

CHAPTER 1

1840-1896

*Development of
Canadian federalism*

PART 7

Indian Affairs

Creation of Indian reserves in Lower Canada

The context:

- In the first half of the 19th century, the population of Lower Canada was growing rapidly, further encroaching on Indigenous territory.
- Indigenous people were no longer seen as potential military allies, or trading partners – due to the decline of the fur trade.
- The rapid development of the forest industry posed a serious threat to Indigenous land, subsistence and ways of life.

Creation of Indian reserves in Lower Canada

The context:

- **Indigenous people were perceived as an obstacle to colonization and progress.**
- **As a result, the government sought to assimilate Indigenous people by imposing a sedentary way of life, evangelizing and “civilizing” them.**



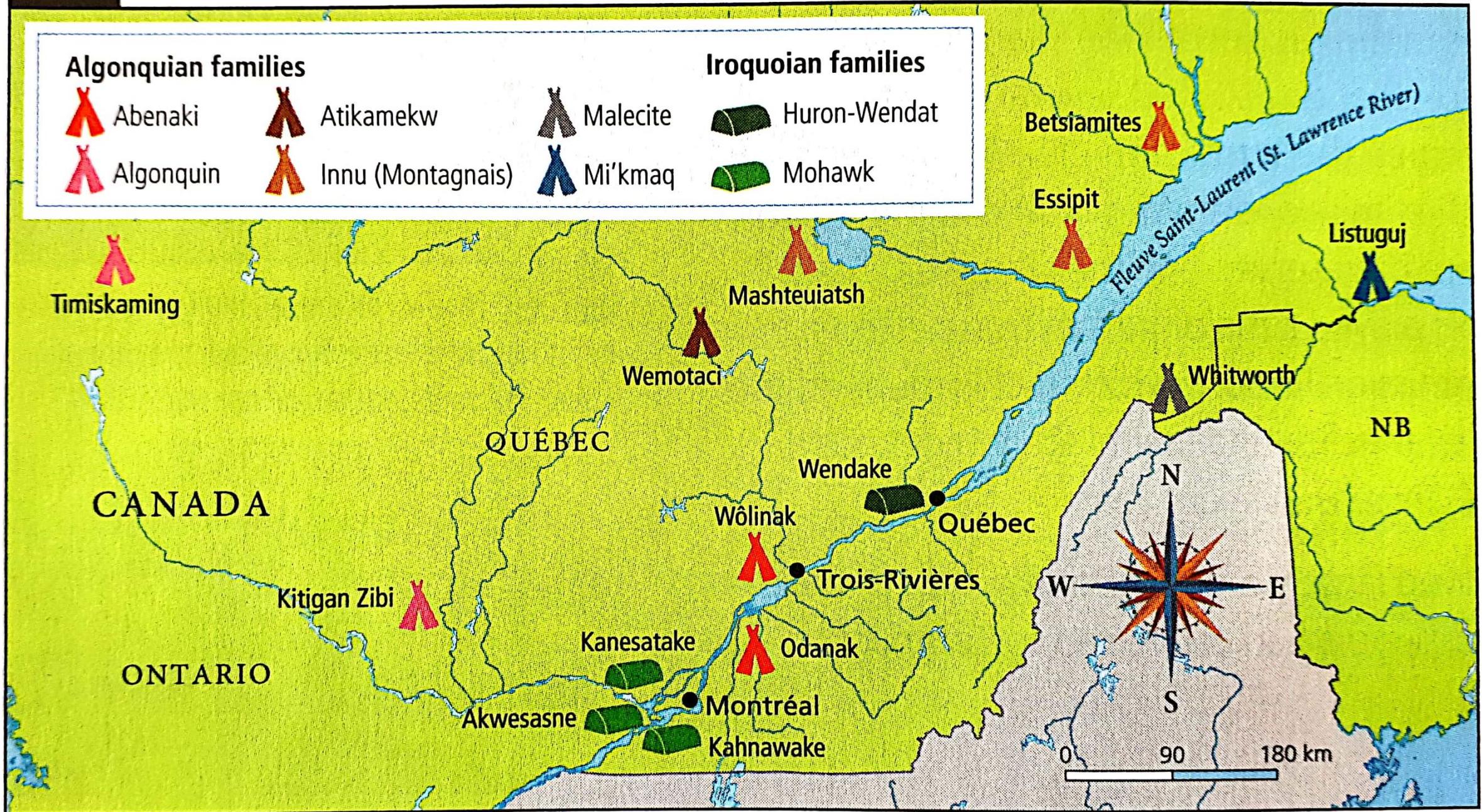
WE ARE ALL
TREATY
PEOPLE

Creation of Indian reserves in Lower Canada

- In order to assimilate Indigenous people, the government of the Province of Canada created in 1853 the first “**Indian reserves**” – territories, held by the British Crown, but reserved for the exclusive use of Indigenous people.
- **The intention was to segregate, contain and control Indigenous people.**
- With the help of Catholic and Protestant missionaries, the government forced many Indigenous nations to settle in these reserves **in an attempt to get greater access to the province’s natural resources.**

1.31

FIRST NATIONS RESERVES IN QUÉBEC, CIRCA 1890



Numbered Treaties

- Between 1871 and 1921, **the Canadian government concluded 11 Treaties with Indigenous nations** located in the territorial boundaries set by Canada.
- These Treaties **allowed for the colonization and development of their land** (farming, mining, etc.).
- The “**Numbered Treaties**” transferred large expanses of Indigenous land, from Northern Ontario to British Columbia, to the Government of Canada in exchange for reserve land, services (medical care and food aid), and other goods and equipment.



Numbered Treaties

- On one hand, **Indigenous leaders believed that the Treaties they were signing was establishing a nation-to-nation relationship, negotiated as equals, that would ensure the group's survival and success into the future** (annual gifts of money, schools and teachers, farm tools, ammunition, land reserved just for their use, the right to hunt and fish, etc.).
- On the other hand, **the Canadian government saw the Treaties as huge surrenders of land that brought the First Nations under government control**. Some promises have still not been fulfilled.

81 The Numbered Treaties in Western Canada, 1871–1921



Legend

- International border
- - - - Provincial or territorial border
- Disputed border (drawn by the Privy Council in 1927)

For easier identification, today's borders have been used on this map.

Data from: Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "Pre-1975 Treaties in Canada," 2013.

Numbered Treaties

VIDEO

Indian Act (1876-today)

Since the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, the **federal government** had sole jurisdiction over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians”.



Indian Act (1876-today)

- In 1876, the federal government passed the *Indian Act*:
 - The law governing the status of Indigenous people and reserves in Canada.
 - It concerned only people that the state deemed “Indians” – First Nations, BUT NOT Métis and Inuit peoples.
 - Under the act, Indigenous people were treated as **minors – wards or children of the State** – , and not allowed to vote or own property. Federal Indian Agents managed the reserves.
 - **The goal was to assimilate Indigenous peoples into Canadian society.**
 - The government pushed them to **enfranchise** (give up their Indian status to become “full citizens”).



NOTICE

THIS IS AN INDIAN RESERVE

Any person who trespasses on an Indian Reserve is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month, or to both fine and imprisonment.

DIRECTOR OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

**Department of Citizenship and Immigration,
Indian Affairs Branch,
OTTAWA.**

Residential schools

VIDEO #1

Residential schools

- In the mid-19th century, renewed efforts were made to **evangelize (convert) Indigenous people to Christianity (Catholic and Protestant missions)**.
- In 1844, the Report of the Bagot Commission recommended the **creation of residential schools as a way to evangelize and assimilate Indigenous children**. The number of residential schools increased every year since then.
- Overall, the evangelization movement proved **very effective**.





Truth and
Reconciliation
Commission of Canada

Residential schools

VIDEO #2