

The Organization of British North America: The Royal Proclamation 1763

Overview

- In 1763 Britain put in place the Royal Proclamation
- the first British **Constitution** for British North America
- Constitution: a written set of rules or laws that specify how a territory will be administered or run by the government.

Causes: Why was the Royal Proclamation necessary?

1. The Conquest / Treaty of Paris:

- Because Britain gained control of the French territory and the French population they needed a set of rules to say how they would be governed.

2. Pontiac's Rebellion

- Native populations were angry about British rule
- Settlement from 13 Colonies threatened Native peoples' control of the land
- The British authorities were attempting to control them, as opposed to treating them as allies.
- Chief Pontiac organized a coalition to attack British Forts
- To reassure Native populations and to make peace, Britain created a reserved Native Territory

Purpose/Goals: What did the British government hope to achieve with the Royal Proclamation?

- To deal with the new populations and territory under British control

1. To make Peace with Native populations.

2. To **assimilate** French: means to make similar – to make the French become British and Protestant

- The British government did not want to have a French Catholic population
- They wanted to eliminate French language + Catholic religion (Make them English)

Changes to the Territory

1. The British government created a new **colony** – The Province of Quebec

- Quebec was restricted to the St. Lawrence River valley.
- This was the area of *Canadien* (French) settlement that used to be called **Canada** by France
- The goal was to limit the French population to where they were already settled so that they could be assimilated.

2. The British created a Reserved Native Territory:

- There would be no settlement from the 13 colonies.
- This was to ensure peace with Native populations

Changes to Language:The goal was to assimilate the French

- The British wanted to encourage British immigration to make the colony English
- They wanted to encourage English Protestant schools and churches so that eventually the French would adopt the English language and Protestant religion

Changes to Religion: the goal was to restrict the Catholic religion in the hopes it would die out

- The Roman Catholic church was tolerated but restricted.
- The **tithe** (church tax that all Catholics had to pay) was removed: this meant that the Catholic Church would have no money to operate. (build churches, pay priests, etc..)
- No new Bishop was allowed to enter the colony: the bishop ordained [made official] new priests so that once the existing Bishop died there could be no new priests.

- Encouraged Protestant churches: the British hoped that the Canadiens would become Protestant

Changes to Laws

- French laws were no longer recognized
- British civil + criminal laws were in force
- Civil law dealt with property rights: this meant that the rights of the Seigneurs to their land was no longer recognized in law.

Changes to Land Distribution for Agriculture

- Existing seigneuries were tolerated: but their existence was not guaranteed in law
- The British township system was introduced for any new land granted: these were square plots of land, owned by farmer

Changes to Government

- British Government appointed the Governor
- The **British Governor held all the power**
- The governor appointed [picked] a council whose role was to advise the governor
- The Royal Proclamation allowed for the establishment of a legislative assembly at a later date.
- The Test Act, a British law, was enforced: No Roman Catholics could hold a government position.
- Since the whole French population was Catholic that meant that no *Canadiens* (French) were in the government.
- This was meant to ensure that the French population had no power in the colony.