**Chapter Outline**

to accompany

*Indigenous Peoples within Canada: A Concise History*, Fifth Edition

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**Chapter 15: Tightening the Reins: Resistance Grows and Organizes**

As the twentieth century progressed, the Canadian government continued with an assimilation policy. However, Indigenous Peoples kept questioning their treatment and organized as a way to put pressure on governments. Residential schools were continuing to strip Indigenous Peoples of their cultures and ways of life. Between the 1950s and 1970s, the schools were slowly phased out and the children “integrated” into the public systems. The 1960s saw an additional attack on Indigenous families with what became known as the “Sixties Scoop,” whereby 15,000 Indigenous children were adopted into non-Indigenous families. Half of the adoptions broke down, resulting in children being placed in foster care systems, or living on the streets in urban areas. One example of protest and reaction to the nearly one hundred years of attack on Indigenous families was the move toward Indigenous control of Indigenous education; Indigenous communities took charge of their own schools with the hopes of providing a relevant and safe education for children. This initiative resulted in band schools appearing on reserves across Canada but not without difficulties. Despite challenges with implementing proposed changes to the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act, a recent agreement in Ontario between the provincial government and the Anishinabek Nation now provides a model for other provinces and territories to follow.

As a result of the social upheaval following the Second World War, a new attitude was brought to bear on Canadian Indian policy. Indigenous soldiers had again enlisted in high numbers and when they returned to civilian life, the restrictions and inequities they faced became more evident. With the leadership of Indian war veterans, in 1946 the government of Canada established a Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee on the Indian Act. It resulted in major amendments to the Indian Act in 1951 such as those regarding the ban on Indigenous spiritual practices like the potlatch and the loss of Indian status upon the completion of a university degree. However, the Inuit were excluded from the Act with the 1951 revisions.

The 1960s saw continued political organization. As part of Expo in Montreal, Indigenous Peoples set up a pavilion and publicly expressed dissatisfaction with their treatment in Canada. A few years earlier, the government had appointed an anthropologist, Harry Hawthorn, to investigate the condition of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Hawthorn spoke against assimilation efforts and promoted the idea of “citizens plus”, to denote that in addition to the normal rights of citizenship, First Nations also possessed certain additional rights as charter members of the country. However, in 1969, Pierre Trudeau’s Liberal government introduced their White Paper, officially the Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, which purported to advance the concept of equality. In reality, it was an attempt to further assimilate and rid Indian people of any “special” rights they may have, including treaties and reserves. Indigenous leadership immediately countered this policy initiative, which included abolishing the Indian Act. The most famous of these came from the Alberta Indian chiefs who presented their paper *Citizens Plus*, also known as the Red Paper. One element of the White Paper did materialize with the creation of the Indian Claims Commission in 1969.

The political mobilization of First Peoples was manifested in the rise of multiple national organizations and resistance movements aimed at gaining more autonomy with regards to self-government. Of particular note were the efforts and strategies used by the Haudenosaunee, and in particular, a traditionalist of the Longhouse religion, Deskaheh, who travelled to Europe to gain support for his people. Indigenous policing bodies known as the Peacekeepers and Warriors also arose among the Haudenosaunee to fight for greater autonomy. As well, the Métis in Alberta also made progress with regards to acquiring rights to land which eventually led to the Métis settlements.

Another major challenge to the government of Canada came from First Nations women who, under the Indian Act, had paternalistically lost their status after marrying a non-Indigenous man. Following the 1951 revisions to the Act, Indigenous women started to attain elected positions on band councils, including that of chief. Further, as a result of a complaint by Sandra Lovelace to the United Nations, the Indian Act was deemed to be in breach of human rights. In addition, with the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982 and with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms making it clear that discrimination on the basis of gender would not be tolerated, the Indian Act was amended in 1985 under Bill C-31, eliminating the gain or loss of status through marriage.