**Glossary of Terms**

***What’s In A Name?***

***Aboriginal:*** *a term defined in the Constitution Act of 1982 that refers to all indigenous people in Canada, including “Indians” (status and non-status), Métis, and Inuit people. More than one million people in Canada identified themselves as Aboriginal on the 2006 Census, and are the fastest growing population in Canada.*

***First Nations****: the self-determined political and organizational unit of the Aboriginal community that has the power to negotiate, on a government-to-government basis, with BC and Canada. Currently, there are 615 First Nation communities, which represent more than 50 nations or cultural groups and 50 Aboriginal languages. This term does not have a legal definition but should be used instead of the term “Indian,” which is inaccurate, and offensive to many.*

***First Peoples*** *refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada, as well as indigenous peoples around the world.*

***Métis:*** *a person of French and Aboriginal ancestry belonging to or descended from the people who established themselves in the Red, Assiniboine, and Saskatchewan river valleys during the nineteenth century, forming a cultural group distinct from both European and Aboriginal peoples. The Métis were originally based around fur trade culture, when French and Scottish traders married First Nations women in the communities they traded with. The Métis created their own communities and cultural practices, distinct from that of the First Nations. This term has also come to mean anyone with First Nations mixed ancestry who self-identifies as Métis.*

***Inuit:*** *Aboriginal peoples whose origins are different from people known as “North American Indians.” The Inuit generally live in northern Canada and Alaska. Inuit has, in recent years, replaced the term Eskimo.*

***Indian:*** *a term used historically to describe the first inhabitants of North and South America and used to define indigenous people under the Indian Act. The term has generally been replaced by Aboriginal peoples, as defined in the Constitution Act of 1982.*

**Boarding School**

Not to be confused with private boarding schools of Great Britain and other countries. Boarding schools, first mentioned officially in the Indian Act in 1894, were residential institutions built on a reserve to serve the students of the local community. One government official writing in 1897 described them as “an advance on Reservation Day schools, where children could be removed from home influences and have the benefit of civilized surroundings without being taken away from their parents’ sight” (Indian Affairs RG 10 v6039 f 160-1-1 p 40-41). They generally received less funding than Industrial schools ($60 per student compared with $72 for industrial schools in 1897). Boarding schools ceased to exist in practical purposes in 1920, when all schools were termed Indian Residential Schools, although the term continued to exist in the Indian Act until 1951.

**Day School**

A school located in a reserve community, similar to a public school. Children lived at home with their families. At first local schools were established by church missionaries. Eventually, they were included in the Indian Act and funded by the federal government. They continued to by run by churches until the 1950s, when the Department of Indian Affairs became responsible for their operation. Indian Day Schools continued into the 1970s, until they became band run schools or were incorporated into a nearby provincial school district.

**Department of Indian Affairs (DIA)**

For most of the last 150 years, the branch of the federal government responsible for Status Indians was called the Department of Indian Affairs. It moved to different ministries from time to time. From 1873 Indian matters were part of the Department of the Interior. In 1880 the Department of Indian Affairs was created as a separate branch under the Department of the Interior, and the Minister of the Interior was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. In 1936 it was moved to the Department of Mines and Resources. In 1949 moved the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In 1965 it became its own ministry, called Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). This later became Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). In 2011 the department’s name was changed to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).

**Indian Act**

The Indian Act is the body of laws that relate only to Canadians who are recognized as Registered Indians. Since its creation in 1876, it has controlled many aspects of economic, cultural, educational and personal lives of First Nations people. However, it is still the only government document that recognizes the special status of First Nations peoples and com- munities. It allows for certain rights including health services, education, subsidized housing and exemption from taxes in certain situations, but all in exchange for land and other rights. Many of the earlier restrictive sections of the act, such as the Potlatch ban and not being allowed to vote, have been removed, but there are still many active and archaic clauses that continue to govern lives of First Nations people.

**Indian Agency**

An administrative unit of the Department of Indian Affairs. Each province was divided into regions called agencies, usually based on geographical and linguistic groupings. Each agency had an Indian Agent who was responsible for the status Indians within that agency. The number and location of agencies changed over time.

**Indian Agent**

The Indian Agent was the local representative of the Federal Government and the Department of Indian Affairs, and was responsible for administering the Indian Act on the re- serves in his jurisdiction. Agents held a great deal of power in the daily lives of First Nations people, and approved or vetoed any actions of band councils. Most details of what might be considered municipal governance had to pass through the Indian Agent. Any items funded by the department, such as sidewalks or school supplies had to be ordered through the agent. In some agencies people could not leave their reserve without a permit from the Indian Agent. Some agents tried to be proactive for the First Nations in their agencies, as far as the Indian Act allowed. Much depended on the character and beliefs of the individual agents; some were more enlightened than others.

**Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement**

This legally binding agreement reached through the courts in 2005 was the impetus for sub- sequent actions, including financial compensation for survivors, the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and money dedicated specifically to the healing process. It came about as the result of the Government of Canada facing an overwhelming number of court cases seeking and awarding financial compensation for survivors. Following the Agreement in Principal, which was signed in November 2005, a lengthy judicial process followed in which nine provincial and territorial courts held separate hearings to certify the class action suit in their jurisdictions, and approve the final settlement.

**Industrial School**

An Industrial school was an early form of residential school. It was based on the British Industrial Schools, which were established in the mid 19th century to deal with poor, neglected or delinquent children and teach them a practical trade. It combined the Victorian values of social improvement and productive labour, as well as the abiding goal of Christianity and civilization for Aboriginal children. The term was dropped in 1920 when all schools where First Nations students were housed were termed Indian Residential Schools (although the term Industrial school persisted in the Indian Act until 1951.)

**Intergenerational Legacy**

The lasting effects of Indian Residential Schools that are passed on from one generation to the next. Even though people may not have attended residential schools, they can still be impacted through the experiences of their parents and grandparents who attended an Indian Residential School. These intergenerational legacies can include loss of language and culture, disrupted parenting skills, or cycles of abuse.

**Reserve**

A Reserve, as defined by the Indian Act, is “a tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band.” Generally a First Nations Band has a number of parcels of land associated with it. The main community is established on one of the reserves, and the resources of other reserve lands may be used by the First Nation. For example, many First Nations have fishing sites that have been set aside as reserves. In general, federal law, not provincial, applies to reserve lands. They were generally selected by government officials, usually with little consultation, from the traditional territories of each Band. Note that in the United States the term “reservation” is used, while in Canada the term is “reserve.”

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2008. Thousands of survivors, their families and others across Canada made statements to document memories of the schools and their impacts. An Interim Report was released in 2012. The Final Report was delivered in 2015 including 94 recommendations for future action. The statements, documents and other materials are housed at the National Research Centre on Indian Residential Schools at the University of Winnipeg, where the work of the Commission will be carried on.