Aboriginal AWARENESS Workshop

Quebec Region Module

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada
Canada

Aboriginal Awareness Workshop

Quebec Region Module

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List of acronyms

CAM: Conseil des Atikamekw et des Montagnais

IQA: Indians of Quebec Association

JBNQA: James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement

MTC: Mohawk Trading Company

NQIA: Northern Quebec Inuit Association

RCMP: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Before You Start...

This regional module will provide participants and the facilitator with insight into the general issues facing Aboriginal peoples in Quebec. It should be presented by speakers from the host community or region; however, this text can be used to present the unit if speakers are unavailable.

Some of the information highlighted in the Current Activity section was taken from materials available at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's (DIAND) Information Kiosk. Speakers may find it useful to address how some of the initiatives described in this section are developing in the host community.

This module is one of nine, each one corresponding to a different region: Alberta, the Atlantic, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Yukon, and British Columbia.

Hunting, fishing and trapping are still popular economic pursuits for the Aboriginal peoples of Quebec.

Statistical Overview of Aboriginal Peoples in Quebec

- 40 First Nations
- 61,026 Status Indians
- 16 Inuit communities
- 9,500 Inuit
- about 19,480 Métis people
- about 150,908 Non-Status Indians

General Overview

This module introduces participants to the Aboriginal peoples of Quebec, and suggests topics and issues for discussion. Keep in mind, this is only a brief summary of key issues.

NOTE: in this module Micmac is sometimes spelled Mi'kmaq or Mi'gmaq; Malecite is also known as Maliseet.

Historical Background

The province of Quebec has played a major role in Canada's development. It has seen the coming and going of many cultures: Aboriginal, Viking, French, Métis and English. Out of these has emerged a province with a largely distinct culture.

The original people of the New World were called Indians by European explorers, who thought they had landed in India. Inuit were called Eskimo, which roughly translates as "eaters of raw meat." These two different cultures dominated Quebec before the arrival of Europeans.

Aboriginal People of Today

First Nations

The population of Algonkian-speaking Nations in Quebec is now about 23,000. They comprise eight different cultural groups: the Montagnais, the Cree, the Algonquin, the Tête-de-Boule, the Naskapi, the Micmac, the Abenaki and the Malecite.

The largest group is the Montagnais, who live in eastern Quebec, north of the St. Lawrence River. To the west of them live the Cree, the second-largest Algonkian Nation. They occupy lands along James Bay—not in government reserves, but rather in separate settlements.

The Algonquins live south of the Cree. The Tête-de-Boule live in the centre of the province, and consider themselves a distinct cultural and linguistic group. But, because of their similarities to the other Algonkian Nations around them

(the Cree to the north, the Algonquins to the west and the Montagnais to the east), they're recognized as a part of the Algonkian cultural group.

Of the other First Nations in this cultural group, the Mi'kmaq is the largest. They live south of the Montagnais and west of the few Malecite people remaining in Quebec. The Abenakis are south of the Algonquins.

The Naskapi are the smallest group. Called the Fort Chimo Nation, they number only about 400, the majority of whom live in northern Labrador.

Hunting, fishing and trapping are still popular economic pursuits for the Aboriginal peoples of Quebec. Because these resources are becoming more and more scarce, it's difficult for them to escape the poverty pattern that prevails in Canada's northern region. In 1986, more than 70 percent of the Aboriginal households in Northern Quebec had incomes below the Canadian poverty line; about 25 percent depended on assistance from DIAND. Worst hit are the Montagnais, the Cree of the interior, the Algonquin and the Naskapi.

The scarcity of resources is due in part to a population boom among First Nations here. But pollution has also taken its toll on the ecology of Northern Quebec. The fishing industry in James Bay has been hampered by toxic levels of mercury in the water. Mining and lumber companies have cleared large tracts of land, destroying many trapping and hunting grounds. Sports hunters and fishers use chartered planes and snowmobiles; this means local Aboriginal people have to travel longer distances to engage in their traditional pursuits.

Many other factors affect the economic situation. They generally have less education and are subject to discriminatory practices by employers. What's more, cultural differences—for example, social prestige is more important than wealth, and highly skilled hunters enjoy more status than salaried employees—tend to keep Aboriginal people in the lower echelons of the Canadian income scale.

In some cases, Aboriginal people are lured away from their own traditions by the promise of money. Aboriginal people abandon hunting, fishing and trapping and hire themselves out for wage labour because they can make a better income. Construction, logging, mining and employment in machine shops, factories, steel plants, and even offices, have lured many away from their First Nation communities.

There could be psychological repercussions. Aboriginal family ties are strong; they also have close links with their communities and with the land. They continue to long for the perceived security of their First Nation community, especially when there are family and community celebrations.

Those raised in a more traditional manner view work as a period of intense activity, to be followed by relaxation. They're not used to the evenly paced pattern of the mainstream world. Work for them involves risk and excitement. It's being outdoors. Working in a factory can be distressing emotionally.

Even though the idea of "reserves" or First Nation communities seems strange for some people, it's the only life that many First Nation youth know. Leaving is often traumatic for First Nation youth. Living in a large city, with no friends or family for support, has been difficult for many. Some have turned to drugs and alcohol.

Aboriginal people are slowly being drawn into the mainstream. Children attend schools that will prepare them to adapt to mainstream culture, at the expense of their own. Since the school term has not been changed to accommodate traditional Aboriginal activities, youngsters can't learn to trap and hunt from their parents, who, in turn, have to abandon some of their traditions to remain with their children.

In traditional Aboriginal society, education and family life are closely interwoven. Survival skills are the basis of any education. Boys are taught the art of hunting, warfare and religious rituals; they learn the ways of the land, water, animals and weather. Girls are taught household duties such as cooking, preparing skins and farming. Children are encouraged and praised when they perform well; they're never chastised when they fail.

In recent years, the federal government has taken an increased interest in the education of First Nations and Inuit. But some issues have to be ironed out before Aboriginal people get the education they want and need:

- the school year has to be adjusted to allow participation in traditional ceremonies;
- Aboriginal languages must be used in schools that cater to Aboriginal children;
- Aboriginal customs, arts and folklore must be presented in a positive light; and
- administrators must encourage Aboriginal students to become teachers.

Inuit

The Inuit population has declined over the years because of diphtheria (1944), typhoid (1945), polio (1948), measles (1952) and influenza (1958). These people have taken measures to maintain their traditions, and put the money they received from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) to good use.

Some funds have gone into researching traditional hunting, fishing and trapping in the Arctic. This study will be used to formulate wildlife management policies.

The Makivik Corporation was created to improve Inuit communities in Quebec. One of its first projects was to establish Air Inuit to serve the Ungava Bay area. The Kativik school board, established in the mid-1970s, wants to merge federal and provincial school systems into a single Inuit-run school board.

JBNQA money helped improve radio contact between isolated communities in Northern Quebec, and established *Taqralik* magazine, the voice of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association (NQIA).

Many Inuit, like other Aboriginal people, are concerned with losing their culture. Elders are most concerned about the disappearance of old family ties; families used to share everything they had without expecting anything in return.

Social problems were handled by the community; if a young person did wrong, family Elders would discuss the problem in an intimate and loving manner. Inevitably, this approach worked. Now, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) intervenes when social problems occur. Inuit Elders resent these outside problem solvers, denying them the opportunity to manage their own affairs according to their traditions.

Inuit Elders also complain about the effects of school on Inuit children. The school system doesn't accommodate alternate cultures. While Inuit children have to get an education to succeed in Canadian society, that education is now provided at the expense of centuries-old traditions. Elders say they no longer see their children; there is no time to teach them about their traditions.

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Aboriginal Groups

Quebec First Nations are presently struggling to obtain land rights from the provincial and federal governments. Mining and timber companies have taken over First Nation territory. Hunting and fishing grounds are no longer productive; entire groups have been forced to relocate.

Aboriginal people are also seeking compensation for the development of resources on land under their control.

Many people have banded together to negotiate with the provincial and federal governments. The Indians of Quebec Association (IQA), formed in the fall of 1965, has emerged as a strong political voice. Its mandate covers nine regions: Timiskaming, Restigouche, Mistassini, North Shore, Southern Quebec, Pointe-Bleue, James Bay, Quebec District and Abitibi. The IQA was successful in bringing an injunction to delay the completion of the James Bay project until Aboriginal rights were addressed. The group is now trying to get financial compensation for Aboriginal lands appropriated by the Canadian government.

The Laurentian Alliance of Métis and Non-Status Indians was formed in 1971 to lobby on behalf of Aboriginal groups who live outside First Nation communities (reserves). The group is concentrating on issues like guaranteed minimum income, on community projects like housing, and on fostering the hiring of Aboriginal people as teachers and social workers.

In the end, the single largest factor contributing to Aboriginal poverty is the people's unwillingness to adapt to mainstream society. Until the world recognizes that First Nation peoples are culturally and socio-economically different, but can contribute to society on their own terms, negative and derogatory stereotypes will continue.

The Land and Aboriginal Peoples: History

Quebec is the largest province in Canada, with an area of 1,540,681 square kilometres. There are three distinct regions: the Canadian Shield, the St. Lawrence Valley and the Appalachian Mountains. The Canadian Shield (also known as the Laurentian Shield) comprises 90 percent of the province. From the sky, it appears to be flat; in fact, it is made up of rough hills, lakes, rivers and muskeg. In the far north lies the bare tundra, a rugged desert. To the immediate south of the tundra lies what is called the taiga, a transition zone of sorts, and south of the taiga is the coniferous boreal forest.

The Shield's climate is continental, with severe temperatures and low annual rainfall. The boreal forest gets between 30 and 50 centimetres of rain annually. The amount of rainfall decreases as you move north through the taiga and into the tundra. In the North, high winds add to the extreme cold; in the boreal forest, temperatures range from very hot in the short summer months to very cold in the long winter months. There is almost no spring or autumn.

It is in the Canadian Shield, north of the St. Lawrence, that the largest of Quebec's two Aboriginal linguistic groups, the Algonkian, lived. The people who spoke Algonkian were divided into seven different Nations: the Algonquin, Cree, Montagnais, Naskapi, Micmac, Tête-de-Boule and Malecite.

Another Nation, the Abenaki, settled in Quebec early in the 18th century. Besides hunting and trapping, the Algonkians were "horticulturists," with corn, beans, squash and sunflowers, the most common crops.

The other linguistic group—the Iroquoians—lived in the south, in the hardwood forest area. These people were known as the League of Six Nations: the Mohawks, Senecas, Oneidas, Cayugas, Onondagas and Tuscaroras. The Huron, Tobacco (Petuns) and Neutral peoples also belonged to this linguistic group.

It's believed that the Iroquoians moved into the St. Lawrence Valley region about AD 1000. The climate, like that of the Shield, is continental. There are hot summers and cold winters. Precipitation is well distributed throughout the year. The soils of the St. Lawrence Valley are well suited to agriculture. The Iroquoians, traditionally hunters and trappers, became farmers when they moved here.

The Iroquois, Hurons and Mohawks, in particular, were "slash and burn" agriculturalists: they cut down smaller trees and piled them around those too big to chop down. They then burned these piles, killing the larger trees. The stumps were removed and crops planted in their place. The Iroquois also hunted and fished, whereas the Hurons established a complex trading system with the Algonkians of the interior. They traded their surplus crops to the Algonkians in return for furs and dried fish. This early trade partnership would develop into an empire for the Hurons in post-contact times and lead to the near extinction of the Algonkians.

The Iroquoian peoples lived in longhouses made of bark shingles held together with saplings and twigs fastened over a log frame. There were no windows, only two doors at either end of the dwelling. The longhouses were divided into compartments, one for each family. Up to 10 Iroquois families would share one longhouse. They slept on platforms raised above the ground.

The Hurons shared a common hunting ground and were culturally more homogeneous than the Iroquois. All villages were heavily fortified, except for some smaller Huron settlements, which depended on larger villages for protection.

A number of longhouse families would form a clan, which became a close family unit. Members of the same clan helped each other and avenged deaths and injuries to clan members. Each member was descended from the same female ancestor.

Pre-contact Iroquoian society was matriarchal: a man moved into the longhouse of his wife's family. In post-contact days, this matriarchal domination of the household grew, since the men were quite often away, engaged in warfare.

Members of Quebec's First Nations were hunters who successfully adapted to their environment. Those who encountered ample game remained where they were; others moved on in search of richer pastures. Some found a plentiful supply of food in the coniferous forests of the north, while others adapted to the southern hardwood forests. Corn was grown before the year 1000; tobacco smoking was prevalent before 1350; and squash, beans and sunflowers were all popular before 1450.

Over the centuries, different physical and cultural groups evolved as a result of isolation, intermarriage and the nomadic lifestyle.

The preference for migration is linked to culture. Unlike Europeans, Aboriginal people had no concept of ownership or property. They believed that the land was made by the Creator, and that to buy or sell it was immoral. They didn't try to control, manipulate or abuse the land; instead, they respected and lived in harmony with it. Land was plentiful, and it was available to whomever could make a living on it. They saw no reason to alter the environment to suit their needs. When subsistence levels declined, they would move on in search of food. There was land enough for all.

The arrival of Europeans dramatically altered the concept of property. Europeans assumed—because of their nomadic lifestyle—that there was no connection between Aboriginal people and the land.

Europeans (particularly the French) pitted the Iroquois against the Hurons in their bid to control the fur trade. The result? The near extermination of the Hurons who, already decimated by European diseases, were forced to flee to Lorette, near Québec City, where they still live today.

The Tobacco and Neutral nations were also dispersed by the Iroquois, as were the Erie. Some might argue that warfare had always existed between Aboriginal nations; however, few First Nations had ever been brought to the verge of extinction before the arrival of the Europeans. Greed for European goods, and the availability of guns, exacerbated hostilities between neighbouring nations.

Settlement in the north of the Canadian Shield has always been sparse. Agriculture wasn't an option for those who lived there; they continued to hunt, fish and trap. The fur trade was the mainstay of post-contact First Nation economies.

If game was scarce, those who lived in the boreal forest would move on to where it was more plentiful. While they may have looked nomadic, their movement patterns were deliberate, and they always moved within well-defined boundaries. These people—the Montagnais, the Algonquin, the Naskapi and, particularly, the Cree—had no permanent dwellings. They

used snowshoes and toboggans to traverse expanses of snow that could last up to eight months. They also used birchbark canoes, well-suited to navigate rapids, easy to carry across portages and quickly repaired.

Of all the game hunted by Aboriginal people, the most important has been the caribou. Recently, there has been a marked decrease in the number of caribou herds in Northern Quebec; moose has become a popular source of meat and hides for the people of the interior. But caribou is easier to hunt, because it is a herding animal and travels in large groups. Moose are more likely to travel alone, and are more difficult to stalk and trail.

A successful caribou hunt yielded more meat than a moose hunt. Hunting parties shared their game. No part of the animal was ever wasted; the hides were tanned or smoked and used for all types of clothing, bags and cooking containers, and to cover houses. The meat was eaten; bones and antlers were made into tools, hunting weapons and toys; the brain, liver and fat were used to cure the skin; and the stomach and esophagus or "gullet" were used to make bags.

No part of the animal was ever wasted; the hides were tanned or smoked and used for all types of clothing, bags and cooking containers, and to cover houses.

The beaver was also essential to the economy of Northern Quebec. It was a vital source of food and clothing, and was plentiful and easy to catch. But the great demand for beaver pelts in Europe after contact caused strife between First Nations.

In traditional Aboriginal societies, especially those of the Montagnais, the Naskapi and the Algonquin, beavers were seen as the most spiritually endowed of all animals. Some believed that if a beaver's remains were badly treated, its soul would prevent other beavers from being caught. As in the case of the caribou, the entire beaver was used. The teeth served as chisels; the skins were fashioned into clothing, bags, quivers, thongs and blankets; the meat was eaten; and the fat was turned into medicine, or used as a protective skin coating in severe cold weather.

Inuit depended on seals, especially the ringed seal. They used its meat as food for themselves and their dogs, and made clothing, shoes and dog harnesses out of seal skin. Seal blubber (fat) was used as fuel for heat and light. The bearded seal was also popular because its tough hide made it highly suitable for boat sails and covers, harpoon lines, dog harnesses and boots.

Inuit history goes back 6,000 years. Archaeologists believe the original Inuit crossed the Bering Straight from Siberia and moved eastward across Canada. They lived in small, scattered nomadic bands. In summer, they lived in skin

tents; in winter, they resided in semi-subterranean dwellings. Their economy was based on hunting and fishing. These were the pre-Dorset people. They lived in the Eastern Arctic from about the year 800 BC to about AD 1200.

They were replaced by the Thule, a people with a superior culture who moved into the Eastern Arctic about 900 years ago. The Thule are the direct ancestors of present-day Inuit. They hunted seals, walrus and the baleen whale. They introduced the igloo, the kayak, dog-sleds, fur clothing, boots and the shaman drum to the area. They hunted with harpoons, spears and bows and arrows made of wood or animal bone with stone, flint or bone blades.

Inuit were hostile to initial contacts with European explorers. That's probably because the visitors, in their search for an unencumbered northwest passage, encouraged First Nations to war with Inuit. The Moravians brought an end to the constant fighting in 1765, and consequently took over all Inuit matters dealing with education, trade and religion. (Moravian missionaries established mission stations throughout Labrador between 1752 and 1771.)

Inuit have had to withstand numerous European attempts to destroy their culture. Whale blubber was an important source of energy in Europe, baleen was in great demand among fashionable women (they called it "whalebone" and used it to shape their undergarments), and sperm whale by-products were used in cosmetics and perfumes. It wasn't long before the number of whales plummeted and some large species were rendered almost extinct.

The Inuit economy and lifestyle changed because of the commercialization of the whaling industry. They had previously hunted solely to support their families, but were being encouraged to trap the Arctic fox during the winter months, limiting the time they could spend on the seal hunt.

Their increased participation in the fur trade with Europeans caused some Inuit to abandon their ancient crafts. Guns, for example, replaced harpoons, spears and bows and arrows; metal pots and pans, whaleboats, and canvas, wool and cotton clothing were becoming a part of the Inuit way of life. The Inuit diet also suffered: store-bought food and canned meat, flour and coffee helped to reduce their health standards.

The Métis Experience in Quebec

Shortly after contact, the French attempted to create a new race on the St. Lawrence. Few French women were prepared to undertake the arduous Atlantic crossing; marriage between French men and Aboriginal women was not only accepted but encouraged with special dowries or grants of land. The

original plan was to "Frenchify" First Nations. In fact, the reverse happened; French officials became alarmed at the rate (up to 20 percent in 1680) their young men were disappearing into the woods with their Aboriginal lovers. In the words of one analyst, this failure to assimilate First Nations led to the process of "métissage," and produced a distinct race in the area. But the Métis people's cultural identity became coloured, then virtually submerged, by Francophone ideology, particularly after the English Conquest.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement

In 1975, the Cree Nations and Inuit of James Bay signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement with the governments of Canada and Quebec. Under the JBNQA, hydro-electric development already started in northwestern Quebec, was allowed to proceed.

This agreement was the first modern Aboriginal claims settlement and the first comprehensive Aboriginal claim settlement negotiated in Canada. Yet, years later, it continues to generate debate; what was once hailed a "great victory" by the leaders of the James Bay Cree has since been labelled a "sellout" by other Aboriginal and even non-Aboriginal groups.

Some say Aboriginal leadership was very weak during the negotiating process, and that leaders were manipulated by non-Aboriginal advisers—even tricked by government negotiators. Other Aboriginal groups claim the agreement was a sellout because Cree community leaders had initially sought to stop the project completely, and failed.

When Quebec started studying the potential of James Bay in 1965, no one consulted the Cree or Inuit in the area. When Robert Bourassa was premier in 1971, he announced that work would begin on a hydro-electric project in James Bay; again, no Aboriginal group had been consulted. Even into 1972, the province refused to consult Aboriginal groups about the project.

Aboriginal opposition to the hydro-electric project was not immediate; because the structure of their societies was too diverse, they were unable to respond immediately. Instead, individuals tried to stop the project. Chief Billy Diamond of the Rupert House settlement was the first; he claimed the project would destroy First Nations in the area. (In 1972, game accounted for about 60 percent of the total food supply for Aboriginal people in and around James Bay.)

The legacy of the JBNQA has been a reluctance among Aboriginal groups to negotiate with governments, for fear they will have to extinguish their land rights.

Diamond united other Aboriginal Nations and associations against the project. Their goal was to stop all work on the project, and make sure First Nations received fair compensation for the loss of their lands.

The Indians of Quebec Association vowed to go to court to block the project. In the James Bay area, Philip Awashish, a young councillor of the Mistissini Nation, called a meeting of Cree leaders to discuss the effects of the project. Response, slow at first, began to snowball. Other Aboriginal groups began to raise funds for the fight and attend meetings as a show of solidarity. All agreed that the damage to the environment, especially to animal life, would be irreversible. In July 1971, Aboriginal leaders resolutely agreed to oppose the continuation of the project.

The IQA announced in May 1972 that it would seek to halt the project. When the provincial government ignored the group, the IQA took its argument to court. Legal proceedings ran from late 1972 to the middle of 1973. But it wasn't until the end of that year that the IQA got its injunction. But the province appealed the court's decision and work on the development continued.

In early 1974, negotiations began between the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, the IQA (which was replaced by the Grand Council of Cree later that year), and the governments of Quebec and Canada. After months of intense bargaining, they reached an agreement-in-principle. It took another year of negotiations before the settlement could be ratified, and within the next couple of years, the agreement was implemented.

The agreement provided for new structures of local government, health and social services, education, judicial services, and environmental management and development for James Bay Aboriginal people. But at the same time, it ceded all Aboriginal claims, rights, titles and interests to the land to the governments of Canada and Quebec. This enabled the province to develop the entire James Bay area, subject to token restrictions which many claim were designed by the government for its own benefit.

Those who criticize the JBNQA claim that the Cree and Inuit should have insisted on control over development and access, ownership of mineral rights, mandatory equity participation and establishment, and interest. Compromises could have been made for monetary compensation.

The legacy of the JBNQA has been a reluctance among Aboriginal groups to negotiate with governments, for fear they will have to extinguish their land rights. But from this process, Aboriginal groups also learned how to unify to fight a common battle, the finer points of lobbying and the need to develop legal support for future negotiations from within their own ranks.

Regional *Issues*

In 1988, the Assembly of First Nations held its annual meeting in Edmonton. George Erasmus, then National Chief of the Assembly, delivered a prophetic speech, warning that there would be violence if progress wasn't made soon in the settlement of Aboriginal issues.

Within hours, there were violent confrontations involving two First Nation communities in central Canada—one in Ontario, the other in Quebec. In Northern Ontario, the Temagami Nation blocked the extension of a remote logging road through territory they had long claimed as their own. A confrontation with the RCMP and Ontario Provincial Police soon followed.

Meanwhile, at the sprawling Kahnawake Mohawk community along Montreal's south shore, armed Aboriginal people cut off access to one of the city's busiest bridges for 28 hours. The First Nations were reacting to an earlier raid by 200 RCMP officers on six community stores accused of illegally selling cigarettes. The Kahnawake Nation has the right to buy tax-free Canadian cigarettes in the United States and ship them back to their community without paying duty. The Nation argues it also has the right to sell these duty-free cigarettes to anyone on the community—even non-Aboriginal people. Ottawa disagreed, and decided to act. During the raid, 17 people were charged with smuggling-related offenses, and 400 cases of cigarettes and $285,000 in cash were seized.

The Mohawks believed the RCMP violated their sovereign right to administer their community. To Ottawa, the raid was simply a legitimate and justified attempt to enforce Canadian law.

Studies have shown that land claims settlements often create an economic boom, as well as job spinoffs in neighbouring non-Aboriginal communities.

In the Gaspé region of Quebec, a long-standing and often violent dispute between the Mi'kmaq people and the province over fishing rights remains unresolved. In the James Bay area of Northern Quebec, financial compensation for the hydro-electric project is still outstanding. In spite of a land claims settlement, the Innu—or Montagnais-Naskapi Nation—of northeastern Quebec still protests the government's development of their traditional homeland.

The Oka Dispute

The armed confrontation between police, military forces and angry Mohawks in Oka, Quebec, has become a symbol of the uneasy relationship that often exists between Aboriginal peoples, and mainstream society and its governments.

Incredible as it seems, this dispute was rooted in a land grant made by the King of France to a Roman Catholic order of priests in 1717. The Mohawks protested this grant from the start. In 1841, the parliament of Lower Canada ruled the grant was legal, passing a law to remove doubt over who owned the land. The Mohawks appealed. In 1912, the British Privy Council, the highest court of appeal for Canadians at that time, ruled against the Mohawks.

In 1975 and 1977, the Mohawks' land claims were also rejected in court, because they couldn't prove they'd possessed the land "from time immemorial." The court also agreed that the French king had had the authority to grant the land.

In the end, the priests from the religious order sold the land to public and private investors. From their original large single tract of land, the Mohawks kept only 50 small parcels.

The contemporary dispute occurred when the government expropriated land from nine private owners in 1947 to build a public recreation facility, which included a nine-hole golf course. In 1989, the Town of Oka decided to add another nine holes and bought more land, this time from a resident of France who had acquired it from private hands in 1967.

The Mohawks set up a barricade to stop the golf course development after failing to settle their land dispute with the Town of Oka. A Quebec Superior Court ruling declared the barricade illegal and ordered it removed. When the Mohawks refused, the mayor of Oka called in the provincial police and the military.

The federal government is now negotiating the establishment of a Mohawk land base and a self-government arrangement.

Current Activity

Public Assembly and Government for Nunavik

Inuit of Northern Quebec have proposed a unique way to exercise their inherent right of self-government. Since September 1994, they have been negotiating with Quebec to create a public assembly and government for Nunavik. (Nunavik is the region in Quebec north of the 55th parallel.)

The future Nunavik assembly and government would replace the present Kativik Regional Government. Its jurisdiction would include all current public institutions, including the region's 14 Inuit municipalities and the Kativik School Board. The assembly would comprise 23 members from these 14 communities, plus one member representing the Naskapi community. These 14 municipalities would constitute an electoral district and have one to three seats, depending on population size.

Once these negotiations are complete, there will be a single government in Northern Quebec, resulting in more effective and efficient governance.

Inherent Right Negotiations in Kahnawake

Kahnawake Mohawk and the federal government are negotiating an agreement that reflects the Mohawks' inherent right to self-government, and gives them more control over their lives.

In 1991, the parties signed the Canada–Kahnawake Relations Agreement on an Agenda and Process for the Negotiation of a New Relationship. Negotiations deal with jurisdiction in areas such as justice, land management and control, finances, the environment, trade and commerce, policing, social services, health, education and culture.

Aboriginal Policing Agreements

Governments are starting to recognize Aboriginal control over policing. In 1995, Canada, Quebec and the Kativik Regional Government signed a three-year agreement giving the regional government authority to administer the Kativik Regional Police Force.

In 1995, a tripartite agreement on policing was signed by Canada, Quebec and the Kahnawake Mohawks. It gives the Mohawk government of Kahnawake authority to maintain and control an autonomous police service.

The Atikamekw of Obedjiwan and the Grand Council of the Crees both started their own forces in 1994.

Land Claims

Resolving land claims is a major priority of the federal government and Aboriginal peoples. Studies have shown that land claims settlements often create an economic boom, as well as job spinoffs in neighbouring non-Aboriginal communities.

Atikamekw and Montagnais Land Claims

Twelve Atikamekw and Montagnais First Nation communities recently opted to settle their complex land claims at three separate negotiating tables. In the past, the 12 communities had negotiated under a larger umbrella group called the Conseil des Atikamekw et des Montagnais (CAM). When the Council dissolved in 1994, the federal and provincial governments agreed to negotiate with three separate groups: the Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw, the Mamuitin Tribal Council and the Mamu Pakatatau Mamit.

In 1994, the Quebec government offered both the Atikamekw and Montagnais nations 4,000 square kilometres of domain lands; 40,000 square kilometres of land for hunting, trapping and fishing; and $342 million in compensation. The groups rejected the offer, but negotiations have resumed and everyone is committed to settling the claim.

Makivik Offshore Claim

The Makivik Offshore Claim involves the Inuit of Northern Quebec. It stems from the JBNQA, because that agreement did not address Inuit land claims. Negotiations began in October 1994.

Outstanding Cree Issues under JBNQA

In July 1995, the Minister of DIAND launched a process to resolve outstanding JBNQA issues with the Crees of Northern Quebec. Discussions with Cree leaders will soon yield a report that will identify the government's outstanding obligations under JBNQA, assess how the Cree view re–negotiating with the government and look at how these issues should be addressed.

Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Build Vibrant Community

Less than five years ago, the Oujé-Bougoumou community consisted of a number of families who lived in tar-paper shacks in camps scattered along logging roads in Northern Quebec. But the First Nation recently received a prestigious international award for its efforts to rebuild the community.

Award-winning Aboriginal architect Douglas Cardinal helped the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree plan their new village. Using a $45-million land claim settlement, they have created a viable community. The village design drew on traditional Cree settlement patterns: buildings are arranged in rings, the key ones at the centre, homes on the perimeter. New facilities include a day-care centre, community centre, healing lodge, youth centre and sports facility. Buildings are heated by underground pipes from a large furnace; for optimum efficiency, this furnace is fuelled by sawdust waste from nearby lumber mills.

In 1994, Industry Canada provided funds to help support three new businesses in Oujé-Bougoumou: a 12-room hotel with a restaurant, a tourism business and lodge, and a gas bar and store. These have helped strengthen the region's tourism industry.

Aboriginal Firm Serves Federal Government Clients

If you supply it, they will come. That's what the Mohawk Trading Company (MTC) learned when it started providing office supplies to six federal government departments.

The MTC is owned and operated by Robert and Glynn Murray, a Mohawk-Cherokee business team with 10 years' combined experience in environmental engineering and 15 years in sales management.

Based in Kanesatake, Quebec, MTC markets office supplies, equipment, computers, software and furniture to Aboriginal businesses, band offices, national organizations, federal departments and large corporations (including Pepsi-Cola and Colgate-Palmolive). The MTC office products store is located in Hull, with two additional retail outlets in Oka-Kanesatake and Hudson, Quebec.

Nunavik Arctic Foods

An Inuit-owned company is selling caribou and seal meat. The project is an example of Aboriginal entrepreneurship and economic development.

In 1995, the Inuit-owned Nunavik Arctic Foods opened four processing plants in the Inuit communities of Quaqtaq, Kangiqsualujjuaq, Umiujaq and Kangiqsujuaq in Nunavik. The plants employ about 120 Inuit as contract hunters and workers.

Its parent company, Makivik Corporation, has invested $4.5 million to build the four plants. It has also researched ways to commercialize and market country foods such as caribou, ptarmigan, ringed seal and fish. If the delicacies catch on in southern Canada, Nunavik Arctic Foods could employ as many as 500 Inuit within five years.

Aboriginal Education and Training

The federal government is working with First Nations and Inuit to improve educational opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. Over the years, the federal government has steadily increased post-secondary education funding to an annual budget of approximately $284 million. In 1994-1995, 26,800 post-secondary students across Canada got grants—2,208 in Quebec.

Building New Partnerships

Mohawk–Canada Round Table

Since June 1994, federal ministers and the three Grand Chiefs of Akwesasne, Kahnawake and Kanesatake have discussed pressing community issues; these include economic development, taxation, policing, justice, health and legal jurisdiction. This round table was established at the request of the communities.

The Murray Treaty and Huron Wendat Framework Agreement

The Supreme Court of Canada recently recognized the Murray Treaty of 1760 between the British colonial government and the Huron Wendat Nation. This guaranteed First Nations safe passage through British-occupied lands, a return to their traditional way of life and the freedom to trade freely.

In 1995, the Huron Wendat Nation and the governments of Canada and Quebec agreed to negotiate a new relationship based on this Treaty. This includes establishing a Huron Wendat government.

This agreement hasn't been established yet. In September 1996, a new band council was elected. It took the position that economic development and self-sufficiency should take precedence over the negotiation of self-government. On November 28 and 29, 1996, the Huron Wendat Nation Council organized two public consultations in the community to discuss the status of the negotiations. The November 30th referendum put to a vote the question of support for continued negotiations on an agreement-in-principle for self-government and the application of the Murray Treaty. A majority voted against continued negotiations. The Government of Canada (the position of the Quebec government is similar to Canada's) respects the position taken by the Huron Wendat First Nation's direction and approach regarding the future status of negotiations.

Kahnawake Employment Programs

In 1994, Human Resources Development Canada and Kahnawake's Local Aboriginal Management Board signed an agreement to let Kahnawake Mohawks manage employment programs in their community. The agreement provided $3.8 million to fund employment programs until July 1997. This is the sixth agreement of its kind in Canada, and the first in Quebec.

Official negotiations with the Mohawks of Kanesatake resumed on April 23, 1996. These negotiations are based on the 1991 Agenda and Process for Negotiations and the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed on December 19, 1994. Ongoing negotiations have been taking place between the parties on topics such as policing services for the community. Negotiations on this specific matter have led to the conclusion of an agreement-in-principle formally ratified by the three parties (Quebec-Mohawks-Canada) on December 19, 1996. The agreement on policing at Kanesatake is an agreement that is consistent with the First Nations policing policy of the federal government.

The Supreme Court of Canada recently recognized the Murray Treaty of 1760 between the British colonial government and the Huron Wendat Nation.

List of Quebec First Nations

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
055 Abitibiwinni First Nation Council	Algonkian*	Ojibway & Cree
074 Algonquins of Barriere Lake	Algonkian	Algonquin
085 Betsiamites	Algonkian	Montagnais
058 Cree Nation of Chisasibi	Algonkian	Cree
057 Eastmain	Algonkian	Cree
086 Montagnais Essipit	Algonkian	Montagnais
053 La Nation Micmac de Gespeg	Algonkian	Micmac
052 Micmacs of Gesgapegiag	Algonkian	Micmac
050 Huronne Wendat	Iroquoian	French
070 Kahnawake	Iroquoian	Mohawk
069 Kanesatake	Iroquoian	Mohawk

*other spelling forms: Algonkin, Algonquian

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
065 Eagle Village First Nation–Kipawa	Algonkian	Algonquin
062 Kitcisakik	Algonkian	Algonquin
073 Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg	Algonkian	Algonquin
084 Montagnais de Unamen Shipu	Algonkian	Montagnais
063 Nation Anishnabe de Lac Simon	Algonkian	Algonquin
051 Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation Council	Algonkian	Micmac
067 Long Point First Nation	Algonkian	Algonquin
054 Première Nation Malecite de Viger	Algonkian	Maliseet/French
078 Les Atikamekw de Manawan	Algonkian	Attikamek
082 Bande des Innus de Ekuanitshit	Algonkian	Montagnais
075 Cree Nation of Mistissini	Algonkian	Cree
076 Montagnais du Lac St-Jean	Algonkian	Montagnais
081 Naskapis of Quebec	Algonkian	Naskapi
083 Montagnais de Natashquan	Algonkian	Montagnais

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
059 Nemaska	Algonkian	Cree
079 Obédjiwan	Algonkian	Attikamek
072 Odanak	Algonkian	Abenakis
Oujé-Bougoumou	Algonkian	Cree
088 Montagnais de Pakua Shipi	Algonkian	Montagnais
087 Bande de la Nation Innu Mati	Algonkian	Montagnais
064 Timiskaming	Algonkian	Algonquin
080 Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam	Algonkian	Montagnais
061 Waskaganish	Algonkian	Cree
056 Waswanipi	Algonkian	Cree
060 Cree Nation of Wemindji	Algonkian	Cree
077 Wemotaci	Algonkian	Atikamek
095 Whapmagoostui First Nation	Algonkian	Attikamek
068 Wolf Lake	Algonkian	Algonquin

First Nations	Linguistic Group	Language
071 Abénakis de Wôlinak	Algonkian	Abenakis

NOTE: Today, the Hurons of Lorette and the Abénakis de Wôlinak (Bécancour) are all French speaking.

NOTE: The First Nation listing can be found in the Indian Register, DIAND, 1999. Other demographics and statistical data are available through the regional DIAND office.