**Chapter Outline**

to accompany

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

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**Chapter 19: From Oka to WaDzunKwuh: Reconciliation, Revitalization, and Resurgence**

This final chapter concentrates on the most recent events that have affected Indigenous Peoples in Canada. One of the most important initiatives of recent decades has been the 2008 apology by Prime Minister Harper to residential school survivors and their families. This apology came soon after the 2007 agreement to compensate survivors. The Residential Schools Settlement Agreement also resulted in the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which gathered more than 6000 testimonial statements that now provide a vital historical collection of the residential school experience. Among their “Calls to Action”, the Commission also called for a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which was formally announced in December of 2015 by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In spite of the slow pace of positive changes since the apology, there have been other signs of improvements that have taken place in the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the federal government. The Supreme Court ruling in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997) affirmed the role of oral history as the best way of overcoming evidentiary shortcomings in the written record, a decision that illuminates the significant role and credibility of oral history overall. The priority of resource allocation that came out of the *Sparrow v. R*. case of 1990 also remains a good example of moving forward, as does the focus on social and economic development, accompanied by meaningful action regarding the duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples on development. In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the Treaty Land Entitlement process has been particularly successful, with these two provinces accounting for 90 per cent of such transactions as of August 2016. Additionally, in November of 2015, the new Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced full support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and he gave the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs an official mandate to implement it.

In contrast to some of this forward movement, there remain controversies and setbacks. One complex case with a long history is that of the Douglas Creek dispute in Caledonia, Ontario. In 2017, the Haudenosaunee again put up barricades to protest the lack of a solution. In 1989, the Ermineskin Nation and Samson Cree Nation also took the federal government to court over breach of treaty, trust and fiduciary obligations related to the management of oil and gas revenues on the Pigeon Lake reserve. By 2009, the Supreme Court of Canada held that the Crown was a trustee and had fiduciary obligations, but aside from one dissenting judge, they also ruled that the Crown had acted “reasonably” in this case.

Resistance also remains a feature of the relationship. In response to Bill C-45, which proposed, among other things, changes to land, resource and water management on First Nations lands, the recent Idle No More movement is another example of resistance through social action. The movement arose as a result of a “teach-in” that was planned in response to governance and environmental concerns related to the omnibus bill.

Finally, this chapter concludes with some discussion about the most compelling recent development in the history of Canada’s First Nations, the evolving focus on Indigenous Knowledge. With the understanding that language is at the heart of knowledge and its dissemination, there are numerous language immersion programs and Indigenous learning programs that have now taken shape across the country.