

Colonialism occurs when a country or a nation takes control of other lands, regions, or territories outside of its borders (boundaries of the country) by turning those other lands, regions, or territories into a colony. Usually, it is a more powerful, richer country that takes control of a smaller, less powerful region or territory. Sometimes the words "colonialism" and "imperialism" are used to mean the same thing.

In the 1700s and 1800s, many of the richer, more powerful European countries (such as Britain, France, Spain, and the Netherlands) established colonies in the continents of Africa, South America, and the Caribbean.

Some countries use colonialism to get more land for their people to live in. They helped settlers move to the new area. The local people living in the land or territories were usually moved away by using force and violence from armies. To protect these settlers from the local residents who were pushed aside, colonial nations often set up a military fort or colonial police system.

Other countries use colonialism to get more land so that they can use the land for farming or to extract (take out) resources such as trees (wood), coal, or metals, or to create a local government or military fort.

Other countries use colonialism so that they can get workers from the poorer country to work in factories or farms (either in the richer country, or in the poorer country). In the past, powerful countries that were colonizing poorer countries or regions often forced the people from the poorer countries to work as slaves.

here are several different types of colonialism. Some countries that expanded their territory made **Settler colonies**. Some countries that started out as settler colonies include the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina. In all of these countries, people from European countries moved to the best parts of the new region, and forced the indigenous peoples(such as Indians, Maori, etc.) to move. When the local people or tribes had to move, it caused a lot of problems.

In some regions which were colonized, the settlers married the local people and had children with them. An example is Canada, where a new people called the Metis came from the marriages of the settlers and the local tribes. In other regions which were colonized, the settlers and the local people lived in separate areas, without living together or marrying.

Government legislation on Indians was all aimed at **assimilation**. In the nineteenth century, the goal of government was to make Canada's native cultures disappear. It was expected that native people would be assimilated, meaning that they would give up their own culture, languages, and beliefs, and live and act just like the British settlers.

But Canada's First Peoples had no intention of giving up their culture, or of dying out.

The 1857 "Civilization of Indian Tribes Act", enacted by the British colonial government, declared that Indians who were "sufficiently advanced education wise or capable of managing their own affairs" would be enfranchised, i.e. given the vote. That law was the first of many seeking to encourage First Nation's People to relinquish their land, language, culture and existing rights in exchange for full British/Canadian citizenship. The law basically said that if an Indian man learned to read and signed a pledge to "live as a white" he was allowed to vote, own property, and serve on juries. But, he would lose all his Aboriginal rights. Very few First Nations "took advantage" of the act and most saw it as an attempt to strip them of their remaining land base

The Indian Act

The Indian Act has controlled most aspects of "Indian's" lives for the past 150 years. The Indian Act is Canadian Federal Law that governs all matters pertaining to Status Indians, bands, and reserves. It has been very paternalistic as it authorizes the Canadian Government to regulate the day to day lives of registered Indians and reserve communities. The Indian Act has a long history of assimilation practices that were aimed at terminating cultural, social, economic and political distinctiveness of First Nations by absorbing them into mainstream society.

Under the Indian Act of 1876 the following laws were in place for "Indians":

1. Introduction of Residential Schools
2. Denied Women to vote in Reserve matters
3. Created Reserves where First Nations could be civilized before assimilating into society
4. Renamed individuals with European names
5. Permission was needed to from the Indian Agent was needed to leave Reserves
6. Voluntary Enfranchisement- based on the assumption that Aboriginal people would be willing to surrender their legal and ancestral identities for the "privilege" of gaining full Canadian citizenship and assimilating into Canadian society.
7. Enforced Enfranchisement of First Nations admitted to University (*Enfranchisement is a legal process for terminating a person's Indian status and conferring full Canadian citizenship. Enfranchisement was a key feature of the Canadian federal government's assimilation policies.*)
8. Government could expropriate sections of Reserves
9. Government could lease out parts of Reserve Lands
10. Forbade First Nations from forming political organizations
11. Denied First Nations legal land claims
12. Prohibited the sale of alcohol to First Nations
13. Prohibited the sale of ammunition to First Nations
14. Prohibited pool halls
15. Imposed band council system
16. Forbade First Nations from speaking in their native tongue
17. Forbade First Nation Religion
18. Forbade wearing of Traditional Regalia
19. Potlatch and cultural ceremonies were illegal
20. Denied First Nations the right to vote

Assignment

To show how the Canadian Government sought to use policies to assimilate "Indians" into Canadian society. Chose 5 of the above points that were part of the Indian Act and explain in a paragraph how each policy was to help Canada meet its' goal of assimilating First Nations.