

Succeeding generations have overcome the first shock of contact with civilization and are gradually becoming adjusted to modern conditions. During the twentieth century there has been a slow but steady increase in the Canadian Indian population, which now numbers about 126,000.

Since the inception of British rule in North America, the Indians have been regarded as a separate and special responsibility of the Government. As early as 1670, Governors of the colonies were instructed to safeguard the interests of Indians and receive and care for those who placed themselves under British protection.

Records exist from 1664 of numerous agreements and treaties made by the British with the Indians of New England when Canada was still under French government. Later, an office was established solely for the administration of Indian Affairs and, in 1755, Sir William Johnson was appointed Indian Superintendent with headquarters in the Mohawk Valley, the country of the Six Nations Confederacy, in what is now the State of New York.

The establishment of this office was the genesis of future Indian administrative organization in English-speaking North America. Following the Revolution, the British Indian Office was moved to Canada, and the title of the position was changed to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. A continuing administrative organization has been maintained since then for the protection and advancement of Indian interests. British policy with regard to Indians in Canada was enunciated in the Proclamation of 1763, whereby their aboriginal rights were expressly recognized. The terms of the Proclamation have been reflected, before and since Confederation, in the administration of Indian affairs, by the successive Governments of Canada.

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries the administration of Indian affairs was divided. The office of the Superintendent General and the Secretary of Indian Affairs was at Montreal, and that of the Deputy Superintendent General and the Assistant Secretary at Fort George (Niagara). By a general order, May 13, 1816, the management of Indian affairs was placed under the control of the Commander of the Forces in the British North American Provinces. Legislation of Apr. 13, 1830, placed the management of Indian affairs in Upper Canada under the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Colbourne. In Lower Canada Indian affairs remained under military control.

After the Act of Union of 1840 the head office of the Department of Indian Affairs, now united, continued to be at the seat of government, which was moved from one place to another under the old Province of Canada. The Imperial Government was responsible for the management and expense of Indian affairs until 1860, but in that year it was decided that the Province of Canada should assume the charge. By "An Act Respecting the Management of the Indian Lands and Property" (23 Vict., c. 151), the management of Indian affairs was brought under the control of the Crown Lands Department from July 1, 1860, the Commissioner of Crown Lands being from that date, Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Under the British North America Act the control of the Indians was allotted to the federal authority. Immediately following Confederation, Indian affairs was attached to the Department of the Secretary of State. In 1873, when the Department of the Interior was created, Indian affairs was transferred to it, as the Indian Affairs Branch. In 1880, under the provisions of the Indian Act, the Indian Affairs Branch became a separate Department and remained so until Dec. 1, 1936,