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**Indian Act**

**Comprehension Questions Pg 137-138**

1. What is the Indian Act?

* Federal legislation related to the rights and status of First Nations peoples.

1. What was the intention of The Numbered Treaties?

* Confirmed the Canadian government’s duty to protect the collective rights of First Nations.

1. What was the intention of the Indian Act?

* The Indian Act allows the government to develop policies and programs to administer Treaty rights

1. What were the Indian Agents? What was their purpose? How did they affect the interpretation of Treaty Rights?

* Indian Agents – officials for each reserve appointed by the government (not Aboriginal)
* The purpose of Indian Agents was to individually decide how the government would fulfill its duties
* There were many different interpretations of Treaty Rights – this meant that it had to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

1. The Indian Act was created in 1876. How did this affect the Canadian Governments’ decision-making? Define ethnocentrism.

* In 1876, the government thought it was appropriate to make laws for First Nations without consulting them.
* This was due to ethnocentrism – the belief that one’s culture is superior to all other cultures.

1. What is the significance of the Indian Act defining who may be registered as a “status Indian”?

* The government decides who may be considered a “status Indian”
* Status Indian is a member of any of the numerous indigenous groups registered as Indians under the federal Indian Act, having special rights and privileges and usually living on a reservation.

1. How did the intentions of the Indian Act change? Define Assimilate.

* It originally aimed to assimilate First Nations. But, now it used to protect the collective rights of First Nations.
* Assimilate is to become part of a different cultural group. This means that they leave behind their original culture.

1. List the restrictions enforced by the Indian Act.

* Controlled how First Nations would conduct their affairs. Ex. controlled band elections
* Restricted First Nations rights to travel, take political action, to wear traditional clothing, and take part in traditional ceremonies.

1. Until 1960, how did the First Nations gain the right to vote?

* Forced to give up their legal identity and Treaty rights to be able to vote

1. Why did the government revise the act?

* Pressure from the First Nations

1. What are some reasons the First Nations would want to continue changing the Indian Act?

* They believe they should be able to govern themselves
* They want to be consulted in the decision making

1. List reasons the First Nations reject Bill C-61 (the legislation proposed by the government to replace the Indian Act).

* The government did not consult the First Nations before drafting the bill
* The Bill does not recognize their status as nations with the right to rule over themselves

1. What is the purpose of the First Nations Governance Act?

* Puts the power to handle in community governance affairs in the hands of the First Nations
* Establish codes of conduct for First Nations officials
* Require First Nations to prepare budgets for public review
* Allow First Nations to make bylaws for their reserves

1. Describe two different responses from the First Nations regarding the bill. Do agree with these statements? Why or Why not?

* Assembly of the First Nations Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come believes First Nations have the right their own political societies. He wants to manage, coordinate, administer, and run their own affairs.
* Roberta Jamieson, chief of the Six Nations o the Grand River, says it is a rule book
* Minister Nault says the bill is needed because the Indian Act is outdated

1. Opinion Response: What are some Pros and Cons to the First Nations Governance Act.

Pros – It demonstrates a change in attitude in order to protect First Nations interests.

Cons – First Nations were not consulted and need to have more independence

1. What do you think should be done about the Indian Act today?

* The Indian Act is outdated and she be eliminated. It should be replaced by an entirely new document drafted by the First Nations, with consulting partners in the government. It should require government approval and participation in the new document, and be made part of the constitution. The government needs to be an active partner within the agreement, because having two entirely dependent governments, with separate laws, in the same country would cause unnecessary conflicts and confusion in the running of day to day government business.

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1. There is a difference between changes made to the Indian Act based on treaties versus government policy? What do you think the difference is? Which do you think the First Nations prefer?

* Decisions based on Treaties involves First Nations input where as Government policy does not involve the First Nations perspective.
* First Nations would prefer Treaty based decisions, because they would have an influence over the outcomes.