

# The Desire for Change

Question 1.

There were plenty of jobs. Many people—immigrants, people raised on farms and people in small towns—moved to the cities to earn money.



1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980



*Middle class home in Toronto.*

more and more jobs: digging sewers, paving streets, building streetcar lines. Even unskilled workers with little knowledge of English or French could usually find some sort of work.

### *Contrasts*

Factory and storeowners lived in large homes on tree-lined streets, with the houses and grounds kept clean and tidy by servants. Most city dwellers were not so fortunate.

They made tractors and threshing machines for the new farms. They built buggies, bicycles and automobiles. Steel mills turned out nails, wire, pots and pans, railway tracks and locomotives. Flour, canned meats and vegetables, brooms, stoves, clothing—all the things people needed for everyday life—poured out of the factories.

There were plenty of jobs. Many people—immigrants, people raised on farms and people in small towns—moved to the cities to earn money. Cities across the country grew rapidly, creating



*"Instant Slum" in Winnipeg.*

POPULATIONS (of Canadian cities)		
	1901	1911
HALIFAX	40,832	46,619
QUEBEC CITY	68,840	78,710
MONTREAL	328,172	490,504
TORONTO	209,892	381,833
OTTAWA	59,928	87,062
WINNIPEG	42,340	136,035
REGINA	2,249	30,213
EDMONTON	4,176	31,064
CALGARY	4,392	43,704
VANCOUVER	29,432	120,847

Which city added the most people from 1901-1911? Which city had the largest percentage increase?

The housing supply did not keep up with the number of people streaming into the cities. Most people were very poorly paid, and could not afford decent homes even when they were available. The downtown areas of many cities became "instant slums." Sometimes immigrant families of ten would live in one run-down room. City water was not always safe to drink. Children were forced to play in the street.

City councils and concerned citizens knew such conditions were horrific, but they didn't know what to do. The concept of planning city growth to avoid these types of problems was still very new.

City councils did their best:

- they provided electric lights and a clean water supply
- they established public health clinics
- they improved public transportation
- they set up parks and playgrounds; so people could relax and play in pleasant surroundings

## THE TORONTO PLAYGROUND SYSTEM—EARLY 1900S

- |                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 29 soccer fields   | 8 bowling greens                     |
| 9 rugby fields     | 2 croquet grounds                    |
| 98 tennis courts   | 2 quoit grounds                      |
| 3 lacrosse fields  | 33 hockey cushions (rinks)           |
| 10 cricket creases | 39 skating rinks and toboggan slides |

Which of the above would still be found in cities today?

**Immigrant children found that where you came from didn't matter on the playground.**



# Votes for Women

At the turn of the century more than half of Canadian adults could not vote. "No woman, idiot, lunatic, or criminal shall vote," was the way the law was phrased. Women were not recognized as independent human beings under the Canadian legal system. Their fathers or husbands were legally responsible for them. Men

Man voting for the first time in 15 years:

"You bet I came out today to vote against giving these fool women a vote. What's the good of it? They wouldn't use it!"

controlled their property, their money, their children and their lives.

Some people began to realize how unfair and dangerous this inequality was for women. A woman had no legal protection in 1900. If her husband abused her, her property, or her children, the law could do nothing. Thus, the matter

of votes for women was tied in with other social issues.

EVERYWOMAN'S  
WORLD

FEBRUARY, 1914



## Question 2.

Now consider these facts about the political, legal, and educational position of women in Canada at the turn of the century:

1. No woman had the right to vote. The Election Act of the Dominion of Canada stated 'no woman, idiot, lunatic, or criminal shall vote'.
2. No woman could be elected to federal or provincial offices in government.
3. A man had a great deal of control over his wife and children. At that time the father had complete control over his children. He could collect their income. Without even consulting the mother, he could put his children up for adoption!
4. It was commonly accepted that a woman's chief function was to keep house for her husband and to bear his children. One out of every five women in Canada died in childbirth at this time.
5. Wives had to obey their husbands and could legally be beaten.
6. In the West, wives or single women could not claim homesteads. Only if she was the head of a household could a woman take up a homestead.
7. Married women had the right to financial support from their husbands. However, wives and children of alcoholic men found it very difficult in practice to collect any support money.
8. Girls could attend elementary and secondary schools but very few women in Canada went on to gain a post-secondary school education. The University of Toronto did not admit women until the 1880s. Most professions were still closed to women. People would not accept the idea that women could perform the jobs of doctors or lawyers or clergy as well as men. The first woman doctor in Canada was Dr. James Barry, who spent her whole life disguised as a man. She was born in Scotland and as a young girl longed to be a doctor. Since women were not admitted to medical school at the University of Edinburgh, she disguised herself as a man. Dr. Barry graduated and became an outstanding doctor. She was sent to Canada as Inspector-General of Hospitals. Not until her death in 1865 at the age of 71 was her secret discovered!

## Aboriginal Nations

While Laurier looked forward to the coming century, Aboriginal Nations had little cause for optimism. Since 1871, many Aboriginal people in Western Canada had been forced onto reserves. The main purpose of the reserve system was to free the land for settlers from Ontario or Europe, without the violent clashes that had marked the western settlement on the frontier of the United States. The Aboriginal people of the Plains had been starving since the buffalo had been wiped out by railway builders and settlers, mostly south of the border. On the reserves, Aboriginal people were supposed to take up farming instead of traditional hunting, but the soil was often unsuitable and many people went hungry.

The government's stated aim was to assimilate Aboriginal Nations into Canadian culture. The Indian Act, first passed in 1876 and revised many times after that, gave the federal government the power to regulate the lives of Aboriginal people. Ottawa had the right to make decisions about what it felt was best for them. The Indian Act defined who was a legal or "status Indian" and who was not. A special government department was created to be in charge of "Indians." This department placed Indian Agents on reserves to control them. At some times the Aboriginal people actually had to have passes from the Agent to leave their reserves.

Canada's Aboriginal people were not citizens like others. For example, they were not given the right to vote or to attend university. If they wanted these rights, they had to give up their status as Indians, and could no longer live on reserves.

In order to assimilate Aboriginal Nations, the government felt it was necessary to deny them their cultures. The Indian Act allowed Ottawa to ban important spiritual ceremonies such as the potlatch and Sun Dance. The government soon set up a system of residential schools to be run by churches. Aboriginal children were sent to the schools as a way of removing them from their families. Sometimes they were forced to leave by the Indian Agent. Once there, the children were forbidden to use their

native languages, dress in traditional ways, or follow their own spiritual beliefs. They were made to feel generally ashamed of their heritage.

The following extracts describe the experiences of two Assiniboine children:

On the day we arrived at the school, each new boy was assigned an interpreter, who was a senior student.... In my first meeting with the [teacher], he showed me a long black leather strap and told me, through my interpreter, "If you are ever caught speaking Indian this is what you will get across your hands."

Source: George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1974), 63.



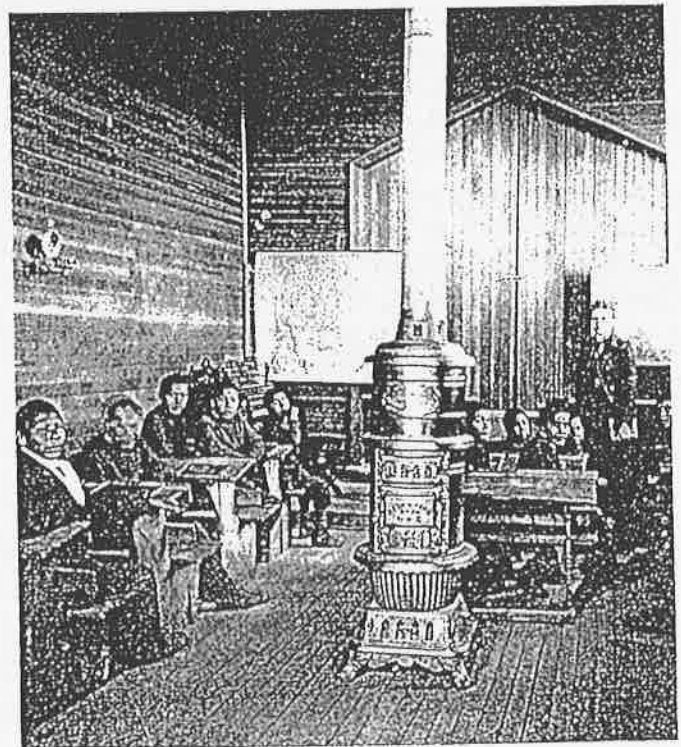
## Question 4.

### RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

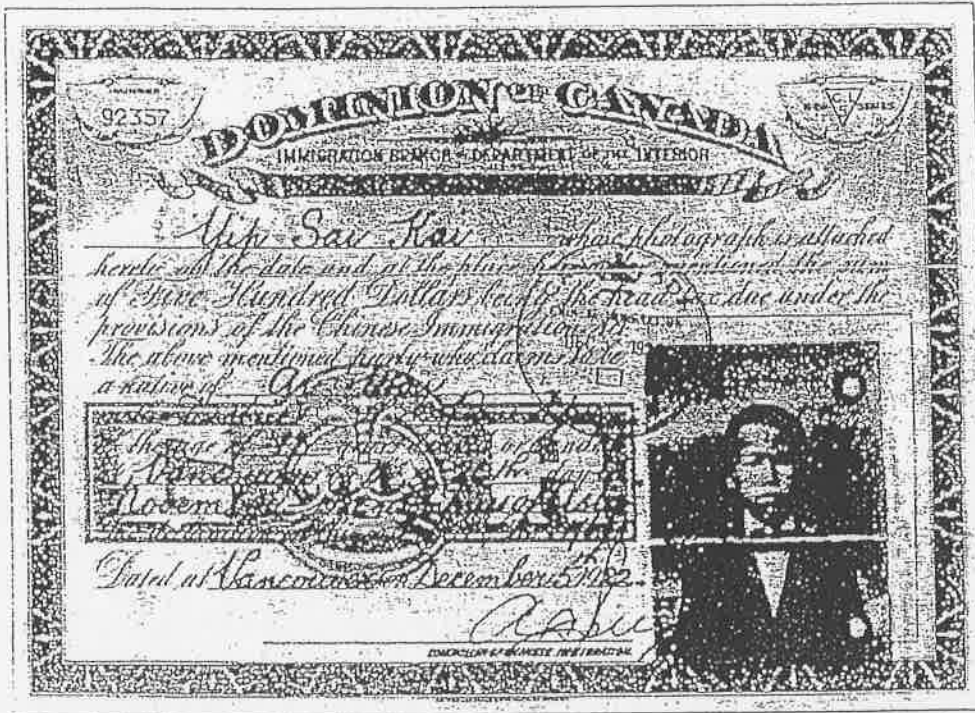


and mentally. Many were even scarred for life. By the time the last residential schools were phased out in the 1980s, entire generations of Aboriginal peoples had lost much of their history, family ties and pride. These would be very difficult things for future generations to replace. In 1998, the government of Canada apologized to Canada's Aboriginal peoples for the abuse suffered in many of the residential schools. *In your view, what would be the hardest thing about attending a residential school? Why?*

Late in the 1890s, Canada's Department of Indian Affairs established residential (boarding) schools for Aboriginal children, building on what the British government had established even before Confederation. The Department wanted to provide a "general and moral" education for the next generation of First Nation peoples. Officials believed that, once removed from their homes and from life on the reserves, these children would become assimilated into the European culture that dominated Canada at the time. The government wanted to eliminate family and tribal influences. Failing to understand the nature of the Aboriginal heritage, the government also failed to understand the negative effects of the assimilation process. It felt that First Nation peoples should learn to farm or ranch, and give up their hunting and gathering way of life. Residential schools were not well funded. They were often poorly equipped and poorly monitored. The quality of teaching was not always strong. Many Aboriginal students suffered physically, emotionally, spiritually



Question 5.



A certificate that shows the payment of the \$500 head tax by a Chinese immigrant.

Between 1895 and 1947, laws were passed in Canada to keep Chinese people out. These were brought about largely by pressure from unions of workers. The workers were afraid the Chinese might take away their jobs.

A tax of \$50 had to be paid by each Chinese person wishing to enter Canada. In 1900, this tax was raised to \$100 and in 1903 to \$500.

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 said that no Chinese people were allowed to enter Canada unless they were merchants or students. Between 1923 and 1947, only forty-four Chinese were allowed into Canada.

## COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

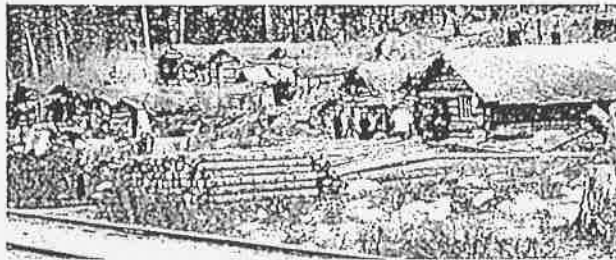
**Chinese Canadians:** Racism against the Chinese began when the first group of Chinese settlers arrived in Canada. Between 1881-1885, 17,000 Chinese immigrants arrived to work on the railway for \$1 a day, half the rate of pay given to white railway workers. The railway companies saved an estimated \$3.5 million dollars by hiring Chinese workers.



Fifteen hundred Chinese workers died during the construction of Canada's transcontinental railway. Living conditions were inadequate, with regular shortages of food and lack of medical care. Landslides and careless dynamiting were also responsible for many deaths.

When the railway was completed in 1885, hundreds of Chinese workers were put out of work. Many stayed in Vancouver where they settled in Chinatown. A few

moved east to the Prairies and Ontario; others returned to China. In 1891, 8,910 Chinese lived in



British Columbia while only 219 lived in the rest of Canada. By 1911, things had changed. The number of Chinese in Canada had reached 27,568—8,000 of whom lived outside British Columbia.

Despite the growing numbers, Chinese Canadians still endured racism and oppression. They could not vote. Their children could not attend public schools unless they were born in Canada or spoke English. This resulted in partial segregation. Children in grades 1 to 4 were still sent to separate schools. Mob violence was partic-



ularly common. In 1907, 7,000 whites in Vancouver went on a rampage through Chinatown, breaking every single store window.

Canada's government supported racist views against the Chinese. In 1923, it passed the Chinese Immigration Act, which prohibited any

Chinese from entering the country. Family members of Chinese immigrants already here were not allowed entry into Canada. During the Depression, Chinese Canadians needing public relief were given half the amount allocated to white Canadians in the same circumstances.

It was not until World War II, when Canada and China became war time allies, that Canada's treatment of its own Chinese population changed for the better. Conscription was extended to include Chinese Canadians in 1944. All anti-Chinese legislation, including the Chinese Immigration Act, was repealed in 1947. That year, Chinese Canadians were allowed to vote for the first time in Canadian history.

*Describe three examples of unfair treatment endured by the Chinese-Canadian community.*