

||||| NATIONAL BESTSELLER |||||

21

THINGS

YOU MAY NOT KNOW

ABOUT

THE INDIAN ACT

Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation
with Indigenous Peoples a Reality

~~~~~ BOB JOSEPH ~~~~~

THE  
INDIAN ACT

*with author Bob Joseph*

“When the present does not recognize the wrongs of the past, the future takes its revenge. For that reason, we must never, never turn away from the opportunity of confronting history together - the opportunity to right a historical wrong.”

*Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, at the relaunch of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, October 2009*

“It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness by habituating so closely in the residential schools and that they die at a much higher rate than in their villages. But this does not justify a change in the policy of the Department, which is geared towards a final solution of the Indian Problem.”

*Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 1910*

“... to wean them by slow degrees, from their nomadic habits, which have almost become an instinct, and by slow degrees absorb them or settle them on the land. Meantime, they must be fairly protected.”

*John A. Macdonald, 1880*

“It is worthy of consideration whether legislative measures should not be adopted for the establishment of some kind of municipal system among such bands as are found sufficiently advanced to justify the experiment being tried. It is hoped that a system may be adopted which will have the effect of accustoming the Indians to the modes of government prevalent in the white communities surrounding them, and that it will thus tend to prepare them for earlier amalgamation with the general population of the country.”

*John A. Macdonald, 1880*



# Imposed the elected chief and council system

*1869 to present day*



# Denied women status

*1869 to 1985*



# Created Reserves

*1876 to present day*





# Encouraged voluntary and enforced enfranchisement

*1876 to 1985*

“ . . . we have been pampering and coaxing the Indians; that we must take a new course, we must vindicate the position of the white man, we must teach the Indians what law is, we must not pauperize them, as they say we have been doing.”

*John A. Macdonald, 1885*



# Could expropriate portions of reserves for public works

*1880 to current version of Indian Act  
1985*



# Renamed individuals with European names

*1880 to undetermined time*



**Created a permit  
system to control  
Indians' ability to sell  
products from farms**

*1881 to 2014*

“The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change.”

*John A. Macdonald, 1885*



# Prohibited sale of ammunition to Indians

*1882 to undetermined time*



# Prohibited sale of intoxicants to Indians

*1884 to undetermined time*



“The third clause provides that celebrating the ‘Potlatch’ is a misdemeanour. This Indian festival is debauchery of the worst kind, and the departmental officers and all clergymen unite in affirming that it is absolutely necessary to put this practice down.”

*John A. Macdonald, 1894*



# Declared potlatch and other cultural ceremonies illegal

*1884 to 1951*

“No rebel Indians should be allowed off the Reserves without a pass signed by an I.D. official. The dangers of complications with white men will thus be lessened and by preserving a knowledge of individual movements any inclination to petty depredations may be checked by the facility of apprehending those who commit such offences.”

*Hayter Reed, 1885*



**Restricted Indians  
from leaving their  
reserve without  
permission from  
Indian agent**

*1885 to 1951*

“The Governor in Council may make regulations, which shall have the force of law, for the committal by justices or Indian agents of children of Indian blood under the age of sixteen years, to such industrial school or boarding school, there to be kept, cared for and educated for a period not extending beyond at which such children shall reach the age of eighteen years.”

*Indian Act, 1884*



**Created residential  
schools**

*1886 to 1996*



**Forbade Indian  
students from  
speaking their home  
language**

*1884 to 1951*



**Forbade western Indians  
from appearing in any  
public dance, show,  
exhibition, stampede or  
pageant wearing  
traditional regalia**

*Late 1880s to early 1960s*



“We would be only too glad to have the Indian use this land, if he would... But he will not cultivate this land, and we want to cultivate it; that is all.”

*Arthur Meighen, 1918*



# Forbade Indians from forming political organizations

*1927 to 1951*



**Prohibited anyone,  
Indian or non-Indian,  
from soliciting funds  
for Indians to hire  
legal counsel**

*1927 to 1951*



**Prohibited pool hall  
owners from  
allowing Indians  
entrance**

*1927 to 1951*

“It is the opinion of the writer that... the Government will in time reach the end of its responsibility as the Indians progress into civilization and finally disappear as a separate and distinct people, not by race extinction but by gradual assimilation with their fellow-citizens.”

*Duncan Campbell Scott, 1931*



**Forbade students  
from practicing their  
traditional religion**

*1940s*

20

**Denied Indians the  
right to vote**

*Until 1960*



**Is a piece of legislature  
created under colonial  
rule for the purpose of  
subjugating a group of  
people**

*Until 1960*



Thank you for coming out and for your interest in learning about the *Indian Act*. It is people such as yourselves who will help change the world, for Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples.

**Gilakas'la**

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