The Development of Western Canada

Unit 2

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Student Name:
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Looking Back

The Promise of a Railroad

After Confederation, the government wanted to expand the Dominion of Canada to the West. A transcontinental railroad would link the West with the other provinces. Then, Western Canada and Eastern Canada could trade goods with each other. A railroad would also open up the West to settlement. Good farmland in Ontario was being used up. People who wanted to become farmers needed to find other places to live. Land in the West would be opened up to settlement and immigration.

The Métis

Rupert’s Land was still owned by the Hudson’s Bay Company. The Métis in Rupert’s Land were facing hardships. There were less bison on the Prairies to hunt for food. The Métis also wanted to protect their culture. They wanted the government in Ottawa to respect Métis history and traditions.

The Threat of Western Annexation

British Columbia and the Red River settlement traded with the United States. Without a transcontinental railroad, they did not have any way to easily trade with the provinces in Eastern Canada. The government of Canada worried that the United States might take over these western areas and open them to more American settlement. For that reason, the government was eager to bring the western colonies and regions into Confederation.
The Canadian government bought Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1868. As part of the deal, the Hudson’s Bay Company kept 1/20 of the land in this region. Rupert’s Land was renamed the North-West Territories and the north-west region was opened to settlement.

First Nations

The people living in the North-West were mainly First Nations. They never believed that Rupert’s Land belonged to the Hudson’s Bay Company or that the company had the right to sell it. The government in Ottawa did not tell the First Nations about the sale. News of the sale was a surprise.

Their way of life was also changing. Americans came to the North-West to trade whiskey to the First Nations in exchange for furs. There were no laws. First Nations people were often killed if they would not trade. The traders also brought new diseases. Many First Nations people died of smallpox and other illnesses.

On the Prairies, the main source of food for First Nations was disappearing. People from the United States and Eastern Canada had hunted the bison for sport. Less than 50 years earlier, millions of bison roamed the Prairies. Now, less than a thousand remained.

Europeans

Only about 1500 Europeans were living in the North-West. Some were Scottish- and French-speaking independent fur traders. Others were merchants, clergy, and English-speaking traders who still worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company. Most of them lived in the Red River settlement.

Remember...
The population of the North-West was mainly First Nations and Métis. These people did not want to give up their traditions to fit in with new European settlers.
Métis

About 10 000 Métis lived in the North-West. About half of the Métis lived in the Red River settlement. Most Métis were the ancestors of French fur traders and First Nations women. Some Métis were the ancestors of British fur traders and First Nations women.

All Métis were proud of their culture. It blended traditions of Cree, Ojibwa, French, and English. The Métis had their own laws and customs. They worried that European settlers might want them to give up their way of life.

Think About Your Reading

1. List three things that were causing the way of life to change for the Métis and First Nations in Rupert’s Land.
   (a)
   (b)
   (c)

2. (a) How do you think the Métis felt about how their life was changing?

   (b) What do you think the Métis might do as a result of these changes?

3. Identify one connection you made to the text. Explain how this helped you to better understand the text.
Treaties and the Indian Act

Settling Land Claims

Settlers were moving onto First Nations land. There were many conflicts between the settlers and the First Nations over who the land belonged to.

The government saw that land claims needed to be clearly understood by First Nations. As a result, land treaties were written. Once land was purchased from the First Nations, it could then be used for settlement.

Land Treaties

From 1871 to 1877, there were seven major treaties between the government and First Nations. Each treaty set out an agreement about a land claim. The First Nations and the government both signed the treaties to show that they agreed with what the treaties said.

First Nations people were not happy with the treaties. In return for selling their land, First Nations such as the Ojibwa and Blackfoot had to move to reserves. A reserve was an area where only First Nations people could live. They no longer had the freedom to live wherever they wanted.

However, First Nations people could no longer take care of themselves without help. The bison were almost gone, and people were starving. Many had traded away their belongings to whiskey traders. If they moved to the reserve, they would at least have food to eat.

The Indian Act of 1876

The government of Canada passed the Indian Act in 1876. It set out a process to move all First Nations people onto reserves and to set up a way of governing them. The government wanted the First Nations people to give up their traditions

Remember...

Treaties were signed between the Canadian government and the First Nations to settle land claims. The Indian Act of 1876 set out special rights for First Nations people who moved onto reserves.
and accept the laws, customs, and language of the majority of Canadians. Children were taken away from their parents and sent to reserve schools, called “residential schools,” to learn European-Canadian ways.

First Nations people who signed treaties were called “status Indians” by the Canadian government. First Nations who did not sign treaties were “non-status Indians.” Status Indians received reserve land, special yearly payments, and the right to medical care, food, and education. They were also promised farm machinery. Non-status Indians did not receive these rights.

I used these clues from the text: “Children were taken away from their parents and sent to... ‘residential schools,’ to learn European-Canadian ways.” I thought about how I would feel about my way of life and my family. I put the information together and inferred that it was cruel to take children from their families and teach them another way to live.

### Think About Your Reading

1. Why was it important for the Canadian government to solve the land claims issues with the First Nations people?

2. List four things that were often negotiated in the treaties between First Nations people and the Canadian government.

   (a)

   (b)

   (c)

   (d)

3. What inference did you make while reading the text? What clues from the text did you use to make the inference?
Check Your Understanding

Pause and think about what you have learned. The following activities will help you review your learning.

Check Your Vocabulary

In your own words, write a definition of the following terms:

Métis (page 6)
rebellion (page 6)
treaty (page 10)

Indian Act (page 10)
tariff (page 12)

Check Your Reading Strategies

You have used the strategies make connections, ask questions, evaluate, make inferences, and use text features to help you understand the text. Which strategy helped you the most? How did it help you?

Check Your Learning

What did you learn that was new or surprising? What did you learn that changed your opinion or your thinking?
## Study Notes

Use the two columns below to help you remember what you have learned. Take a blank piece of paper, and cover up Column B so you cannot see it. Read each item in Column A, and test yourself by writing down three or four ideas about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Population of the Northwest Territories (Rupert’s Land) | • Mostly First Nations  
• Few Europeans  
• Large Métis population |
| Red River Rebellion                                 | • Métis feared loss of land and way of life as more settlers moved West  
• Louis Riel leader of Métis people  
• Wanted a Métis List of Rights from the Canadian government  
• Métis took over Fort Garry until agreement with government could be reached  
• English-speaking people in Ontario angry about rebellion and with execution of Thomas Scott  
• French-speaking people in Quebec saw Riel as hero |
| Treaties and Indian Act                             | • Government had to settle land claims with First Nations before settlers could move West  
• Government purchased land from First Nations and signed treaties placing First Nations on reserves  
• Indian Act attempted to move all First Nations to reserves  
• First Nations children removed from families and sent to residential schools |
| Dominion Lands Act                                  | • Land divided into townships  
• Settlers given land and required to build home and farm  
• Land for schools, Hudson’s Bay Company, and Canadian Pacific Railway |
| Protective Tariffs                                  | • Higher taxes placed on goods from the United States so Canadian products would sell more cheaply |
| Canadian Pacific Railway                            | • At Confederation, Macdonald promised to build a railway across Canada  
• Railway completed in 1885 |
Study Guide

Use the following graphic organizer to help you remember the important ideas you learned in this unit.

Factors Contributing to Settlement

- **Government**
  - Gave land to settlers
  - Put higher taxes on goods coming from other countries
  - Immigrants invited from United States and Europe
  - Settlers mainly wheat farmers
  - Created three provinces: Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba

- **Canadian Pacific Railway**
  - Macdonald promised to build transcontinental railway as part of Confederation
  - Completed in 1885
  - Allowed goods and people to travel more easily
  - Carried settlers West

- **The Gold Rush**
  - Gold found in Yukon
  - Thousands sought gold
  - Towns built
  - Yukon became a new territory in Canada
  - Many left after gold rush over

Effects of Development of Prairies on People

- **Red River Rebellion**
  - Métis were concerned about their right to keep their land and their way of life
  - Louis Riel led rebellion to get Métis rights
  - Government settled with the Métis
  - Manitoba became the fifth province

- **Treaties and Indian Act**
  - Canadian government made treaties as a way to purchase land from First Nations
  - Many First Nations moved to reserves
  - Many First Nations unhappy with change in way of life

- **North-West Rebellion**
  - Métis felt Canadian government had not kept promises
  - First Nations on reserves needed food and equipment
  - Riel returned to Canada and led second rebellion
  - Rebellion defeated by government troops
  - Riel executed

Impact on Rest of Canada

- Tension between French Canada and English Canada caused over outcome of rebellions
- French thought Riel was a protector of French rights; English thought he was a traitor to Canada
- Many people thought the First Nations should give up their way of life, culture, and language and assimilate to European values
# Reflect on My Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three new things I learned:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two things I already knew:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One thing I still have a question about:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>