

Section 16.—The Indians and Eskimos of Canada

The Indians.*—Entry of native tribes into North America probably began as early as 15,000 years ago according to the findings of archæologists. It is believed that roving bands of hunters, driven from their lands in northeastern Asia, crossed into North America by way of Bering Strait. Ethnic origins of the Indians appear to have varied. Though differences in language were many and varied somewhat from tribe to tribe religious background and traditions seemed to stem from practically the same source.

There are ten linguistic groups of Indians in Canada of which four are east of the Rocky Mountains—Algonkian, Athapaskan, Iroquoian and Siouan—and six are west of the Rockies—Kootenayan, Salishan, Wakashan, Tsimshian, Haida and Tlinkit. Indians of Algonkian stock are the most numerous and are scattered throughout the area from the Atlantic seaboard to the Rocky Mountains. Included in the Algonkian stock are such tribes as the Micmacs of the Maritimes, the Montagnais of Quebec and the Ojibwas, Crees and Blackfeet who live in the Prairie Provinces. The Iroquoian stock, which includes the Hurons, is found mainly in Ontario and Quebec, while tribes of Sioux are located in the Prairie Provinces. The Northwest and Yukon Territories are the usual homelands of the Athapaskan.

According to the 1951 Census there were 155,874 persons of Indian origin in Canada, distributed by province and sex as follows:—

<u>Province</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Newfoundland.....	184	174	358	Saskatchewan.....	11,265	10,985	22,250
Prince Edward Island....	136	121	257	Alberta.....	10,743	10,420	21,163
Nova Scotia.....	1,379	1,338	2,717	British Columbia.....	14,602	13,876	28,478
New Brunswick.....	1,164	1,091	2,255	Yukon.....	734	799	1,533
Quebec.....	7,556	7,075	14,631	N.W.T.....	1,913	1,925	3,838
Ontario.....	19,025	18,345	37,370				
Manitoba.....	10,642	10,382	21,024	CANADA.....	79,343	76,531	155,874

These figures include all persons with a paternal ancestor of Indian race, many of whom have long been assimilated and have lost their identity as Indians. The number of persons considered as Indians under Indian legislation is placed (1955) at 151,558. They are divided into about 600 Bands and live on 2,223 reserves set aside for their use and benefit.

Administration.—The primary function of the Indian Affairs Branch, under the Citizenship and Immigration Act and the Indian Act, is to administer the affairs of the Indians of Canada in a manner that will enable them to become increasingly self-supporting and independent. The functions of the Branch include the management of Indian reserves and surrendered lands, trust funds, welfare projects, relief, family allowances, education, descent of property, rehabilitation of Indian veterans on reserves, Indian treaty obligations, enfranchisement of Indians and other matters.

The Indian Act currently in effect was drafted following inquiry into Indian affairs by a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons during 1946, 1947 and 1948 and subsequent conferences with representative Indian groups. Proclaimed Sept. 4, 1951, the new Act succeeds an Act that was first consolidated in 1876 and amended from time to time.

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