

# 8

## The Canadian Identity: One, Two, or Many Nations?

### FOCUS ON

- How did French–English relations shape Canadian identity in the second half of the twentieth century?
- How has immigration shaped the Canadian identity since World War II?
- What constitutional changes occurred during the 1980s and 1990s?
- How did Aboriginal peoples contribute to Canadian culture in the late twentieth century?

### Counterpoints Issue

- Does Canada need a multiculturalism policy?



**I**n the decades following World War II, various groups in Canada became concerned about their identity and their role within the nation. This painting, *Unity Rally III, Montreal* by Evangeline Murray, focusses on French–English relations, but Aboriginal concerns and multiculturalism also became important issues.



**Expressing ideas** From the title, explain what is happening in this painting. What is the significance of the flags? What impression is given by the balloons?

## Introduction

During the night of March 7, 1963, three Canadian army buildings in Montreal were bombed with Molotov cocktails (homemade fire-bombs). The mysterious letters "FLQ" were painted on the walls. The next day, a document from an organization claiming responsibility for the bombings was delivered to the news media:

The Front de libération du Québec is a revolutionary movement of volunteers ready to die for the political and economic independence of Quebec.

The suicide-commandos of the FLQ have as their principal mission the complete destruction, by systematic sabotage of:

all colonial [federal] symbols and institutions, in particular the RCMP and the armed forces; ...

all commercial establishments and enterprises which practise discrimination against Quebecers, which do not use French as the first language, which advertises in the colonial language [English];

all plants and factories which discriminate against French-speaking workers.

... INDEPENDENCE OR DEATH

The age of terrorism had arrived in Canada.

How did this new crisis emerge? What had happened between English- and French-Canadians to make the relationship so strained? How could the crisis be resolved?

In this chapter, you will learn about the impact of Quebec nationalism in the latter part of the twentieth century. You will also see how growing multiculturalism and the struggle of Aboriginal peoples for their rights changed the nation.

## The Roots of Quebec Nationalism

### The Duplessis Era

From 1936 to 1939, and again from 1944 to 1959, Quebec was controlled by Premier Maurice Duplessis and his party, the Union Nationale. Duplessis was a strong Quebec nationalist who was devoted to the idea of Quebec as a distinctive

- 1960 Quiet Revolution begins in Quebec.
- 1965 Canada's maple leaf flag flies for first time.
- 1967 Canadian immigration policy becomes officially "colour-blind."
- 1968 National Indian Brotherhood formed.
- 1970 FLQ crisis in Quebec leads Prime Minister Trudeau to invoke War Measures Act.
- 1971 Federal government introduces multiculturalism policy.
- 1980 Quebec holds a referendum on sovereignty-association.
- 1982 Constitution patriated without Quebec's agreement.
- 1990s Asian countries become major sources of immigration.
- 1990 Meech Lake Accord dies.
- 1992 Charlottetown Accord rejected in referendum.
- 1993 B.C. Treaty Commission established.
- 1995 Second referendum on Quebec sovereignty is held.
- 1999 Nunavut created.
- 2000 Nisga'a Treaty given royal assent.

society, a "nation" rather than just another Canadian province. To emphasize his province's difference from English-speaking Canada, he introduced a new flag for Quebec bearing the French symbol, the *fleur-de-lis*. He fiercely opposed the growing powers of the federal government in the post-war years.

Under Duplessis, the Roman Catholic Church was the main defender of Quebec culture. Priests urged people in Quebec to turn their backs on the materialism of English-speaking North America. The Church praised the old Quebec traditions of farm, faith, and family. It ran Quebec's hospitals and schools, where most children received only a basic education. Religion played a role in every part of the curriculum, and the schools taught children to accept authority. The elite few who attended high school and university received a fine education, but the emphasis was on traditional subjects such as classical

**Figure 8-1** Duplessis associated labour unions with communism, and he did not hesitate to call in the provincial police to crush strikes. This photograph was taken in 1949 during a strike by Quebec asbestos miners.

**Using evidence** What do you think is happening in this photograph? Who do you think these men are? Give reasons for your view.



languages and philosophy. As a result, Quebec produced many priests, lawyers, and politicians but few scientists, engineers, or business people.

While Duplessis tried to keep out the influence of foreign culture, he encouraged foreign investment in Quebec. Businesses and industries from Ontario and the United States were attracted by what Quebec had to offer. The province guaranteed cheap labour, since union activity was either discouraged or banned. It also promised low taxes. Quebec would benefit from the new investment, but so would Duplessis. In return for favourable business conditions, companies were expected to contribute generously to the Union Nationale. Bribery and corruption became the trademarks of the Duplessis regime. In return for government jobs or licences, businesses were expected to give “kickbacks” or gifts to the Union Nationale.

## The Quiet Revolution

In 1960, after Duplessis died, Jean Lesage and the Liberals came to power with an election slogan that announced it was “Time for a change.” Once in power, Lesage’s first step was to stamp

out corruption. Government jobs and contracts were now awarded according to merit. Wages and pensions were raised, and restrictions on trade unionism were removed.

The government also began a peaceful but dramatic movement to modernize the province’s economy, politics, education, and culture. It took control of social services and the education system. Students were now required to take more science and technology courses to prepare them for the new Quebec. Above all, Quebecers were encouraged to think of themselves as citizens of the twentieth century. As new attitudes began to take hold, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church declined. This wave of change became known as the Quiet Revolution, and it transformed the face of Quebec.

In the 1962 election, the Liberals went one step further. They campaigned, and won, with the motto *Maîtres chez nous*, “Masters in our own house.” The aim now would be to strengthen Quebec’s control of its own economy. Among other steps, the government nationalized (bought out) several hydro companies and turned them into a large, provincially owned power monopoly, Hydro Québec.



**Figure 8-2** A Canadian Army engineer lies injured in Montreal after an FLQ bomb, which he had removed from a mail box, exploded in his hands. On May 17, 1963, a total of seventeen bombs were placed in mail boxes in the Montreal suburb of Westmount.

## The Birth of Separatism

As Francophone Quebecers became proud of their achievements, they became angrier at what they perceived as injustices at the hands of English-speaking Canadians. Why was Ottawa, the national capital, so overwhelmingly English-speaking? Why did federal politicians from Quebec seldom hold key Cabinet posts? Why did French-Canadians not have the right to their own schools and hospitals in the rest of Canada, even though English-Canadians enjoyed those rights in Quebec? And why was Quebec's Francophone majority expected to speak English in stores or at work?

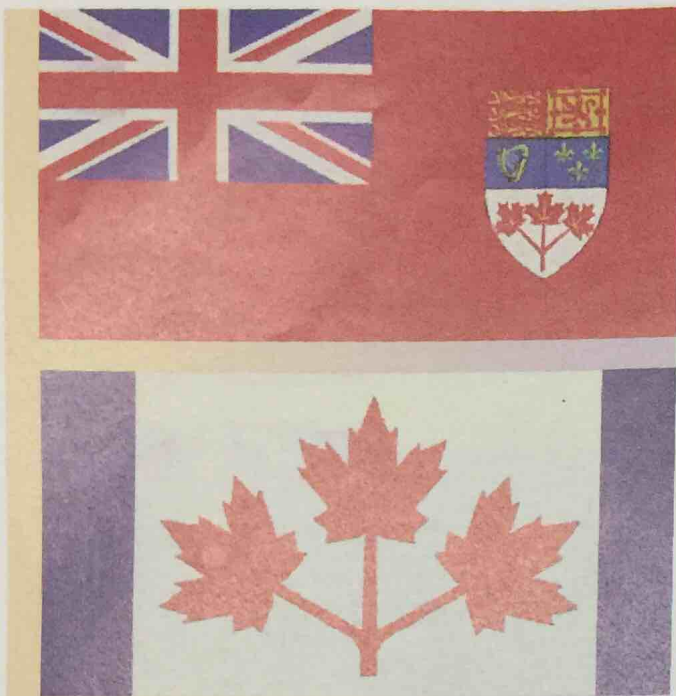
For some, the only solution lay in a Quebec controlled entirely by Quebecers—in separation from Canada. Some young radicals with extreme views joined terrorist groups such as the FLQ (Front de libération du Québec) and fought in the name of *le Québec libre*—a “free” Quebec. As you read in the introduction to this chapter, these groups used firebombs and explosives to attack symbols of English-Canadian power in Quebec. For example, in the early 1960s, Royal Mail boxes and downtown office towers belonging to Canadian National Railways were attacked.

While most Quebec nationalists disapproved of such tactics, there were signs of general discontent in the province. In 1967, the influential Quebec cabinet minister René Lévesque left the Liberal Party and, a year later, formed the Parti Québécois (PQ). Lévesque believed that Quebec and Canada would do better to divorce peacefully than to continue a marriage of two cultures that, to many Quebecers, was no longer workable.

## Ottawa's Response

Lester Pearson became prime minister in the midst of the Quiet Revolution. He was convinced that Canada would face a grave crisis unless the French were made to feel more at home in Canada. He appointed the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (the “Bi and Bi Commission”) to investigate some solutions. The commission recommended that Canada should become officially bilingual.

In 1964, Pearson acted on a long-standing complaint in Quebec that Canada's symbols were too British. He suggested that Canada should have a new flag to replace those in use—the British Union Jack and the Red Ensign, which had the



**Figure 8-3** Diefenbaker and the Conservatives wanted to keep the old Red Ensign (top), with its traditional links to Britain, while the Liberals favoured a design using the three maple leaves of the Canadian coat of arms (bottom).

**Expressing ideas** Compare these two flags with the flag that was finally chosen. Consider the use of symbols and colour. Which of the three flags do you think is best, and why?

Union Jack in the upper corner. Pearson chose the maple leaf as a symbol for the new flag because it seemed to represent all Canadians. Unfortunately, rather than bringing Canadians closer together, the new flag increased the tensions between French and English Canada.

Many Canadians opposed any new flag because they felt that Pearson was pandering to Quebec. An emotional debate split the country. Finally, after hundreds of suggestions from across Canada, the red-and-white maple leaf design was chosen. On February 15, 1965, Canada's new flag was raised on Parliament Hill for the first time. Ironically, English-Canadians have come to regard the flag with pride and affection, while people from Quebec, disillusioned by the bitter debate, continued to fly primarily the *fleur-de-lis*.

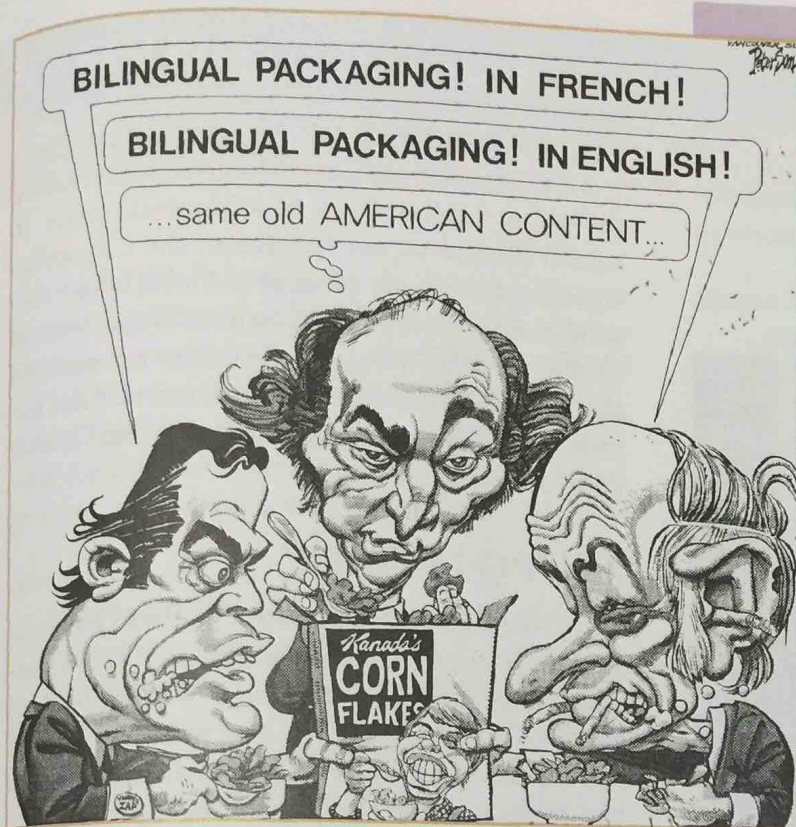
## ACTIVITIES

1. The Duplessis era is sometimes referred to as "The Great Darkness." Would you agree or disagree with this assessment? Explain.
2. During the Duplessis years, why did many Quebec Francophones feel victimized by Anglophones as well as by their own government?
  3. a) Make a chart contrasting Maurice Duplessis's and Jean Lesage's approaches to governing Quebec.
  - b) Did the changes brought by Lesage really amount to a revolution? Support your answer with evidence from your chart.
4. a) Describe the aims of the FLQ. Check the extract in the introduction as well as the text above.
- b) Had you lived in Quebec in the 1960s, how do you think you would have reacted to the FLQ? Write a letter to the editor explaining your view.
5. a) Why did Prime Minister Pearson believe a new flag was necessary?
- b) How important do you think a flag is in asserting identity? Should it be a criminal act to show disrespect to a flag? Discuss your views with the class.

## Trudeau and Quebec

When Pierre Trudeau succeeded Pearson as prime minister in 1968, he was determined that the federal government should do more to persuade people from Quebec that their future lay with Canada. In 1969, he acted on the advice of the "Bi and Bi Commission." His government passed the Official Languages Act, making Canada an officially bilingual country. Now, all federal government agencies across the country were required to provide services in both languages. English-speaking civil servants had to take French-language training courses, and more French-Canadians were appointed to senior federal government positions. Trudeau also called on all Canadians, especially young people, to increase their understanding of the other national culture.

Trudeau's moves met with mixed reviews. Many Canadians embraced the idea of bilingual-



**Figure 8-4** This 1976 cartoon shows B.C. Premier Bill Vander Zalm, Prime Minister Trudeau, and Quebec Premier René Lévesque. Many people in British Columbia, farthest from Quebec geographically, opposed the Official Languages Act.

**Interpreting a cartoon** What is happening in the cartoon? What does this cartoon say about western Canada's reaction to bilingualism? About regionalism in Canada? About Pierre Trudeau's views?

ism with enthusiasm and enrolled their children in French immersion classes. But others, western Canadians especially, felt that the federal government was forcing French on them. Some also believed that Ottawa was focussing all its attention on Quebec, while the West and its concerns were largely ignored. Francophones in Quebec were also unimpressed. Trudeau was not doing enough, they felt. They wanted “special status” for Quebec in Confederation. Trudeau, however, insisted that Quebec was a province just like any of the others.

## The October Crisis

In October 1970, events in Quebec made headlines across the nation and around the world. On October 5, members of the FLQ kidnapped James Cross, a British diplomat, from his Montreal home. In exchange for Cross's safe release, the FLQ made several demands, including the release of FLQ members serving prison sentences for previous criminal acts.

While both federal and Quebec authorities agreed to most of the demands, they refused to release any FLQ prisoners from jail. In response, on October 10, the FLQ kidnapped Quebec labour minister Pierre Laporte. Alarmed that the situation in Quebec was getting out of control, Trudeau decided to take drastic action.

Claiming that Quebec was on the verge of a violent revolution, Trudeau asked Parliament to impose the War Measures Act. This sweeping piece of legislation had only ever been used during the two world wars. Under the act, civil rights were suspended. Anyone could be arrested and detained without being charged with an offence. Membership in the FLQ became a crime. When asked by a reporter just how far he would go to defeat the FLQ, Trudeau brushed aside concerns about the measures he was taking and replied, “Just watch me.”

On October 16, federal troops were sent in to patrol the streets of Ottawa and Montreal. Hundreds of pro-separatist Quebecers were arrested and held without charge. While critics both

inside and outside Parliament questioned the wisdom of these moves, Trudeau stated such action was necessary in order to combat FLQ terrorism and help free the hostages unharmed.

One day later, police made a horrifying discovery: they found the body of Pierre Laporte in

the trunk of a car. He had been strangled. His murder shocked Canadians and increased the pressure on the government to crack down on the FLQ and find the remaining hostage, James Cross.

Two months later, the Montreal police tracked the group holding Cross in a Montreal house. In return for the captive's release, the kidnappers were permitted safe passage to Cuba, where they would be granted political asylum. Those detained under the War Measures Act were released. Of the 450 people held in detention under the act, only twenty-five were ever charged. The October crisis was over.



**Figure 8-5** Soldiers with semi-automatic rifles patrol the streets of Montreal.

**Expressing ideas** How do you think you might have reacted to this image in 1970?

## The PQ in Power

In 1976, Quebec voters chose the Parti Québécois as their next provincial government. It was a stunning victory for René Lévesque and his party. In the 1970 election, the PQ had won only seven of the 110 seats in the provincial legislature. During the 1976 election campaign, Lévesque had reassured Quebecers that a vote for the PQ would not automatically mean separation. He promised that he would hold a province-wide referendum before making any moves towards independence. With this reassurance, Quebecers had voted in, for the first time, a party dedicated to the ultimate goal of separation from Canada.

The top priority of the new government was strengthening the status of the French language. Shortly after taking office, the PQ government

**Figure 8-6** Quebec Premier René Lévesque hushes supporters at a PQ rally following his party's victory over the Liberal party of Robert Bourassa in the provincial election.



# building your skills

## Assessing Viewpoints

The use of the War Measures Act by Prime Minister Trudeau remains controversial. Was he justified in invoking such powerful legislation?

The following four documents give different points of view. Read the documents. For each, identify who made the statement, the circumstances under which the statement was made, and what position was taken.

### Source 1

The kidnapping in broad daylight of a Quebec cabinet minister [Laporte] in front of his own ... residence had a dramatic effect on [the government's] view of the crisis we were facing. We began to believe that perhaps the FLQ was not just a bunch of pamphlet-waving, bomb-planting zealots after all; perhaps they were in fact members of a powerful network capable of endangering public safety, and of bringing other fringe groups—of which there were a large number at the time—into the picture, which would lead to untold violence. If all these groups coalesced [came together], the crisis could go on for a very long time, with tragic consequences for the entire country.

Source: Pierre Trudeau, *Memoirs* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 136.

### Source 2

...[T]he list of people arrested, without warrant, on the strength of suspicions, prejudice, or pure idiocy, exceeded the incredible number of four hundred.... Deprived of all their rights, beginning with habeas corpus [see Chapter 2], a great many of them were to remain in custody for days and weeks. As much as, if not more than in 1917, when there was at least the excuse ... of a real world war, the whole of Quebec found itself behind bars as Trudeau and company now attempted to justify their act before Parliament, the existence of which they seemed just to have remembered.

Source: René Lévesque, *Memoirs* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), 247.

### Source 3

...[T]here were no fine distinctions drawn between separatism and terrorism in the general round-up in October 1970.... After the crisis had passed, rather than issuing an apology for such overzealous police work, the Prime Minister boasted that separatism was "dead." Other ... Liberals agreed: the FLQ crisis had been an opportunity to "smash separatism" and the government had taken it.

Source: J.L. Finlay and D.N. Sprague, *The Structure of Canadian History* (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 1984), 444.

### Source 4

As for the objection that Trudeau was acting to squash separatism and ... the Parti Québécois, we have the statements of both the Prime Minister and one of his supporters ... during the crisis. On October 17, [Bryce] Mackasey stressed to the House of Commons that the Parti Québécois was "a legitimate political party. It wants to bring an end to this country through democratic means, but that is the privilege of that party." Trudeau ... made the same point in November to an interviewer.

Source: Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 394.

## Applying the Skill

1. Are these documents primary sources or secondary sources? Explain in each case.
2. Summarize each document's main argument.
3. Which documents support Lévesque's claims?
4. Which documents do you consider to be the most credible sources? Justify your choice.
5. Write one or two paragraphs giving your view on whether the use of the War Measures Act was justified. Support your view with details from the text and the documents above.



passed Bill 101, sometimes referred to the “Charter of the French Language.” This law made French the only official language of the province. Quebec government employees had to work in French. Commercial outdoor signs would have to be in French only, and children of immigrants would be required to attend French rather than English schools.

Francophone Quebecers welcomed the language law. Many felt their culture and language were endangered. The birth rate in Quebec had fallen to its lowest level in history, and while immigration had increased, most new immigrants preferred to educate their children in English. To non-Francophone Quebecers, however, Bill 101 was a symbol of oppression. In the rest of Canada, as well, many people felt that the PQ’s policies were too extreme. They looked to the federal government to stand up to the separatist challenge and find a way to preserve Canadian unity.

## The 1980 Referendum

In 1980, the Lévesque government called a referendum, as promised, to determine Quebec’s political future. Lévesque asked Quebecers to vote

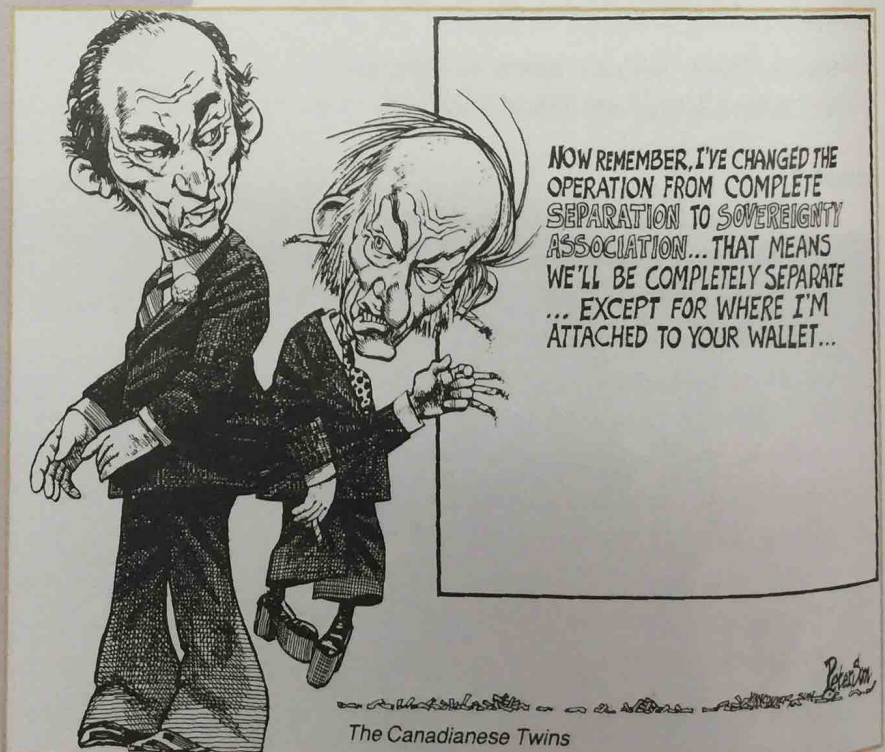
“yes” to giving his government a mandate to negotiate a new agreement with Canada based on **sovereignty-association**. He proposed that Quebec become politically independent, yet maintain a close economic association with Canada. At rally after rally, Lévesque inspired his listeners to seize the opportunity to become “*maîtres chez nous*.”

Prime Minister Trudeau also made impassioned speeches urging the people of Quebec to remain part of a strong, united, and forward-looking Canada. During the campaign, Trudeau promised to negotiate a new Constitution should the “no” side win. This promise proved popular among Quebecers. They wanted a Constitution that recognized Quebec as an equal partner in Confederation and as a distinct society within Canada. Trudeau’s promise helped to swing many Quebec votes to the “no” camp.

In the referendum, 40 per cent of Quebecers voted “yes” to sovereignty-association; 60 per cent voted “no.” In front of thousands of distraught supporters, a visibly upset René Lévesque accepted defeat. Yet, he also promised his followers that their dream of a sovereign Quebec would triumph one day.

**Figure 8-7** This cartoon showing Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Lévesque offers one view of sovereignty-association.

**Interpreting a cartoon** According to the cartoonist, how did sovereignty-association differ from separation? What was this cartoonist’s view of Lévesque? How do you know?



## Patriating the Constitution

True to his word, Trudeau announced plans to revise Canada's Constitution. The British North America (BNA) Act had been Canada's Constitution since 1867. The act set out the powers of the federal and provincial governments and guaranteed the language and education rights of Quebec's French-speaking majority. Since the BNA Act fell under British jurisdiction, no changes could be made without the British Parliament's approval.

Trudeau wanted to patriate the Constitution (bring it home to Canada), where the Canadian government would have the authority to make changes. Trudeau wanted this authority because he hoped, above all, to include a Charter of Rights

and Freedoms, a clear statement of the basic rights to which all Canadians were entitled. Before he could make any changes, however, he had to have the approval of the provinces.

As a first step, Trudeau needed to come up with an **amending formula**. How many provinces would have to be in agreement for a change in the Constitution to be made? Should Quebec, as the French-speaking partner in Confederation, be given veto power? These were difficult issues to resolve. Quebec was not the only province pushing for more power; the western provinces also saw this as an opportunity to have more say over affairs that affected them. Furthermore, most of the provincial premiers were opposed to the Charter. In English-speaking Canada, premiers



**Figure 8-8** Queen Elizabeth II arrives at Parliament to sign Canada's new Constitution Act, April 17, 1982.

**Using evidence** From this photograph, what would you say was the mood of the occasion?

felt that the Charter would make the courts more powerful than their legislatures. In Quebec, Lévesque feared that the Charter could be used to override his language laws—or any other legislation that might be passed to protect Quebec's distinct society.

A series of meetings failed to resolve these issues. In a last-ditch attempt to reach agreement, the prime minister and the ten premiers met in Ottawa on November 4, 1981. Over late-night cups of coffee in the kitchen of the National Conference Centre, federal Justice Minister Jean Chrétien and the justice ministers from Saskatchewan and Ontario hammered out what came to be called the "Kitchen Compromise." Nine of the ten provincial premiers were awakened in their rooms at the Château Laurier Hotel and asked to approve the deal.

The premiers agreed to accept the Charter if an escape clause were added. This was the "**notwithstanding clause**," which allowed the federal government or any of the provinces to opt out of some of the clauses in the Charter. This meant that a provincial law that was contrary to a specific Charter guarantee could be passed, despite anything the Charter contains (see also Chapter 12). An agreement on the amending formula was also reached. Changes to the Constitution could be made only with the agreement of "seven out of ten provinces representing 50 per cent of Canada's population." This meant, in effect, that Quebec could be excluded as long as Ontario was included.

Only René Lévesque, who was staying at another hotel, was not included in the Kitchen Compromise. The next day, he argued against the deal. Nevertheless, Trudeau accepted the compromise. He maintained that the federal government had so many members from Quebec that it could speak for that province. Lévesque and the people of Quebec felt betrayed. They believed that the federal government and the English-speaking premiers had ganged up on Lévesque in order to deny Quebec recognition of its distinct status. The Quebec provincial government refused to sign the proposed new Constitution.

Without Quebec's agreement, Trudeau went ahead. On April 17, 1982, the new Constitution

Act was signed into law by Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Trudeau outside the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. The Canadian Constitution had officially come home. The last step towards making Canada a completely independent nation had been taken. As the rest of Canada celebrated, flags in Quebec flew at half-mast, and Premier Lévesque led an angry demonstration through the streets of Quebec City.

The last step towards making Canada a completely independent nation had been taken. But the process had revealed cracks in national unity that would continue to trouble Canadians in the years that followed.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Do you think the Official Languages Act was an effective way to address dissatisfaction in Quebec? Explain.
2. Make a timeline of events during the October crisis. Identify events that you think were most significant. Give reasons for your choices.
3. In Quebec elections, the Parti Québécois won 23.5 per cent of votes in 1970, over 30 per cent in 1973, and 41 per cent of votes in the 1976 election. What do you think accounted for these results in each case? Find evidence from the text.
4. Would you describe Lévesque's plan for sovereignty-association as separation from Canada? Why or why not?
5. Explain:
  - a) amending formula
  - b) patriation
  - c) Charter of Rights and Freedoms
  - d) Constitution Act of 1982.
6. Make a chart with two columns: "Attitude to Patriating Constitution" and "Reasons." Complete the chart with information from the text for Trudeau, Quebec, and Other Provinces.
7.
  - a) Do you think Lévesque was betrayed by the Kitchen Compromise? Explain.
  - b) Role-play a conversation between Lévesque and Trudeau on the Kitchen Compromise.

## The Constitution Debate

By 1984, most Canadians outside Quebec felt that the issues of the Constitution and Canadian unity had been settled. Their greatest concern was the worsening economy. Yet, when John Turner, Trudeau's replacement as prime minister, called an election later that year, Brian Mulroney, the leader of the Progressive Conservatives, returned to the issue of the Constitution. To build support from separatists in Quebec during the election campaign, Mulroney promised to repair the damage of 1982 by obtaining Quebec's consent to the Constitution "with honour and enthusiasm."

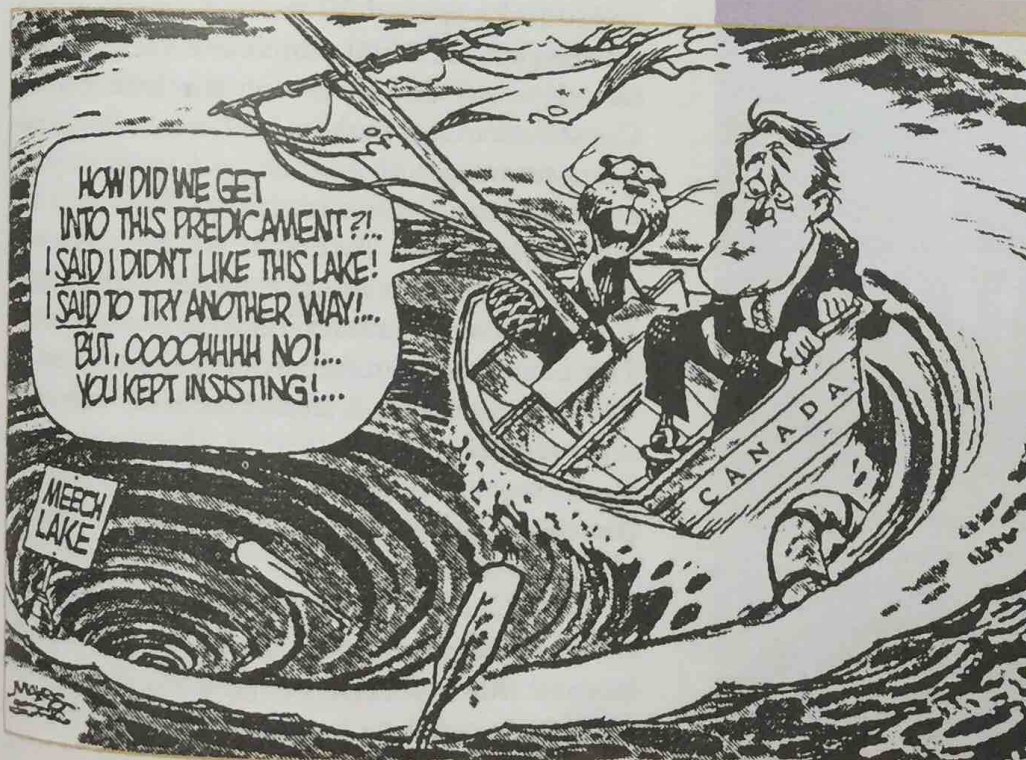
Once elected, Mulroney looked for an opportunity to follow up on his promise. The time seemed right when René Lévesque retired and the pro-federalist Liberal Party, led by Robert Bourassa, took office in Quebec. Mulroney began negotiations. His first priority was to reach an agreement by which Quebec would sign the Constitution, but by now, other provinces had their own demands. For example, Newfoundland and Alberta wanted more control of their own re-

sources—Newfoundland of the fisheries, and Alberta of its oil industries.

Western alienation, which had grown through the oil crisis of the 1970s, had come to a head once again over a government contract to repair air force jets. Ottawa awarded the multibillion-dollar contract to the Bombardier company of Montreal, even though Bristol Aerospace of Winnipeg had made a better proposal. Westerners were outraged. They were convinced that the contract went to Bombardier just to "buy" Conservative votes in Quebec. In response, the Reform Party was formed in 1987 to be the voice of western Canada. As well, both Alberta and Newfoundland demanded reforms to the Senate that would give their provinces a stronger voice in Ottawa. (Senate reform is discussed in Chapter 9.)

## The Meech Lake Accord

In 1987, Prime Minister Mulroney called the premiers to a conference at Meech Lake, where he proposed a package of amendments to the Constitution. Among other provisions, the Meech Lake Accord offered to recognize Quebec as a distinct society. It also proposed giving more power



**Figure 8-9** Some critics thought Mulroney had made a bad mistake in reopening the Constitution debate.

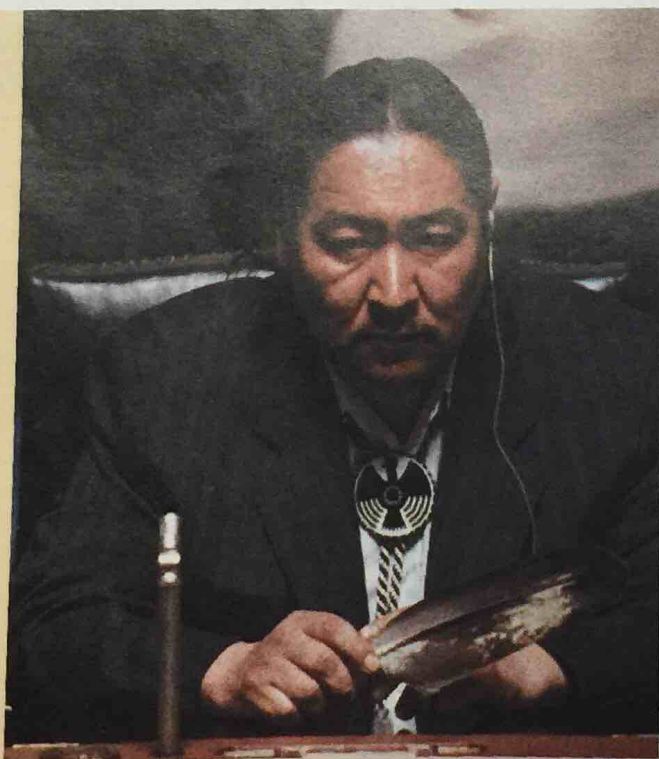
### Interpreting a cartoon

Who are the characters shown in this cartoon? What is happening to them? Do you find this cartoon effective? Explain.

to the other provinces. All provinces, for example, would have the power to veto constitutional change. Quebec supported the accord. Premier Bourassa announced:

The Meech ... Accord is an unprecedented historic attempt to maintain and consolidate the unity of our country, Canada. For Quebecers, Canada is the first choice, and I would like it to remain that way.

However, there were many critics. The most vocal of these was Pierre Trudeau. He argued that the designation of Quebec as a distinct society would create “two solitudes” in Canada. It would, he said, simply isolate the Francophones of Quebec. It would make them less rather than more a part of Confederation. Other critics disliked the “distinct-society” clause. Quebecers



**Figure 8-10** Elijah Harper, a Cree NDP member of the Manitoba legislature, shown here holding an eagle feather for spiritual strength, opposed the Meech Lake Accord because it did not recognize Canada's Aboriginal nations as a distinct society. He started procedural delays that prevented final ratification of the accord by the provincial legislatures.

saw this clause as a way of protecting French culture and language, but opponents worried that it might be used in Quebec to override the Charter and deprive specific groups of their rights. Aboriginal peoples pointed out that they, too, had a distinct society that needed to be recognized and protected. And other critics argued that the citizens of Canada had not been given enough opportunity to have their say on the crucial issue of the Constitution.

Two provinces, Manitoba and Newfoundland, withheld their support; as a result, the Meech Lake Accord disintegrated in June 1990. Quebecers were dismayed. The failure of the accord was seen as a rejection of Quebec itself, even a “humiliation.” By late 1990, support in Quebec for separation had soared to 64 per cent. Lucien Bouchard, a powerful Quebec member of Mulroney's Cabinet, resigned in protest and formed the **Bloc Québécois**. This political party would run in federal elections to support the aim of Quebec separation.

## The Charlottetown Accord

Prime Minister Mulroney believed he had to continue with the Constitution debate. Anxious to avoid previous mistakes, his government appointed a special “Citizen's Forum”—a committee that travelled across the nation to hear the views of Canadians on the future of the Constitution. Eventually, Mulroney and the premiers came up with another package of proposed constitutional amendments. This was the **Charlottetown Accord**, which answered Quebec's concerns in ways similar to the Meech Accord. Now, other interests were also addressed. The Charlottetown Accord proposed reforming the Senate, making it an elected body with equal representation from all parts of the country, as the western provinces wanted. It also supported Aboriginal self-government to draw the support of the First Nations.

The Charlottetown Accord was put to a national referendum in October 1992. Mulroney warned that rejection of the accord would endanger the very future of the nation. Yet, 54.5 per cent of Canadian voters rejected it. The

Charlottetown Accord had so many clauses, each designed to please a different group, that it was easy to find fault.

The greatest opposition was in British Columbia, the fastest-growing province, where 68.3 per cent voted “no.” B.C. voters felt that the accord gave Quebec too much power. They objected particularly to the guarantee that Quebec would always have 25 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons, regardless of the size of its population. Voters in Quebec generally believed that the Charlottetown Accord did not give them enough power because most of the Senate seats had been given up to the West. They also feared Aboriginal self-government, because it would affect a large portion of northern Quebec.

## Referendum of 1995 and After

Angered by events in the Constitution debates, Quebecers again elected the separatist Parti Québécois in the 1994 provincial election. The following year, Premier Jacques Parizeau called a provincial referendum on full sovereignty—the separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada. The “yes” forces reminded Quebecers to remember their “humiliation” in the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord. On the night of October 30, 1995, as the referendum votes were counted, the nation held its breath. When the results were in, 49.4 per cent of Quebecers had voted “yes” to sovereignty; 50.6 per cent had voted “no.”

The vote was so close that the country was in a state of shock. The “no” side had won by a slim margin of just over 1 per cent. In the aftermath of the referendum, some politicians continued to believe that Canada could change the Constitution to satisfy at least some of Quebec’s demands. Others thought it was time to take a hard line with the separatists. By the end of the century, no permanent settlement was clear. Lucien Bouchard became Quebec premier and talked periodically of a new referendum on sovereignty. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien began working on guidelines for a future vote on sovereignty in Quebec. He stressed that, should the province ever opt for sovereignty, the costs for Quebecers would be high.

Following the narrow margin of victory in the 1995 referendum, the federal government moved to ensure that a future referendum would follow a clear process. Prime Minister Chrétien sent the question of how Quebec might separate to the Supreme Court of Canada. Then, he followed up on the court’s ruling with his controversial “clarity bill,” which set down in law, for the first time, Ottawa’s insistence on a clear question in any future referendum and a substantial “yes” majority



**Figure 8-11** People from across Canada took planes, buses, cars, and trains to Montreal to tell the people of Quebec that they wanted them to stay in Canada.

**Using evidence** How does this photograph demonstrate support for the “no” side?

before Quebec's exit from Confederation would be negotiated.

As the century closed, support for separatism appeared to be declining in Quebec. Liberal gains in Quebec in the 2000 federal election and the resignation of Premier Bouchard seemed to support the tough stand towards separation that had been adopted by Prime Minister Chrétien. The new premier of Quebec, Bernard Landry, remains committed to a restructuring of Canadian confederation into something resembling the European Union. The "clarity bill" may soon be tested.

## ACTIVITIES

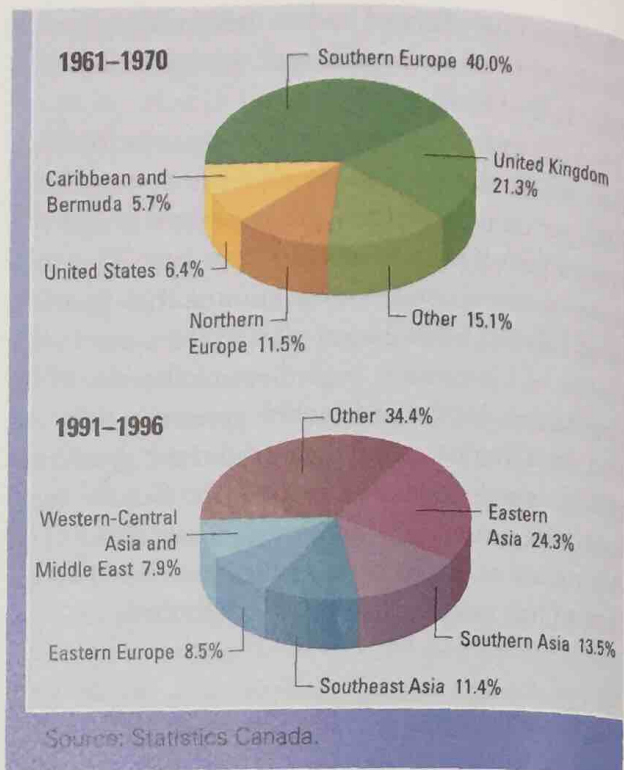
- Why did Brian Mulroney reopen the Constitution debate?
  - Do you think he made a mistake in doing so? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- List the criticisms of the Meech Lake Accord. Why did it fail?
- Why did the Charlottetown Accord fail?
- How did the Quebec referendum of 1995 differ from that of 1980?
- Why did the results of the 1995 Quebec referendum shock the country?

## A Multicultural Nation

As Anglophone and Francophone Canada attempted to define their country's nature, another force was developing that would have an impact on Canadian society: Canada was becoming more multicultural.

### Immigration and Multiculturalism

From the end of World War I until the 1960s, Canada had a somewhat restrictive **immigration policy**. Immigrants of British and European origins, especially northern Europeans, were preferred because it was thought they would adapt the most easily to the Canadian way of life.



**Figure 8-12** Immigration to Canada by country of birth (five leading regions).

**Using evidence** Based on these graphs, find evidence to support the following conclusion: *The sources of Canadian immigration changed almost completely between the two periods shown.*

Immigrants of other origins did arrive, but the government limited their numbers in various ways.

By the 1960s, Canadians had a more open attitude towards people of other cultures and countries. In 1962, new regulations removed most limits on immigrants of Asian, African, and other origins. In 1967, legislation made Canada's immigration policy officially "colour-blind." Since the Canadian economy required people with training and specific skills, immigrants were to be chosen by a point system based on education and employment prospects. National and racial origins were no longer factors.

In 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau also introduced an official policy of **multiculturalism**. Trudeau claimed that the policy would:

... support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our

Birthplace	Toronto* Population	Vancouver* Population
Canada	60.2%	66.5%
Europe	16.2%	10.1%
Asia	14.5%	18.7%
Caribbean and Bermuda	3.5%	0.3%
Central and South America	2.8%	0.9%
Other	2.8%	3.5%

\*These figures refer to the Toronto and Vancouver Census Metropolitan Areas, whose 1996 populations were: Toronto 4.4447 million, Vancouver 1.8914 million.  
Source: Statistics Canada.

**Figure 8-13** Birthplace of populations, Toronto and Vancouver, 1996, by selected regions (in percentages).

**Interpreting statistics** Using information from this table, write two or three sentences comparing and contrasting the composition of the populations of Toronto and Vancouver based on place of birth.

society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expressions and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for us all.

The policy of multiculturalism encouraged the country's different ethnic groups to express their cultures. Multicultural activities were organized across the country. For example, heritage language classes were provided to help children learn the language of their parents. Festivals were held for cultural communities to share their music, dances, foods, games, arts, crafts, and stories. Various programs were designed to make all residents feel at home in Canada, regardless of their origins. These programs were also intended to prevent racism by promoting respect for all cultures.

In 1976, immigration regulations changed again, this time to allow immigration of family members with relatives already in Canada. From the late 1960s on, more allowance was also made for refugees fleeing persecution in their homelands. For example, some 11 000 refugees came to Canada in 1968, after the Soviet Union invaded

Czechoslovakia. In 1972, about 7000 people of Asian background, many of them highly trained, came from Uganda after their country's dictator, Idi Amin, singled them out for ill treatment. During the 1980s, immigration policy especially encouraged immigrants having the money and business skills to create jobs by investing in existing companies or starting new ones.

During the 1980s, Canada became more multicultural than ever before. Figure 8-12 shows how the sources of immigration continued to change into the 1990s. The biggest increase was in immigration from Asian countries. Canada's cities also continued to draw most of the new immigrants and to develop as lively multicultural centres (see Figure 8-13).

## Multiculturalism Becomes an Issue

The federal government recognized the growth of Canada's multicultural communities by establishing the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship in 1988. This department continued to promote multiculturalism in all areas of government policy. Despite these initiatives, however, Canadian attitudes towards multiculturalism were complex. Many Canadians believed that the policy benefited Canada. It allowed people of all ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds to feel welcome here, and to play a positive role in the development of the nation. Supporters say the policy also helped strengthen national unity by drawing all Canadians closer together in mutual respect.

But through the 1980s and 1990s, it became clear that not everyone agreed with this position. Some Canadians argued that the policy of multiculturalism was preventing Canada's communities from developing a common Canadian identity. Canada's model of multiculturalism was like a mosaic, where groups maintained their own identity. It would be better, they said, to follow the "melting-pot" model of the United States, where cultural groups were encouraged to assimilate—that is, to give up their identities and take on the mainstream culture to a greater extent.



As new cultures took root in British Columbia, other issues were raised. For example, traditional Canadian holidays such as Easter and Christmas are rooted in the Christian faith and culture. These holidays presented a challenge for schools with large multicultural populations. One solution was to highlight the festivals of groups represented in sufficient numbers in the school. For example, Chinese New Year, the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and Sikh holy days such as Baisakhi were celebrated in some schools. These festivals offered students a better understanding of the beliefs and customs of Canada's multicultural society.

## ACTIVITIES

1. How did Canadian immigration policies and patterns develop between 1960 and 2000? Present your answer in the form of a timeline or chart.
2. Why did the federal government introduce an official multiculturalism policy in 1971?
3. Do you think the policy has had its intended effect? Support your view with examples.
4. Explain how the Canadian model of a "cultural mosaic" differs from the U.S. model of a "melting pot."
5. Quebec has long pressed for a greater share of immigrants to Canada and a greater say on who can enter. Why do you think this is so?

## counterpoints

### Does Canada Need a Multiculturalism Policy?

Canada's official multiculturalism policy has fierce defenders and critics. Many Canadians believe the policy benefits Canada. They feel multiculturalism plays a positive role in the nation's development, and that it helps create national unity, as Pierre Trudeau claimed it would in 1971. Supporters also feel that multiculturalism gives Canadians an awareness of other cultures, an asset when dealing with problems that may arise in various communities. Furthermore, they say the policy helps promote values such as tolerance, equality, and support of diversity.

Opponents claim that it is not good for the country to promote differences in cultures. They say this approach weakens the country's unity. Some critics feel that ethnic groups should maintain their own cultures in Canada if they wish, but that the government should not provide financial support to these groups—rather, it should support Canadian culture. Critics also point to

countries such as Rwanda and Yugoslavia, where ethnic diversity has ripped communities and families apart.

#### For and Against

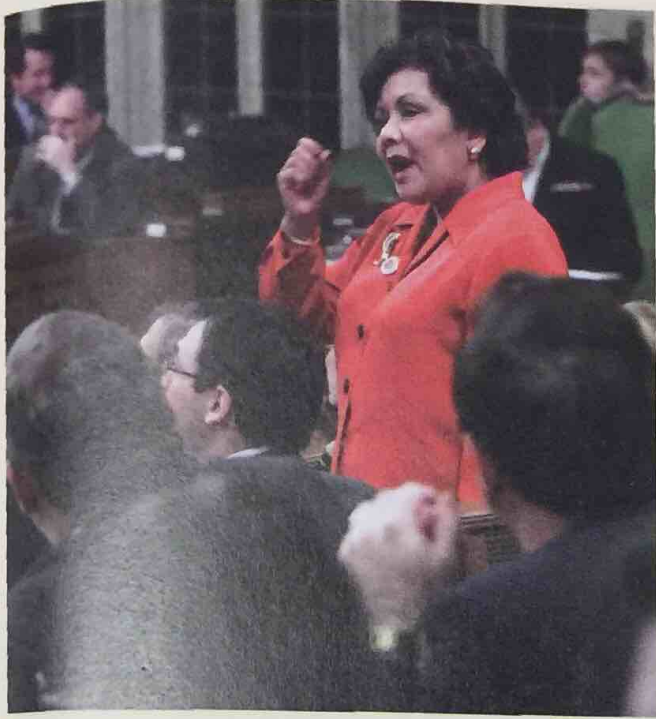
The Honorable Hedy Fry, who is also the member of Parliament for Vancouver Centre and an immigrant to Canada, has expressed the following view:

Multiculturalism is the key to Canadian unity. We must understand that people of different races can have a strong sense of belonging to one nation while maintaining their original cultural identities.... Multiculturalism and respect for our differences are important reasons why this country has been ranked as the best nation in the world by the United Nations.

Source: Gary Engler, "Dr. Fry defends her job and policies." *Vancouver Sun*, November 19, 1997.

Neil Bissoondath, an author and also an immigrant to Canada, has a different view:

Anyone critical of multicultural policy ... is immediately branded a racist. And if one happens to be, as I am, a "person of colour," one is then graced with words such as "sell-out," "traitor" ... from "ethnic" defenders with a stake in the system.... Many are they in this country who fear a serious



**Figure 8-14** Hedy Fry responds to questions in the House of Commons, March 1999.

examination of multiculturalism, its policies and its consequences.

Source: Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Penguin, 1994), 5.

Rais Khan, a University of Winnipeg political science professor and immigrant to Canada, is also critical of the multiculturalism policy:

Immigrants come here to become Canadians; to be productive and contributing members of their chosen society. I am one of them. I did not come here to be labelled as an ethnic or a member of the multicultural community, or to be coddled with preferential treatment, nurtured with special grants, and then to sit on the sidelines and watch the world go by. I came here to be a member of the mainstream of the Canadian society.... I do not desire special consideration; I wish to be treated equally.... Whether or not I preserve my cultural background is my personal choice....

Source: Rais Khan, presentation to the Reform Party, quoted in Preston Manning, *The New Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992), 316–317.

Myrna Kostash, an Alberta author with an Eastern European background, has responded to Neil Bissoondath:

It is precisely the policy of multiculturalism that has brought ethnic minorities out of the so-called ghettos into the mainstream of our public culture....

Bissoondath takes great satisfaction from his successful acculturation into Canada, having arrived some twenty years ago from Trinidad. He spurns identification with the “ethnic bastions” of ex-Trinidadians in Canada. Fair enough. But he should acknowledge the experience of those Canadians for whom multiculturalism emerged after decades of a less salubrious [agreeable] history in a far less culturally accommodating society than the one Bissoondath joined. For a real experience of ghettoization [being kept apart as a group], he should have come to Canada before the Multiculturalism Act....

Source: Myrna Kostash, reviewing Neil Bissoondath’s book *Selling Illusions* in the *Toronto Star*, October 22, 1994, F17.

### **Analysing the Issue**

1. In a group, survey a variety of Canadian newspapers, magazines, and television programs to determine the extent to which they reflect Canada’s multicultural nature. Use a three-column chart to record your findings, according to the media types surveyed. Summarize your findings, and present them to the class.
2. Both Hedy Fry and Neil Bissoondath are from Trinidad. Why do you think their views on multiculturalism differ?
3. Imagine you are the federal minister responsible for multiculturalism. Prepare a speech announcing that you are going to either **a**) continue the policy of multiculturalism or **b**) make changes to it. Justify your decision, taking possible consequences into account.

## Aboriginal Nations

By the latter half of the twentieth century, Canada was becoming a bilingual but multicultural country. Yet, its roots were even more diverse, including the First Nations that were its original residents.

When Aboriginal people living on reserves won the right to vote in 1960, it did little to improve their living conditions. They continued to suffer from serious problems, including poverty, poor health, and inadequate housing and education. For those who left to try their luck in the large cities, life was often worse. Lacking education, job skills, and the ability to adapt to urban life, many faced hostility and discrimination.

By the late 1960s, First Nations were organizing to pressure Ottawa and the provincial governments to deal with the crisis they were facing. The National Indian Brotherhood was formed in 1968 to lobby on behalf of Aboriginal people living on reserves. In response to their growing demands, Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government proposed a policy outlined in the White Paper of 1969. A white paper is a document that a government puts forth for discussion. If it is accepted, it may be passed into law. The 1969 White Paper called for an end to what Trudeau viewed as the overly protective attitude that had previously marked government policy in dealing with Aboriginal peoples.

Trudeau and his Indian Affairs Minister, Jean Chrétien, suggested that Aboriginal peoples should be treated exactly like other citizens. Any special rights they had on the reserves, such as not having to pay income tax, would be abolished. At the same time, more would be done to encourage them to leave the reserves and seek jobs in the cities. In this way, they would become part of mainstream Canadian society. This kind of assimilation would supposedly bring an end to their problems.

Aboriginal people were furious. They saw the White Paper as an attack on their right to maintain their unique identity. Harold Cardinal, an Alberta Cree leader, explained their response:

Ironically, the White Paper concludes by ... calling upon Indian organizations ... to assist [in the process

it recommends].... It is difficult to envision any responsible Indian organization willing to participate in a proposal that promises to take the rights of all Indians away and attempts to ... legislate Indians out of existence. It is a strange government and a strange mentality that would have the gall to ask the Indian to help implement its plan to perpetrate cultural genocide on the Indians of Canada. It is like asking the doomed man on the gallows if he would mind pulling the lever that trips the trap.

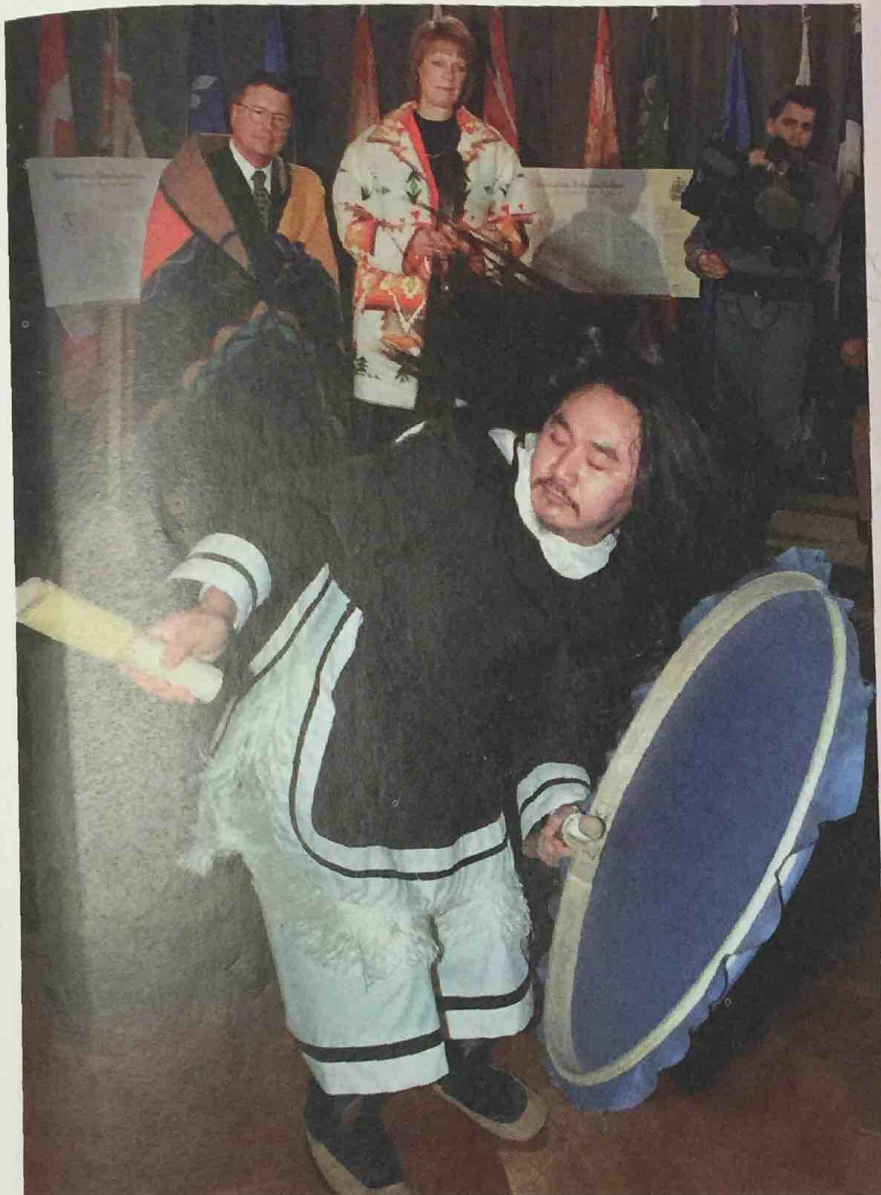
Source: Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999), 137.

The National Indian Brotherhood led the attack on the White Paper. Instead of assimilation into "white" (non-Aboriginal) society, they demanded **self-government** and control over their own affairs. When they presented their paper, called *Citizens Plus*, or the "Red Paper," a surprised Jean Chrétien announced he was shelving the White Paper. However, he offered no new policy in its place.

## Educational Concerns

Gradually, First Nations began to take some control in areas that concerned them most. One of these was education. The system of residential schools was finally abandoned in 1969. In following years, many First Nations took over the education of their children, and "band schools" emerged in various parts of the country. At band schools, Aboriginal children could study their own languages and learn about their own cultures and traditions. However, the lack of secondary schools near the reserves meant that most Aboriginal children were forced to leave home at a much younger age than other Canadian children. As part of a government-run "boarding home program," some high school students were sent to live with families and attend school in cities such as Vancouver and New Westminster, British Columbia. But they were far from home, and loneliness drove some to return before graduating from high school.

Although the residential school system was dismantled, its legacy continued to haunt many who had lived through it. In 1990, a prominent



**Figure 8-15** Phanelie Palluq performs a drum dance in 1999 before Minister of Indian Affairs Jane Stewart and Natural Resources Minister Ralph Goodale at the Ottawa ceremony in which the government offered an apology for the cruel treatment of Aboriginal children in residential schools.

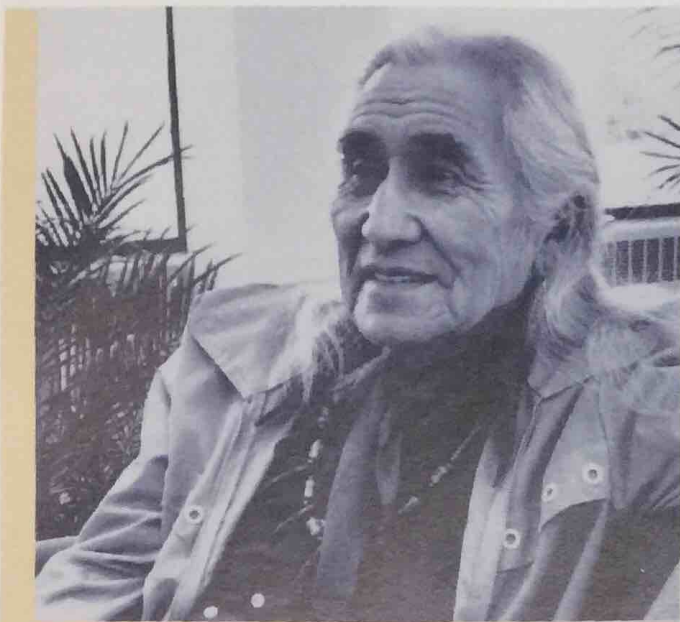
Aboriginal chief and lawyer, Phil Fontaine, spoke out about how he was mistreated at school. Others soon came forward with horrifying stories of abuse. In 1998, the federal government apologized for its part in the problem and announced a \$350 million healing fund.

## Environmental Concerns

Aboriginal peoples also began taking control over another area of concern: the environment. Canadian industries were expanding, sometimes in and around reserves. Many Aboriginal groups were concerned that hydroelectric and natural gas

projects would endanger their traditional activities of hunting, fishing, and trapping.

Probably the most significant Aboriginal victory during the 1970s was won by the Inuit, Métis, and Indian Brotherhood (later Dene) of the Yukon and Northwest Territories. They were struggling to halt the construction of oil and natural gas pipelines that were to run through their lands in the Mackenzie Valley. The pipelines were to deliver energy from Alaska and the Arctic to Alberta. The three Aboriginal groups lobbied to stop construction of the pipeline. They demanded a study to determine its impact on their lands and the environment.



**Figure 8-16** An eloquent spokesperson for the Aboriginal cause was Teswahno, also known as Dan George. He was Chief of the Squamish Band of Burrard Inlet, British Columbia, from 1951 to 1963. At age sixty, he became an actor committed to portraying Aboriginal characters in a positive light. He helped the movie industry move away from its stereotyped views of Aboriginal people. Chief George had roles in a number of Hollywood films, including *Little Big Man* (1970) and *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1975). Also a poet and essayist, he died in 1981.

The federal government agreed to create a commission to investigate the issue. The Berger Commission conducted hearings all over the North, listening carefully to Aboriginal concerns. In 1977, the commission recommended that construction of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline be suspended for ten years pending an in-depth environmental study and negotiations with the Aboriginal peoples about financial compensation, self-government, and other issues. In fact, construction was suspended for much longer. By 2000, however, Aboriginal groups were open to the idea of building the pipeline. At the same time, they stressed that they wanted control and some ownership of the project.

In Quebec, after a long dispute in the 1980s and 1990s, Cree residents of the North managed

to halt construction of two new phases of the huge James Bay Hydro Project, which threatened to flood a large part of their ancestral territories.

## The Path to Self-Government

In 1980, Canadian Aboriginal peoples formed the Assembly of First Nations to represent them in their dealings with the federal government. During the constitutional negotiations, the Assembly of First Nations pressured the country's political leaders for legal recognition of Aboriginal rights. As a result, Aboriginal rights were entrenched in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In 1985, Parliament also passed Bill C-31, which gave Aboriginal band councils the power to decide who had the right to live on Aboriginal reserves. Previous decisions of this sort had been made by the federal government's Department of Indian Affairs.

The increase in band council powers raised the question, "What other powers should be transferred from the federal government to the band councils?" The stage was set for discussions about self-government. Aboriginal peoples said self-government would give them the right to manage resources and gain control of their education, culture, and justice systems. Control of resources would also allow them to tackle social and health concerns in their communities.

But how would self-government work in practice? Should Indian reserves be run as municipal or town governments by the band members? Or would Aboriginal lands and reserves across Canada eventually join together to form something like a province? Furthermore, how could Aboriginal nations lay claim to lands that they considered to be theirs?

Aboriginal land claims have been of two types. **Specific claims** have arisen in areas where treaties between Aboriginal peoples and the federal government have been signed, but their terms have not been kept. For example, the agreed-upon size of a reserve may have decreased as land was taken away for the building of a highway or other development. **Comprehensive claims** have questioned the ownership of land in large parts of Canada that were never surrendered by treaty.

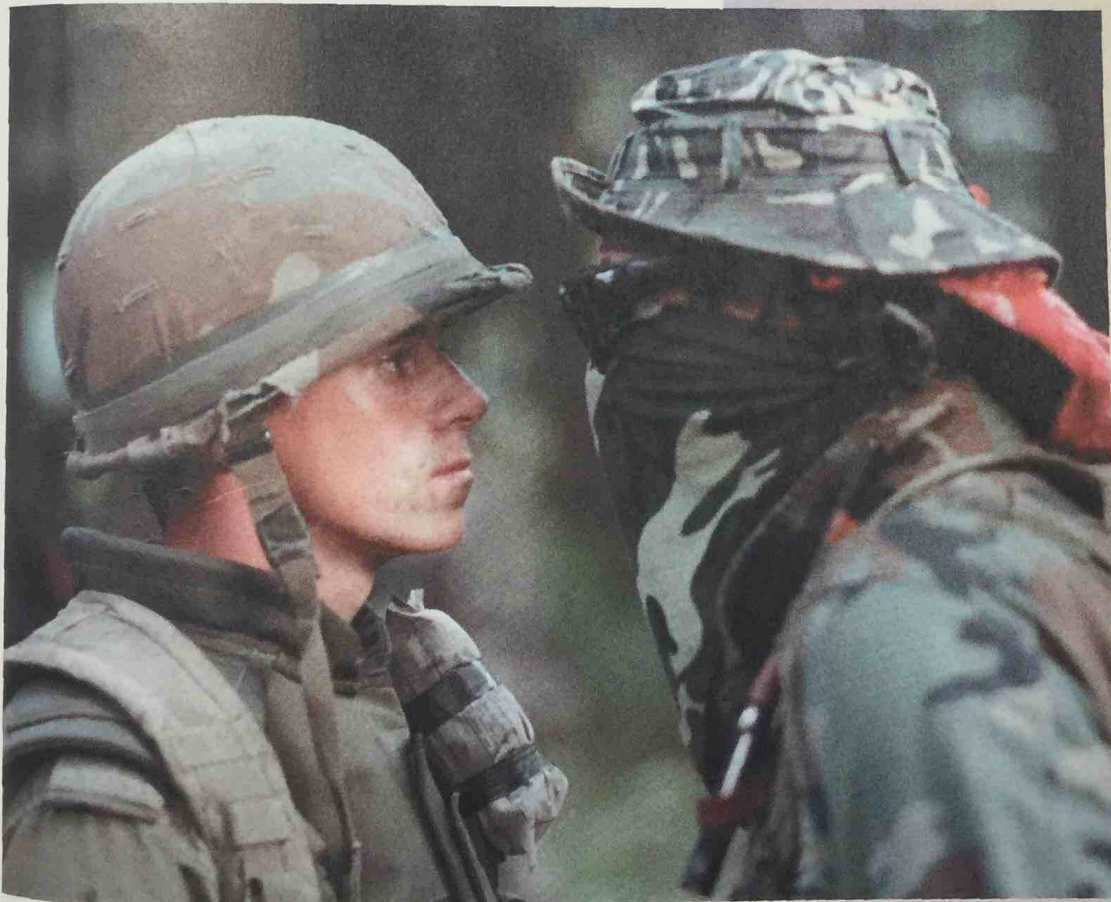
## The Oka Confrontation

By the end of the 1980s, scores of specific claims were slowly making their way through the courts, as members of reserves demanded additional land or compensation for lands they had lost. Few Canadians paid much attention, however, until the summer of 1990, when events in the Quebec town of Oka made headlines across the nation. The Oka town council decided to expand a golf course into land that Mohawks at the nearby Kanesatake reserve considered sacred. The ownership of the land had long been disputed.

The Mohawk warrior society decided to stop construction of the golf course by blockading the land. In response, the mayor of Oka called in the Quebec Provincial Police to remove the blockade. On July 11, the police advanced on the Mohawk lines, gunfire broke out, and an officer was killed. It was not clear which side fired the fatal shot. From that point, events snowballed. The police blockaded Kanesatake. Mohawks from the nearby Kahnawake reserve barricaded the road

to a bridge which ran through their reserve, blocking access to part of Montreal. There were nightly violent confrontations involving the population of nearby Quebec communities, the police, and the Mohawks. Across Canada, other Aboriginal groups demonstrated their support by blockading highways and railway tracks that ran through their reserves.

As the tense stand-off continued, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa called in the Canadian Forces for help. Troops with heavy weapons moved into the area. Negotiations to end the crisis were tense. Towards the end of September, members of other bands persuaded the Mohawks of Kanesatake to end the stand-off. Eventually, the disputed land was purchased by the federal government and given to Kanesatake. The crisis passed, but the point made by the confrontation hit home. Oka was a wake-up call to the government and people of Canada. Canada's First Nations had demonstrated that they were prepared to fight for their rights.



**Figure 8-17** This image of the Oka confrontation became famous around the world.

### Expressing ideas

What did this image say about relations between Canada and Aboriginal communities?

As the visibility of Aboriginal people in Canada's political life has increased, so too has their presence in Canadian art and culture. Aboriginal writers and artists have won acclaim around the world. Giving voice to their culture, they have enriched the Canadian identity.

**Tomson Highway** (born 1951) is a Cree from Manitoba. After studying music and literature in Ontario and in England, he joined a performing arts company. He is a well-known playwright whose works include *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* and *The Rez Sisters*. He became Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts in Toronto, one of only a few Aboriginal theatre groups in North America.

**Daphne Odjig** was born in 1919 on Manitoulin Island, Ontario. Her grandfather was a stone-carver who told her, as a child, about the history and legends of her people. Odjig later moved to British Columbia, where her paintings were inspired by the landscape of the B.C. interior and the West Coast islands. She published her memoirs, *Paintbrush in My Hand*, in 1992 and in 1998 received an Achievement Award in Arts and Culture from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

**Figure 8-18** *The Indian in Transition* by Daphne Odjig. This mural hangs in the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Painted in the late 1970s, it outlines the history of Aboriginal people in Canada.



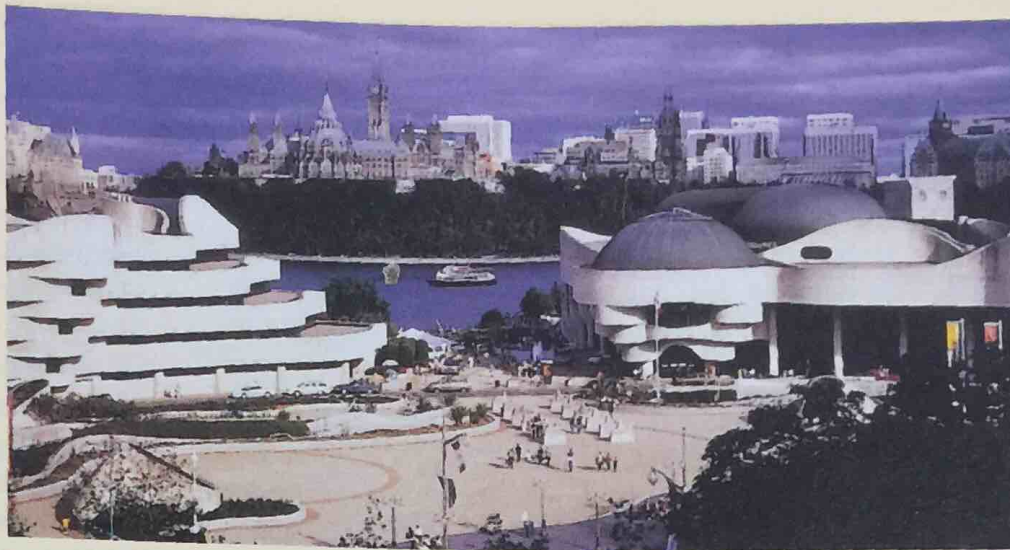
**Rita Joe** (born 1932) is from the Eskasoni First Nation reserve on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. As a foster child, she moved many times from family to family and from reserve to reserve. Many of her poems deal with the pain of her people, once proud and self-sufficient, and serve as a plea for better understanding between cultural groups. When she was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 1990, she accepted the award in recognition not just of herself but of her people as well. The poem below records her experience of residential school.

### I Lost My Talk

I lost my talk  
 The talk you took away  
 When I was a little girl  
 At Shubenacadie school.  
 You snatched it away;  
 I speak like you  
 I think like you  
 I create like you  
 The scrambled ballad, about my word.  
 Two ways I talk  
 Both ways I say,  
 Your way is more powerful.  
 So gently I offer my hand and ask,  
 Let me find my talk  
 So I can teach you about me.

**Douglas Cardinal** (born 1934) is from Calgary, Alberta. A distinguished architect, he is best known for his design of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. As he described it, the Museum was designed to speak "of the emergence of man from the melting glaciers; of man and woman living in harmony with the forces of nature and evolving with them."

**Figure 8-19** The Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, designed by Douglas Cardinal.



**Bill Reid** (1920–1998) came from mixed parentage in British Columbia. It was not until he was in his teens that he discovered that his mother was Haida. He soon became interested in traditional Haida carving techniques, and began to create wooden masks and poles. Many of these techniques were on the verge of extinction, and Reid's work inspired other Aboriginal artists to return to traditional art forms.



**Figure 8-20** One of Bill Reid's most famous works, *The Spirit of the Haida Gwaii*, sits in the foyer of the Canadian Embassy in Washington.

**John Kim Bell** was born on the Kahnawake Mohawk reserve in Quebec. He studied violin and piano as a youth. In 1980, he was appointed apprentice conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and went on to devote his time to promoting opportunities for Aboriginal artists. In 1993, he established the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. Between 1993 and 1998, over \$5 million in educational awards was given to over 800 Aboriginal students pursuing studies in the arts, business, medicine, and the sciences.

**Susan Aglukark** (born 1967) was raised in Arviat, now part of Nunavut. She has developed a distinctive musical style, fusing traditional Inuit chants with modern pop melodies. But she is more than a pop star. She does social work as well, and is the national spokesperson for the Aboriginal Division of the National Alcohol and Drug Prevention Program.

### Questions

1. What themes and concerns are evident in the works of Rita Joe, Bill Reid, and Daphne Odjig included here?
2. Summarize the contributions of Aboriginal artists to Canadian society.



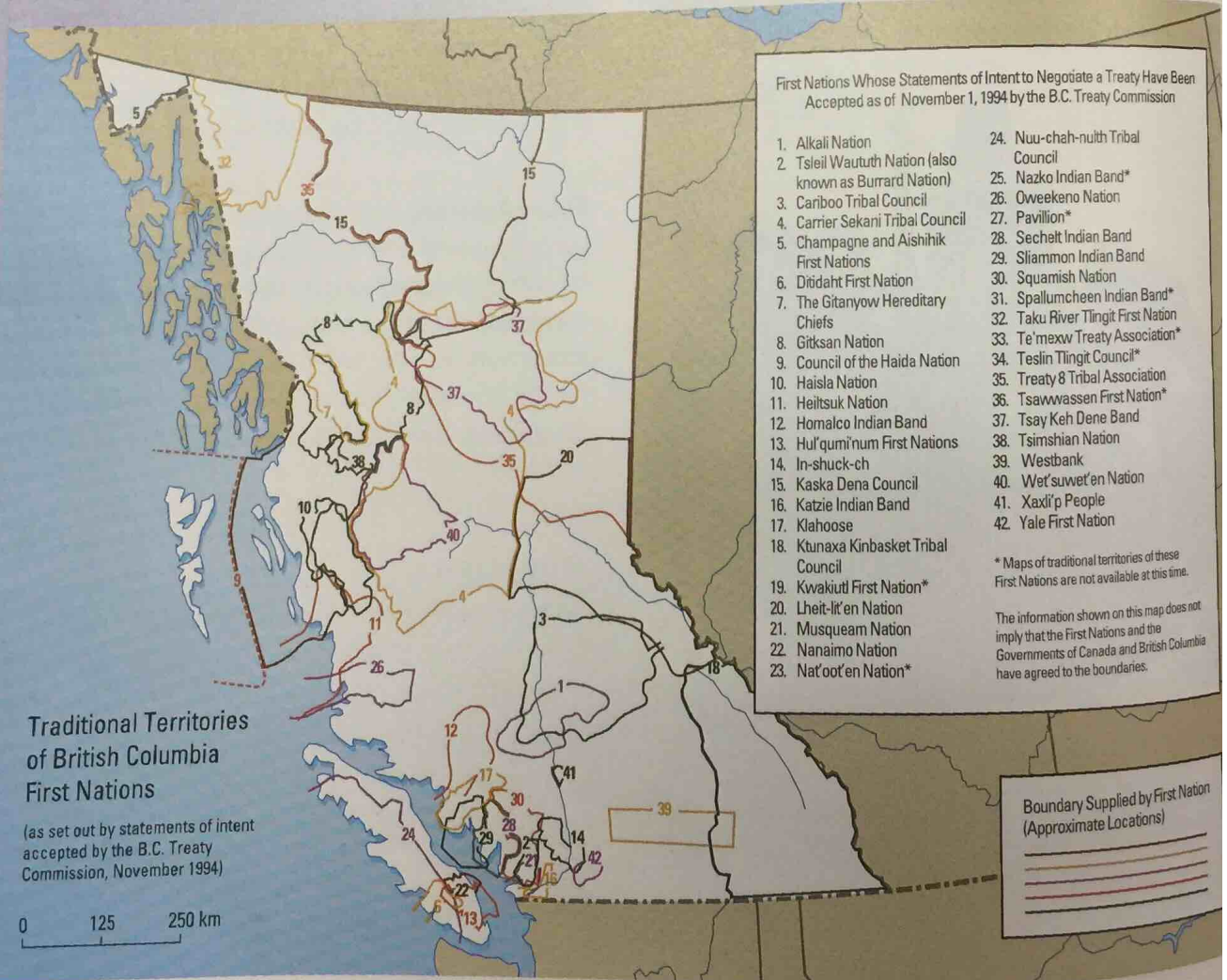
## Land Claims in British Columbia

Most land claims in British Columbia have been comprehensive, as Aboriginal nations never officially gave up their claims to most of what is now British Columbia. In addition, when the British took over Canada, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 declared that “any lands whatever, which, not having been ceded to or purchased by us, ... are reserved to the ... Indians.” Treaties were not signed except in a few areas, such as the province’s north-east corner and parts of Vancouver Island.

Opponents of comprehensive claims argue otherwise. They deny that the 1763 proclamation can be valid in parts of Canada, such as the North and British Columbia, that were not known to the British at that time. They assert that Canada exercised the traditional rights of “discoverers and conquerors.” The land ceased long ago to belong to the First Nations. In any case, without written records, it is difficult for some First Nations to prove continuous occupation of the land.

The history of Aboriginal land claims in British Columbia goes back more than a century. In 1887, the Nisga’a, the original occupants of the Nass Valley in the northwest, began asserting their land rights. In 1912, they became the first group to make a land claim against the Canadian government. Even when the Indian Act made it illegal for them to raise funds for land claims, they continued their struggle.

**Figure 8-21** The overlapping claims of the forty-two Aboriginal groups claiming land in British Columbia. Together, they amount to 110 per cent of the province. The B.C. government has stated that it favours a total land settlement of approximately 5 per cent, reflecting the Aboriginal percentage of the B.C. population.



In 1993, the Nisga'a won a partial victory when some justices of the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged that the concept of Aboriginal title (right to land) did indeed exist. Then, two neighbouring nations, the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en, took their land claim to court. Their claim became known as the Delgamuluukw case, named after one of the people who made the claim.

Both the Nisga'a and those involved in the Delgamuluukw case persevered until they met with success. In the mid-1990s, the governments of Canada and British Columbia decided that the time had come to settle rather than dispute the Nisga'a claims. In 1996, the Nisga'a were offered a settlement that entitled them to 8 per cent of their original claimed land, ownership of the forests, and partial profits from salmon fisheries and hydro development. The Nisga'a also won the right to develop their own municipal government

and policing. The government offered to pay the Nisga'a \$190 million over fifteen years, in compensation for lost land. The Nisga'a agreed to become taxpayers, giving up their tax-exempt status under the Indian Act.

In 1998, ruling on the Delgamuluukw case, the Supreme Court of Canada defined "Aboriginal title." It ruled that Aboriginal groups could claim ownership of land if they can prove that they occupied the land before the Canadian government claimed sovereignty, and that they occupied it continuously and exclusively. This was a landmark ruling that would have application in other parts of the country.

The Nisga'a settlement and Delgamuluukw decisions stirred up controversy. Some businesses feared future court cases over ownership of the land. They began to halt their investments, and jobs were lost in British Columbia. Opponents of the Nisga'a deal argued that there would be further



**Figure 8-22** Prime Minister Jean Chrétien congratulates Joseph Gosnell, president of the Nisga'a Tribal Council, on the passage of the Nisga'a Treaty bill in Commons. Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine (second from right) and Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault look on.



**Figure 8-23** Celebrating the creation of Nunavut in Iqaluit, the territory's capital, in April 1999.

expensive disputes over land and self-government. They demanded that the province hold a referendum on the deal. The B.C. government refused a vote by all the population, arguing that the rights of a minority can never be fairly decided by a vote of the majority. In the closing days of 1999, the Parliament of Canada passed the Nisga'a deal over the strong objections of the opposition Reform Party. When the treaty was given royal assent, Nisga'a Chief Joseph Gosnell announced:

Today, the Nisga'a people become full-fledged Canadians as we step out from under the Indian Act—forever. Finally, after a struggle of more than 130 years, the government of this country clearly recognizes that the Nisga'a were a self-governing people since well before European contact. We remain self-governing today, and we are proud to say that this inherent right is now clearly recognized and protected in the Constitution of Canada.

Source: Federal government press release, April 13, 2000.

## A Powerful Force for Change

Self-government and land claims continued to be important issues in many other parts of Canada. The creation of the territory of Nunavut in 1999 resulted from the largest treaty ever negotiated in Canada. It gave the Inuit of this northern area political control of some 1.6 million square kilometres on the eastern Arctic. It suggested that Aboriginal land claims and self-government will continue to be a powerful force for change in shaping the nation into the twenty-first century.

### ACTIVITIES

1. Explain the importance of the following in the development of Aboriginal identity:
  - a) the 1969 White Paper and *Citizens Plus*
  - b) the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and the Berger Commission.
2. a) Define assimilation.
  - b) Give examples of the federal government's attempts to assimilate Aboriginal people into Canadian society.
3. What was the government's response to demands that it acknowledge its part in the ill treatment of Aboriginal children in residential schools? Do you think this response was adequate? Give reasons.
4. Explain the importance of:
  - a) the Assembly of First Nations
  - b) specific land claims
  - c) comprehensive land claims
  - d) the Nisga'a Treaty
  - e) the Delgamuukw decision.
5. What percentage of B.C. land do Aboriginal groups claim? What Aboriginal land settlement percentage does the B.C. government favour? What issues do these percentages raise?
6. a) Why do you think the creation of Nunavut is significant?
  - b) What challenges do you think are posed for Nunavut by having 29 000 people politically control 1.6 million square kilometres of land? How do you think e-mail and other modern technologies can help?

## LOOKING BACK

### Develop an Understanding

1. Make a three-column chart with the following headings: "Key People," "Key Events," and "Key Ideas." List examples from this chapter under the appropriate headings. Include a brief explanation of each.
2. Choose at least seven events from this chapter's sections on French–English relations. Devise a way to present them in order to illustrate the evolution of relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada from the 1940s to the present.
3. Make a PMI chart in which you list the effects of Canada's multiculturalism policy.
4. How have Canadian Aboriginal peoples made their voices heard since 1945? What key events have contributed to their affirmation of their identity and position in society? Make a timeline including at least five events. Write brief notes on why you chose them.
5. Look back at the photographs in the sections dealing with Aboriginal nations. What do they tell you about how Aboriginal people have given voice to their culture? How do you think this has helped shape the Canadian identity?

### Explore the Issues

6. **a)** Do you think Quebec has a distinct society? Why or why not?  
**b)** In view of your answer, how should the rest of Canada respond to Quebec?
7. Pierre Trudeau hoped to create a strong, unified country that was bilingual and multicultural. Did he succeed? Did his policies address the major concerns in all parts of the country? Work in a group to formulate a debate topic based on these questions. Then, debate your topic in class.
8. Hold a class debate or small-group discussion on one of the following topics:
  - a)** Is Quebec a distinct society?
  - b)** Would a distinct-society clause in the Constitution hurt Canada as a country, or hurt Canadians?
9. **c)** Should further constitutional talks be attempted while there is a Parti Québécois government in Quebec?  
**d)** Is the constitutional debate over?

### Research and Communicate

10. With a partner, script and tape a message you would like to broadcast from British Columbia to Quebecers on the day before a referendum on sovereignty.
11. Some immigrants have achieved high honours in Canada. List the names of at least three, and provide descriptions of their main accomplishments. If necessary, do research in sources such as encyclopedias, almanacs, and Web sites.
12. In 2000, Matthew Coon Come was elected chief of the Assembly of First Nations. How has he contributed to the affirmation of Aboriginal identity in Canadian society? Do research and write a biographical article about him.
13. Most of British Columbia is involved in Aboriginal land claims disputes. Research and report on an Aboriginal land claim in your area.
14. In groups, conduct a poll on the present status of land claim negotiations in British Columbia. Construct your questions so that people can express their opinions on Aboriginal title, compensation, fishing rights, and other issues. Compile and analyse your results.
15. Research the status of Aboriginal rights in another country such as Brazil, Australia, or New Zealand. Compare your findings with the situation in Canada.