere to continue their struggles to build healthy and secure communities."

REFLECTION

Learn more about the history of the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree by visiting their Web site at www.ouje.ca. How does Oujé-Bougoumou community development reinforce their traditional cultural beliefs?

than \$91 million for the Inuit. It also set up services and programs with annual contributions from federal and provincial governments.

The agreement created committees for environmental and social protection. It established Cree and Inuit school boards, turned over health and social services to Aboriginal agencies, and provided ongoing support for economic development.

The agreement covered more than 1.1 million square kilometres. It divided that territory into three categories:

- Category I lands
(14 000 square kilometres) are reserved exclusively for Aboriginal communities.
- Category II lands
(150 000 square kilometres) mostly surround villages. On these lands, Aboriginal peoples have exclusive hunting, trapping, and fishing rights. They also help manage wildlife.
- Category III lands
(1 000 000 square kilometres) are Quebec public lands, but Aboriginal peoples have special rights to hunt and fish there.

In 1978, the JBNQA was amended to include the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (NEQA), which was negotiated by the Naskapi First Nation of Northern Quebec. In it, the Naskapi received \$9 million and more control over their education programs.

Both the JBNQA and NEQA made provisions to allow local self-government for Category I lands. This finally came to pass in 1984 with the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act, which transferred most of the

powers of the Indian Act to the First Nations' governments. The act was Canada's first Aboriginal self-government legislation.

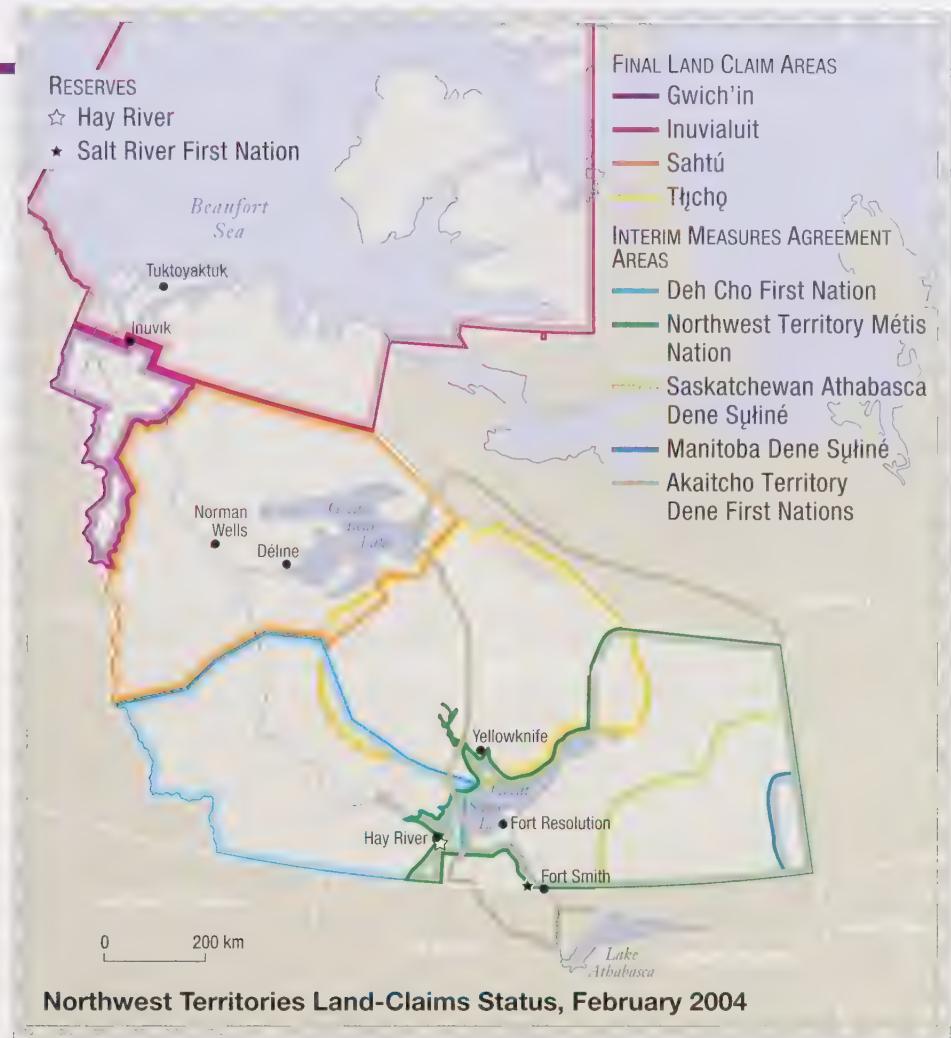
Many Aboriginal people feel that the JBNQA created expectations that are still unfulfilled. Despite this, the agreement marked a huge leap forward from the thinking that guided the numbered treaties. It placed more power and more resources in Aboriginal hands than any agreement signed before, and helped pave the way for future agreements.

It also helped shape a new generation of Aboriginal leaders. Billy Diamond and Charlie Watt went on to help draft Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982, which entrenched Aboriginal rights in the highest law of the country.

AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WITH THE DENE AND MÉTIS OF TREATY ELEVEN IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

In 1974, the Dene and Métis peoples of the Northwest Territories presented a joint land claim. Most Métis in the territory are descendants of the region's Dene, and there is a strong bond between the groups. Like the Cree and Inuit in Quebec, the Dene and Métis felt threatened by a proposed industrial development. However, the negotiations for their land claim involved a new theme: an explicit call for self-government.

Sixteen years later, in April 1990, Dene, Métis, and government negotiators initialled an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP). Many Dene and Métis remained worried, however,



Northwest Territories Land-Claims Status, February 2004

The complexity of land-claims negotiations are evident in this map of land-claims status in the Northwest Territories. The details of the settlements are even more complex. Within each claim area are territories where Aboriginal groups have mineral rights, rights of exclusive occupation and use, and special management rights and responsibilities.

that the agreement did not go far enough to protect their rights. They asked to renegotiate parts of the AIP, but the government refused. Each community was left to pursue its own course with the federal government. Today, each community has concluded an agreement based on the AIP or is in negotiations to do so.

What Triggered Negotiations?
Canada's government and First Nations in the Northwest Territories negotiated Treaty Eight in 1899 and Treaty Eleven in 1921, but the terms of the treaties were never fulfilled. Treaty Eight formalized only one reserve, and no reserves

ever emerged from Treaty Eleven. As was the case with many northern regions, the Northwest Territories faced few pressures from industry or settlers, so neither the government nor First Nations saw a need to reserve more land.

That changed in the early 1970s. Developers wanted to build a major pipeline through the Mackenzie River Valley to carry northern oil and gas to markets in the south. The Dene Nation (then called the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories) claimed that it had rights to Crown land in the valley, and went to court to stop the pipeline. The



The Mackenzie River is the longest in Canada at 1800 kilometres. This view of the Mackenzie River Valley shows some of the effects of oil exploration in the area. While advocates of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline compare its impact to a thread across a football field, opponents compare it to a slash across the Mona Lisa.

Dene won their case in the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, but later lost an appeal in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Nevertheless, the government accepted the Dene-Métis land claims as a way to honour the unfulfilled terms of Treaty Eight and Treaty Eleven. This was one of the few comprehensive claims for land included in a treaty area that have been accepted by the federal government.

The government also established a public inquiry into the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. Under the leadership of Justice Thomas Berger, the Berger Commission recommended in 1977 that a ten-year moratorium be imposed on the development project while land claims were resolved.

Negotiating the Agreement

In 1975, the Dene Nation issued a declaration calling for nationhood, which you read on pages 2–3. Métis people became worried that the Dene fight for self-government would overshadow their own rights, so they decided to pursue a separate land claim.

Eventually, the Dene and Métis renewed their partnership and negotiations continued throughout the 1980s. The AIP they reached in 1990 included a settlement for 181 300 square kilometres of land, including mineral rights for 10 100 square kilometres. It also provided a \$500 million cash settlement over fifteen years, plus a share of federal resource royalties. Furthermore, it established special hunting and fishing rights and made provisions to involve Aboriginal groups in management and protection of the environment.

The agreement was controversial. Some people saw the AIP as a significant step forward. Others objected to clauses that required them to surrender Aboriginal title in exchange for the agreement. When the government refused to renegotiate the AIP, various regions and communities began to pursue settlements of their own.

Today, each region of the Northwest Territories is in a different stage of negotiating a Land, Resources, and Self-Government Agreement.

For example, the Tł'chǫ (Dogrib) have ratified a Final Agreement and

are waiting for the federal government to pass legislation to make it law. A provision in their agreement allows Métis people who lived in the settlement area before 1921 (when Treaty Eleven was signed) to be part of the agreement. Métis people in the region are working on their own claim through the North Slave Métis Alliance, but some people may choose to be part of the Tłchǫ settlement.

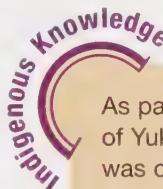
The Northwest Territories Métis Nation (formerly the South Slave Métis Tribal Council) is negotiating an AIP for lands and resources. First Nations in their region decided to pursue a treaty land entitlement (TLE) claim, so Métis people had to pursue their negotiations separately. Métis groups are not eligible to participate in TLE negotiations because their ancestors were not part of the treaty process. Métis descendants of the Gwich'in, in contrast, participated in that group's land-claim negotiations and are part of its claim settlement.

The Akaitcho Territory First Nations are part of Treaty Eight. They are trying to negotiate an agreement based on what their ancestors agreed to when they signed an adhesion to Treaty Eight in 1900 at Fort Resolution. Saskatchewan Dene Sųłiné are negotiating mostly for hunting and trapping rights. Manitoba Dene Sųłiné are claiming land as well as harvesting rights.

UMBRELLA AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNCIL OF YUKON INDIANS

In 1973, Tutchone leader Elijah Smith presented a position paper to Canada's prime minister, Pierre Trudeau. *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* launched a two-decade dialogue that culminated in 1993 with the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) with the Council of Yukon Indians (since renamed the Council of Yukon First Nations). They were the first group in the north to submit a formal land claim.

The UFA established a framework for the negotiation of individual land-claims settlements with each of the Yukon's fourteen First Nations.



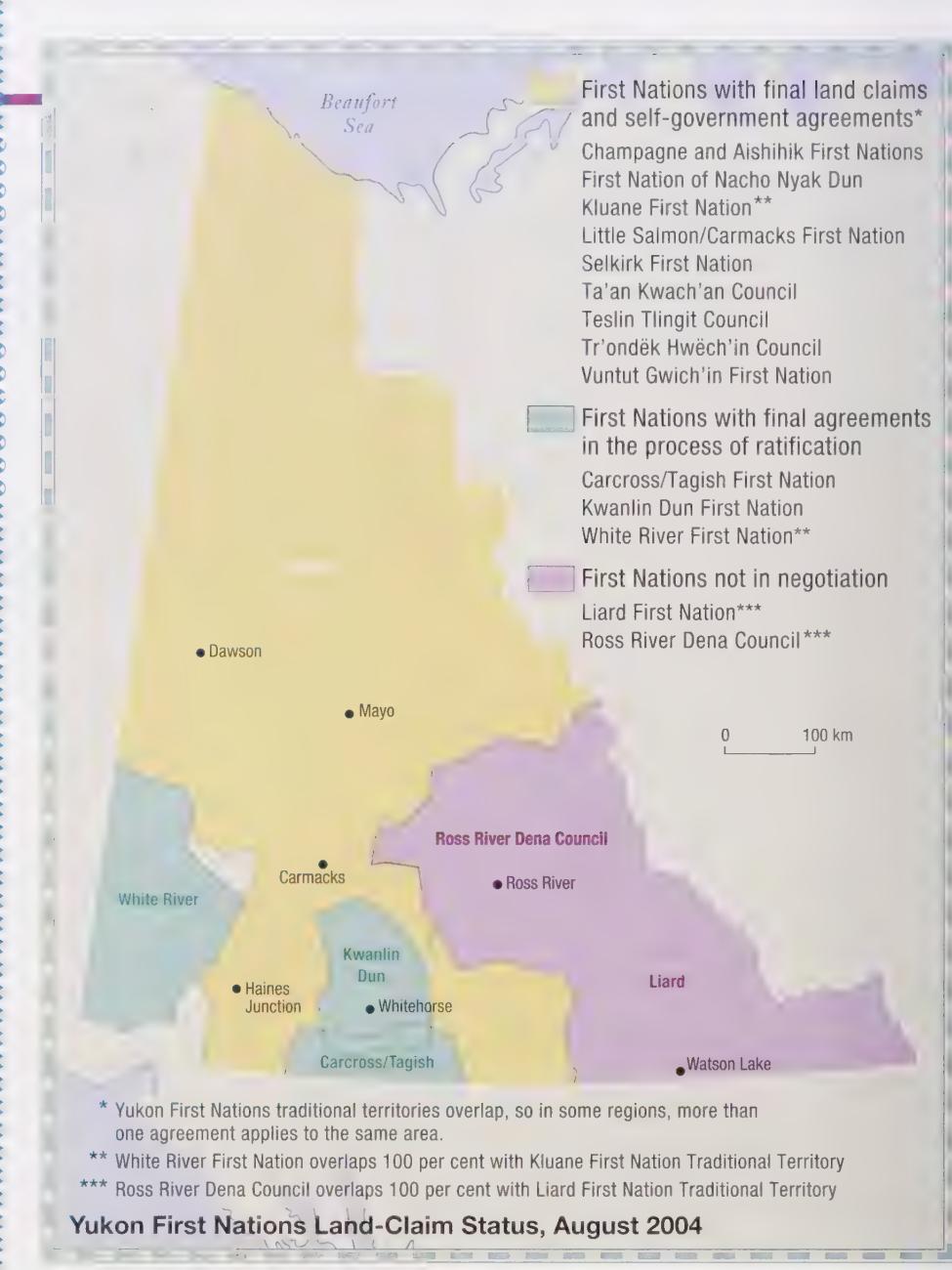
As part of the Umbrella Agreement with the Council of Yukon Indians, a new national park called Vuntut was created, which covers approximately 4400 square kilometres. Vuntut means "among the lakes" in the Gwich'in language. First Nations will continue to have harvesting rights in the park and will play key roles in management of the park and its resources.

Visit Parks Canada's Web site at www.pc.gc.ca to see the location of Vuntut National Park and information about its natural and cultural significance. In small groups, create a brochure or Web site that promotes the park and Aboriginal people's involvement in its management and conservation.

One of the areas protected by Vuntut National Park is Old Crow Flats, shown in this photograph. Old Crow Flats is the Yukon's largest wetland complex and is an important habitat for waterfowl, muskrat, and other animals important to the Gwich'in people.



The Umbrella Final Agreement with the Council of Yukon Indians included guarantees for special economic and employment opportunities, specific hunting and fishing rights, and guaranteed participation in management of national parks and heritage and wildlife areas.



KEY PROVISIONS OF THE UMBRELLA FINAL AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS

Settlement Lands

- lands included in Yukon First Nations settlements total 41 595 square kilometres (8.5 per cent of the Yukon's total land area)
- 25 900 square kilometres of settlement lands include ownership of minerals and oil and gas

Financial Settlement

- \$242 673 000 (1989 dollars)

Self-Government

- each First Nation to negotiate its own self-government agreement

What Triggered Negotiations? As in Quebec and the Northwest Territories, industrial development spurred Yukon First Nations to action. In the mid-1960s, oil and mining companies had begun moving into their traditional territory. Neither the government nor the companies consulted First Nations about the developments. Most First Nations in the region believed they had much to lose and little to gain from industry in their territory.

To these First Nations, the oil and mineral boom carried echoes of the Klondike Gold Rush. Between 1896 and 1900, an estimated 60 000 people had flooded into the Yukon. By 1905, most of them had left. First Nations benefited little from the boom. They worried that the new rush for resources would once again both overrun and overlook them.

Negotiating the Agreement
From the beginning, the council insisted that it represented not only First Nations people with status, but also First Nations people without status. *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* described involuntary enfranchisement as “one of the most unfair tricks ever used to wipe out a race of people.” Eventually, the council joined with the Yukon Association of Non-Status Indians and officially took over the role of representing all Yukon First Nations.

Negotiators reached a tentative agreement in 1984, but the council rejected it. The council objected to the idea of extinguishing Aboriginal title in exchange for the agreement.

In addition, the agreement left out First Nations people without status.

Negotiations resumed after the federal government released a new claims policy in 1986 that removed the requirement that Aboriginal title and rights be extinguished in any final agreement. Within two years, the parties had reached an Agreement-in-Principle. They signed the Umbrella Final Agreement on May 29, 1993. All except two First Nations in the region have or are in negotiations for final agreements. The Liard and Ross River First Nations have decided to pursue their claims through the court system.

BRITISH COLUMBIA LAND CLAIMS

British Columbia had a long history of refusing to negotiate land claims, and now has a lot of catching up to do. By 2004, fifty-three First Nations (124 bands) had begun negotiating land claims. This represents about 70 per cent of B.C.’s Aboriginal population. Areas in British Columbia that were included in Treaty Eight and the Douglas Treaty are also being renegotiated so that all First Nations in the province will have similar settlements.

In an effort to move negotiations forward more quickly and efficiently, the provincial and federal governments, with First Nations input, created the British Columbia Treaty Commission in 1992. The commission operates at arm’s length from both government and First Nations interests. It helps co-ordinate meeting schedules and deadlines, distributes loans and grants to help First Nations research and prepare their claims, and offers advice to all parties.

REFLECTION

Why are British Columbia land claims in a unique situation compared to other claims in the western provinces?

DETAILS OF THE NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT



Nisga'a Land-Claim Settlement Area, 1998

The Nisga'a Final Agreement, initialled August 4, 1998, represented not only justice, but poetic justice as well. The Nisga'a — a relatively small group of people, today numbering less than 6000 — did much to further land claims for First Nations across the country.

To the Nisga'a people, a treaty is a sacred instrument, the legal framework for a new society based on self-reliance and self-actualization. Fairly and honourably negotiated, the treaty represents a major breakthrough for aboriginal self-determination — one of the most pressing issues in contemporary Canada and around the world.

— Dr. Joseph Gosnell, leader of the Nisga'a negotiating team

The Nisga'a petition in 1913 was the first land claim in Canada. In the 1970s, their court battle for Aboriginal title, the Calder case, overturned decades of inaction and denial by federal and provincial governments. In addition, the Nisga'a made these breakthroughs in British Columbia, the only province that consistently denied Aboriginal title. In many ways, Nisga'a patience and persistence have come to symbolize Aboriginal rights struggles in Canada as a whole.

Between 1976, when the federal government first began negotiations with the Nisga'a, and the final agreement in 1998, the negotiations included more than 500 meetings and public events. The Nisga'a accepted about 2000 square kilometres of land, including surface and subsurface resources. Although this sounds like a huge area, it is actually only about 8 per cent of what the Nisga'a originally used as traditional territory. The agreement also included a cash payment of \$190 million. In return, the Nisga'a agreed to phase out their tax-free status over the subsequent twelve years.

Significantly, the agreement combined a land claim with constitutionally protected self-government — the first agreement in Canada to do this. This means that Nisga'a self-government cannot be changed or taken away unless the federal government, the provincial government, and the Nisga'a all agree.

REFLECTION

The Fraser Institute, an independent public policy organization, criticized the Nisga'a Final Agreement. Research why and form your own opinion about its arguments. Write your support or rebuttal in an essay.

NUNAVUT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT

In 1976, the Inuit of the eastern Northwest Territories presented a claim to the federal government. The Inuit Tapiriyat of Canada (ITC) proposed a new boundary to divide the Northwest Territories and create a new territory called Nunavut, which means “Our Land” in Inuktitut.

For the next seventeen years, the ITC and then the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) negotiated with the federal government. In 1993, the negotiators signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The agreement marked the largest comprehensive land-claim settlement in Canadian history.

Self-Government in Nunavut

The creation of Nunavut, on April 1, 1999, represented more than two decades of work by Inuit in the eastern Arctic for greater self-determination. Along with land and financial arrangements, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement also gave Inuit people the right to be major participants in the creation and development of Nunavut. Nunavut is a public government, which means anyone — Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal — can run for or hold public office. This is the same as other governments in Canada, where there are no special restrictions on the ancestry of who can hold office. Yet this government still provides effective self-government for Inuit people. This is because 85 per cent of Nunavut’s population is Inuit. By voting and running for office, Inuit people exert effective control of Nunavut’s government.



Nunavut Land-Claims Settlement Area, 1993

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement gave Inuit ownership of 350 000 square kilometres of land, including mineral rights to an area of 37 000 square kilometres. It also included \$1.17 billion in financial benefits over fourteen years, plus a share of resource royalties. Like other major land-claims agreements, it also gave Inuit people input into wildlife and resource management.



Compare the photographs of the Nunavut legislative chambers (top) and that of the House of Commons (bottom). How does the Nunavut seating arrangement reflect an Aboriginal worldview? Based on the seating arrangement in each photograph, what differences would you expect to see in the operation of each government?



As of 2004, Premier Paul Okalik is Nunavut's only Inuk lawyer. The Akitsiraq Law School intends to change that. Akitsiraq means "to strike out disharmony and wrongdoing and to render justice" in Inuktitut. The school is a one-time program that is allowing a group of Inuit students to complete their law degrees while living in Nunavut. The students began their studies in 2001. Here, Rector Gilles Patry and Dean Bruce Feldthusen chat with students Susan Enuarraq and Sandra Inutiq at a reception for Akitsiraq Law School students at the University of Ottawa.



In October 1999, the Nunavut government and the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) signed a protocol stating that the Inuit people of Nunavut could assert their Aboriginal right to self-government through the Nunavut government. The NTI is an organization that ensures Inuit economic, social, and cultural well-being through implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

To ensure that it fulfills this agreement, the Nunavut government has developed policies in almost all areas of its jurisdiction. A discussion of some of these policies follows.

Culture

For Inuit self-determination to be realized through public government, policy development and operations

need to be culturally sensitive. In 2003, the government set up a council of community representatives to advise the government on Inuit *iliqqusitugangit*, which means "what has been known for years, a deeper knowledge." This cultural policy will provide the principles, values, and traditional knowledge upon which government decisions will be based. The advisory council intends that Inuit *iliqqusitugangit* will develop a government open, responsive, and accountable to Inuit people.

Economy

In 2000, the Nunavut government and the NTI announced a series of economic policies to promote Inuit self-sufficiency. Locally owned businesses are given preference when the government awards contracts. Government incentives are given to companies that employ Inuit workers and companies are penalized when their commitments to employ Inuit people are not met.

Education

Education is the largest expenditure in the Nunavut budget. The government is committed to increasing funding so that all children in its territory have access to a good education. New programs are increasing the presence of Inuit culture in schools. For example, Elders in the School is a program that brings Elders to schools to teach students about Inuit culture and history.

The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) — formerly the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada — proudly proclaims that Canada's Inuit people are living in a "post-land-claims era." Four land-claims agreements encompass the wide Arctic region Inuit people have called home since time immemorial:

- James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement November 11, 1975
- Inuvialuit Final Agreement June 5, 1984
- Nunavut Final Agreement May 27, 1993
- Labrador Final Agreement May 26, 2004

Visit the ITK Web site at www.itk.ca to see a map of each region. Why do you think the Inuit were able to settle their land claims while many other Aboriginal groups struggle to have their concerns addressed?

Justice

Nunavut's justice programs are sensitive to Inuit values and customs. For example, the territory has only one level of court system, reflecting Inuit tradition. Community justice committees and community-based justices of the peace divert cases from the court system as much as possible. Land-based camps have been created for offenders to learn more about traditional Inuit lifestyle. The Nunavut Law Review Commission, composed mostly of Elders, is reviewing laws and recommending changes to make them reflect Inuit custom.

Public Service

The Nunavut government is committed to building a public service that reflects the Inuit majority. To achieve this, the government is decentralizing its operations into communities outside the capital city of Iqaluit. Training programs are increasing the number of qualified Inuit workers in the public service. At the end of 2002, the government reported that about 50 per cent of its public service employees are Inuit. Its target is 85 per cent.

RESEARCHING COMPREHENSIVE CLAIMS

What issues are involved in land-claims negotiations and settlements?

WHAT TO DO

1. Working with a partner, research the details on one of the comprehensive land claims that you have learned about in this textbook. These include the

- James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, 1975
- Agreement in Principle with the Dene and Métis of Treaty Eleven in the Northwest Territories, 1990
- Council for Yukon Indians Umbrella Final Agreement, 1993
- Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, 1993
- Nisga'a Agreement, 2000

If you prefer, choose another comprehensive claim, such as the Innu Nation Claim of Newfoundland and Labrador that was first submitted in 1978.

2. Conduct an online research of the claim history, negotiations, and current status. If there is a final settlement, what have been the results for Aboriginal peoples

and others? Two Web sites that may be helpful starting points are

- Indian and Northern Affairs wwwainc-inac.gc.ca
 - Aboriginal Canada Portal wwwaboriginalcanada.gc.ca
3. Create a Web site using an electronic program such as Front Page™ that illustrates the timeline of events, significant individuals involved in the negotiations, any complications during the negotiation process, main ideas of the agreement, and the impact of the land claim.

LOOKING BACK

Name at least two points from each settled comprehensive land-claim settlement you studied on pages 143–155 that make it unique. What issues and resolutions were similar?

Issues for Investigation

Chapter Four Review

Check Your Understanding

1. Why do some First Nations object to the term *land claim*?
2. What was the first Aboriginal land claim in Canada?
3. What is the difference between ceded and non-ceded lands? How do First Nations view ceded land differently from the federal government?
4. How did the 1876 Indian Act affect land claims?
5. How did the 1927 amendment to the Indian Act affect First Nations land claims? Why did the government make this amendment?
6. Why was 1951 an important year for First Nations land claims?
7. Explain the significance of the Calder case for Aboriginal land claims.
8. What were two complaints Aboriginal peoples had about the federal government's *In All Fairness: A Native Claims Policy*?
9. To what federal government office do Métis and non-status First Nations people address their concerns? When was this office opened and why?
10. Outline the steps that Aboriginal groups take when launching a land claim.
11. What are the differences between comprehensive and specific land claims?
12. What problems are created when land claims remain unsettled for years, decades, or longer? Provide specific examples.
13. How have changes in the lifestyle of Aboriginal peoples made land claims important to their livelihood?
14. What does it mean to "take treaty"? What does it mean to "take scrip"? If you were placed in the position of choosing between the two today, which would you choose? Explain your choice using historical examples.
15. Why does the Oka crisis stand out in land-claims history?
16. What is a Status Indian? How does having status impact a person with First Nations ancestors?
17. Why is self-government an important issue in land-claims negotiations?
18. Create a chart that includes the key conflicts and resolutions of the following land-claims agreements:
 - James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
 - Agreement in Principle with the Dene and Métis of Treaty Eleven in the Northwest Territories
 - Agreement in Principle with the Council of Yukon Indians
 - Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
 - Nisga'a Final Agreement

Reading and Writing

19. In your opinion, how fair was the *In All Fairness: A Native Claims Policy*? Explain your opinion in a paragraph.
20. Many of the problems affecting contemporary Aboriginal peoples result from decisions made by people long ago. Resolving today's issues can be difficult and can result in further injustices. Write an essay titled "Finding Justice for Aboriginal Peoples in the Twenty-First Century." Use specific examples that you have learned about in this textbook, additional research, and current events to form a thesis and express your opinion on this topic.
21. What role do natural resources play in land claims? Find three specific examples in this chapter and create a PowerPoint™ presentation that illustrates the impact that characteristics of the land itself have on the way and speed with which land claims are negotiated and settled.

Viewing and Representing

22. Create a work of art or performance that is titled The Value of Land. Include as many different perspectives as you can, but also include your own ideas and perspective.
23. Draw a concept map showing the structure of Métis Settlements self-government. Visit the Métis Settlements General Council Web site at www.msgc.ca to find more detail or, if possible, use protocol to request a classroom visit from a Métis Settlement councillor. What powers does each level of government have? How do these powers compare to the Core Areas of Jurisdiction listed on page 100, as identified by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples? Why were the settlements able to resolve their land claim when other Métis people have not been?
24. How can settling land claims lead to self-determination? Create a poster that demonstrates the significance of land claims for Aboriginal peoples, including the considerations that follow:
 - political value
 - economic value
 - social value
 - cultural value
 - educational value
 - spiritual value

Going Further

25. As a class, role-play a land-claims negotiation. You might choose one of the land-claims settlements discussed in this chapter or create an imaginary land-claims negotiation with a scenario described by your teacher. Assign some or all of the roles that follow amongst your class members:

- Aboriginal leaders
- Aboriginal community members
- provincial and federal government representatives

- local landowners (could be Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, or both)
- natural resource entrepreneurs (could be Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, or both)
- non-Aboriginal community members
- members of another minority group
- members of the media

Your teacher can act as mediator. Your goal is to represent the various perspectives of those involved in the negotiation. Be careful that your portrayal focuses on the issues, not the personalities of the people whose views you represent. Consider what you have read throughout this chapter about the motivations and interests of all parties involved. Following the simulation, discuss the questions that follow:

- (a) How easy/difficult were the negotiations?
- (b) What were the most difficult issues to solve?
- (c) What emotions did you experience during the role-play? How did your emotions affect your decision making?
- (d) How easy was it to relate to other people's perspectives?
- (e) Which groups, if any, seemed to have more power? Less power? How can you explain the imbalance of power?
- (f) How was the dispute resolved? Were all parties satisfied with the resolution? How did you handle people who disagreed with the settlement?
- (g) What did the simulation teach you about negotiations?

LOOKING BACK

With a partner, answer the focus questions that began this chapter on page 108.

CHAPTER FIVE

In Canadian Society

AS YOU READ

As First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples assert their rights to land, self-determination, and self-government, they increasingly claim a place as an active, integral part of Canadian society. But what does it mean to be a part of Canadian society? What does it mean to be apart or excluded from Canadian society?

In the passage that opens this chapter, Jenine Dumont describes stereotypes that she has encountered as a Métis person. A stereotype is a rigid belief about certain groups of people.

Dumont published "I Didn't Know I Was Different" in 1990 in *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada*. The author's expressions and choice of words, such as *Indian*, have been respected in the essay that follows. Do you think her writing would have the same effect if the words *First Nations person* were used to replace *Indian*? How and why would the story be different? What does this tell you about the connection between language and stereotypes?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

As you read this chapter, consider these questions:

- ▲ What is mainstream Canadian society and how are Aboriginal peoples a part of it?
- ▲ What are stereotypes?
- ▲ What roles do language and the media play in perpetuating stereotypes?
- ▲ What is discrimination?
- ▲ How are Aboriginal peoples breaking down cultural barriers such as stereotypes and discrimination?

I Didn't Know I Was Different

Excerpt from an essay by Jenine Dumont

I WAS BORN IN 1944 TO GABRIEL DUMONT AND VICTORIA LAFROMBOISE AT DUCK LAKE, SASKATCHEWAN. MY FATHER WAS A GRANDNEPHEW OF THE FAMOUS OR INFAMOUS GABRIEL DUMONT of the Northwest Rebellion. To the Métis, Gabriel Dumont was always considered famous, but as a child I interpreted from history that the accepted adjective was infamous....

On April 9, 1950, Easter Sunday, my youngest sister was born. When my mom brought her home, I said "She looks like an Indian." I didn't know I was part Indian, and it was two years before I knew....

My brother was in grade seven, and they happened to be studying social studies one day when Duck Lake and the Rebellion was discussed. The teacher, who knew our family, asked my brother if that was where our father was from. His reply was "Yes, they're all a bunch of Indians there."

Nothing more was said, but a few days later or perhaps the next day the kids started teasing us, calling us Indians and half-breeds! This went on for some time. I couldn't understand why the teacher did not stop them, although the teasing occurred at lunchtime and recess.... My brother skipped school a lot that year and eventually dropped out. He was fourteen years old.

That was when I realized I was part Indian. I believe that was also the first time my father talked to me about being proud of my heritage. Over the years, he would often say "Hold your head up high and be proud; it doesn't matter what they say."

I was particularly close to my father and believed him, so I did as I was told.



In 1997, Aboriginal artist Mary Anne Barkhouse created a series of images called *Wolves in the City*. Two of the series are shown here: Parliament Building and Danger Moose. Most of the images place wolves in an urban or other human environment. In her statements about the work, Barkhouse draws a connection between wolves, which are increasingly displaced from their natural surroundings, and Aboriginal peoples.

I walked that way so much that in high school people thought I was a snob; I really was shy and afraid of being hurt. I had some difficulty being proud of my Indian ancestry, as there were constant reminders that Indians were inferior. My own mother referred to Indians as *les sauvages* “the savages,” as if they were inferior. I remember thinking “Why are you saying that, we’re part Indian too!” I got a lot of mixed messages....

I think the prejudice I was exposed to as a child affects the way I interact with people as I am not an open person and do not make friends easily. When I compare myself to my sisters, who did not suffer the same prejudices I did, I find them to be much more open and congenial. I would like to think there is less prejudice in the world, but is there? I have a ten-year-old

son writing a story about an Indian chief who killed a white man’s wife and then this white man relentlessly hunts down the Indian. The story is supposed to take place 100 years ago. I guess the stereotypes are still there. Where else would this ten year old get his ideas?

REFLECTION

1. Jenine Dumont’s story is powerful partly because of her willingness to share painful personal experiences and partly because her language choices convey the power of stereotypes to infect even people who are stereotyped. Read over Dumont’s essay carefully to find examples of stereotypes. What makes them stereotypes? Who holds the stereotypes in her story? How are the stereotypes conveyed? What are the stereotypes’ effects?
2. How did stereotypes affect Jenine Dumont’s self-esteem and self-confidence?
3. In *Wolves in the City*, how does Mary Anne Barkhouse represent the position of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian society? How does Barkhouse’s perspective relate to Jenine Dumont’s? Give specific examples from the works to support your answer.

Alienation in Canadian Society

AS YOU READ

Jenine Dumont's writing shows her feelings of alienation from her peers, community, and even family members. An individual feels alienated when he or she feels isolated from a social group. What does it mean to feel alienated from Canadian society? What does it mean to feel a part of Canadian society? Pages 160–171 explore the cultural composition of Canadian society today and the kinds of cultural barriers that can prevent certain groups of people from being full participants.

Before you begin reading, think about a situation in which you have felt part of a group — a time when you had a strong sense of belonging and acceptance among the people around you, whether they were friends or family or both. Now think about a time when you felt excluded or shut out for some reason. Write about your experiences, paying attention to the emotions each experience generated in you. If either type of experience was a normal part of your everyday life, how would your self-esteem, energy, sense of optimism, and confidence be affected?

IN THE 2001 CENSUS, CANADIANS LISTED MORE THAN 1200 CULTURAL GROUPS IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT HOW THEY IDENTIFY THEIR CULTURAL ANCESTRY. A CENSUS IS AN OFFICIAL COUNT OF THE POPULATION. IT COLLECTS VARIOUS

- kinds of information, such as age, income, religion, education, and

Some people criticize multiculturalism as allowing only a surface cultural acceptance, such as traditional clothing, songs, and dances at special occasions. Here a dancer from the White Buffalo Dance society performs at Edmonton's Heritage Festival in 2001. In your opinion, does Canadian multiculturalism support meaningful cultural acceptance? What evidence do you have to support your answer?



cultural background. One of the conclusions Statistics Canada drew from the 2001 Census data was that Canada is becoming more culturally diverse, although the degree of diversity varies from place to place in the country.

Canada is a multicultural society. The term *multiculturalism* has many meanings, depending on its use and context. In Canada, multiculturalism is an official federal government policy. It was introduced in 1971 to recognize and promote the cultures of Canadians whose origins are not one of the two dominant cultures, British and French. Multiculturalism supports the idea of a **heterogeneous** society in which people freely practise their own cultures and speak their own languages.

Historically, most Canadian immigrants have come from European countries. At first, French and British immigrants were most common, but later immigrants came from many other European nations. In the last fifty years, however, the European proportion of new immigrants has dropped, while the Asian proportion has grown significantly. Today, the majority of new immigrants to Canada come from Asia.

Despite the official policy of multiculturalism, Euro-Canadian values and beliefs dominate the institutions, values, and priorities of Canadian politics, economics, and society. These Euro-Canadian values are believed to reflect those of the majority of the population. Within a Euro-Canadian worldview, the views of the majority take priority over those of minority groups.



MAINSTREAM SOCIETY

Mainstream describes the ideas, values, and ways of behaving that are accepted by the majority of a country's people. Many countries are **homogeneous**, which means the majority of the people belong to a single cultural group — the Japanese in Japan, for example. This shared culture means a shared worldview in most respects. People sharing a worldview generally have a bond of community and understanding, which in turn reinforces their worldview. For example, if everyone around you believes the world is round, your own belief that the world is round is reinforced to the point that you consider it to be the only belief possible. Of course, in all societies there are individuals who do not share the ideas of the majority. However, the rules and systems of a democratic society generally reflect the worldview of the majority.

Before the nineteenth century, First Nations and Inuit worldviews reflected the views of most people in North America. First Nations and Inuit cultures were diverse, but shared enough characteristics that various nations understood one another and generally co-existed peacefully. However, after Confederation in 1867, people of European ancestry increasingly dominated the cultural mix. Euro-Canadian worldviews became the views guiding Canadian government, economics, and society. These worldviews became mainstream.

ASSIMILATION

People who do not belong to a mainstream group sometimes adopt

mainstream values in order to fit in and be part of the dominant group. In other words, they assimilate into the mainstream. Assimilation can be a natural process that occurs as individuals and cultures adapt to change. For example, many First Nations had traditions of marrying people of different nations or clans to build alliances. When this happened, one individual would leave his or her family in order to join another group. In this case, the newcomer would generally adopt some or all of the ways of life of his or her in-laws. Sometimes the mainstream will change in order to make room for new ideas but, generally, smaller groups adapt to larger groups.

To better understand why assimilation happens, imagine a river flowing by — the main stream. Is it easier to swim in the direction the water is travelling, or to swim upstream? Obviously, it is easier to “go with the flow.” Yet, if you want to go upstream or directly across the river, travelling with the mainstream will not actually take you where you intend. Furthermore, if there are fences that prevent you from even getting into the water, you might end up stuck where you are.

Many immigrants to Canada wish to belong to the mainstream. They might learn English or French, attend hockey games, and generally try to fit in, becoming a part of the culture around them.

The citizenship affirmation ceremony, such as the one shown here, is a significant milestone in the lives of immigrants to Canada. Many people invite friends and family to celebrate their entry into Canadian citizenship. During their land-claims negotiations, Nisga'a leaders sometimes referred to “negotiating their way into Canada.” With a partner, contrast these two ways of becoming part of Canada.

Others resist the pull of mainstream society and try to maintain their cultural practices, even though these make them different.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples are in a special position because they are the only minority cultural groups in Canada that are not immigrants. First Nations and

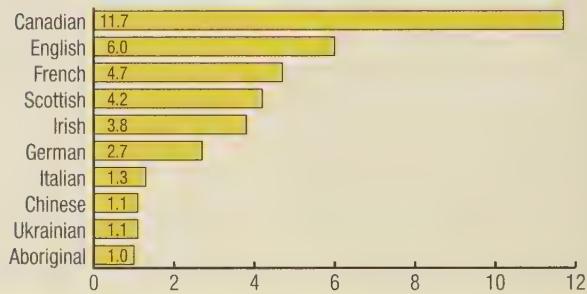
Inuit cultures were the dominant cultures in North America for centuries before any newcomers arrived, and the Métis Nation originated in this country. Despite many government policies that encouraged or tried to force Aboriginal peoples to assimilate into the mainstream, most did not.

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT CENSUS INFORMATION

Statistics Canada conducts a census of the Canadian population every five years. The information is used by governments and businesses to understand the kind of people who live in Canada. This helps them make plans about the best products and services needed today and in the future.

The accuracy of the census depends upon the individuals who respond. For example, the cultural backgrounds reported in the census are how people identify themselves. This means people may report that they are from one culture, even though their background may include several. They may also report more than one culture, if that is how they identify themselves.

TOP TEN CANADIAN CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS (in millions of people)



What is the significance of census information for Aboriginal peoples?

WHAT TO DO

- Visit the Statistics Canada Web site at www.statcan.ca and locate information related to Aboriginal peoples from the latest census. Also review sections of the Web site related to education and *The Daily*, which presents summaries of significant information. Of particular interest to you will be the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey.
- Write a one-page report on a portion of the census data that you believe has significance for Aboriginal peoples and their place in Canadian society. Present at least some of your information using a graph or chart. Keep your summary clear and concise.
- Look at the information carefully to find any details about the specific portion of the Aboriginal population surveyed. For example, some information might be gathered only from First Nations people living on reserves or from all Aboriginal peoples living in urban areas. Why is considering these details an important step in using census data to draw conclusions?

Thinking About Your Project

As a class, discuss circumstances that might prevent people from taking part in the census, such as living in isolated or remote locations, not being able to read, not having a telephone, and so on.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Today, Aboriginal peoples have more control over the degree to which they adopt mainstream cultural ideals. Many wish to adopt some or even many elements of mainstream society. Others prefer a more traditional way of life. At stake for individuals is the freedom to choose. Aboriginal peoples have the right to be fully contributing members of Canadian society, while retaining their cultural identity as Aboriginal people. It is the right to participate, but remain different.

However, cultural barriers, such as those described by Jenine Dumont on pages 158–159, prevent many Aboriginal people from playing a strong role in Canadian society. Some Aboriginal people (and members of other groups) feel a sense of alienation from the rest of Canadian society.

Throughout history, many groups have been the subject of stereotypes. A **stereotype** is a rigid, oversimplified, often exaggerated belief that is applied to groups of people. People do not necessarily have to belong to a minority group to suffer the consequences of stereotypes. Women around the world continue to fight stereotypes in order to gain equal political, economic, and social opportunities in their countries.

Stereotypes overlook cultural differences between groups, as well as individual differences among people. For example, the idea that First Nations people once wore feathered headdresses and rode horses across the prairie is a stereotype that has been applied to all



Aboriginal peoples, even though this form of dress and habitat was not part of most Aboriginal peoples' cultures.

Stereotypes emerge for a variety of reasons. At their simplest level, they are generalizations that help explain other people's behaviour, especially people who are perceived to be different in some way.

It can be difficult to really get to know an individual from another culture if stereotypes stand in the way. The stereotype forms a lens through which the other person appears odd and unfamiliar. Even getting to know an individual from a stereotyped group may not dispel stereotypes, since the individual might be seen as an exception.

Some stereotypes are not necessarily negative, such as the stereotype that women are naturally nurturing. A nurturing tendency is not a negative quality, but even this stereotype can be a problem, because it does not allow for individual differences. Some women are highly nurturing and others are less so. Stereotypes, whether they are positive or negative, are harmful to individuals, groups, and society. They do not allow individuals the freedom to express their unique gifts.

Most Canadian immigrants live in cities, and many seek out other people with the same cultural background. Newcomers feel more comfortable living in areas where they can speak familiar languages and practise familiar customs. Calgary's Chinese community built this Chinese Cultural Centre to serve as a gathering place.

Discrimination

Stereotypes reinforce prejudiced attitudes. **Prejudice** is a preconceived idea about an individual or group. Most prejudiced ideas are unfavourable, and may lead to discrimination. **Discrimination** occurs when people treat others unequally because they perceive one group of people as inferior to another. Discrimination creates barriers that prevent groups of people from full participation in a society's activities and rewards. Prejudice can exist without discrimination. For example, a person might hold racist ideas but not act upon them. When people judge others *and* treat them unfairly, they engage in discrimination.

Stereotypes often generalize unfavourably about a group's culture, practices, or values. This helps form a cultural bias in which one culture is favoured over another. Stereotypes and cultural biases are often used to provide justification for discrimination.

Discrimination can operate at different levels and in different ways. It can be overt or covert, conscious or unconscious, institutional, subtle or blatant, and verbal or non-verbal.

Overt discrimination takes the form of obvious behaviour or verbal acts. An example of overt discrimination would be if a person were refused entry into a business because of his or her cultural background.

Covert discrimination is more hidden and, therefore, more easily denied or discounted. An example of covert discrimination might be a woman not getting a job because of her gender. She might never know why she did not get the job.

People sometimes create overt or covert pressures that discourage members of a particular group from living in a certain neighborhood or prevent them from gaining employment, education, or social services.

A person may discriminate against another consciously or unconsciously. For example, someone may consciously choose not to hire an individual because they believe a negative stereotype. However, a person might only hire people from their own cultural group simply because they feel more comfortable with them. In many cases, this may be unconscious discrimination.

Discrimination can also be institutional. A government or business that does not provide easy wheelchair access makes it more difficult for part of the population to receive its services. Similarly, a government department that requires people to fill in a lengthy form filled with legal language may discriminate against people with lower reading levels.



How did the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms affect blatant discrimination? Why is subtle discrimination more difficult to change?

Degrees of discrimination can also be measured. Blatant discrimination is generally conscious and deliberate. Such discrimination is against Canadian law, so it is less frequent. Subtle discrimination, like covert discrimination, can be much more difficult to detect. For example, if a For Rent sign on an apartment declares that no minority groups can apply, it would be considered blatant, overt discrimination. It would be against the law, and the landlord could be taken to court.

However, if the sign just says For Rent and the landlord never rents the place to any minority groups, there would not necessarily be proof that discrimination against minority groups was taking place. The landlord might have any number of reasons for not renting to specific people. His or her reasons may or may not have anything to do with the minority or other group the rental applicant is part of.

Verbal and non-verbal communication can promote or dispel discrimination. Verbal discrimination, such as a racist joke or slur, is clear. Non-verbal communication is behaviour that does not rely on written or spoken words. Non-verbal communication can undermine even the strongest verbal message. For example, an individual might smile and say that he or she respects a minority group, but non-verbal cues such as rolled eyes, a sigh, or stare can betray another attitude altogether.

In the worst cases, discrimination is used to exploit or manipulate a political, economic, or social situation at the expense of another group.

THE COLUMBUS CONTROVERSY

In 1992, 500 years after Christopher Columbus reached the Americas, many countries wanted to celebrate his “discovery of the New World.” Aboriginal groups from North, Central, and South America were nearly unanimous in their condemnation of the idea. Many asked why the beginning of their cultural domination by Europeans should be celebrated.

In addition, they declared that Columbus’s arrival to the lands that their ancestors had called home for centuries was not a “discovery.”

Although some people argue that these are “just words,” these particular words create cultural barriers that exclude the perspective of an entire group of people.

When used with sensitivity, language promotes openness and trust among individuals and groups. It can affirm the belief that everyone should be treated fairly and equitably. Such language is sometimes called inclusive. Inclusive language helps ensure that everyone feels important and included in a wider community.

Today, many people make a conscious effort to avoid language that may offend or exclude other people on the basis of their gender, sexual identity, class, cultural background, appearance, age, or ability.



On November 23, 2003, Lee Curotte, of Kahnawake, installed a banner reading Columbus Invaded America on a statue of an Massasoit, an Aboriginal leader who helped the first pilgrims who arrived to the United States. Curotte was part of an annual protest in Plymouth, Massachusetts, each Thanksgiving to talk about the status of indigenous peoples in the Americas.

REFLECTION

As a class, discuss examples of inclusive language. Research the controversy over Columbus further. Write a paragraph exploring how the phrase *discovery of the New World* perpetuates stereotypes.

WILLIE LITTLECHILD

Ermineskin First Nation



Willie Littlechild

When speaking about racism, special status, and land claims, lawyer J. Wilton “Willie” Littlechild mentions a little Cree word that means a lot.

“Skungun. It means that at treaty-time, we agree to share everything — in this case we’re talking about surface rights to

land — but you reserve a small portion to use for yourself, for ceremonies and traditional pursuits, for example,” explains Littlechild, who practises law in Hobbema, Alberta.

“When politicians and leaders say ‘we should all be equal’ it sounds very good. But what they’re saying is that indigenous peoples should not have any unique or special rights at all. Yet indigenous peoples, generally, have a special, spiritual relationship to Mother Earth.

“When Elders and traditional people hear politicians talking about doing away with reserves and making us all equal, you can see pain in their faces. We need the land for our ceremonies and sanctuary. It is a part of us. We have a spiritual connection that doesn’t seem to be taken into consideration by the dominant society, which looks at land as so much real estate and in terms of what it can yield for profit.”

Littlechild, the first Treaty Indian from Alberta to graduate from law school in 1976, has been active in the international forum for over twenty years, representing the concerns of indigenous peoples in such organizations as the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the Organization of American States. Closer to home, he served as the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Wetaskiwin from 1988 to 1993. He has also served on many committees and worked on international forums that promote global recognition of indigenous peoples and their

rights. He is especially proud of his key role in helping establish the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, of which he has been selected as Rapporteur. This position means he is responsible for all reports of recommendations and decisions by the forum directly to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Before being called to the bar, Littlechild studied physical education. During his years as an active competitor in hockey, baseball, and swimming, he participated in more than thirty-five provincial, regional, national, and international championships, winning ten Athlete of the Year awards before his retirement from active competition.

Littlechild was often the only Aboriginal athlete on teams playing out of province and off-reserve. Because of this, he was sometimes a target for racial slurs. “In the late 60s, through my involvement in sports, I was introduced to an awareness that there were things more important in life, such as law, racism, and discrimination,” Littlechild recalls.

Since then, his international legal involvement has helped to open the doors for racial tolerance. His prescription to end racism is simply “understanding.”

According to Littlechild, “It’s about exploring the similarities we all have, rather than the differences.”

REFLECTION

- How did Littlechild’s involvement in athletics prepare him for a life of leadership in the international community?
- Littlechild makes a distinction between being equal and being the same. How does this distinction apply to Aboriginal rights in Canada? Why might some people not always understand or agree with this perspective?

THE POWER OF EDUCATION

One way to stop discrimination is to make it against the law. This is effective in stopping obvious forms of discrimination. Changing more subtle forms of discrimination is more difficult, because it relies upon changing attitudes. Teaching people to have empathy and compassion — the ability to imaginatively step into another person's perspective and consider how they might experience the world — is one way education can help prevent discrimination.

Education can also help dispel stereotypes. Once people are aware that certain patterns of thinking are stereotypes, the stereotypes lose their power. However, making people aware of the stereotypes that surround them can be difficult. Stereotypes can be taught and reinforced in subtle ways that are rarely questioned. Pages 167–170 examine some of the tools of stereotypes and ways that they may be used to dispel stereotypes instead of reinforcing them.

LANGUAGE

Language is a set of written or verbal symbols that people use in an agreed-upon way to communicate with each other. It is also a powerful tool that can be used to promote or dispel stereotypes. Words are not in themselves bad or negative. They can become negative because of how they are used.

Because language is composed of symbols, a word is not just a word. Some words can have a meaning that encompasses a long history. If particular words, such as *Indian*, are used consistently in a way that

offends or excludes, the word takes on meanings of offense and exclusion.

Stereotypical language often appears in the form of a label. For example, if a person shows up late to a movie, another member of the audience might think "Late people are so inconsiderate." All people who are late have been labelled inconsiderate, regardless of individual circumstances. If the person who is late happens to be a member of a visible minority, the label might be applied to all people of this minority group.

One consequence of such labels is that they can remove people's humanity. Other people are viewed as no more than an adjective, such as lazy, heathen, or inconsiderate.

MASS MEDIA

Mass media generally appeals to the masses — the mainstream. The mass media is one of the main sources of information for Canadians. People turn to the media to be informed and entertained. Such media often reinforce commonly held attitudes rather than challenge them. However, used carefully, media such as newspapers, television, and film also have the ability to dispel stereotypes.

Two years ago I was in Spain. We were performing theatre and telling stories. People kept putting their hand up to me and saying "HOW!" No, I'm serious, and I was kinda' getting mad about it. Then my agent told me they weren't being rude to me. It's just all that they knew about Native people... just from what they read in magazines and saw in the movies. It wasn't an insult. So then I felt better.

— Stan Isadore, Driftpile First Nation



Stan Isadore

Some Aboriginal people became successful actors in the early film and television industry, despite discrimination. One was Jay Silverheels, from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. He played the role of Tonto in the television series *The Lone Ranger*. However, not even Silverheels could escape the stereotypes surrounding his character. Later in life, Silverheels spoke publicly about improving the portrayal of Aboriginal peoples in film and television.

Many Canadians do not know much about Aboriginal peoples except what they learn in mainstream media. As a result, many stereotypes persist in spite of other gains Aboriginal peoples have made in recent decades.

Film

The Hollywood movie industry helped create and popularize stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples. Early Western movies used many stereotypical images of First Nations. Sometimes actors from mainstream cultures played First Nations characters — the actors wore makeup and played stereotypes, characters not even resembling real people.

Most films portrayed Aboriginal peoples in ways that were historically inaccurate. The movie industry took advantage of stereotypes to heighten the drama of films and to create suspense for their audiences. Portrayals often put First Nations people in the role of “bad guys” working against the good. These portrayals shaped the mainstream public’s image of Aboriginal peoples for generations.

These images sometimes even influenced Aboriginal people’s ideas about themselves. Aboriginal people who grew up watching such films sometimes internalized the stereotypes, replacing real knowledge about their own culture.

A new stereotype that is often seen in films presents Aboriginal



people as guardians of the environment. Although this is not a negative role to play in society, it is damaging because it presents a picture of Aboriginal peoples that does not take a normal range of individual differences into account.

Television

While few minority cultural groups receive as much news media attention as Aboriginal peoples, this coverage comes at a price. News coverage is more likely to perpetuate stereotypes than dispel them. Aboriginal peoples are often portrayed as having or creating problems that cost money or provoke violence. Few mainstream stories incorporate cultural insights from an Aboriginal perspective.

Pervasive stereotypes in the mainstream have prompted more media programs from Aboriginal people’s perspectives, such as the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) and the Aboriginal People’s Television Network (APTN). The IBC, created in 1981, broadcasts programs produced by Inuit people and programs from other media outlets, sometimes dubbed in Inuktitut.



North of 60 stars Tina Keeper and Tom Jackson have become familiar faces in homes across Canada. Many people applauded North of 60 for putting Aboriginal people on prime time television. If possible, watch a few episodes and write a review that captures your own ideas about the show and its effects on stereotypes.

outside of stereotypes that they have about Aboriginal people.

Art and Literature

Many early written and artistic accounts of Aboriginal peoples were from a European perspective. These works often perpetuate historical inaccuracies to this day.

In the late twentieth century, Aboriginal people began to regain control of the words and images that represent them to mainstream society. Today, many Aboriginal people have been acclaimed nationally and internationally for their creative pursuits in art and literature. Noted artists from Alberta alone include Dale Auger, Alex Janvier, Jane Ash Poitras, and Joane Cardinal Schubert. There is a growing recognition that Aboriginal people provide a unique perspective and make important contributions to North American life. These contributions often challenge stereotypes and mainstream misconceptions.

Marketing Media

In recent years, many Aboriginal people have objected to the use of their cultural symbols for inappropriate and insensitive purposes. One pervasive example is the use of Aboriginal cultures for various marketing and advertising purposes.

For example, many professional sports teams — the Atlanta Braves and their famous tomahawk chop; the Cleveland Indians with their

The APTN was formed in 1999. Much of the APTN's programming is produced by and developed for Aboriginal peoples. Some programs are in Aboriginal languages.

Aboriginal people also own newspapers, local and regional radio stations, and television production outlets. All are in a position to assert Aboriginal peoples' cultural values and perspectives. These media outlets facilitate communication among Aboriginal groups and help Aboriginal people build or reinforce a positive cultural identity.

A few mainstream media outlets have also made efforts in this direction. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation made an effort to improve the portrayal of Aboriginal people in television dramas. Shows such as the *Beachcombers* and *North of 60* used Aboriginal actors to portray Aboriginal people. These characters had believable lives and occupations. The shows drew large audiences among Aboriginal people and mainstream audiences. For many mainstream audiences, these programs provide the only information

smiling mascot, Chief Wahoo; and the Edmonton Eskimos — use images that reinforce stereotypes or disfavoured language.

It is true that the names and symbols of other cultural groups are also used in similar ways: the New York Yankees, Notre Dame Fighting Irish, and Vancouver Canucks. However, many of these groups have not borne the legacy of stereotyping

that Aboriginal people have. This distinction makes a significant difference.

The widespread use of Aboriginal paraphernalia such as tomahawks, feathers, face paint, and drums mock and trivialize their true cultural, historical, and spiritual significance. Teams can adopt marketable names and images without referring to Aboriginal cultures or stereotypes.

HUMOUR AND STEREOTYPES



Don Burnstick

Stereotypes have an inherent “us versus them” mentality. Jokes are especially powerful in reinforcing this. By laughing at another person or group, the laughers share a bond that is enhanced by excluding the target of the joke. Imagine the experience of being in a room of people laughing at you. How did you feel? Now imagine being one of the group who is laughing at someone else. How is this experience different?

Have you ever felt uncomfortable in a group when someone told a joke that reinforced a stereotype? Did you speak up or did you remain silent? It can be difficult to voice an opinion that counters a group’s belief system.

Like many other tools that build and reinforce stereotypes, humour can also remove the power from stereotypes. For example, many Aboriginal comedians regularly use stereotypes in their work. Don Burnstick, from the Alexander First Nation, tells “redskin” jokes regularly as part of his routines.

In the National Film Board video *Redskins, Tricksters, and Puppy Stew*, he recalls his first redskin joke: “If you know how to filet bolgna, you might be a redskin.” Since that first joke, he’s told dozens of others and uses them as a regular part of his routine. He says “the word *redskin* was, and probably still is, racist, but what I did is I jumped into that racism and twisted it and made it funny.”

REFLECTION

Why are Burnstick’s jokes different from jokes that reinforce stereotypes? Could a non-Aboriginal person tell the same jokes with the same effect? Watch the video *Redskins, Tricksters, and Puppy Stew* to see Don Burnstick and other examples of Aboriginal humour. How can humour dispel stereotypes?

ABORIGINAL IDENTITY TODAY

Aboriginal people live in the contemporary world. Although many Aboriginal people wish to preserve elements of their ancestral heritage, most are not suggesting that they give up the conveniences and pleasures of contemporary life. Even while they might practise traditional activities such as hunting and fishing, and do so in a way that honours their culture's spiritual traditions, they might also want access to modern health care and to enjoy books, television, and movies as other Canadians do.

Carl Brave Rock, a young actor and playwright from the Kainai First Nation, has a personal perspective on this issue. His words express a longing for a cultural identity that is free from old stereotypes. What do you think of his idea that young Aboriginal people today long for a new stereotype? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Your Project

With a small group, prepare a creative presentation highlighting your own ideas about Aboriginal identity and stereotypes. The medium you choose is up to you. Consider a dramatic presentation, poster, PowerPoint™ presentation, song, video, Web site, or any other method you think will best express your ideas.

"We're not much different from other people. We all speak English; we all wear the same clothes now; we like driving cars; we like having pretty houses. That's where we get our little identity crisis. What the hell makes an Indian today — if we don't smoke pipes, or if we don't have long braids? ... Never lived in a teepee. I don't even own a teepee....The question that now plagues [our people's youth] is, who are we? ... It's a subconscious identity crisis, perhaps a longing for a new stereotype rather than the big-nosed, long-haired, mean ol' Indian stereotype known before....

— Carl Brave Rock, in *Elder, Student, Teacher: A Kainai Métissage* by Dwayne Donald



In The First Tourist, by Inuit artist Kananginak Pootoogook, the tourist gestures to the hunter to "Stop right there!" The resulting snapshot will freeze the hunter in time. What comment do you think the artist is making about mainstream culture's interest in Aboriginal cultures?

LOOKING BACK

Before moving on to the next section, discuss the following questions with a partner: What is mainstream society? How is multiculturalism a part of mainstream society? What kinds of cultural barriers prevent people from playing a positive role in mainstream society? What roles do the media play in reinforcing stereotypes? How can education fight stereotypes? In the next section, you will look at people who, through example, break stereotypes about Aboriginal people every day.

Breaking Cultural Barriers

AS YOU READ

Despite obstacles such as stereotypes and discrimination, many Aboriginal people have played, and continue to play, positive roles in mainstream Canadian society, as well as in their own communities. These people break down cultural barriers. Their example helps educate non-Aboriginal Canadians about false stereotypes and the diverse contributions Aboriginal peoples can make to society. Their example also serves as a role model for other Aboriginal people. As you read this section, think about how each accomplished Aboriginal person helps build a positive place for all Aboriginal people in Canada.

IN THE PREVIOUS SECTION, YOU LEARNED ABOUT THE CULTURAL COMPOSITION OF MAINSTREAM CANADIAN SOCIETY AND THE KINDS OF CULTURAL BARRIERS, SUCH AS STEREOTYPES AND DISCRIMINATION, THAT PREVENT ALL PARTS

- of this society from being full participants. You also learned how education can dispel stereotypes. A powerful form of education is seeing examples of individuals who do not fit stereotyped ideas about their group. Every person who does not conform to a stereotype knocks a chip in it.



Over time, with education and awareness, stereotypes can be widely recognized as the rigid and harmful ways of thinking that they are.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

It would be impossible to include all Aboriginal people worthy of note in one book. There are too many both past and present. Most never receive any formal recognition at all, which does not take away from their contributions. However, formal recognition of excellence can play a significant part in removing cultural barriers.

The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, created in 1985 by Mohawk conductor and composer John Kim Bell, established the annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. First given out in 1993, the awards celebrate accomplished individuals in the Aboriginal community, and promote role models for Aboriginal youth. The awards represent the highest honour the national Aboriginal community can bestow upon its achievers, those individuals who have accomplished their goals through self-discipline, drive, and determination.

Past award winners include people such as Pearl Calahasen, the first Métis woman elected to the

The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation is best known for its awards. However, the foundation is also a major supporter of education for Aboriginal people, providing approximately \$2 million a year in scholarship money for Aboriginal young people. How do its awards reinforce the foundation's educational goals?

Alberta Legislature; Dr. Frank Calder, whose court case resulted in significant gains for all Aboriginal land claims; Métis author Maria Campbell; Kainai business leader Roy Fox; and actor Tina Keeper, who is well known for her work on *North of 60*.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people who have reached a significant level of achievement in their occupations can be nominated for an award. The career categories for nomination include professional

work in community development, education, health services, law and justice, medicine, science and technology, and social services. The awards also recognize work in agriculture, arts and culture, business and commerce, fisheries, heritage and spirituality, media and communications, sports, and youth. A national jury of Aboriginal people selects twelve career achievement award winners, one youth achievement, and one lifetime achievement award recipient each year.

NOMINATING SOMEONE FOR A NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Anyone can nominate an individual for a National Aboriginal Achievement Award (NAAA). In this activity, your class will research worthy individuals, reach a consensus as to which one to nominate, and then go through the process of nominating an individual for an NAAA.

How difficult is it to choose the NAAA winners?

WHAT TO DO

1. Research past winners of National Aboriginal Achievement Awards to get a feel for the qualities and accomplishments necessary to win an award. The foundation has an excellent Web site with concise profiles of past winners at www.naaf.ca.
2. Find the steps required to nominate an individual and review them carefully.
3. Find names of potential candidates for awards using your own knowledge, asking family, teachers, and friends for suggestions, reading Aboriginal newspapers, or even by calling local organizations for suggestions.
4. Once you have a number of potential candidates, narrow down your choices until you have just one person to suggest to the class. Prepare a summary of this person's qualifications and accomplishments.
5. As each person in your class presents his or her candidate, listen carefully so that you will be able to pick the one you think will be the best nominee.
6. Determine a method for deciding upon your class candidate. You might decide to use a system of voting or consensus decision making.
7. Work with your teacher to determine all the tasks that must be done in order to complete the nomination process. Sort out tasks as evenly as possible among small groups or individuals.
8. Work with your classmates to prepare and send in your nomination. Be sure it is as polished as possible. You might also wish to send a letter to the nominee to let them know about your nomination.

Issues for Investigation

MAINSTREAM ADOPTION OF ABORIGINAL WAYS

Achievements by Aboriginal people in politics, economics, arts and culture, and many other fields over the last few decades have made a difference in the place of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures in Canada. Parts of Canadian society are becoming more culturally sensitive in their approach to Aboriginal peoples.

In addition, Canadian society is slowly changing to accommodate more Aboriginal beliefs and values. For example, several mainstream government processes concerning Aboriginal peoples are becoming more reflective of Aboriginal cultures. In different regions of the country, tripartite agreements — usually among the federal government, a provincial government, and an Aboriginal government — now apply to self-government, treaties, health and social services, child welfare, policing, youth services, and more.

Alberta singer Laura Vinson has never denied her Métis heritage, but, like many other Aboriginal peoples, has difficult memories of the way she and her people have sometimes been treated. Her newest work reaches deeply into those experiences, speaking to audiences of all backgrounds.



This type of agreement reflects Aboriginal cultures' traditional approaches to decision making, where all parties involved have an equal voice and work together towards a common goal. In reaching such agreements, non-Aboriginal participants learn processes that might be used in other situations. In this way, all Canadians benefit.

Other cultural influences on the mainstream include environmental activism. According to Dunne-za Elder Dominique Habitant, the greatest contribution Aboriginal peoples have to offer mainstream society is that of helping reconcile humankind's place on Earth. Aboriginal peoples can teach mainstream society a lot about respect.

"Respect for yourself, all things, and others besides yourself is what we always ask for," says Habitant. "In decisions, you must take into consideration how you are affecting other organisms around you, and those to come, for seven generations ahead in time. You must always try to be in balance when you walk the Earth." Aboriginal peoples' oral traditions could play a strong role in educating Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people about living in harmony with the environment.

Though the words *balance* and *respect* have become almost cliché in reference to Aboriginal cultures, they convey a universal truth. Unless humankind considers the consequences of its actions, it stands to wipe itself out and take many species with it. Old and young traditionalists, such as educator and artist Dale Auger, a Sakaw Cree, and Laura

Vinson, a Métis singer, call people from all cultures to find their connection with Earth. They and others like them believe that only this connection will teach people to be more planet-friendly and tolerant of others.

Nowhere is this traditional holistic attitude of respect put to better use than in the provincial judicial system, which is benefiting from the Aboriginal concept of restorative justice. Restorative justice is a traditional Aboriginal method of conflict resolution. It places an emphasis on restoring harmony and making amends rather than punishing offenders.

According to provincial circuit court judge John Reilly, as quoted in the *Calgary Sun*,

Canadians of European origin and Canadians of Aboriginal origin have a fundamentally different world view. The Aboriginal culture was [traditionally] very community based — [living on the land] required absolute co-operation amongst the people in the community. Instead of seeing an individual as freely, willingly choosing to do wrong and altering or deterring that choice through punishment, [traditional cultures] saw an offending behaviour as a tear in the relationship that binds people together. The objective, then, was to mend the tear, restoring the community to its pre-offence cohesiveness.

The approach was not meant to be soft on crime, but rather to take into consideration the needs of the victim and the community — with active remorse and reparation on the part of the offender.

Restorative justice initiatives are especially effective with young offenders. Youth justice committees are being used in many Alberta communities, and not all of them are Aboriginal. For example, a program called Calgary Community Conferencing helps reduce crime and violent conflict in the city's elementary, junior, and senior high schools. The resolution process involves giving everyone involved a chance to speak about their needs, with the offender eventually suggesting resolutions for the problem.

In schools and in wider society, law enforcers are finding restorative justice to be effective, and adoption of this traditional Aboriginal practice is growing.



Jordin Tootoo is the first Inuk athlete to play in the National Hockey League. On October 9, 2003, he played his first shift for the Nashville Predators. He won a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2002.

LOOKING BACK

How has the position of Aboriginal peoples in mainstream Canadian society changed since the 1970s? In your opinion, has this position improved, gotten worse, or stayed the same? Write an essay on this topic that provides examples to support your points from areas such as politics, economics, statistics, and the media. You may want to refer back to previous chapters for ideas.

Chapter Five Review

Check Your Understanding

1. Define *multiculturalism* in your own words.
2. Is your community highly multicultural or are certain groups noticeably larger than others? Explain how you reach this conclusion and factors that contribute to your community's character.
3. Define *assimilation* in your own words.
4. How do stereotypes form?
5. What harm can stereotypes do?
6. How does language contribute to stereotypes?
7. What roles do the mass media play in reinforcing stereotypes?
8. Without using stereotypes, write a description of Aboriginal peoples.
9. Define *discrimination* in your own words.
10. How does discrimination differ from prejudice and stereotypes?
11. What are different levels and types of discrimination?
12. What is institutional discrimination?

Métis architect Douglas Cardinal's dramatically curved designs are apparent in buildings around the world, including Alberta's Grande Prairie Regional College and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec. He has won an international reputation for excellence in design and won a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 1995.



13. What are examples of mainstream society's adoption of Aboriginal cultural values? What is the significance of these examples for Aboriginal peoples in Canada?
14. Name at least ten Aboriginal people who you believe have made significant contributions to their communities and mainstream society. Describe briefly the reasons for each of your choices.

Reading and Writing

15. Using the Statistics Canada Web site, create a profile of your own community. Present your data using words, graphs, and charts in a PowerPoint™ or overhead presentation.
16. National Aboriginal Achievement Award winners vary from Douglas Cardinal, a world-renowned architect, to Joe and Josephine Crowshoe, ceremonial Elders from the Piikani First Nation. The numerous categories for awards celebrate achievement in almost every walk of life. Find a local First Nations, Métis, or Inuit person who you think is a good role model for youth. Use the profiles on the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards Web site as a model to write a profile of the person. You may need to request an interview with the individual to get the information you need. Create a class Web site of your role model profiles.
17. Express your own experiences with stereotypes or discrimination in a poem, short story, or essay.

Joe and Josephine Crowshoe were instrumental in preserving their Piikani oral tradition, ceremonies, and language. They were widely recognized as cultural authorities by those inside and outside the Aboriginal community. Josephine, a Holy Woman, was the Keeper of the Natoas (Sundance) Bundle and Joe was the Holder of the Blackfoot Short Thunder Medicine Pipe Bundle. They both won National Aboriginal Achievement Awards in 1998.

Viewing and Representing

18. Create a poster educating people about subtle forms of discrimination.
19. Describe the weekly programming of the Aboriginal People's Television Network. In what ways does it reflect Aboriginal cultures? How does it deal with Aboriginal issues? What role do Aboriginal languages play in its programs? Review a program you think does a good job of presenting Aboriginal people without stereotypes.

Speaking and Listening

20. Research early accounts of First Nations or Inuit cultures written by explorers, settlers, or missionaries in Canada. Find examples of how they viewed Aboriginal peoples. How did their worldview shape their ideas and judgements? Prepare an oral story as if from the perspective of a First Nations or Inuit person meeting Europeans for the first time. How might their worldview impact their impression of the Europeans?
21. In small groups, discuss any experiences you have had with stereotypes or discrimination. How did they make you feel? What did you do in the situation or following the situation? How might individuals handle such experiences with positive outcomes?
22. Hold an anti-discrimination day at your school. Plan creative ways to inform other students about the damage done by discrimination and ways to prevent it.



The television series renegadepress.com is a dramatic program on the Aboriginal People's Television Network about a group of multicultural inner-city teenagers that operate an online newspaper. The paper deals with issues that affect them and their friends, such as contraception, bullying, anorexia, and solvent abuse. The series breaks down many cultural boundaries and stereotypes as it deals with difficult issues.

Going Further

23. Brainstorm alternative names and symbols for sports teams that currently use Aboriginal stereotypes or cultural objects inappropriately.
24. Watch a Western film, preferably from the 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s. Re-write a scene in the script to overturn any stereotypical portrayals of Aboriginal people.

LOOKING BACK

Review the Focus Questions on page 158 with a partner and then answer each on your own in your notes. Do you reinforce any stereotypes in your own thinking or behaviour? Think critically and write as honestly as you can about how you see groups of people that are different from you.

CHAPTER SIX

Communities Today

AS YOU READ

Chapter Five described the cultural composition of Canada today and some of the barriers that keep members of some cultures, including many Aboriginal peoples, from fully participating in Canadian society. The degree to which these barriers affect Aboriginal individuals sometimes depends on where they live. Aboriginal people who live in mainstream communities, such as urban areas, generally experience cultural barriers more often. Those living in rural, primarily Aboriginal communities generally experience more cultural acceptance.

Today, more than half of the Aboriginal people in Canada do not live on reserves or in other Aboriginal communities. Many live in urban areas, part of urban Aboriginal communities that are growing each year. The existence of these urban communities increasingly challenges traditional ways of thinking about and dealing with Aboriginal issues in Canada.

As you read this chapter, consider some of the questions that follow: What factors do Aboriginal people consider when choosing where to live? What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of city life? What are advantages and disadvantages of life in Aboriginal communities? How might availability of services affect where people choose to live? What are effective ways of developing and delivering services that address Aboriginal people's rights and needs?

This chapter begins with a song by Shingoose, a singer/songwriter of Anishinabé heritage based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His thirty-five-year career in music combines European music styles with themes and issues from his First Nations cultural heritage. He often uses humour to depict the conflicts between his First Nations heritage and urban society.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

As you read this chapter, consider these questions:

- ▲ Why do some Aboriginal people migrate to urban areas?
- ▲ Why do some Aboriginal people choose to live on First Nations reserves, Métis Settlements, and in other Aboriginal communities?
- ▲ What knowledge and skills are needed for urban living?
- ▲ What services are available for Aboriginal people and how effective are they?
- ▲ What kinds of issues are involved in the delivery of services to Aboriginal people?

It's Hard to Be Traditional

By Shingoose
(Curtis Jonnie)

Well, it's hard to be traditional
When you're living right
downtown
People tend to look at you
funny
Every time you come around
They like to make fun of you
when you dance
Especially when it rains
It's hard to be traditional
When you're living in the
nuclear age

For instance,
Where do you go when you
want a sweat?
Well, you head down to the
YMCA
They got a great steamin'
sauna there
But they look at you weird
when you pray
Instead of rocks they got a
little box
Of electric coils and wires
And when you throw the
water on and start to sing
Someone always hollers,
"Fire!"



Shingoose



Artist Lance Belanger, who has Maliseet and French heritage, created Culture in Transition out of microchip circuit boards, seal fur, and enamel on canvas. How do you interpret his message?

Has anybody seen good old Mother Earth
around lately?

That's 'cause she's living at the public park
But they'd never let you hunt or trap in there
And it's always closed at dark
Yes, and all the animals are fair game
But they're living in a cage
And if you ever tried to skin one
Well, they'd have you on the next front page

Chorus

Way before the hippies grew long hair
We were wearing braids
But then around the turn of the century
All of us got shaved
(or was it saved? I don't know)
But now long hair is coming back again
Just when I got used to it short
It's gotten so you can't tell these days
Whether you're a girl or a boy

What do you get when you rub two sticks?
You get a raging fire
But it's just as easy to flick your Bic
And nobody would be the wiser
Oh, it's hard to stay true to your roots
And only your hairdresser can tell
Whether or not you're traditional and the
rest can go to...

REFLECTION

1. Shingoose's song uses humour to explore a serious issue. Summarize the main theme of his song in a single sentence. What other methods could Shingoose have used to get his point across? Why do you think he chose music and humour? In your opinion, does his choice strengthen or weaken his message?
2. Using the library and the Internet, research Aboriginal writers and entertainers who use humour to present their viewpoints. Find examples of stories from Aboriginal oral traditions that contain humour. Prepare a three to five page presentation using PowerPoint™, slides, or overheads that compares traditional and contemporary uses of humour.
3. Shingoose describes a cultural transition in his song, although in a very different way from Lance Belanger. What kind of cultural transition do you think Aboriginal peoples are experiencing today? Use song, story, poem, or artwork to express your ideas.

Life in Rural Aboriginal Communities

AS YOU READ

An Aboriginal community is one that is composed of enough Aboriginal people that Aboriginal worldviews, cultural practices, and languages are an expected, fully accepted way of life. This way of life is often distinctly different from that of mainstream society.

This section looks at the benefits and drawbacks of life for Aboriginal people within Aboriginal communities. As you read pages 180–187, think about the aspects of life that you think make an Aboriginal community different from other communities in Canada. What aspects of life are the same?

For First Nations people, Aboriginal communities are generally reserves and areas immediately surrounding reserves. For Inuit people, they can be anywhere in the Arctic, where Inuit people form the majority of the population. For Métis people, the Métis Settlements in Alberta and certain other towns and rural regions across the West have enough Métis population that Métis cultural practices are common.

Some reserves are located within cities or close to urban areas, but most Aboriginal communities are rural and some are far from major centres of population, particularly in the North. This section will focus on rural Aboriginal communities.

BEFORE WORLD WAR II, NEARLY ALL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN CANADA LIVED IN RURAL AREAS. THIS IS BECAUSE TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL WAYS OF LIFE INVOLVED HUNTING, TRAPPING, FISHING, AND FARMING. TODAY, ABOUT HALF OF THE



total Aboriginal population in Canada live in rural areas.

The 633 First Nations reserves, 8 Métis Settlements, 53 Inuit communities, and numerous other towns and regions in Canada with high Aboriginal populations are diverse in location, level of economic development, social issues, services, size, attitude, and local politics. These differences, combined with individual personalities and situations, create circumstances that either pull people to stay in Aboriginal communities or push them to leave. Sometimes people feel an internal tug-of-war, both pushed and pulled. Many who leave eventually return.

RESERVE LIFE

What draws First Nations people to life on a reserve? The main benefits of an on-reserve lifestyle include being close to extended family and friends and being surrounded by First Nations culture. Elders provide guidance, and others in the community often help families who are starting out or in need. Generally, the atmosphere is supportive and friendships are strong. Being with people who speak First Nations languages and feel a sense of pride in cultural traditions adds richness to life that may be missing elsewhere.

Life's pace is also more free and relaxed in smaller communities. A rural setting provides peace, quiet, and closeness to the natural world. People can fish, hunt, or trap along

The main benefit of life in an Aboriginal community is being near family and friends and attending community events and celebrations, such as this powwow on the Alexis First Nation reserve.

with others who share an understanding of the spiritual aspects of these pursuits. Living in a more natural environment also allows people to practise traditional ceremonies.

Children have fewer restrictions in rural communities. Sometimes, people who have left reserves return after they have children. They want their children to develop a deeper connection to their heritage, family, and the land. Many communities have on-reserve schools, particularly at the lower grade levels, that incorporate the culture and language of those living there.

Reserves sometimes offer other benefits, as well. Some pay power or heating bills for their Elders. A few communities provide rent-free or low-rent housing. Some reserves offer employment opportunities in on-reserve businesses and industries. These businesses are often more culturally sensitive than mainstream businesses, making it easier for people to find jobs that they enjoy.

Resource Development

Many reserves in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada are developing resources on reserve land to create employment and economic benefits for their communities. Many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business leaders believe resource development is the key to Aboriginal prosperity. Dave Tuccaro, a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation and owner of eight highly successful businesses, says "In Canada's northern diamond mines, Aboriginals are doing hundreds of millions of dollars in business, and in the oil sands, Aboriginal businesses did



Drummers helped celebrate a signing ceremony between EnCana Corporation, Saddle Lake First Nation, and Western Lakota Energy Services. The celebration was held at the Keyano-Pimee Exploration Company Ltd. site, which is jointly owned and operated by the Saddle Lake and Whitefish (Goodfish) Lake First Nations. Why do you think many First Nations use joint ventures with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations to develop their resources?

over \$400 million dollars in 2003 alone. This is the result of good partnerships that are providing Aboriginals with job and educational opportunities — the means to build a sustainable future. It's time for Aboriginals to get busy, the sooner the better."

However, resource development can have positive and negative consequences for Aboriginal communities. For example, in the early 1970s, an oil boom in Inuvialuit territory brought high wages and a cash economy. Many families moved to towns so their children could attend school. The boom ended, but most families remained in towns. Today, many young Inuvialuit have never lived on the land and are missing a vital connection to their cultural identity.

In the 1960s, development of oil and natural gas near Hobbema, Alberta, suddenly increased local First Nations' income and wealth. In fact, the four First Nations in the area became the richest in Canada. The



Dave Tuccaro from the Mikisew Cree First Nation was included in the Financial Post's "Top 40 under 40," a listing of the country's most influential young economic leaders. He received a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 1999 for his contributions to business.



The Siksika First Nation is using provincial and federal economic development funding as well as oil and gas resource revenue to build Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, a World Heritage and National Historic Site. The site is scheduled to open in 2005. The \$29 million project is fully owned and operated by the First Nation. The park will have many positive economic benefits for the Siksika reserve, as well as cultural and educational benefits for other provincial residents, tourists, and Canadian citizens.

communities distributed some of the money to the people and invested the rest in business ventures and improvements to the community's schools, social services, and medical clinics.

However, the sudden wealth also created social problems in the community. The high incomes and the material goods that the money could buy influenced many members to abandon traditional practices and customs.

For some people in Hobbema, these changes were not welcomed. In 1968, the former chief of the Ermineskin First Nation at Hobbema, Robert Smallboy, led a group of about 125 people to the foothills

of the Rocky Mountains. They established a camp near Nordegg and pursued a more traditional life of hunting, fishing, and trapping, away from the influences of modern life.

Other communities experienced similar problems with resource development. Most reserves in Alberta now manage development carefully, focusing their attention on re-investing wealth for their community's future. The goal is economic stability, where the community is not dependent on any single source of income. For example, Shell Canada has been working closely with the 400 First Nations and Métis people who live near its Athabasca Oil Sands Project at Fort McKay. Together they have reached agreements on initiatives that deal with education, employment, economic development, culture, and community infrastructure.

Another example is the Siksika First Nation, which began the Siksika Development Corporation in 1995. The company was created to ensure that the First Nation would receive long-term economic benefit from oil and gas exploration and development on its land. Alfred Many Heads, director of the corporation, says that the First Nation re-invests much of its revenue in other businesses to allow it to diversify from the boom-and-bust oil and gas economy. One diversification plan is to develop an industrial park on reserve land.

Tax Status

First Nations people who live and work on reserves do not have to pay personal or property tax. Section 87 of the Indian Act says that the "personal property of an Indian or a

Indigenous Knowledge

Research a First Nation in Alberta that has been successful in tapping into resource wealth on their reserve lands (lumber, or oil and gas). Write a short profile of when development began, how it affected life on the reserve, and how the First Nation managed the development and any economic gains. Overall, has the community benefited from development? Explain your answer.

band situated on a reserve” is tax exempt. This tax exemption includes employment income for First Nations people with status who live and work on the reserve for the majority of their time. Today, a few First Nations have a different tax status because of settled land and self-government claims.

First Nations leaders maintain that their right to tax-free status comes from treaties, not the Indian Act. In the Benoit case, Mikisew First Nation member Gordon Benoit asserted his right, under Treaty Eight, to be exempt from federal income tax, even though he lives and works off-reserve. Support for his case included a report from treaty commissioners that stated that they had explained to the First Nations that the treaty “did not open the way to the imposition of any tax.” In 2003, Benoit lost his case at the Federal Court of Appeal, and in 2004 he was denied the opportunity to appeal this ruling.

Drawbacks of Reserve Life
The benefits of reserve life are not always enough to keep people on the reserve. What some people experience as a comforting closeness of family and friends, others feel as a lack of privacy. In some cases, the influences of family and friends are not always positive. For example, some people experience peer pressure to use alcohol or other substances. Moving away can give them the chance to start a new life away from old habits.

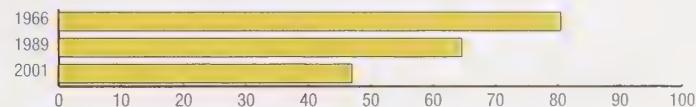
It is worth noting that this drawback, and many of the rest that follow, often apply to many rural communities, not just reserves or other Aboriginal communities. Some

drawbacks are distinctly part of reserve life and others a function of living in a rural area.

Small communities offer fewer employment and educational options. Most people who leave reserves do so to pursue these opportunities elsewhere. Some reserve schools have limited resources and may not be able to provide the same course and extracurricular opportunities as schools in urban areas. Some may not even be able to keep up with repairs to their school facilities. A few rural areas offer post-secondary options, but they are not usually as extensive as those in major cities.

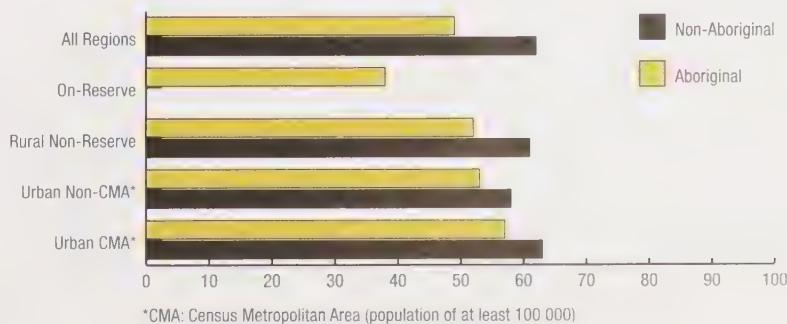
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has a goal of ensuring that people living on reserves have the

Percentage of First Nations People Living On-Reserve



What trend do you see in this bar graph? What factors do you think contribute to this trend? Have you or anyone you know moved to or from a reserve? What were reasons for moving? What effects do you think migration has on communities and cultures? Discuss these questions as a class.

Employment Rates of People Aged Fifteen and Over by Place of Residence and Aboriginal Identity





SELF-GOVERNING COMMUNITIES

Today, many Aboriginal communities have regained traditional powers of self-determination through land claims or self-government agreements. They have more control over aspects of life that reinforce their cultures, such as language, education, and economic opportunities in their communities. These communities can make their own choices about the future. Most have plans to live alongside mainstream Canadian society — a part of Canada, but culturally distinct.

Other communities are still in the process of achieving this level of control over their futures. In particular, most First Nations reserves still operate under the federal government's Indian Act legislation. As you read in Chapter Two, these communities are working in many ways to increase their powers of self-determination. Government attitudes have been slowly shifting to support this goal.

In 2004, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Andy Scott affirmed the federal government's support for Aboriginal self-determination:

I really believe that this [shift to Aboriginal self-determination] is about making available the instruments to the communities that are necessary for them to be successful on their own terms. We need the First Nations community to bring not only value to the decision, but in many cases, to make the decision. That's what self-determination is all about....

The relationship [between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society] is improving because the Canadian public, generally, is coming to understand two things: the entitlement, the contract that is represented by treaties and various claims that First Nations communities have with the Crown, and, perhaps even more important, the public is seeing the resolution of these outstanding issues as being important to everyone.

This is a big piece of unfinished business for this country. I feel optimistic that we are going to make great progress, so that while we're in an uphill journey with lots of baggage, I see the top.

REFLECTION

Where does the entitlement that Andy Scott mentions come from? Review previous chapters with a partner and name as many sources of entitlement as you can.

same basic services as other Canadians. Despite this, in 2000, some reserves still lacked basic water and sewer facilities. Ten per cent of First Nations communities had no access to electric services, and 12 per cent were without year-round road access. Many families are unable to find homes on their reserves and are forced to move or live with other families. Less critically, some people find that reserves offer limited outlets for recreation and leisure.

Social problems — substance abuse, gangs, physical violence, crime — can also drive people away from some reserves. Other reserves might suffer corruption, inequalities, or differences of opinion that divide the community. For example, residents may not agree with local politics or attitudes towards community development.

While some reserves have good economic opportunities, others rely on government grants and social assistance for 80 per cent or more of incoming money. This can demoralize the people who live there. The desire to pursue better economic opportunities is one of the main reasons people leave reserves. This is why so many First Nations leaders stress the importance of developing more on-reserve economic opportunities.

Impact of the Contemporary World on Reserve Life

Life on reserves has changed greatly in the last few decades, in many cases improving dramatically. First Nations are gaining more control over their affairs, and governments have become increasingly respectful of cultural needs.

Unfortunately, not all changes taking place on reserves are viewed as positive by community members. Reserves, like many other rural communities, are experiencing problems that were once found only in urban areas. These problems include

- **Pollution.** Many reserves suffer from the effects of polluted land and contaminated water due to mining, agriculture, and other industries.
- **Youth at risk.** Abuse of alcohol and other drugs or substances can be a problem that affects

young and old. In some places on the prairies, alienated young people have formed gangs that reinforce their sense of alienation from wider society.

- **Television.** On reserves today, as in other locations in Canada, children are drawn to the ideas and values reflected on television.

Self-government provides the most promising means of addressing these issues, because it will allow communities to address their problems in culturally appropriate ways.

OLD LANGUAGES ADAPTING TO THE MODERN WORLD

Blackfoot

aisaiksisto (television/movie,
literally “becoming visible”)
aikkamiksimstaa (computer,
literally “quick thinker”)

Cree

kîwîpahkamâhowin pîhwâpskos (telephone,
literally “tap the line,” referring to the early
telegraph wires)
pîwâphskos icîkaân (cell phone, literally
“unbelievable or extraordinary thing”)
pîwâpiskatahk (satellite, literally “iron star”)
masinatahikan kâ ïnîsimakahk
(computer, literally “smart typewriter”)

Dene Sųliné

tsi chok hetai (plane, literally “a big boat that’s
flying”)
beschene chok (bus, literally “a big wagon”)
eri ‘tis net’i (movie, literally “watching or looking
at paper”)

Dené Tha'

wok'luitse tani (car or contraption)

Dunne-za

woosloozhy kyaytanee
(a vehicle, literally “stinky wagon”)

Métis Cree

kosa pâchi’kun (television)

Nakoda

bahborgin (car, literally “covered wagon”)
tahnuska tahpi tin (computer, literally
“power needed to work”)

Saulteaux

masinâtêpicikan (computer)
masinâhtêsicikan (movie)
otâpân (vehicle)

Tsuu T’ina

dat’i shi cha t’i ni (movie, literally
“dancing/phantom/strange images”)
idini t’uga yii tlahti (car, literally “running on
its own power”)
dzalagha tla di ta shi (plane, literally
“flying above/up there”)

REFLECTION

Part of a culture’s adaptation to new situations involves an evolution of language as people use the words they have to describe the unfamiliar. How can you see this process in the examples above? Find an Aboriginal language speaker who can help you learn a word to share with your classmates that reflects a similar linguistic evolution.

MÉTIS AND INUIT COMMUNITIES

Many of the positive attributes of reserve life — closeness to family, use of Aboriginal languages, cultural acceptance — are also true of life in other Aboriginal communities, such as the Métis Settlements.

The Métis Settlements are unique among Métis communities because they have collective title to their land and legislated self-government. However, they are not the only Métis communities in Canada. Many Métis people continue to live in or near the Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta towns that are part of their cultural history. Unlike reserves or the Métis Settlements, such communities are not restricted to people with particular Aboriginal ancestry. They have an

Aboriginal character because Métis people and Métis culture form a significant part of the community.

For example, St. Laurent, Manitoba, has the largest Métis population in the province. St. Laurent was among the towns settled by Red River Métis people after the 1870 Red River Resistance. Today, Métis culture is still very much a part of the community. Michif is widely spoken among community members.

Life on reserves differs from life in other Aboriginal communities because of the Indian Act and treaties, which only affect First Nations. For example, Métis residents of a Métis Settlement are not exempt from paying taxes. Neither are Inuit residents of an Inuit community.

In many other respects, rural Métis and Inuit communities face



In 2004, St. Laurent, Manitoba, was recognized by the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC, for its vibrant French Métis culture.

The community is one of ten Aboriginal communities in North America profiled in the Smithsonian's new exhibit.



Individuals such as Clarence Houle, shown here logging with his horses on the Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement, can be free in an Aboriginal community to choose more traditional ways of making a living. Selective logging using horses is an ecologically sound method of harvesting. It leaves the forest ecosystem intact.

many of the same challenges as rural First Nations communities. For example, like reserves, Métis and Inuit communities face pollution, contaminated water, and social issues. In 2002, Inuit villagers in northern Quebec reported over 600 sites where mining and exploration equipment and materials, including toxic chemicals, had been left in their territory.

In the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Statistics Canada found that water quality problems were a particular problem for Inuit communities in northern Quebec. In that region, 73 per cent of Inuit people reported that their water was contaminated at certain times of the year. Across the Arctic, 34 per cent of Inuit people reported water quality problems. In comparison, about 19 per cent of other Aboriginal people in rural areas outside the Arctic reported water quality problems. It is important to note, however, that this survey did not include First Nations people living on reserves, where water problems are more common.

Throughout their traditional territories, Inuit people now have land-claims agreements that give them post-secondary education, health care benefits, and hunting rights. These benefits are in many ways similar to treaty rights received by First Nations. To continue receiving their land-claims benefits, Inuit people must maintain a link with their home region. If they lose this connection for a period of ten years, they lose their benefits.

As yet, Métis people have few benefits compared to First Nations and Inuit peoples.



Modern communications technology means that even isolated communities such as Grise Fiord, which is Canada's most northern civilian settlement, can be connected to television and Internet services by satellite. How do you think these connections affect life in isolated communities?

Two contemporary world luxuries that have negatively impacted Inuit people are the widespread use of televisions and video games. These luxuries have had a significant impact on social customs. For example, the pastime of visiting family and friends and social fundraising events such as family movie nights are no longer popular. Children, in particular, are “glued to the tube.” But so are adults. When I visit someone today, the television is nearly always on in the background and sometimes homeowners even continue to watch while we visit, so it is very difficult to sit and chat. Traditions of socializing have almost died and people have become sedate and inactive, contributing to poor health.

— Edna Elias, (Kugluktuk, Nunavut) Barrhead, Alberta

LOOKING BACK

What are the main benefits of living in an Aboriginal community? What benefits do reserves offer that other Aboriginal communities do not? What are some of the drawbacks of life in an Aboriginal community? If you have experience of living in an Aboriginal community, write your own list of benefits and drawbacks.

Urban Communities

AS YOU READ

While many Aboriginal people continue to live in communities where Aboriginal ways of life are dominant, a growing number of Aboriginal people face a different reality in Canada. Almost half of the 976 305 people in Canada who identified themselves as Aboriginal in the 2001 Census made their homes in urban areas.

For people accustomed to life in a rural or mainly Aboriginal community, urban life can be a shock. With a partner, brainstorm words and phrases that describe urban life to you. Are your impressions as a long-term resident of an urban area or as a visitor? How might this make a difference in your impressions of urban life?

URBANIZATION AMONG ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA HAS STEADILY INCREASED SINCE THE 1940S. AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II, MOST FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE LIVED MAINLY ON OR NEAR RESERVES. IN 2001, 47 PER CENT LIVED ON

reserves, 24 per cent in urban areas, and 29 per cent in rural non-reserve locations. This urbanization trend is true for Métis populations as well. In 2001, 68 per cent of the Métis population in Canada lived in urban areas, with 29 per cent in rural regions.

Inuit people are also drawn to cities, although not to the same extent as First Nations and Métis people. About 10 per cent of the Inuit population lives outside the

Indigenous Knowledge

The Blackfoot language has several ways of indicating that someone lives off the reserve: *aya'piopiiksi* (those who are living among *naapiikoaksi* [Caucasian people]), *iitsa'pao'takiwa* (working on the outside), *aisaitapiiksi* (those who become outsiders), *aikippitasa'pitapiiksi* (those who are temporarily on the outside), and *aisaissksinima'tasaawa* (he/she is going to school on the outside). What do such phrases reveal about the most common reasons for living off-reserve? If possible, find someone who speaks another First Nations language to explain how that language would describe similar situations.

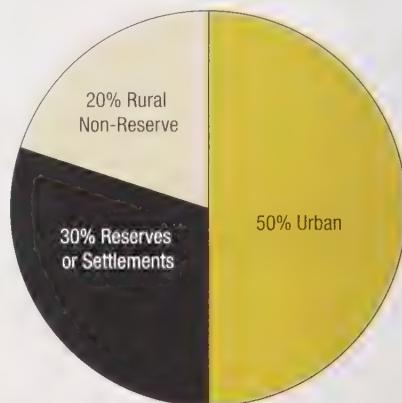
Arctic. Most of these people live in urban centres, such as Yellowknife, Montreal, Ottawa, and Edmonton.

THE DRAW OF URBAN AREAS

What draws people to a big city? A city offers more choices — in schools and educational programs, in recreation and leisure opportunities, shopping, and other conveniences and amenities. Some people go to a city looking for excitement or new friends. Others want to join friends and family who are already living in a city. Some want or need to be near better medical facilities and services. Some people hope to escape from problems in their home community.

The exact reasons an Aboriginal individual chooses to live in an urban environment vary, depending on what the particular city or town has to offer, the circumstances of the

Approximate Percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples by Place of Residence



*Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

In contrast to the Aboriginal population, about 80 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population lives in urban areas.

Aboriginal community the person comes from, and the individual's goals, background, and ability to adapt. Age, marital status, family size, and education all affect people's choices. The most common reason Aboriginal people move to urban areas is the need to find housing and the desire to pursue education, training, or employment opportunities.

URBAN CHALLENGES

Not all people who move from a reserve to a city stay there. Some discover that they prefer rural life after all. Many move back because they miss family and friends. Many move to and from urban areas regularly, as employment or other circumstances change. Others adapt to the urban lifestyle and settle in, raising families who may never know life in any other setting.

Though the experiences of individuals living in urban centres differ, they face many of the same challenges. These include the physical atmosphere of cities, high cost of living, alienation, difficulty accessing services, problems maintaining cultural identity, and cultural barriers (such as stereotypes and discrimination). Each of these challenges is examined in this section.

Physical Atmosphere

Cities are often crowded, polluted, noisy places, with little connection to the natural world. Systems of street addresses, freeways, and public transit can seem alien and confusing to someone from a rural community.

Unemployment and Poverty

City living is often costly and can involve extra expenses for transportation, parking, education, and services.

CITY LIGHTS

Top Five First Nations Populations in Cities

1. Winnipeg 22 955
2. Vancouver 22 700
3. Edmonton 18 260
4. Toronto 13 785
5. Saskatoon 11 290

*Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

Top Five Métis Populations in Cities

1. Winnipeg 31 395
2. Edmonton 21 065
3. Vancouver 12 505
4. Calgary 10 575
5. Saskatoon 8305

On top of this, unemployment is five to six times greater for First Nations people than for non-Aboriginal people living in the same urban area. Reasons for this high unemployment can include lack of training, limited education, discrimination, and conflicts with corporate expectations and values.

Low-paying, low-skilled jobs provide little satisfaction and stability, leading to an increased sense of alienation from the rest of the urban community. They also do not supply enough income to provide a good standard of living. Data from 2001 show that about 28 per cent of Aboriginal people living off-reserve fell below the poverty line, compared to only 13 per cent of non-Aboriginal people. Poverty can create a cycle of dependence from which it is difficult to emerge.

Yet there are signs of hope. Population figures show that the Aboriginal population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population. In 2001, the median age for the Aboriginal population in Canada was 24.7 years, compared to 37.7 years for the non-Aboriginal population. The median age is the point where exactly one-half the population is older and one-half younger.

More First Nations and Métis people live in Winnipeg than in any other Canadian city. Use the Internet to research an agency or organization in Winnipeg that serves the needs of Aboriginal people. Write a newspaper article reporting what you find. How do these services compare to those in your closest urban area?

This trend will likely continue for some time in the future. Because the Aboriginal birth rate is 1.5 times higher than that of the non-Aboriginal population, one third of the Aboriginal population in 2001 was aged fourteen and under. This compares to 19 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population.

In a few years, this demographic could offer a solution to a forecasted shortage of skilled labour in Western Canadian cities. Given the right education and training opportunities, young urban Aboriginal people could reduce that shortage. Statistics already show a decrease in Aboriginal unemployment. In Edmonton, for example, Aboriginal unemployment dropped from 22 per cent in 1996 to 13 per cent in 2001.

Alienation

People who have been raised in families where traditional cultural values dominate, or in communities where hunting, trapping, and fishing remain a central part of life, generally find it difficult to adapt to an urban lifestyle. A city can seem like an impersonal place. For example, people often do not even know their neighbours. If they do know them, they may share few

How might a government or business owner use demographics to plan for its future labour needs? Brainstorm ideas with a partner and select your best ideas for a class discussion.

One of the untapped human resources of Canada is the Aboriginal peoples, and once we are in a position to prove that we are and always were hard-working people, we will be an asset, and viewed as an asset.

— Wilfred Collins, Chairman, Elizabeth Métis Settlement

common values or interests. Urban dwellers without good systems of support can feel isolated and alone.

Access to Services

Urban Aboriginal people do not receive the same level of services from the federal government as First Nations people living on reserves or Inuit people living in their communities.

Few municipal and provincial agencies provide specific services for Aboriginal populations. Those services that are offered tend to be unco-ordinated and inconsistent, with great variations from province to province. Sometimes Aboriginal people have trouble accessing services that are available to other Canadians, so they may not get the help they need.

This situation is partly the result of an on-going disagreement about jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government has assumed responsibility for providing services to First Nations people living on reserves, Inuit people, and Métis people living in the North. This responsibility comes from treaty agreements, the constitutional division of powers, and the federal government's interpretation of these legal responsibilities. The federal government argues that programs and services for all other Aboriginal people are provincial responsibility. In turn, the provinces have usually argued that the federal government has responsibility for all Aboriginal people, no matter where they live.

This disagreement is particularly significant for First Nations people. Those who live in urban areas

receive far fewer services than those who live on reserves. For example, First Nations people with treaty rights are eligible for free alcohol and drug treatment programs, if they receive treatment on a reserve. If they live in an Alberta city, such as Edmonton, they are not eligible for similar programs funded by the province and must return to the reserve for treatment.

There is an irony inherent in this lack of urban access to services. First Nations people on reserves do not pay federal income or property taxes. Urban First Nations people do, but receive fewer services in return. In addition, many urban residents face a higher cost of living.

Technically, chiefs and councils are responsible for band members who live off-reserve. The Siksika First Nation, for example, has an office in Calgary that helps its urban residents. For most First Nations, responsibility for urban members is difficult to fulfill. First Nations leaders find they must deal with local needs first. This often forces them to put the needs of urban band members on hold.

Many Aboriginal leaders say that urban resources for their people exist, but these are usually under-funded and unable to deal with the demand. Administrators of these services sometimes spend more time applying for funding than they do serving their clients.

In 2003, in an effort to improve this situation, the federal government allocated \$25 million over three years to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. This program distributes money to eight major cities: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon,

Most of us [services that serve urban Aboriginal people] are always fighting over dollars, to keep our administration going, to house ourselves, and look after our administration costs, whether we're Métis, Treaty, whatever...[W]e give people the runaround now when they come into the city. Well, you're Treaty and you've not been here one year so you go to this place. But, oh no, you've been here a year already so you go to this place. Well, you're Métis, you have to go somewhere else. It's too confusing for people.

—National Round Table on Urban Aboriginal Issues in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*

Regina, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, and Toronto. Each city, in partnership with stakeholders, is expected to introduce pilot programs that better address the needs of urban Aboriginal populations.

Maintaining Cultural Identity

Aboriginal people living in urban areas told the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples that maintaining their cultural identity is essential to their sense of happiness and well being. However, this can be difficult. Urban life places demands on people that can cause them to change their values and way of life. In addition,

There is a strong, sometimes racist, perception that being Aboriginal and being urban are mutually exclusive. ... there is a history in Canada of putting Aboriginal people "in their place" on reserves and in rural communities. Aboriginal cultures and mores have been perceived as incompatible with the demands of industrialized urban society. This leads too easily to the assumption that Aboriginal people living in urban areas must deny their culture and heritage in order to succeed — they must assimilate into this other world. The corollary is that once Aboriginal people migrate to urban areas, their identity as Aboriginal people becomes irrelevant.

— *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*

most supports of Aboriginal identity are noticeably absent from many urban areas, such as contact with the land, Elders, family, spiritual ceremonies, and Aboriginal languages.

Some urban Aboriginal people return home frequently, maintaining their cultural ties. Those who cannot or do not, however, must find other ways to maintain their sense of identity.

Cultural Barriers

Some Canadians know surprisingly little about their country's first inhabitants. As a result, they may have stereotyped expectations of Aboriginal peoples. This can lead to racism and discrimination. As you learned in Chapter Five, education is the key to breaking down these barriers. Greater cultural understanding is particularly important for institutions that provide services to Aboriginal people.

The Canadian government thought that if they moved the real people (First Nations) into white society, the government would not have to live up to its treaty obligations. *ha k'i ji t'si ka aa na gu t'ina dinati k'aa ha li ni dza ku yi naa, it'i di kaa t'i k'a gi yi di yi t'lishi du ha gi yi la gi yi ni zin.*

The government's plan was to eliminate the real people. *ha k'i ji t'si ka aa na gu t'ina du dinati isti gi di naa ha ta, a na gu gi dis dat gi yi ni zin ni t'i.*

The real people moved into the cities, hoping to find a better way of life, but white society tormented them. *dinati gu ja gi diln na ka gu t'sis t'si gi dis naa, ha t'a, ik'aa ha li gaaw ta za ni aa.*

Unfortunately, First Nations people turned to alcohol and began destroying themselves. *gi maa gu t'a, dinati ik'aa ha li tuwa i sila ist'aa gi di zid.*

— Vera Marie Crowchild and Regina Noel,
Tsuu T'ina First Nation, recounting stories
told by their Grandmother Daisy Otter

THE URBAN POLICY GAP

The rising number of urban Aboriginal people and the difficulties this population can encounter reflect an important gap in the policies affecting and services for Aboriginal people in Canada. Most services offered by the federal government for Aboriginal people address the needs of those living on reserves. In fact, 90 per cent of the money the federal government spends on all Aboriginal programs and services goes to programming for reserve populations (including Indian and Northern Affairs administration costs). Only about 47 per cent of the First Nations population benefits from any of this money. This is only about 30 per cent of the overall Aboriginal population in Canada.

Public policy discussions focus on issues such as treaties, self-government, reserve housing problems, and land claims. Few solutions to these issues benefit urban Aboriginal populations. This does not mean that reserves do not have serious concerns that deserve attention and funding. However, the urban Aboriginal population cannot be ignored or left in limbo forever.

Part of the problem is that urban Aboriginal populations are not well organized as a collective political power, and few Aboriginal people are part of mainstream political processes. Urban Aboriginal people are therefore not included in discussions about the policies and institutions that affect them, including self-government.

There are signs that this situation may improve in the future. The Assembly of First Nations, for example, is currently looking at ways

to restructure its organization to better represent the concerns of urban populations. According to Chief Phil Fontaine, “We represent all our people, regardless of where they live, whether it’s in urban communities or in reserve communities. But we recognize that we need to do some things better than we’ve done up till now, to represent our members in cities. This is a serious undertaking. We may have to re-invent the AFN...so that we can effectively represent all our people, whether they’re living in Toronto or Winnipeg, or Onion Lake.”

FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

As First Nations and Métis people began moving to cities in greater numbers during the 1950s, local volunteers formed Friendship Centres to assist them. At that time, the centres functioned mainly as referral agencies, connecting individuals to various resources and services to help them adapt successfully to urban life.

When more and more new arrivals showed up throughout the 1960s, the Friendship Centres needed to expand their services. By the end of the decade, the centres had joined together in a network, with provincial and territorial associations providing administrative support. The Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association was incorporated in Alberta in 1970. In 1972, the federal government implemented a funding program to support the forty Friendship Centres then in existence across Canada.

Since then, the number of Friendship Centres has more than doubled, and their services have

The story of my involvement in the Friendship Centre movement goes back to the years of my childhood, when I was involved in the Li'l Beavers Program at the Thunder Bay Indian Youth Friendship Society. I am originally from the surrounding area, from Longlac, Ontario, which is approximately three hours north of Thunder Bay. I am from the Ginoogaming First Nation, which translates to “long lake” in Ojibwa.



Joseph Dore

In 2000, I was eighteen and attending high school in Thunder Bay, when I was approached to attend the annual general meeting of the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre. This is where it all began for me. I ran for the position of Youth Representative on the Board of Directors, where I served for a one-year term. This was the first of many positions I was to hold in the Friendship Centre movement.

I sadly left my home province in 2002 and moved to Edmonton to be closer to my family. Since May 2002, I have been an active member on the executive committee of the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association. I am also the Alberta representative on the Aboriginal Youth Council of the National Association of Friendship Centres. Being involved with the Friendship Centre movement as a youth leader has given me many opportunities to grow personally and professionally. The experience has involved training in youth leadership, decision making, policy and procedure development, board governance, lobbying, advocacy, and travel.

Hard work and a lot of good comes out of good hard work. Now I'm an employee of the Red Deer Native Friendship Centre as the Assistant Executive Director. I continue to learn and grow in the Friendship Centre movement. I believe I've been able to help many Aboriginal youth to lead healthy lifestyles, achieve their dreams, and lead successful lives. Friendship Centres definitely helped me achieve my goals.

In the Spirit of building healthy communities,
Joseph Dore, Oji-Cree youth



Communities such as High Level, Fort McMurray, and Slave Lake (shown here), have Friendship Centres.

Although these communities are not major cities, the centres play significant roles in their communities. Find out the kinds of services they provide and compare these services to those offered by Friendship Centres in Calgary and Edmonton.

greatly expanded. More than one hundred Friendship Centres operate across Canada.

Friendship Centres have been the most stable urban Aboriginal organization and have significantly helped urban populations in the past few decades. In particular, Friendship Centres do much to promote Aboriginal cultures and languages. They also increase the non-Aboriginal public's awareness and understanding of Aboriginal cultures. They provide a useful model for other agencies that offer services to Aboriginal clientele. While still providing referral services, today's Friendship Centres also focus on improving health and equality through various programs. As well, they provide employment training and job search assistance, organize women's groups, and serve as a vital cultural connection. Sometimes they serve people from nearby reserves as well.

Other Urban Services

Although Friendship Centres are status-blind, which means they are open to Aboriginal people of all cultures, some urban Inuit people have formed their own version. In Montreal, Yellowknife, and Ottawa, Inuit people have established non-profit organizations that operate programs such as the Inuit Tunngasukvingat in Ottawa. Inuit Tunngasukvingat offers a monthly gathering with a feast of traditional Inuit foods, entertainment, and games. It also offers programs such as student tutorials, work search assistance, carving lessons, and counselling.

Other organizations that provide services for urban Aboriginal people include youth centres, housing assistance agencies, Aboriginal student centres at universities, resource centres, health agencies, employment agencies, head-start (early childhood education) programs, business development associations, addiction-recovery programs, women's shelters, Aboriginal media, and more. Services vary from city to city.

RESEARCHING FRIENDSHIP CENTRE PROGRAMS

Alberta has twenty Friendship Centres, from High Level in the north to Lethbridge in the south.

What needs are met by Friendship Centre programs?

WHAT TO DO

1. Visit www.albertafriendshipcentres.ca to find the Friendship Centre nearest to you.
2. Research the services and activities provided by the centre. How do these programs reflect some of the challenges discussed in this chapter? Note any additional needs that have not been discussed in this book.
3. How would these needs be met in rural or other Aboriginal communities?
4. Summarize your findings in a report.

Thinking About Your Project

If you live in or near an urban area, arrange to visit a local Friendship Centre to talk to staff.

URBAN SUCCESS STORIES

The challenges of urban life do not mean success is impossible. Many Aboriginal people adapt very well to urban living. Former Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come was born on a trapline in northern Quebec. MLA Joan Beatty, Saskatchewan's Minister of Culture, Youth, and Recreation (and a former CBC-TV reporter), grew up in Deschambault Lake, Saskatchewan. She did not go to school or learn to speak English until she was ten. Celebrated playwright Tomson Highway, whose Mother tongue is Cree, grew up on a trapline in northern Manitoba. They, like many other urban Aboriginal people who have become teachers, engineers, dentists, doctors, construction workers, business owners, and just about every other occupation available, have found success in urban centres.

For award-winning musician George Leach, living in Toronto helps him develop his career. It also provides other opportunities, including a role in the television series *Nikita*. Toronto is also where his producer and his agent are. Despite feeling settled in Toronto, he retains ties to his Sta'atl'imx community in Lillooet, British Columbia. He believes that he needs both societies to succeed, and accepts that problems exist in both. Whenever he returns to Lillooet, he spends time listening to the lake and cleanses himself by fasting.

John Bernard, a member of the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, is the founder of Donna Cona Inc., an Ottawa-based computer systems company. Among its many successful projects, Donna Cona designed Nunavut's information technology system and brought high-speed satellite Internet service to many First Nations communities. Nearly half of Donna Cona's employees are Aboriginal. Most work at skilled jobs with starting annual salaries of \$60 000. The company's revenue in 2003 was estimated at close to \$12 million. Bernard believes that none of this could have been achieved had he remained on the reserve in New Brunswick where he grew up.

"I always knew I'd have to leave if I was to get anywhere," he said. His sister, however, remains on the reserve. "She's happy. I go down there and she's on top of the world. And here I am, winning all these awards and all stressed out."

REFLECTION

Through family or friends, find an Aboriginal person who has a connection to a rural Aboriginal community, but who has lived and worked in an urban area. In person or over the phone, interview the person about their perspective on the challenges and benefits of urban life. Write a newspaper article about the person using portions of your interview.



Ventriloquist and puppeteer Derrick Starlight grew up on the Tsuu T'ina reserve on the edge of Calgary. He now has an office in Calgary, a touring show, his own production company, and a regular spot on a local Saturday morning television show.

URBAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

In your talking circle, discuss your response to the statements that follow and issues you've been reading about in this section. In particular, think about the role that Aboriginal youth play in urban communities.



As future leaders, what responsibilities, if any, do you think Aboriginal youth have to their people? What issues do you think are most problematic for urban Aboriginal populations? What are solutions to these problems? Do you think the trend of increasing urbanization will continue into the future, or will more people be drawn back to rural communities? Why?

Active listening is as much a part of communication as speaking. During your talking circle, focus on your listening skills. Try to listen to each participant without judgment or criticism.

I think the most terrible experience for an Indian person in the urban setting is racism in the community. That diminishes your self-esteem, confidence, and everything else. You experience racism every day in the stores and everywhere else on the street. All the other groups discriminate against you.

— Aboriginal Youth Council of Canada in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*



Aboriginal culture in the cities is threatened in much the same way as Canadian culture is threatened by American culture, and it therefore requires a similar commitment to its protection. Our culture is at the heart of our people, and without awareness of Aboriginal history, traditions, and ceremonies, we are not whole people, and our communities lost their strength. Cultural education also works against the alienation that the cities hold for our people. Social activities bring us together and strengthen the relationships between people in areas where those relationships are an important safety net for people who feel left out by the mainstream.

— David Chartrand, President, National Association of Friendship Centres (1992)

Natives who grew up off the reserve have ... been looking to reconnect with their heritage, and they've been doing it at friendship centres. What twenty years ago was a place to stop in for coffee and a game of pool has been transformed into a social service organization that has also become the bearer and protector of the fragile Aboriginal culture.

"It's the only base they have as far as a cultural base, and we try to emphasize that in each of our programs," [Cathy General, Executive Director of the Niagara Regional Native Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake] said. "It's been really successful, but we need ongoing cultural training and teaching and we try to inform the non-native community as well."

Centuries-old native prophecies tell of a strange new people someday rising up to re-establish the nation.

John Hodson, the co-ordinator of the Aboriginal education program at Brock University, believes they've arrived — and they're wearing facial piercings and backward baseball caps.

He said native cultures were "gutted" by residential schools and restrictive government policies until the 1970s, making today's youth the first generation in years to be in tune with the ways of the past, enabling them to "walk in both worlds."

"Aboriginal people are becoming savvy in both our own culture and savvy in maneuvering within the mainstream," he said. "So we're starting to ask ourselves: 'What is it our colonial experience has given us?' and the next stage is 'OK, what do we want to be?'

"It's like finding a place in modern life for ideas that are 45 000 years old."

— *The Standard*, St. Catharines, Ontario



We need for all four levels of government — federal, provincial, municipal, and Aboriginal — to recognize the new urban reality [in Edmonton] and work in concert to provide our city's Aboriginal citizens with all the help they need, from settlement services to English classes to affordable housing to access to post-secondary education.

Finally, and vitally, we need to ensure that such services are, as much as possible "status blind" — that they serve all Aboriginal people who need support, not just status Indians, but also Inuit, Métis, non-status Indians, and those of blended heritage.

We can't sustain a system where people only get services because of who their grandparents were. We need to make sure services are based on need, not on purity of bloodlines alone.

We can't work together on this city's future with a social infrastructure based on a vanished past. We don't need any more commissions or inquiries. We need action, and we need it soon. Neither our city nor our Aboriginal community has much time to waste.

— Paula Simons, *Edmonton Journal*

REFLECTION

Share your own experiences or impressions of urban life with your classmates.

LOOKING BACK

As a class, talk about the challenges that can make it difficult for Aboriginal people who grow up in rural areas to make the transition to city life. How are these challenges currently being addressed? What challenges remain?

Effective Services for Aboriginal People

AS YOU READ

In the last section, you learned that lack of services is one of the biggest problems urban Aboriginal people face. Like other Canadians, Aboriginal people receive many services from the federal government. Some services are only for Aboriginal people. However, these services vary widely in their availability, their accessibility, and their effectiveness.

Pages 198–205 examine some of the services the federal government provides to Aboriginal people and the changes being made to how those services are provided. In addition, it looks at issues and controversies surrounding these services and how they are delivered. As you read, make notes about each controversy and consider your own attitude towards it.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT PEOPLE IN CANADA ENJOY ALL THE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO OTHER CANADIANS, INCLUDING PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE CANADIAN CHILD TAX BENEFIT, OLD AGE PENSIONS, AND EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.



For a person to be healthy [he or she] must be adequately fed, be educated, have access to medical facilities, have access to spiritual comfort, live in a warm and comfortable house with clean water and safe sewage disposal, be secure in cultural identity, have an opportunity to excel in a meaningful endeavour, and so on. These are not separate needs: they are all aspects of a whole.

— Henry Zoe, Dogrib Treaty Eleven Council,
Brief to the Royal Commission
on Aboriginal Peoples

Is health, as described by Henry Zoe, a right? What factors might prevent a person from being healthy as he describes it? What kinds of programs and services exist to address this problem?

In addition, Aboriginal people are entitled to special services and rights. As stated in the Red Paper (Aboriginal leaders' response to the government's 1969 White Paper) Aboriginal people are "Citizens Plus." When Canada's historical treaties were signed, the federal government agreed to provide First Nations with services in exchange for use of the land they occupied. Among the most important of these services today are post-secondary education assistance and non-insured health care benefits.

Contemporary land-claims agreements, such as those signed by Inuit people, often include similar benefits.

Most of the federal government's programs and services for Aboriginal people are available to First Nations people living on reserves. Some of the government's services are available to all Aboriginal people, including Métis, Inuit, First Nations people without status, and First Nations people who live off-reserve. Provincial, territorial, and municipal governments sometimes offer services for Aboriginal people, typically in response to needs that federal government programs are not meeting.

Governments must consider many issues when making decisions about Aboriginal programs. They must consider, of course, their financial responsibility to all Canadians. The cost of services must be kept under control and the effectiveness of services must be monitored. In general, services are more easily delivered in areas with larger Aboriginal populations. Larger populations make services more cost

effective. Where there are larger concentrations of Aboriginal people, services can be tailored to meet their specific needs. In some cases, Aboriginal organizations can be provided with the resources to design and deliver their own programs.

In general, services are provided in one of three ways. Some programs are delivered jointly by Aboriginal communities and the government. An example of this is the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), a program designed to help Aboriginal people obtain and keep employment.

AHRDS offers programs in over 400 locations across Canada. Each program is provided through a local Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement Holder. Each agreement holder determines the programming needs of the community it serves. To meet the needs of the largest possible number of Aboriginal people, AHRDS was developed in conjunction with the Assembly of First Nations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Other services are provided directly by the government to Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal Business Canada is an Industry Canada program that assists Aboriginal entrepreneurs in starting or expanding their own businesses.

Some services are funded by the government, but delivered by Aboriginal communities. For example, the Athabasca Tribal Council operates the Mark Amy Treatment Centre for Addictions. The centre delivers a

MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA

The Métis Nation of Alberta is having great success with its Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy programs. Three people who have received help through this program are profiled below.

Jennifer and Holly Mueller, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Jennifer and Holly took the Aboriginal Policing and Security Program at Grant MacEwan College with funding from the Métis Nation of Alberta Region VI. After successfully completing the program, they went on to complete their RCMP depot training. Holly is now posted in Rimbev and Jennifer is posted at the Piikani Nation Reserve.



Brandon Bursey, Computer Support Technician

The Region III Métis Employment Services in Calgary helped Brandon access funding for the Computer Support Technician Program at SAIT. Brandon not only completed the program with fantastic marks, he also tutored his fellow students. He was hired by IBM as a consultant and has had two promotions in his short time with the company.



REFLECTION

Research at least one employment or scholarship program or service that you are eligible to receive and report on the program to your class.



There is great diversity among Aboriginal cultures and communities across the country. For example, consider the different needs of an Inuit community and a First Nations reserve in southern Alberta. One-size-fits-all programs do not work. Government programs must have enough flexibility to adapt to local needs.

twenty-eight-day program to First Nations members who are struggling with addictions. The program tackles the issues of addiction from a First Nations perspective.

Whether the government or an Aboriginal community delivers a service often depends on the characteristics of the community involved. A community's ability to deliver services depends upon the size of its land base, its geographic location, its adherence to traditional values, economy, and culture, its local history, and its human and financial resources.

A lack of human resources — people with the specific skills needed to assume control over services — is a significant problem in many communities. For instance, there are approximately fifty Aboriginal physicians in all of Canada, with even fewer people trained in health management. Compounding the problem, many well-trained Aboriginal people leave their communities to seek jobs or further education elsewhere.

Many Aboriginal communities have highly motivated, energetic, and skilled individuals who provide capable leadership, but this core group is often overworked and overburdened. The nature of Aboriginal



community life and the shortage of human resources mean that most communities are able to handle only two or three major initiatives at any one time. This is one reason why Aboriginal services may require significant time to develop.

As much as possible, the federal government's policy of devolution is putting Aboriginal services in the hands of Aboriginal communities. This requires co-operation among Aboriginal political leaders and community members, along with regional, provincial, and national governments.

CONTROVERSES

The existence of services specifically for Aboriginal people can be controversial. Some non-Aboriginal people hold on to stereotypes that deny the worth of Aboriginal cultures. They continue to believe that Aboriginal people should assimilate and be treated the same as other citizens.

Others deny the special status of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These people argue that Aboriginal peoples are no more entitled to special services than any other minority group. This argument trivializes the unique relationship Aboriginal peoples have with the land that is now called Canada, a relationship that is

fundamental to their cultures, values, and spirituality. It ignores their status as indigenous peoples. In addition, the argument ignores historic obligations that the federal government accepted in treaties and other agreements with Aboriginal groups.

Another argument proposes that Aboriginal people have changed and are now culturally much the same as other Canadians. This argument suggests that if this is true, then Aboriginal people should be treated the same as other Canadians. However, this argument rests on a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of cultures. It is true that some Aboriginal traditions and practices have faded over time, but all cultures evolve. Aboriginal people cannot be expected to behave as they did centuries ago, any more than non-Aboriginal people can be. If other contemporary cultures exist, contemporary (including urban) Aboriginal cultures will also exist.

Some people fear that Aboriginal services place an unfair tax burden on the average citizen. Such views ignore the important economic, social, and moral benefits of encouraging all communities across Canada to fulfill their potential. The costs of not improving services may well be far greater.

Aboriginal people are also divided on the subject of services for their communities. Some Aboriginal people find comfort in the status quo and resist the idea of fundamental change, such as the devolution of services to Aboriginal governments and organizations. Some argue that Aboriginal leadership is not yet prepared to deliver services. They

worry about the consequences of concentrating power in the hands of a small and powerful Aboriginal elite. Others question the government's motives for reducing its role in Aboriginal communities. They fear that the long-standing relationship between government and Aboriginal peoples will be jeopardized, and that they will lose their services as a result.

Another controversy concerns whether services should be status-blind and open to all Aboriginal people, or whether services should be specifically tailored for specific groups of people, such as Métis people or First Nations people with treaty rights. Those who argue for status-blind services make the case that this change would result in less overlap and more cost-effective services. Those who argue against it suggest that cultural identity and historical rights require that specific groups have specific rights.

DEVOLVING SERVICES TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Although some Aboriginal people express reluctance about Aboriginal administration of Aboriginal services, most are highly supportive. Evidence suggests that services designed and delivered by Aboriginal people to Aboriginal people are more effective. In a survey of people who use Friendship Centres, for example, 83 per cent said they were highly satisfied with the service they received.

A major problem with services for Aboriginal people that are delivered by non-Aboriginal governments is cultural bias. In the past, mainstream governments did not



Aboriginal Head Start is an early childhood education program funded by the federal government. This photo was taken at the Wii-jii-waaganesag (Ojibway for "our little companions") Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve Program at the Pic River First Nation in Ontario. Working with Aboriginal community groups, Head Start programs across the country help teach children to read, eat well, and speak their traditional languages. Research how this program is delivered and administered. Decide whether and how improvements could be made. Write a one-page report of recommendations.

• always deliver and administer their programs in ways that respected the values, traditions, and cultures of Aboriginal groups. They did not take into account the effect their programs might have on the people and communities receiving them. For example, residential schools, theoretically an educational service to First Nations, instead caused enormous social and cultural dislocation. Even today, government programs and services for Aboriginal people may contain unintended cultural bias.

One way to ensure that programs are not culturally biased is to listen to the people who receive the services. For example, Aboriginal people have asked that agencies dealing with Aboriginal communities employ more Aboriginal workers and that they offer services in Aboriginal languages. Another solution is to hand over control of services to Aboriginal people.



The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) is offered by the Gabriel Dumont Institute in co-operation with Saskatchewan Learning, the University of Regina, and the University of Saskatchewan. The program ensures its graduates have a solid background in Métis and First Nations culture and history. Research the needs this program is intended to fit.

Many political leaders believe that government-delivered services discourage Aboriginal people from realizing self-determination. Aboriginal leaders also feel that it is important to offer services in their own languages and in ways that reflect and promote their cultural values. For example, non-Aboriginal health care services tend to focus on treating the symptoms of problems, rather than the causes. Aboriginal health care methods look at more holistic solutions to health problems.

Today, governments recognize that they cannot develop effective programs and services for Aboriginal people without their help in designing, delivering, and evaluating them. However, government systems, by their nature, tend to preserve the status quo. Government officials may have little incentive to encourage Aboriginal communities to develop innovative solutions to their problems. Some may resist change, even with significant evidence that suggests the need for change.

ABORIGINAL SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Today, many Aboriginal people are designing and delivering services for their own communities. When individuals and communities are given the opportunity to conduct their own affairs, they become more self-sufficient. Individuals learn that they have a role to play in making their communities stronger, healthier, safer, and more productive.

When community members deliver services, the whole community is empowered. Most Aboriginal-led services are based on widespread community consultation, which results in programs that address needs appropriately.



For example, Nunavut Sivuniksavut is an eight-month college program that helps Inuit youth to make the transition from their home in Nunavut to university in southern Canada. The program teaches students about Inuit history, organizations, and the Nunavut land-claim

What cultural values might affect the way health care is delivered to Aboriginal populations? How might more Aboriginal health care workers increase the quality of care for Aboriginal populations?

NATIVE COUNSELLING SERVICES OF ALBERTA

Native Counselling Services of Alberta offers several restorative justice and correctional programs that ensure Aboriginal people are treated fairly and equally in Alberta's justice system. One of its correctional programs, the Stan Daniels Healing Centre, is a service it provides under contract with Correctional Services Canada. Programming at the centre is guided by resident needs under the direction of Elders. One successful program at the institution is the *Oskipi Matsuin* (Cree for "new life") program, which helps residents develop life skills in a culturally sensitive manner.

Native Counselling Services also offers a Criminal Courtwork program, which counsels Aboriginal people in their rights, court procedure, and availability of resources to help them. The program costs are shared between Alberta Justice and Justice Canada. In the 2001–2002 fiscal year, the program had 14 623 clients.

A significant initiative for young offenders is a program called *Kochee Mena*, which is Cree for "try again." The Alberta Solicitor General contracts Native Counselling Services to provide the service for Aboriginal male young offenders. *Kochee Mena* is a safe, holistic environment that provides residents with education (in partnership with the Edmonton Public School Board) and cultural programs, as well as recreation and independent living education.



REFLECTION

How do these examples from the Native Counselling Services of Alberta demonstrate the increasing flexibility that governments are showing in order to address Aboriginal people's needs? Why are initiatives in justice important? What kinds of programs might alleviate the need for so many justice services?



Métis Child and Family Services heads a program to provide various kinds of support for Métis children. Here, fiddle instructor Gary Lee gives lessons to support children's cultural education.

I have been in nursing for thirteen years and I have recently returned to university to complete a baccalaureate in nursing. Nursing has given me the opportunity to work in areas such as Auxiliary, Medical Surgical, Emergency, and Labour and Delivery. Through further education I now work in Population Health as a Diabetes Educator and Health Promotion Specialist. My education and work experience has helped me grow professionally and develop my self-confidence and self-esteem. Now, I feel like I have more opportunities than I ever dreamed possible.

I've always been a helping person and was drawn to the medical profession because I saw that I could do so much to help people. I never imagined, though, how much I would learn, because in medicine, you never stop learning. Through medicine I have also gained self-knowledge about my own health and well-being and the importance of preventative health.

I strongly encourage young people to enter the health profession. It's a career that can take you so many directions with endless opportunities. Opportunities that are waiting for you in your community.

— Lee Ann Johnson, Registered Nurse,
Kainai Diabetes Program

settlement. It also helps the students adjust to life in an urban environment. The program was initiated in 1985 by the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut. The original program



Lee Ann Johnson

trained people to communicate land-claims negotiation status to local communities. Since settlement of the land claim, it has become a college transition program.

In Alberta, one successful service began in April 2003, when the Alexis First Nation signed a Community Tripartite Agreement that gives it greater control over policing services. Under the agreement, two Aboriginal members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police First Nations Community Policing Service provide full-time service to the reserve. The two officers work out of a satellite office located in the community. Residents on the Community Advisory Committee consult with the officers to ensure that communications are open and that local policing issues are addressed. This agreement provides the community with professional, effective, accountable, and culturally sensitive services.

Another initiative involves Aboriginal Health Careers, a federal government program designed to address the shortage of First Nations health professionals. The program encourages Aboriginal youth, in particular high school students, to pursue training and careers in health care.

As part of this program, the Treaty Seven Tribal Council has worked hard to encourage young people to pursue health careers. For example, the council provides funding to students to research and develop school projects related to health careers. It also offers Nursing Incentive Awards, financial awards to students who pursue nursing as a career.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

How should effective services for Aboriginal people be designed and delivered?

WHAT TO DO

1. With a partner, visit the Government of Canada Web site (www.canada.gc.ca) to find out more about the various services that the federal government provides to Aboriginal people.
2. Choose one government service that interests you. Why does the government offer this service? What benefits, both direct and indirect, does it offer to Aboriginal people? What could make the service more effective?
3. If possible, supplement your research by interviewing a local person who either receives services from or works for this service. What are his or her impressions of the effectiveness and problems with the service?
4. Prepare similar research on an Aboriginal service that is delivered by an Aboriginal organization, even if it is funded by the federal or provincial government. What are its challenges and accomplishments? How effective do you believe it is? What could make it more effective?
5. If possible, interview someone who receives benefits from this service or someone who works for it. What are his or her impressions of the effectiveness and problems with the service?
6. Design a service to be run by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people. Be sure to consider some of the challenges and problems you found in your research about the other services you studied. What particular benefits do you see in having this service run by an Aboriginal community? What problems or challenges might communities face in creating and delivering this service?
7. Create a promotional brochure and Web site advertising the service and its goals. Include details, such as what the service offers, who qualifies for the service, and how people may access it.

LOOKING BACK

The examples of services discussed in this section relate specifically to policing, health, and employment or economic development. What other services should have Aboriginal involvement? As a class, discuss the role non-Aboriginal governments should play in providing services to Aboriginal communities. Why are some First Nations communities more active than others in designing and running their own services? What factors might deter some communities from doing so? Why are Aboriginal services for Aboriginal people seen as an important goal by both the federal government and Aboriginal leaders? How does this issue relate to larger questions, such as Aboriginal self-determination?

Chapter Six Review

Check Your Understanding

1. Why do some First Nations people choose to live on reserves? What are the major benefits of reserve life?
2. List factors that might make a First Nations person choose to leave a reserve and move to a city.
3. List factors that can make it difficult for Aboriginal people used to life in Aboriginal communities to make the transition to life in an urban centre.
4. Why might some First Nations people move back to reserves, even if they are adapting well to life in a city?
5. What are the challenges and benefits of developing resources in Aboriginal communities?

Marvin Francis was a poet, playwright, artist, and theatre director who passed away in early 2005. When he was a child, his mother moved him and his siblings away from the Heart Lake First Nation to help them avoid attending residential school. Francis grew up in many locations, but spent much time in Winnipeg and Edmonton.

mcPemmican

first you get the grease from canola buffalo
then you find mystery meat
you must package this in
bright colours just like beads

let the poor intake their money take their health
sound familiar
chase fast food off the cliff
speed beef
deer on a bun
bury in the ground

special this day
mcPemmican “cash those icons in

how about a
mcTreaty”

would you like some lies with that?

6. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has a stated goal of ensuring that people living on reserves receive the same basic government services as other Canadians. What steps is the government taking to accomplish this? In your opinion, has the government achieved its goal?
7. Why do some non-Aboriginal people object to special government services for Aboriginal people? In a table, list some of the arguments in one column. In the second column, examine each argument from an Aboriginal perspective.
8. Many First Nations now take an active role in delivering child and family services on reserves. Why might this be an important area for Aboriginal-led initiatives?
9. What factors can affect a community's ability to deliver its own services?
10. What roles do Friendship Centres play in the urban community?

Reading and Writing

11. Research at least four examples of services now being delivered by Aboriginal people to Aboriginal people. What needs does each service address? For each one, describe why it is appropriate that management of the service is in Aboriginal hands. What differences does it make to the people receiving the service?
12. Read the poem by Marvin Francis on this page. It conveys some of his impressions of life in an urban environment. “mcPemmican” discusses the fast-food, disposable culture prevalent on city streets. Discuss the poem with a partner and summarize what you think Francis’s point is and how he makes it.



Air Mikisew is owned and operated by the Mikisew Cree First Nation out of Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. The successful airline has a full range of air services, including fishing charters with its floatplanes. It is also under contract with the Alberta government to provide emergency medical air transportation.

Viewing and Representing

13. Imagine you are the recruiting officer for a newly established First Nations police service. Create a poster to attract applicants for the position of police officer. Remember to list the qualifications for your ideal candidate and to describe the reasons why people might enjoy the job.
14. Design a campaign to educate non-Aboriginal Canadians about treaties, treaty rights, and services for First Nations. You might plan posters, billboards, radio or television advertisements, or press releases.

Speaking and Listening

15. Air Mikisew, featured in a photograph on this page, is just one of many band- and settlement-operated businesses in Alberta. Research a business run by a local First Nation or Métis Settlement. How does the business affect life in the community? If possible, interview a spokesperson for the business to find specific examples of the business' impact on the community. Give a short (5 minute) presentation about the company to your class.



As part of its community initiatives around its Athabasca Oil Sands project, Shell Canada helped construct a new Elders Centre at Fort McKay and agreed to help finance its operation for the first three years.

16. The Elders Centre at Fort McKay, pictured on this page, is one way that resource development has benefited a local community. Write a newspaper article about how resource development has affected a local reserve or settlement. You will likely need to interview people living and working in the community to get a sense of different perspectives on the topic.

Going Further

17. As a class, arrange a visit to your local Friendship Centre. Ask a member of the staff to give you a tour. Talk to the people who work there and, if you can, some of the people who use the facility. Write a report about your visit, describing the role the Friendship Centre plays in your community.

LOOKING BACK

Return to the narrative voice in Shingoose's song on pages 178–179. How does this narrative voice compare to the voice expressed in Marvin Francis's poem? Is humour also part of Francis's work? If so, explain how. Write your own song or poem that describes your experiences of urban or rural lifestyles.

CHAPTER SEVEN

World Issues

AS YOU READ

Aboriginal peoples in Canada are not alone in the challenges they face. Indigenous peoples around the world face issues such as discrimination and land claims. Today, indigenous peoples from different countries co-operate to share knowledge and ideas that will further their inherent rights.

Rigoberta Menchú Tum is a refugee from Guatemala's thirty-six-year-long civil war. She became an influential spokesperson for the struggles of indigenous peoples around the world. Shortly before she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, the thirty-three-year-old Maya woman spoke with journalist Anders Riis-Hansen. Riis-Hansen is associated with the Commission for the Defense of Human Rights in Central America.

Menchú Tum has changed the way many people think about indigenous peoples' rights. As you read, notice how she makes her case by providing specific examples and recommending specific action. Do you think this is an effective strategy? What themes connect the examples she gives? Make a list of the themes you see and share it with a partner. Relate these themes to issues raised by Aboriginal peoples in your area, in Alberta, and across Canada.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

As you read this chapter, consider these questions:

- ▲ What cultural characteristics are shared by indigenous peoples around the world?
- ▲ What issues do indigenous peoples from different countries have in common?
- ▲ How have indigenous peoples been affected by natural resource development?
- ▲ What role does the United Nations play in resolving issues faced by indigenous peoples?
- ▲ What progress have indigenous peoples made in human rights, education, and self-determination?
- ▲ What role do Aboriginal youth play in the future of indigenous peoples around the world?

An Interview with Rigoberta Menchú Tum

By Anders Riis-Hansen

Riis-Hansen: On the twelfth of October, a great number of countries will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America. Do you see this as an insult to the indigenous people?

Menchú Tum: We have seen repeated occupations of our land, long lines of colonists have arrived, and they remain today. For me, to celebrate the twelfth of October is the absolute expression of triumphism, occupation, and presumptuousness, and I think that anyone who has mature and responsible politics should not celebrate it. History will remember those that celebrate it.

On the other hand, the 500th anniversary has opened a lot of space in international forums. With respect to this, I am deeply gladdened that 1993 has been declared the International Year of Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations. It is the first year we have had in 500 years. This is thanks to the struggle of many untitled, unnamed indigenous brothers who, without understanding international law, patiently walked the corridors asking for some time. Thanks to them this international year has been declared.

In addition, I think that the current situation has generated an understanding of the cultural diversity of America. We were the first to talk about cultural diversity, the need to respect the Maya and the environment.



Riis-Hansen: The last country of the continent abolished slavery more than 100 years ago. How is repression and racism expressed today?

Menchú Tum: For example, in the case of my country, Guatemala, 65 per cent of the inhabitants are indigenous. The constitution speaks of protection for the indigenous. Who authorized a minority to protect an immense majority? It is not only political, cultural, and economic marginalization, it is an attempt against the dignity of the majority of the population. The human being is to be respected and defended, not protected like a bird or a river.



Riis-Hansen: Do you fear for your life when you visit Guatemala?

Menchú Tum: Not only in Guatemala, but everywhere. Our lives are no longer our own; they can take them away any time.

The Mayas, our grandparents, always said: every human being occupies a small piece of time. Time itself is much longer, and because of this they always said that we must care for this earth while we are on it because it will be part of our children and the children of our grandchildren. They know that life is short, that it can end so soon, and that if one gets lost on the way, others will come to take their place.



Rigoberta Menchú Tum became an activist while still a teenager and has devoted her life to indigenous people's rights in her own country and elsewhere. Prepare a report on the causes of the Guatemalan civil war or Rigoberta Menchú Tum's book I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala.

Riis-Hansen: Do you believe that a Nobel Prize can contribute to peace in Guatemala?

Menchú Tum: I believe that it has already contributed a lot. We have broken the silence around Guatemala. We have entered into the governmental tribune and we have been able to demand that there be no more blank checks for the governments that violate human rights....

The gap between rich and poor must be eliminated, or we will continue to be the example of conflict in America.

REFLECTION

1. Use the Internet to find out more about Rigoberta Menchú Tum. From what you learn, how do you feel about Menchú Tum and her work? How has she contributed to her people?
2. Rigoberta Menchú Tum's fame has helped her cause, but has also exposed her to criticism. Some critics question her account of her life as a member of a peasant family in Guatemala. They say she embroidered her story with details that could not be true, or that if they were true, they were true of other people's lives and not her own. Would your feelings about her contributions change if you found she had embellished her own life story with events that happened to other people? Discuss this issue in small groups or as a class.

Common Cultures, Common Issues

AS YOU READ

Pages 210–219 discuss some of the similarities in the cultures of indigenous peoples around the world and how colonization has led to common issues among indigenous peoples today. As you read, note the challenges that indigenous peoples have faced — and continue to face. With your class, discuss why the struggles of indigenous peoples are important. What gains have been made? What challenges remain to be resolved?

AT LEAST 5000 INDIGENOUS CULTURES EXIST TODAY, WITH ABOUT 300 MILLION INDIGENOUS PEOPLE SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD IN SEVENTY COUNTRIES. DESPITE ENORMOUS DIVERSITY, MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S CULTURES HAVE CHARACTERISTICS IN COMMON.

COMMON CULTURES

“We share the same vision and the same experiences, and we are alike in our traditional ways,” says Grand Chief George Manuel, of the Secwepemc First Nation and the first president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. He travelled to many countries in the 1970s, including Argentina, Sweden, Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Peru, to meet with other indigenous people. He discovered that nearly all the

We recognize that we must all live together in this land, that we must share, and that in the end our interests are much the same. We want peace, health, and well-being for our children. We strive for clean water and air, happiness and freedom. We insist on mutual recognition and respect for dignity, fundamental rights, and the principle of equality of peoples.

— Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Cree (Canada)

Our first relationship is to nature. You are part of nature, not the master of nature.

— Mari Boine, Sámi (Norway)



In all indigenous cultures, day-to-day activities are imbued with educational, social, and spiritual ways of life. Here Barbara Joe and her granddaughter Ravenlyn Wilson pick medicinal tea at Burns Bog in Tsawwassen traditional territory.

indigenous people he met included the concepts of the four sacred directions and the circle in their cultural ceremonies.

The word *indigenous* refers to things that originate in a particular region or environment and live, grow, are produced, or occur naturally there. Most indigenous peoples gain their cultural identity from the place where they originate. The world's indigenous peoples descend from the original inhabitants of their lands. The names of many — Ainu,

Indigenous peoples are the environment and the environment is indigenous peoples — we are one and the same with the air, water, and the soil of our Mother Earth. We are connected to every living species and every living species is spiritually and culturally connected to us.

— Tom Goldtooth, National Coordinator, Indigenous Environmental Network

Dene, Dogon, Huaorani, Inuit, Maori, Naga, Yup'ik — simply mean “the people” in their language.

Spirituality and the Land

Though indigenous cultures differ one from another, distinct similarities exist. For example, all have a spiritual connection to the land and the natural world. Many indigenous cultures respect and care for the land and its resources as a part of their community. Most have practices that express spirituality in daily interactions with the natural world, such as during hunting, fishing, or gathering plants, as well as ceremonies tied to natural cycles, such as seasonal change or phases of the moon.

Oral Traditions

Most indigenous peoples pass on cultural beliefs and values through oral traditions that can be traced back to their ancestors. Indigenous oral traditions, including poetry, song, story, and dance, explain spiritual beliefs and pass knowledge on from generation to generation. For thousands of years, for example, the indigenous peoples of Australia have told stories that trace the path that a spirit ancestor travelled across the land. This path is connected to a mapping system that divides traditional lands using natural boundaries, such as rivers, lakes, and mountains. Children learn these “story maps” of their homeland and how places relate to each other and to people.

Extended Family

The extended family unit provides the basis for social organization among many indigenous peoples. Like many other indigenous cultures around the world, First Nations,

Métis, and Inuit cultures include mutual support systems that centre on the extended family. These support systems helped to care for individuals in times of need.

Respect for Diversity

Sometimes indigenous peoples within one country are painted with a single brushstroke — a stereotype that does not account for their true diversity. Prior to European contact and colonization, each indigenous people lived in a traditional territory, sometimes overlapping with other groups. Most cultures respected other peoples’ differences, allowing diversity to thrive. The diverse cultures and their territories do not necessarily conform to the boundaries of countries.

For example, Australia’s indigenous peoples include the Torres Strait Islanders as well as the Awabagal, Darkinung, Eora, Darug, Gundungurra, Yuin, and others — each people with its own culture, beliefs, and language. At the time of European contact, approximately 700 indigenous languages existed in Australia.

Community

Indigenous people’s cultures usually emphasize the welfare of the community over the individual. In Scandinavia, Sámi society is organized around the *siida*, a community of about a dozen families living together, usually along a river, lake, or fjord. The *siida* council decides how the territory’s resources should be used throughout the year, much like a First Nations band council that makes decisions for the benefit of the community as a whole.

ETHNOCENTRISM

Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture is superior to other cultures. Ethnocentric people have a cultural bias — they use their own standards to measure all other cultures, and they view differences as signs of inferiority.

Anyone can be ethnocentric, regardless of their cultural heritage. In a multicultural country, if some groups believe themselves to be inherently superior to others, this can lead to tensions or even conflict.

Ethnocentrism can be complicated when one group holds more political or economic power than other groups. The powerful group then has some ability to impose their way of life on other groups.

Colonizing cultures tended to be ethnocentric. Explorers and settlers often failed to realize that other cultures had valid social and

REFLECTION

In small groups, think of contemporary examples of

COLONIAL HISTORY

Indigenous cultures share cultural features, but also share a common history of colonization. In most cases, contact with colonizing countries led to a drastic decline in indigenous populations through armed conflict or disease. Indigenous peoples were in some cases destroyed. During the Spanish conquest of South and Central America in the sixteenth century, twenty-five million indigenous people died or were killed. By the end of the 1890s, the Caribbean peoples were almost entirely eliminated. Indigenous populations in Australia plummeted from at least 500 000 (some estimates say as many as one million) to 60 000 after colonization, and the Maori population in New Zealand plunged from 200 000 to 42 000.

Despite the atrocities committed against indigenous peoples in the colonial period, many survived with their cultures intact. Indigenous peoples around the world share a strong will to preserve their lands, languages, customs, and beliefs for future generations.



Edmonton's Rossdale Flats served as a burial site and gathering place for First Nations for thousands of years. Here Duane Goodstriker sets up commemorative crosses to honour Aboriginal people buried in the river valley. Controversy arose when proposals to expand a power plant in the area threatened to destroy the site. Such controversies are familiar to indigenous peoples throughout the world. Research this issue and the stakeholders involved. What is going to happen to the site?

COMMON ISSUES

Indigenous peoples share histories that include cultural suppression, economic hardship, discrimination, and racism. They now face common issues as a result of their histories.

Some of the challenges faced by indigenous peoples have a **geopolitical** aspect: a combination of geographic and political factors that relate to or influence a nation or region. For example, in many areas, national borders drawn across ancestral lands have physically divided populations of indigenous peoples. The Blackfoot and Mohawk nations now exist on both sides of the United States–Canada border. Inuit people live in four countries: Canada, Greenland, Russia, and the United States.

Issues shared by indigenous peoples can be grouped into nine general areas: land and resources, the environment, war, language and culture, education, self-determination, health, human rights, and intellectual property rights.

Land and Resources

Regaining ancestral lands and sacred sites is a struggle shared by almost all indigenous peoples. Some want to protect certain sacred or burial sites from development. Some seek a fair share of the wealth generated from their land's resources.

National governments are morally and sometimes legally obliged to respect and protect the rights of indigenous peoples, but often they do not. Even when governments have designated land for indigenous peoples, they sometimes find ways to re-acquire it.

For example, one of the most densely populated places on Earth is

the Indonesian island of Java, home to 120 million people. In an attempt to ease overcrowding, the Indonesian government began a relocation program in 1969. Over the next three decades, the government moved up to ten million people onto other Indonesian islands, many of which are traditional territories of the country's indigenous peoples. This massive intrusion led to simmering resentment and many violent flare-ups. Hundreds of people have been killed, and many others have been forced to leave the areas they settled in. More than 400 000 people now live in camps awaiting resettlement.



Melina Laboucan-Massimo's experience as the Latin American Regional Co-ordinator for TakingITGlobal (a worldwide youth action organization) made her all the more passionate about what it is to be indigenous and who she is as a Cree person. She hopes that completing a Master's Degree in Indigenous Governance will help her in her work addressing issues facing indigenous peoples.



Melina Laboucan-Massimo

Like in North America, indigenous peoples in Latin America have faced harsh conditions and many injustices – some are prepared to do combat to protect their land. In Canada, we were forced to give up our languages, cultures, and land and this has been devastating to our communities. In many cases, our cultures have been appropriated and turned into a commodity for tourists. We need to keep our culture intact and make it an integral part of our lives. I feel distinct from mainstream society and a resistance to ethnocentric assimilation policies. I feel frustrated at the lack of understanding that mainstream society has towards marginalized First Nations people.

How is Laboucan-Massimo using her frustration in a positive way? What frustrations could you turn to positive action?

CHERITH MARK

Nakoda First Nation



Cherith Mark

As the fast drumming and low chanting begin, the spotlights come up on a shimmering, golden spirit-being floating across the stage.

Cherith Mark, performing in *Miinigooweziwin...the Gift* at The Banff Centre, is moving her body to the music and exalting in the physicality of her eagle dance. The twenty-eight-year-old Nakoda (Stoney) woman from Morley, Alberta, offers an energetic mix of traditional and modern forms of movement. She is destined to become one of Canada's most sought-after Aboriginal contemporary dancers.

"When I dance, I feel grounded," Mark says. She first powwow danced when she was five years old, and then performed in a junior high school troupe in her teens. In 1997, she travelled to the United States with Calgary's Red Thunder Native Dance Theatre to dance in Arizona's Spirits in the Sun festival. There, she witnessed contemporary dances led by choreographer Alejandro Ronceria.

"I wanted to elaborate on my dancing. Alejandro referred me to the Aboriginal Arts Program at The Banff Centre. A year later, in 1999, I was performing in the centre's Chinook Winds dance production and I've been back to Banff every summer since," says Mark. This multi-disciplined performer has studied at the Aboriginal Arts Program in Banff, and The Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto. She has also earned her dance diploma from Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton and plans to major in dance at Burnaby's Simon Fraser University.

Mark cherishes her experiences studying performance art with international teachers and dancers.

"The Maori people from New Zealand are especially honourable. When they enter their homes, they chant their genealogy — that's how grounded they are in their nationality. Singing and dancing is a part of who they are as Maori people."

"And Alejandro, who is from Columbia, is an amazing teacher. He shares what he's been given in many cultural exchanges and always explains the origin of where it comes from."

Once she has gone further in her studies, Mark plans to be a choreographer and hopes to teach dance in her community.

"A lot of Aboriginal youth know about powwow dance, but they don't know there is such a thing as contemporary dance. I would like to teach and inform them that contemporary dance has many possibilities. The sky's the limit. It's another way of storytelling that many people don't know about."

REFLECTION

Have you ever participated in an exchange with students from other cultures or seen a performance of dance or singing from an indigenous culture from outside North America? If you have, what did you learn about the similarities and differences between their culture and your own?

The Environment

Environmental damage can harm indigenous cultures, because they are closely connected to the natural environment. The Yanomamo, for example, who live deep in the jungles of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil, depend on their environment for survival. Miners, loggers, and road builders have intruded into their territories, bringing physical attacks and disease, as well as damage to Yanomamo homes and food supply. So far, neither country's government has adequately defended the Yanomamo by protecting their environment.

War

Some indigenous peoples have been subjected to direct efforts to destroy them. For example, in Guatemala, an estimated 200 000 people were killed in the country's civil war. Most who died were indigenous people. Hundreds of thousands of Mayans fled their homelands, and 440 ancient Mayan villages were completely destroyed.

Language and Culture

Since 1492, more than 2000 indigenous languages and cultures in the western hemisphere alone have been wiped off the face of the Earth. From North America, these extinct cultures include the Wappo, Beothuk, Takelma, Natchez, and Massachusett, among many others. Many indigenous peoples today struggle to maintain their beliefs, values, languages, spirituality, and traditions.

Language and culture are intertwined. About 6000 indigenous languages are spoken in the world today, but many are nearly extinct.



This Maori girl in traditional dress is cooking maize in a hot pool in New Zealand. Why is preserving ancient cultures difficult in the contemporary world? Do you think school education programs are an effective technique to ensure cultural preservation? Explain your answer.

The cultures associated with them are also in peril. Unless drastic changes occur soon, half of them may disappear within your lifetime, and 90 per cent of them within the lifetime of the next generation.

For many years in Norway, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere, it was often forbidden to speak indigenous languages in schools. Today, indigenous nations in these countries and others are lobbying for indigenous language programs in schools.

GLOBAL STATISTICS

- Guatemala is one of the few countries where indigenous peoples form the majority of the population, yet only 150 of 25 000 students enrolled in higher education are indigenous people.
- Indigenous Australians are imprisoned at a rate sixteen times higher than non-indigenous Australians. In some regions, the rate is twenty times higher.
- In Canada, 45 per cent of Aboriginal adults living off-reserve reported one or more chronic health conditions, including arthritis, diabetes, rheumatism, and high blood pressure. Rates of arthritis or rheumatism among Aboriginal populations are almost twice that of the non-Aboriginal population.
- Almost three-quarters of the 120 armed conflicts in the world today are battles between central governments and indigenous peoples living within their borders.

PROTECTING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Many mechanisms to protect the rights of indigenous peoples exist, but they are not consistently implemented. Education is essential for the many indigenous peoples who remain unaware of the laws and agreements protecting their rights.

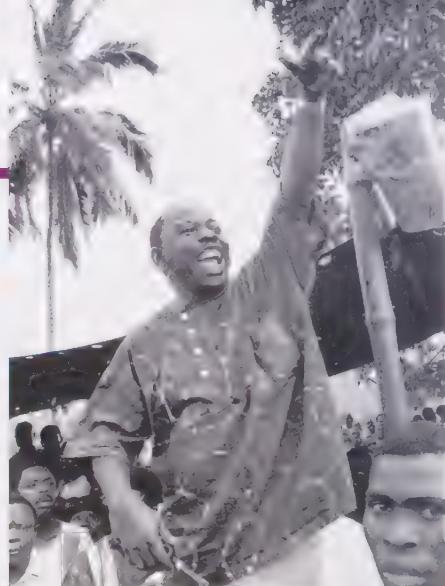
Realizing that they have similar struggles, indigenous peoples around the world have joined forces. They share information on how to use legal means to assert land claims, to force governments to recognize existing treaties, and to claim the right to live the way they choose.

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) was established in the 1980s to represent Inuit concerns in the United States, Canada, Greenland, and Russia and Sámi people's concerns in Norway. Each country has its own national office. ICC members came together to fight pollution and global warming, and to preserve Inuit culture and traditions. The ICC is vocal about environmental change and its impact on the Arctic regions of the world.

Other regional, national, and international groups working to improve the lives of indigenous peoples include the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, Four Directions Council, the Indian Council of South America, the Indian Law Resource Center, the Indigenous World Association, the International Indian Treaty Council, the International Organization of Indigenous Resources Development, the National Indian Youth Council, and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. In this chapter, you will also read about the United Nations' efforts in this area.

REFLECTION

Choose one international organization of indigenous peoples mentioned on this page or elsewhere in the book and prepare a brief oral report to your class on the organization's mission, history, and accomplishments.



Nigerian poet Ken Saro-Wiwa was the inspirational spokesperson of the Ogoni people in Nigeria until he was executed by the Nigerian government in 1995, along with eight other activists. The activists fought ecological damage to Ogoni land by Shell, one of the world's largest oil companies. Worldwide protests against the executions prompted Shell to incorporate a human rights policy into its business plan. How effective do you think public pressure is as a tool for indigenous populations to effect change?

Education

Many indigenous peoples have suffered from both substandard education and education designed to extinguish traditional cultures. For example, almost half of indigenous Mexicans cannot read or write, and 58 per cent of their five year olds do not go to school. Many indigenous peoples have found that their ancestral cultures have been eroded, and that they have not been educated well enough to take a strong role in the mainstream culture.

Self-Determination

Many indigenous peoples share the desire to pursue economic, social, and cultural development under their own authority. Some national governments have responded flexibly to this issue. In 1979, for example, Greenland's Home Rule Act granted

Inuit people autonomy for domestic issues, without disintegrating the territorial unity of Denmark.

Health

Levels of health and standards of health care for indigenous peoples often lag behind mainstream cultures. In indigenous communities from central Australia, for example, 40 per cent of children under the age of three have been hospitalized for respiratory illnesses, and three times more babies die than the national average.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia die, on average, twenty years earlier than other Australians. About 53 per cent die before age fifty, compared to 13 per cent of the general population.

Some of the world's indigenous peoples are better off than others. In general, indigenous peoples in developed countries tend to live longer, healthier lives than non-indigenous peoples in developing nations.

Human Rights

Laws in many parts of the world have infringed on the basic rights of indigenous peoples. Between the 1870s and 1969, for example, about 100 000 indigenous children in Australia were taken from their families and placed in government-run institutions, or adopted into non-indigenous families. This policy was intended to erase the existence of indigenous peoples as a distinct group.

In one example from Canadian history, First Nations people needed written passes to leave reserves until the 1950s. They were once forbidden to sell products or livestock without written permission. They

were denied the right to vote until 1960, and they were banned from owning land unless they gave up their inherent rights. Indigenous populations in other parts of the world have had similar experiences, and continue to face such human rights violations.

Intellectual Property Rights

Mainstream cultures have often taken an interest in — and profited from — indigenous cultures and traditional knowledge. Cultural knowledge or artifacts are sometimes appropriated, or made the property of non-indigenous people or corporations. Furthermore, indigenous peoples often receive no share of the wealth created when traditional knowledge is used by others.

Climate change has real and serious implications on Inuit life because much of the traditional knowledge is based on the times of seasons and not traditionally on temperatures. For example, caching caribou is done in the fall after flies stop flying, not only to prevent maggots but because meat shouldn't be too fermented or too fresh. Now with climate change and warmer temperatures, much meat is going to waste because of over-fermentation and botulism is becoming a real hazard....

Inuit have been careful caretakers of the Arctic for a long time.... Our customs and laws were designed to ensure our survival.

What it all came down to was respect for the earth and to do your part to keep the world in its original state. Inuit see themselves as part of the ecosystem and want to be included, not as victims, but as a people who can help.

I believe Inuit can provide the rest of society with useful and timely information because we are at the forefront where the impacts and effects of climate change are felt first and may be the most severe.

— Jose A. Kusugak, President, Inuit Tapiruit Kanatami,
Above & Beyond: Canada's Arctic Journal

THE AINU IN JAPAN

Europeans were not the only colonists. The Ainu people are descendants of the original inhabitants of the Japanese islands. They lived mainly on Hokkaido, off Japan's north coast, making a living by fishing, hunting, and gathering plants from the nearby forests. About 1000 years ago, the Japanese Wajin people migrated northward, beginning a period of conflict that lasted for about 600 years.

In 1669, an Ainu rebellion under the leader Shakushine ended when Japan, fearing defeat, proposed a peace treaty.

At the meeting, the Wajin poisoned Shakushine and forced the leaderless Ainu to sign two agreements: one promising submission to the Wajin for three generations and the other establishing a land-lease system. The lease system provided the Wajin settlers with fishing, hunting, and timber rights, along with free reign to exploit the Ainu.

The land-lease system lasted until the nineteenth century. Deprived of their traditional means of sustenance and subjected to unfair trade policies, the Ainu people were forced into debt. Some were

placed in labour camps to repay their debts, where they were treated cruelly. Many Ainu died there, killed by their jailors or disease, such as smallpox, cholera, and syphilis.

In 1873, the Japanese government decreed that Hokkaido was unowned land and would henceforth be state property. Colonists were offered homesteads, swelling the island's

population to over one million people. The Ainu continued to be an oppressed minority, their land gone and their customs and language still prohibited, though the government eventually abolished unfair trade practices.

The Hokkaido Kyu-Dojin Protection Act (Kyu-Dojin meaning "former Aboriginals"), a Japanese law passed in 1899, provided the Ainu with small parcels of land to be used only for agricultural purposes. However, the best farmland had been handed out years before to settlers from the south, and what was left was usually unworkable. Though the Ainu had never been farmers, they were forbidden from having any other occupation. Anyone caught fishing in rivers or cutting wood in forests was arrested. Any land not fully cultivated within fifteen years was taken away. Many people lost their land and died of starvation.

Over the next hundred years, attitudes in Japan towards indigenous peoples changed. In 1997, a new Japanese law was passed to provide funding to research and promote Ainu culture. Approximately 24 000 Ainu people now live in Hokkaido. Many are working to preserve their language, oral tradition, traditional dances, and other elements of their culture.

REFLECTION

Research current efforts by the Ainu people to preserve their culture. What challenges do they face? How do these challenges compare to issues faced by Aboriginal peoples in Canada? What role does ethnocentrism play in the issues faced in both countries?



This Ainu giliak (spiritual leader) lived in the village of Agnevo in the late nineteenth century.

DESCRIBING THE EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION

What are the effects of colonization on indigenous peoples?

WHAT TO DO

- Working in groups of three or four, select an indigenous population from outside North America that has experienced colonization. Examples include Aboriginal peoples in Australia, the San of Southern Africa, and the Sámi of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.
- Using your textbook, the library, and Internet, research the main events of the colonial period and their effects on the indigenous people you are studying. Focus on the questions that follow:
 - What did the actions of the colonizing country reveal about its values and worldview?
 - How did the colonizing country's values and worldview compare to those of the indigenous peoples? Provide specific examples.
 - How has the colonial experience affected the indigenous culture today?
 - What general statements can you make about the effects of colonization on indigenous cultures? Include examples from Canada that show similar effects.
- Using your research, create a museum display that focuses on the effects of colonization on indigenous peoples. Your display should incorporate at least three different ways of presenting the story, such as
 - an information pamphlet
 - an automated PowerPoint™ presentation
 - artifacts
 - maps
 - quotations from those who experienced the events
 - a timeline
 - newspaper clippings

Marina Murdilinga and Billy Nalakandi with their children at Kubumi, in Arnhem Land, Australia. Arnhem Land is a vast Aboriginal reserve in the far north-western tip of Australia's Northern Territory. The Aboriginal people in the area won their land claim in 1976 with the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory), the first time the Australian government acknowledged inherent Aboriginal rights to land. Many people in the region want to be left alone to live their lives as their people have for over 40 000 years. Visitors may enter the territory only with permission.



- As a class, display your research around the class or other display space in the school. If possible, invite another class to see your displays, or host an evening for your parents to experience your work.

LOOKING BACK

What cultural characteristics are common to many indigenous peoples around the world? For each characteristic, offer one example from outside North America and one from Canada. What issues are shared by indigenous peoples around the world? For each issue, give one Canadian and one international example. What is ethnocentrism and how did it affect colonized indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world? In what ways do indigenous peoples co-operate with each other to achieve their goals today?

Natural Resources and Conflict

AS YOU READ

The demand for natural resources, such as timber, oil, gas, and minerals, has had many effects on indigenous peoples around the world. As the opening story for this section shows, resource development has sometimes had tragic consequences. How do you think the companies involved in resource development and extraction explain or justify their actions?

An important term used in this section is *sustainable development*. Development that is sustainable meets present needs without compromising the needs of future generations. As you read further in the chapter, think about why sustainable development is significant for indigenous peoples.

GRAT BEAR LAKE, IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, IS CANADA'S SECOND LARGEST LAKE AND ONE OF THE DEEPEST IN NORTH AMERICA. ITS BLUE WATERS ARE FROZEN FOR ALL BUT FOUR MONTHS OF THE YEAR. FOR THOUSANDS OF

years, the Sahtú Dene people have lived along its shores, following a traditional lifestyle of fishing and hunting caribou.

About 150 years ago, Louis Ayah, a respected spiritual leader, had a vision. Terrible things would happen, he said, when the white man started taking “dangerous rock” out of the ground. The water

Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth.

— Chief Seattle, Suquamish

Uranium mining in Canada has left over 120 million tons of radioactive waste. This amount represents enough material to cover the TransCanada Highway 2 metres deep across the country.

— Winona LaDuke, Co-Chair, Indigenous Women's Network

would become yellow and poisoned, and what looked like a metal bird would take the rock to a faraway land and use it to harm the people living there, who look much like the Dene. Ayah warned his people to stay away from this area.

Ayah's vision came true. In 1930, uranium was discovered at Great Bear Lake. The area was mined for almost thirty years, first under private ownership and then, from 1942–60, under the Crown corporation Eldorado Mining and Refining. Eldorado's primary customer was the United States Army. At 8:15 A.M. on August 6, 1945, a B-29 bomber dropped a bomb containing the “dangerous rock” on Hiroshima, Japan. Up to 200 000 people died as a result. World War II ended soon afterwards.

While it operated, Eldorado hired Dene men for \$3 a day to carry 45-kilogram gunnysacks of radioactive ore from the mine and transport it downriver. The men worked twelve hours a day, six days a week during the four months that Great Bear Lake was ice-free. While working and travelling, the men ate and slept on the huge sacks, and swept the dust from the docks and barges. Sacks were sometimes used later for tents and clothing. Dene Elders remember the men coming home covered from head to toe in dust, the same dust that settled onto the lake, causing the ice and snow to melt faster.

Before the uranium supply ran out, more than 1.7 million tonnes of radioactive waste from Eldorado's operations were dumped into and around Great Bear Lake.

In 1953, the first Port Radium miner died of cancer. The first Dene ore carrier died of cancer in 1960. Since then, cancer has killed at least 50 people in Délina, a Dene community of 650. After learning about scientific evidence linking health problems and uranium, as well as evidence that the Canadian government knew of these dangers as early as 1932, the Dene began in the 1970s to seek restitution. For decades, while caribou herds migrated across radioactive wastelands, the Canadian government denied any problems.

In 1998, widows of the Délina mine workers were horrified to learn of the connection between their lands and the atomic bombs detonated during World War II. One wrote an apology to the people of Hiroshima, and six community members travelled to Japan to express their sorrow.

Finally, in 1999, the Délina Dene and the government of Canada initiated a joint investigative program, the Canada-Délina Uranium Table. These talks will look for ways to deal with community concerns over the old mine site.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE DEMAND FOR RESOURCES

Almost everything produced today depends on natural resources. Petroleum products supply plastic, wax, cosmetics, food preservatives, inks, detergents, film, bandages, fertilizers, synthetic fabrics, carpets, certain medicines, non-leather shoes, tires, and CDs. Homes and other buildings are heated by wood, coal, oil, or natural gas. Electricity often comes from burning fossil fuels, such as coal, or from hydroelectric generation.



Ore carriers, many of whom were Sahtú Dene men, worked long hard days at the Eldorado uranium mine during the brief Arctic summer. Many later got ill or died because of exposure to radiation.

Demands for new consumer goods and technological advances, along with rising expectations and increased populations, place a huge strain on the natural world. In the search for more resources and new supplies, industries look in even the most inaccessible areas, often the homelands of indigenous peoples.

This global search creates opportunities for developing countries to bring in income and pay off debt. However, decisions to exploit natural resources, typically with the involvement of foreign companies and international financing, frequently displace indigenous peoples from ancestral lands.

Recognizing this, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development acknowledged that, although countries have the right to exploit their natural resources, this right does not override the rights of indigenous peoples: "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature."



The Oldman Dam in southern Alberta was built to support farmers' needs for water, but it is capable of generating power. The dam, built on the traditional lands of the Piikani First Nation, destroyed First Nations cultural artifacts. Research reasons for the dam and reasons why many people opposed it.

Which reasons do you think are most compelling?

Tourism

Tourism is sometimes an excellent way for indigenous peoples to use their natural resources sustainably. For example, the Calgary Zoo has established a partnership with Wechiau communities in Ghana to preserve and promote a hippopotamus sanctuary in the northern part of the country. The zoo helps fund the park and promotes it to tourists. The project gives local people a way to make a living from the animals, and helps preserve endangered species at the same time.

With less consultation and care, however, tourism can encroach on the rights of indigenous peoples. For example, tourism in the Cordillera region of the Philippines has resulted in hotels on ancestral lands, and the commercialization of indigenous cultures and traditions. Elsewhere as well, governments and corporations investing in tourism routinely fail to consult with indigenous peoples and to ensure that they benefit from such ventures.

Mining

Mining extracts valuable metals and minerals from the earth, including diamonds and other jewels, the copper essential for electrical wiring, the iron needed to make steel, and the silicon necessary for computer chips. The mining industry provides raw materials for almost everything used in our daily lives. It feeds the industrial world and provides thousands of jobs.

But the process of mining disfigures the Earth and pollutes land and water. Its environmental impact spreads beyond the mine site itself, stretching along access roads, rivers, lakes, airstrips, and power lines. Mining often displaces indigenous people and sometimes destroys their sacred places. When mines close, they often leave a legacy of scars, danger, and contamination.

For example, mining development on Spirit Mountain, once a sacred site to Assiniboine and A'aninin (Gros Ventre) nations living in what is now Montana, has left serious surface and ground water pollution. In 1994, the first lawsuit over the poor clean-up resulted in a \$37 million settlement for local communities.

Hydroelectricity

Hydroelectric power supplies 19 per cent of the world's electricity. In some countries, it supplies 90 per cent. Hydroelectricity is promoted as economical, reliable, and respectful of the environment. Some hydroelectric stations harness the power of waterfalls, but most require dams, which are costly to build and often create large bodies of water close to populated areas.

The larger the dam, the wider the area of flooding, which damages valley and river ecosystems. The World Commission on Dams states that dams have displaced forty to eighty million people, a disproportionate number of them indigenous.

The Itaipu Dam on the Parana River, between Paraguay and Brazil, is now the world's largest hydroelectric complex. Its eighteen turbines produce 12 600 megawatts of electricity, enough to illuminate 120 million 100-watt lightbulbs at once. About 1500 indigenous families were forcibly relocated in the 1970s to make room for the dam. Forced to move onto distant reservations — where they suffered economically, socially, and spiritually — these people have never been compensated.

Forestry

Fifty million indigenous people live in rainforests. The world's forests are also home to diverse species of animals, birds, plants, and other organisms, which interact in complex ways. A shared belief among indigenous peoples is that every form of life on the planet has a reason for being. Science increasingly agrees.

Forests are essential to the quality of life for all humans and animals on the planet. They moderate climates, absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, and filter air and water, acting much like global lungs.

From a resource perspective, forests provide lumber, the raw material for building products, paper, and fuel. They also provide other useful plants. Seventy-five per cent of prescription drugs in the western world are derived from native plants.



At Long Galoh, a Penan village on the island of Borneo, Chief Pada No fires a blow pipe armed with poison darts at wild birds. His people have hunted with blow pipes for centuries, but the logging industry has destroyed much of his people's traditional hunting grounds. Most Penan have been relocated by the government. Research the background of this situation and find reasons for and against the logging development. If you were in charge of the Borneo government, what decision would you make about the Penan people and their land?

Western scientists are still learning about the potential uses of many plants that indigenous healers have used for centuries.

Half of the world's forests have disappeared through logging, agriculture, and urban development. Tropical rainforests are destroyed at a rate of over 130 000 square kilometres per year, and 9 per cent of the world's tree species are at risk of extinction. An estimated 137 species of plants and animals disappear from the world every day.

The forestry industry is slowly improving its practices, though clear-cutting and slash-and-burn techniques remain common. In Malaysia, the world's largest exporter of tropical timber and a country widely criticized for its forestry practices, 2.7 million hectares were logged during the 1990s. A recently established certification process was supposed to improve forestry practices, but the basic rights of indigenous peoples are still often ignored.

Petroleum

Oil is the world's largest source of energy, supplying nearly half of the total energy demand. In 1995, the world used more than three billion tonnes of oil in a single year — about the weight of three billion small cars. Every day, Canada alone consumes nearly two million barrels of oil. One barrel is enough to fill the gas tanks of four cars; two million barrels could fill a football stadium. The petroleum industry includes some of the world's most profitable corporations, a few of which have larger economies than three-quarters of the world's countries.

Though this industry includes some of the worst offenders against indigenous peoples and the

environment, public pressure has led to more progressive policies. For example, Syncrude Canada, our country's largest single oil producer, has established an environmental policy that respects the needs of surrounding communities.

As part of this policy, the company is committed to improving environmental performance. In partnership with the Fort McKay First Nation, Syncrude developed land reclaimed from mining operations into habitats for more than 300 wood bison. Syncrude is also Canada's largest industrial employer of Aboriginal people — more than 700 work for the company, many at highly skilled, high-paying jobs.

TRADITIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Indigenous peoples have traditional ways of life that are inherently sustainable. These practices enabled them to live efficiently in even the world's most extreme environments, such as deserts and the Arctic.

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations officially recognized the position of indigenous peoples in conflicts surrounding resource development. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development states "Indigenous people and their communities ... have a vital role in environment management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture, and interests, and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development. This development should improve the quality of life for all the world's people."

REFLECTION

As you learned in Chapter Two, Aboriginal peoples in Canada have traditional political, economic, social, and spiritual ways of life that ensured people lived harmoniously with the environment. Find and learn a story from a local Aboriginal group's oral tradition that communicates a sustainable practice.

RESOLVING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONFLICTS

How have conflicts over natural resources emerged and been resolved?

WHAT TO DO

1. Working in groups of three, select a case study about conflict between indigenous peoples and natural resource development. Suggestions include the
 - Boruca Hydroelectric Project (Costa Rica)
 - El Desquite Mine Project (Argentina)
 - Upper Baram Timber Project (Malaysia)
 - Central Kalahari Game Reserve (Botswana)
 - Texaco/Petroecuador (Ecuador)
2. Using the Internet and the library, read about the nature of the conflict, its cause, how it was resolved (or not resolved), and strategies, if any, that have been developed to avoid future problems.
3. What does the conflict reveal about attitudes towards natural resources and indigenous peoples?
4. Write a final report that includes
 - a cover page and title
 - a table of contents
 - a map
 - the cause of the conflict and different perspectives on it
 - a timeline of major events
 - how the conflict was resolved or why the conflict was not resolved
 - the impact of the conflict or resolution
 - an analysis of the outcome, and your group's recommendation, if possible, for an improved process for resolution
 - at least one connection to a Canadian example of natural resource management conflicts
5. Use a computer to prepare your final report.



This bulldozer is in the Wichi community of Hoktek T'oi, Salta Province, Argentina. It has invaded the village cemetery, just one incident of damage in the region caused by careless clear-cutting in the rainforest. How is a bulldozer symbolic of the approach often taken by governments and companies towards indigenous peoples' rights? What symbol would you suggest to demonstrate a better approach? Use this symbol on the cover page of your report.

LOOKING BACK

How does sustainable development fit within traditional indigenous peoples' worldviews? How is it a significant goal for natural resource development? Name and describe at least three examples of natural resource development and how it affects indigenous peoples.

The United Nations

AS YOU READ

The United Nations is an independent international body. It sets standards for relationships among nations and between governments and their people. As you read, consider how the United Nations has supported indigenous peoples' struggles for human rights, economic development, cultural preservation, and self-determination. Why would indigenous groups, such as the Quebec Cree, turn to the United Nations for help? What values does the United Nations try to balance? How successful do you think the United Nations has been at ending injustices?

THE FIRST TIME THE JAMES BAY CREE ASKED THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) FOR ASSISTANCE WAS IN 1981. NINE CHILDREN HAD DIED THE PREVIOUS YEAR FROM DISEASES RELATED TO A CONTAMINATED WATER SUPPLY, PRIMARILY

- because Canada and Quebec had failed to provide medical and sanitation services as required by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Canada began to uphold its treaty responsibilities soon afterwards, but Quebec did not.

Every paragraph of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is based on an abuse of human rights that the indigenous peoples have experienced. The Declaration proposes remedies in the form of human-rights standards. These are not theoretical. We knew from bitter experience what needed to be in the draft.

— Chief Ted Moses, ambassador to the United Nations for the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec)



Ted Moses

In 1985, the year Phase I of the James Bay Project was completed, the Cree presented a submission to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The submission described their experiences — how the altered environment had damaged their traditional lifestyle — as a caution to others.

Cree people from Quebec returned to the UN again in 1991, when Quebec's separation from Canada appeared likely. In their brief to the UN, the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec) argued forcefully that they had a right to self-determination under international law. If Quebec has a right to separate from Canada, they argued, then the Cree have the same right to keep their territory in Canada. The Cree asserted that they are citizens of Canada and are bound to the country by terms of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

In 1998, after assessing Canada's record, the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights found Canada to be in violation of its international obligations regarding the rights of First Nations. In 1999, the UN Human Rights Committee separately made a similar finding. Canada responded with a commitment to end its "practice of extinguishment," meaning policies that freeze Aboriginal rights, deny future recognition of those rights, and deny Aboriginal access to courts to assert those rights.

THE ORIGINS AND POWERS OF THE UN

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 to solve international disputes that threaten world peace and security. Today, it often plays a global peacekeeping role. In 2003, UN peacekeepers, with their distinctive blue headgear, had a presence in ninety-four countries.

As well helping to maintain peace and security, the United Nations works to protect human rights, to protect the environment, to help the advancement of women and the rights of children, and to fight epidemics, famine, and poverty. It assists refugees, delivers food aid, combats disease, helps expand food production, makes loans to developing countries, and helps stabilize financial markets.

Almost all of the countries in the world today — 191 out of 193 or 194, depending on the criteria used to count — belong to the United Nations. When a country becomes a member, it agrees to accept the obligations of the UN Charter, an international treaty that sets out basic principles of international relations. The charter lists the four main purposes of the United Nations:

- to maintain international peace and security
- to develop friendly relations among nations
- to co-operate in solving international problems and promote human rights
- to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of all nations

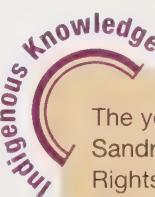
The United Nations is not a world government and it does not make laws. It does provide a forum

Education is an essential human right, a force for social change — and the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and controlling population growth. Education is a path towards international peace and security.

— United Nations, *The State of the World's Children* (1999)

and process to resolve conflicts and make policies on matters that affect the world's people. While UN committees cannot force a member country to change its laws, they can exert considerable pressure on governments.

Public condemnation voiced in UN decisions is an embarrassment to a country such as Canada, which has long prided itself on being a champion of international human rights. In addition to the cases involving the Cree in Quebec, Canada has been found in violation of Aboriginal peoples' rights several other times. For example, in 1990, the UN Human Rights Committee concluded that Alberta's expropriation of Lubicon Lake Cree lands for private oil and gas company leases violated the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a UN agreement regarding human rights.



The year 1977 was pivotal for Aboriginal rights in Canada. Sandra Lovelace's appeal to the United Nations Human Rights Committee helped prompt an amendment to the Indian Act in 1985 (Bill C-31). Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was pivotal to her case. What does this article state? Research and evaluate the United Nations's role in this case.



Leroy Little Bear

LEROY LITTLE BEAR

Kainai First Nation

"If you think provincial government moves slowly, you should try working at the international level," says Leroy Little Bear of his involvement with indigenous groups working for human rights through the United Nations.

But the wait is worth it, according to the Native American Studies professor. He is gratified to see years of meetings, conventions, and resolution-making paying off.

"Twenty years ago, there would have been no talk of protecting indigenous peoples' rights and knowledge at the global level, but there is now," Little Bear explains. "Within the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, there is a section that specifically speaks to protection of indigenous knowledge related to the environment."

A graduate of the University of Lethbridge, Little Bear has held Professor Emeritus status there since his official retirement in 1997. This status means he keeps his title of professor in honour of his contributions to the institution. He continues to teach and mentor university students and to act as an advisor to government. The accomplished academic has co-authored three books and taught at Harvard University.

Little Bear is now interested in connections between North American Aboriginal peoples' science and Western physics. He became fascinated with the subject after working with a group of Aboriginal traditionalists and senior scientists, who compared similarities and differences between Western science and indigenous cultures and worldviews.

"At face value, Western concepts of physics, for example, differ greatly from those of our culture. But enter into the subject at the level of quantum mechanics, and you notice more and more similarities," Little Bear explains. He explores Blackfoot knowledge through its oral tradition. Blackfoot stories and songs referring to the "magical" manipulation of time, space, and matter become more practical and less mystical the deeper you go, he says.

"As we connect with these ways of knowing, which our ancestors used for centuries, we move towards sustainable existence and away from the illusion that so much of modern society is based on," Little Bear concludes.

REFLECTION

1. Aboriginal people's traditional knowledge is considered a collective right. The knowledge is owned by no individual, but is property of an entire nation, including past, present, and future members of that nation. The right to manage the uses to which this knowledge is put is an intellectual property right. Many world indigenous peoples are working together to ensure that the intellectual property of their people is protected as carefully as their traditional lands. Visit the United Nations Web site at www.un.org and visit the Cyberschoolbus site to learn more about this topic.
2. What is quantum mechanics? Research how this field of physics is related to traditional First Nations worldviews and oral traditions.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE UN

Only countries have voting rights at the United Nations (UN), but the UN recognizes that other groups have interests in the issues it deals with. The UN therefore recognizes many non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs can attend meetings and present their views. Among many other Aboriginal organizations, the Métis National Council has NGO status, which can help the organization influence UN decisions.

Indigenous peoples have often turned to the United Nations for legal recognition and political support. After initially focusing on human rights, indigenous people now participate in international conferences concerning the environment, development, and population.

Since the 1970s, indigenous issues have formed a larger part of the UN agenda. In the 1980s, a working group suggested that the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples be dealt with on a continuing basis under a separate, high-level, permanent UN body. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established in 1982, leading to some of the largest human rights meetings ever held by the United Nations.

In 1985, the Working Group began drafting a declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples. In 1993, it completed a draft document, the most comprehensive statement of such collective rights ever developed. More than 100 indigenous peoples' organizations participated in the Working Group.

In an attempt to increase global awareness about indigenous peoples'



United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (centre left) stands with participants at the third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Annan's opening speech said that indigenous peoples had made much progress over the last decade, but continued to suffer discrimination and other human rights violations.

rights, both among indigenous peoples and the rest of the world's citizens, the United Nations declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. Continuing this effort, the United Nations then announced the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, beginning December 10, 1994.

In 2000, the UN established the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which acts as an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council regarding indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and human rights.

LOOKING BACK

Write down the four main purposes of the United Nations. With a partner, review this section to find examples of activities that fulfill these purposes. List United Nations endeavours that work specifically on behalf of indigenous peoples. Write a review of the United Nations Web site as a source of information for indigenous students around the world.

Aboriginal Youth and Education

AS YOU READ

The United Nations pursues many health and education programs to ensure the well being of young people around the world. In most cultures, young people are valued for the future they represent. Societies try to secure that future by investing in young people's knowledge and skills. Education provides access to economic, political, and social power.

To be effective, education must be relevant to the needs and situation of students. It must also be a life-long process. As you read this section, think about the importance of education as a means to achieving self-determination.

CHARLES NELSON PERKINS WAS BORN AT THE ALICE SPRINGS TELEGRAPH STATION ABORIGINAL RESERVE, NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA, ON JUNE 16, 1936. OF ARRERNT AND KALKADOON DESCENT, HE WAS A NON-PERSON

according to the Australian government. Section 127 of the Australian Constitution (repealed in 1967) stated "In reckoning the numbers of people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted."

When he was ten, he was taken from his home — as were almost all Aboriginal children over a period of almost 100 years. He was sent to a mission school for Aboriginal boys in Adelaide. He remembers his grandmother as a face behind a wire



Charles Perkins, pictured here in the 1960s, became a leading Aboriginal rights leader in Australia. What qualities and experiences do you think drive a person like Perkins to become a leader? What would drive you to stand up for what you believe in?

fence. She made trips to the school to try to speak to him in his own language, only to be shooed away by a mission manager.

Technical school training prepared Perkins to become a machinist, but fate intervened. When he was sixteen, he was spotted playing soccer by the English first-division club Everton, which offered him a place on the team. In England, he discovered how much better life could be outside Australia's systematic racism. Though he was later invited to try out for Manchester United, he chose to return to Australia in 1959.

At the age of twenty-three, he became an Aboriginal rights activist. The Freedom Rides through rural New South Wales in 1966 were among his most famous efforts. Modelled after African American Freedom Rides, this bus tour of student protestors sparked international awareness of the problems of Aboriginal people in Australia. Like African Americans, Aboriginal Australians were banned by law from public places such as washrooms, swimming pools, cinemas, and shops. The Freedom Rides are often cited as the most significant act in Australia's race relations during the twentieth century.

Named Aborigine of the Year in 1993 and awarded the Order of Australia for his work on behalf of indigenous people, Perkins's legacy includes the Aboriginal embassy, a tent he helped build in 1972 on the lawns of Australia's former parliament house. The tent remains there today, protected under heritage laws.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Perkins was the first Australian Aboriginal person to graduate from university. In 2000, thirty-five years after he completed his arts degree, the University of Sydney awarded him an honorary doctor of laws.

In contrast, many of the world's children leave school before grade five. One hundred and thirty million children worldwide — two-thirds of them girls — have no access to education. A disproportionate number of them are indigenous people.

In 2001, only 17 per cent of indigenous Australians had a high school education. They were more

than twice as likely as non-indigenous students to leave high school before graduating. Fewer than half of indigenous teenagers were attending educational institutions, compared to 75 per cent of non-indigenous teenagers. Canada's picture in this regard is improving. Of working-age Aboriginal people, 61 per cent had high school diplomas or better in 2001, up from 55 per cent in 1996.

Education has a direct impact on employment. In 1991, 84 per cent of Aboriginal Canadians with university degrees were working, compared to 52 per cent of Aboriginal people overall. But education is more than a path to a good job. The

ABORIGINAL YOUTH WORKING ABROAD

The Native Law Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, in co-operation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, offers international internships for Aboriginal young people from Canada to work in other countries with institutions that serve the needs of indigenous peoples. The focus of this program, called Young Professionals International, is giving indigenous peoples the chance to learn from each other.

Jonathan Breaker was one of these interns. He went from the Siksika First Nation in Alberta to Paris, France, to work for UNESCO. His project involved work with sustainable development issues among indigenous peoples — preserving indigenous culture and language, conserving the environment, and reducing poverty. All these goals were pursued through programs integrating the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples.

Adrienne Edmunds, an Inuk from Labrador, worked for the New South Wales government in Australia to research Canadian and Australian indigenous social justice issues, and to compare contemporary and historical policies of the governments of both countries. Her experiences abroad increased her empathy, sensitivity, and appreciation for cultural differences.

Bev Lafond is from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in the Treaty Six territory in Saskatchewan. Her placement allowed her to work with the Human Rights Commission of New Zealand. She knew about issues affecting First Nations people in Canada, and wanted to see if new initiatives or developments in other countries could be adapted for her own community. Part of her job was to share information on First Nations initiatives and development in Canada.

REFLECTION

Write a paragraph describing an international internship for yourself. Explain which country you would like to visit and what kind of work you would like to pursue.



The Bigstone Cree Nation is just one of many Alberta communities that makes sure its school programs are relevant and meaningful for Aboriginal students. Here Elder Bill Sewepagaham teaches students about drumming and singing.



Young girls in Kabul, Afghanistan, are shown here in 2003 attending school for the first time in five years. Why do girls in some countries have problems accessing education?



Canada's first accredited Aboriginal-run university, First Nations University of Canada, was launched in 2003. Formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, which opened in 1976, First Nations University has campuses in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina. It is "dedicated to promoting and expanding Aboriginal knowledge in teaching, research, and service."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) declares that education "is the foundation of a free and fulfilled life" — a statement based on decades of research and experience.

Knowledge is power. In an increasingly global community, the world's indigenous peoples are learning from each other and gaining from one another's triumphs. Indigenous Australians, for example, hold up Nunavut as a shining model

of Aboriginal self-government. First Nations in Canada cite an Australian case, *Mabo v. Queensland*, during court arguments for Aboriginal title.

Education helps people to see opportunities, to understand how to turn ideas into reality, and to play a part in making the world a better place, both locally and globally. It enables the world's indigenous peoples to bring their stories onto the world stage, where others will listen, care, and assist.

Many factors contribute to lower education rates for the world's indigenous peoples, including poverty, war, physical distance from facilities, and disease. What is taught in the classroom — and how — also plays a considerable role. Lessons that are relevant to students' lives and cultures, and taught in students' first languages, help make education more effective. Recognizing this, education systems around the world are slowly evolving to meet the needs of indigenous peoples.

ENSURING CULTURAL FUTURES THROUGH EDUCATION

Around the world, a revolution in education is beginning, as governments and educators realize the importance of a new approach to teaching and learning — one designed to make classroom experiences more fulfilling and relevant, while equipping students with skills they will use throughout their lives. Approaches to learning systems vary around the world, reflecting local conditions and needs. The intent is to make education more effective for both children and society as a whole.

For example, the Yurrekaityarindi partnership in Australia involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their communities' education systems. Yurrekaityarindi are committees of indigenous people who work with local schools and educators to ensure that indigenous students are encouraged to excel in their studies. They also help students overcome challenges to learning.

Another Australian initiative is the Intelyape project, which developed Arrernte literacy materials with indigenous Australians in Alice Springs. The project has become a model for other countries creating bilingual programs based on local indigenous languages.

How can education best serve the needs of Aboriginal youth?

WHAT TO DO

1. Research initiatives in education for indigenous youth in Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, and Russia.
2. Compare these initiatives to the educational opportunities provided for Aboriginal youth in your community or province.
3. What is your ideal vision of education for Aboriginal youth in your community? What educational goals do you think are most important for Aboriginal youth today? Is cultural education an important part of the system you envision? Design a weekly school timetable that includes a description of each course and any special features of how it is taught. How will this education system help prepare Aboriginal youth for the future?

Thinking About Your Project

Besides formal education at school, how else can people learn about culture? In your opinion, how is culture best taught?



These students at New Aiyansh, British Columbia, are part of a bilingual/bicultural education system developed by the Nisga'a Tribal Council (since the Nisga'a Treaty called the Nisga'a Lisims Government.) Its goal is to have students fully fluent in Nisga'a language and culture.

LOOKING BACK

Why is education important to Aboriginal youth? How is it important to Aboriginal cultures? If you could do something to help your community, what would you most like to do? What kind of preparation, education, or experience would you need to achieve this goal?

Chapter Seven Review

Check Your Understanding

1. Define geopolitical. How have geopolitical boundaries created challenges for indigenous peoples?
2. Describe at least four cultural characteristics often found in indigenous cultures from around the world.
3. List common issues faced by indigenous peoples around the world.
4. Define ethnocentrism and explain how it has affected indigenous peoples.
5. Describe at least two examples of how ethnocentrism affected Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history.
6. How does the Ainu experience in Japan mirror First Nations experiences in Canada?
7. Why did colonizers sometimes separate indigenous children from their families?
8. How did the government's failure to address the dangers involved in mining uranium near Great Bear Lake reflect its attitudes towards the land and Aboriginal peoples?
9. In what ways does hydroelectric generation often conflict with Aboriginal views about natural resource management?
10. How can a natural resource extraction company demonstrate environmental responsibility? Give a specific example.
11. What is meant by sustainable development? Why is it important for indigenous peoples?
12. What are the four main purposes of the United Nations?
13. In what disputes was Canada found in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights? What happens when a country is found in violation of a United Nations agreement?

14. How has the United Nations responded to the increasing demand by indigenous peoples to have global representation?

Reading and Writing

15. Create a chart to organize your ideas about the issues facing indigenous peoples around the world, and how (or whether) their issues have been addressed. Your chart could look something like this:

Name of Issue	Description of Issue	How Issue Has Been OR Could Be Resolved

16. How does the position of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compare to indigenous peoples in another country? Choose a specific group of indigenous people to study. Make your comparison based on factors such as education, health, language, self-government, and cultural continuity. Write an essay giving your opinion with evidence to support your ideas.

17. Consider the statement that follows:

Indigenous youth inherit the responsibility to protect and preserve their traditional lands, resources, and sacred sites upon which their cultural heritage and identity is based.

— United Nations, 2002

Write a paragraph or two about your response to this statement. Do you think this responsibility is fair and reasonable? Is your education preparing you to take this role? Include specific examples in your response.

18. Research human rights issues in your province and prepare a case study to present to your class.
19. In a small group, create a Web site educating others about indigenous people's intellectual property and their rights regarding this property.

Speaking and Listening

20. Working with a partner, imagine that you are employed by a television-advertising agency and you have been asked to create an environmental commercial that will target an age group of sixteen to eighteen year olds. You have been told to use one of the quotations from this textbook somewhere in your commercial. Create a 30-second commercial that will address an environmental issue and reflect Aboriginal peoples' views about conservation and management of resources. Videotape your commercial and present it to the class.
21. Find a story from the oral tradition of an indigenous culture from outside North America. Learn the story and present it to your class. Along with your story, provide a brief overview of the culture and environment of the people who tell it.

Going Further

22. Invite an Aboriginal person who has attended international meetings of indigenous peoples to your class to discuss his or her experiences. What did he or she learn that could benefit local communities?

23. One forum through which Aboriginal people in North America meet and network with other Aboriginal people is sporting events. Research the history of the Arctic Games, North American Indigenous Games, or Northern Games. Write a three-page history of the event and learn how to do one traditional game or event to teach other students in your class. As part of your instruction, give the history of the sport and mention records or achievements held by Aboriginal athletes in this event.

For example, the one-foot high kick, a traditional Inuit sport, requires participants to jump off the ground on two feet, kick the target (usually a rolled-up seal skin), and land on the foot that kicked the seal. Traditionally, Inuit sports helped hunters build their skills and strength, while reinforcing social ideals about fair play and respect for the land. Explain the benefits to Aboriginal youth of participating in such events in the past and today.



At the 2004 Arctic Games, held in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Nunavut athlete Chris Merkosak competed in the one-foot high kick, a traditional Inuit sport. The junior male record was set in Fort McMurray by sixteen-year-old John Miller III, from Alaska, who kicked 2 metres, 87 centimetres.

LOOKING BACK

In an activity on page 8, in the first chapter of this book, you read a copy of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Look back to that declaration now and reflect upon how much you have learned in this course about the rights of indigenous peoples. For as many of the clauses as you can, give a specific example that shows problems in the world today, or changes that have improved the lives of indigenous peoples.