

Diefenbaker and Enfranchisement

Unit Theme: What was the most significant effect of Diefenbaker's term as Prime Minister on the lives of Canadians? Also identifying rights and how they've changed for different groups during this period.

Lesson Title: What was the significance of Diefenbaker's granting of enfranchisement to Aboriginal people? (Was it the most significant policy of Diefenbaker's term as Prime Minister on the lives of First Nations?)

Context: Grade 11 Social Studies – unit Diefenbaker 1958-1963. This lesson follows a lesson looking at the reactions of Canadians to Diefenbaker's plan/outline for a bill of rights, the reactions of (voting) Canadians and those of First Nations people who had different concerns/attitudes towards government.

Rationale: broaden understanding of Aboriginal experience, access to rights/freedoms and impact of policy on their lives. (PLO: development and impact of Canadian social policies and programs related to minority rights, and demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by aboriginal people in Canada during the 20th Century). Learn how to pull data from a primary source and situate it in history.

Background: students will have already covered Canada in post WWII, UN formation and UN Bill of rights, Canada up to Diefenbaker including his other policies not relating to the Bill of Rights, and way policies relate to First Nations. In addition should have background knowledge of The Indian Act, and experiences of Aboriginal people's in Canada (I.e. during settler immigration, Northern development, WWI/II). In previous class will also look more at (non-minority) Canadian's views of Pro/cons/limits of Bill of Rights.

Objectives (by the end of the lesson students will):

1. Help students understand importance of Bill of rights in context of First Nations experience. Remind students of Aboriginal rights as laid out in Indian Act, other experiences
2. understand attitude of First Nations people in Canada as outlined in the article.
3. identify importance according to Diefenbaker of granting franchise to First Nations people and how he addresses their concerns.
4. Evaluate "What was the most significant effect of Diefenbaker's term as Prime Minister on First Nations Canadians? Was it enfranchisement? Or one of his other policies? I.e. Northern development

Materials:

- Native Voice Special Edition 1960 Page 2 The Indian Magna Charta
http://www.usask.ca/diefenbaker/galleries/virtual_exhibit/enfranchisements_of_aboriginals/docs/native_voice.pdf (see attachments)
- Question sheets (see attachments), Discussion question
- Glossary and brief Indian act history
- Chalk/white board markers, pens/felts for students, paper for students

introduction

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Time
<p>Guide students through review/brainstorm of the main points of the Indian act. On board write two headings Indian Act 1876 and experience of Aboriginal people Hand out key-point summary (photocopy+ glossary)</p> <p>Introduce vocabulary Escutcheon, waiver of Aboriginal rights, abrogated, Magna Charta The franchise</p> <p>See what students think the reading will be about</p>	<p>Ask them about The Indian Act – what do you remember? What rights/freedoms were restricted How was edu/politics/society controlled? View from Canadian Society? What are some rights that first nations people didn't have then that they have now. (if students remember nothing, lecture)</p>	10

Body of Lesson:

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Time
<p>Hand out article and question sheets. Have students read the article and answer first 11 questions not discussion</p>	<p>Students read article and answer first 11 questions. Can ask for clarification.</p>	20mins
<p>Teacher Activities</p> <p>Have students go to various parts of the classroom based on which of Diefenbaker's policy they want to make points of. (if no action split them up) Break students into smaller groups as needed. Diefenbaker learned until now had greatest effect on first nations. Try to have one for each topic. (If no-one agrees then why wasn't it significant) Consider way of life, economic, social factors, political etc (I.e. northern vision, social/education, Bill of rights) (groups self-assign recorder, and reporter – they may need some brief notes)</p> <p>Mix up groups Monitor as students discuss rankings,</p>	<p>Student Activities</p> <p>Students brainstorm How did _____ effect the lives of First Nations – why significant effect / why theirs is #1points (look at pro and cons of it to aide with defending position) After 7ish minutes switch reporter (they can add any new points)</p> <p>Have students combine with students of other topics to determine a ranking.</p>	<p>Time</p> <p>10mins</p> <p>10mins</p>

choices etc	Discussion Question: 12: Did enfranchisement have a significant effect on the lives of First Nations people? OR Was this the most significant result of Diefenbaker's term as Prime Minister?? (rank, then give reasons for your choices)	
-------------	--	--

Closure:

Have students write individually their rankings. (can use a pyramid) Can be same as, or separate from group ranking.	Students write individually their own rankings, with reasons. Top 2 or 3 + reasons	10-15mins
Collect these papers – if can't do in class finish as HW	Hand in papers / finish as HW	

Assessment

Collect students' written responses to questions in order to determine way in which students drew linkages and understood the connections. Collect recorder's papers as well, with group names written – to determine what they were thinking.

Attachments:

1. Glossary and quick overview of Indian act
2. Question sequence (unless it is built into the activities)
3. Primary source document(s) – see link in Materials, and below
4. Reference: University of Saskatchewan: Diefenbaker Centre Virtual exhibit: Enfranchising Canada's Aboriginal Peoples:
http://www.usask.ca/diefenbaker/galleries/virtual_exhibit/documents/index.php
Text: Canada a Nation Unfolding (Ontario Edition) P 301-304

Glossary

Escutcheon: a shield or shield-shaped emblem, displaying a coat of arms

“The Franchise” (enfranchisement): the ability to vote in an election and be recognized as a citizen

Waiver: to give up/let go of a privilege or a right

Abrogate: abolish, make disappear

Magna Carta is Latin for Great Charter – the original magna carta was a list of items restricting the power of King John of England in 1215

Quick overview of the Indian Act of 1876

1. The Indian Act gave complete control over First Nation’s politics, culture and education to the Federal Government.
2. It determined who had Status and who didn’t as a First Nation’s Person.
3. The Indian Act didn’t allow First Nation’s people to vote until 1960 in Federal elections. (some provincial governments allowed first nations to vote earlier in Provincial Elections)
4. before 1960 only enfranchised First Nation’s people could vote. This meant first nations people lost their Status and lost access to benefits such as health services, education, subsidized housing, some tax exemptions as well as the ability to live on a reserve.
5. Ways to loose status included Marrying of status women to non-status men, children with only one parent who held status, the giving up voluntarily of status in order to vote. These policies were contradictory to matrilineal cultures, which many First Nations societies were.

Compliments
— of —
Minnie Hurley
PUBLISHER



The Indian Magna Charta

PRIME Minister John G. Diefenbaker is the only statesman to fulfil the promises of the late beloved Queen Mother Victoria, when she promised the Native Canadians that they would be protected in their aboriginal rights and given guidance by her ministers. She pledged her ministers to carry out this sacred trust, but in a hundred years none has taken it up.

It remained for Canada's greatest son, John G. Diefenbaker, to implement the great Queen's assurance. By doing this he has erased the blackest stain on Canada's escutcheon. This country can now face the world with a clean conscience. This is a voluntary measure without barter or bargaining, or waiver of aboriginal rights.

The considerations underlying the government's action were clearly stated by Prime Minister Diefenbaker in the course of his speech to the House of Commons on January 18, as reported in **Hansard**. He said:

"The other measure, the provision to give Indians the vote, is one of those steps which will have an effect everywhere in the world—for the reason that wherever I went last year

on the occasion of my trip to Commonwealth countries, it was brought to my attention that in Canada the original people within our country, excepting for a qualified class, were denied the right to vote. I say that so far as this long overdue measure is concerned, it will remove everywhere in the world any suggestion that color or race places any citizen in our country in a lower category than the other citizens of our country.

"I say this to those of the Indian race, that in bringing forward this legislation the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mrs. Fairclough) will reassure, as she has assured to date, that existing rights and treaties, traditional or otherwise, possessed by the Indians **shall not in any way be abrogated or diminished in consequence of having the right to vote**. That is one of the things that throughout the years has caused suspicion in the minds of many Indians who have conceived the granting of the franchise as a step in the direction of denying them their ancient rights."

We Indians, the first in the land and now about to attain full citizenship in our own country, thank you, Mr. Diefenbaker.

Questions: The Indian Magna Charta – “The Native Voice Special Ed.” 1960 p2

1. What are your first impressions of this document?
2. When and where was this published?
3. By whom? For whom was it published?
4. What is the tone of the article?
5. How do Aboriginal people feel about being given ‘the franchise’?
6. Why did Diefenbaker give aboriginal people in Canada “the franchise” ?
7. What is the greatest concern of aboriginal people in regards to their rights and being enfranchised?
 - a. Why was this a concern?
8. What is Diefenbaker’s key means of reassuring aboriginal people that their concerns have been taken into account?
9. Why was it significant that aboriginal people didn’t need to “barter or bargain” or “waiver aboriginal rights“ in order to receive ‘the franchise’?
10. What is “the blackest stain on Canada’s escutcheon” that Diefenbaker has erased?
11. Why did First Nations people in 1960 consider it important to be able to participate in elections (federal/provincial) How do you view being able to participate in an election? How would you feel if you were a member of a disenfranchised group?