

1763 - 1791: The Royal Proclamation, 1763, and the Québec Act, 1774

http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/aboriginals/aboriginals3_e.html

A new document in 1763 called the [Royal Proclamation](#) set the boundaries of a new colony called Québec - which was now under British control. This document would open a new chapter in European-[Aboriginal](#) relations, because it was the first document that called for land [cession](#) negotiations. For the first time, the Aboriginal people would be expected to extinguish their rights to the land in order for large-scale colonial settlement to take place.

The Royal Proclamation, 1763

In 1763, the [Royal Proclamation](#) was created to integrate New France into the British Empire in North America. It created the Province of Québec along a fairly narrow stretch of land located along the shores of the St. Lawrence River. Part of the proclamation, however, expressly dealt with Aboriginal issues.

The British, who now controlled Québec, wanted settlement to take place within the colony, but also wanted to ensure Aboriginals had their own land for [reserve](#) settlements. This was especially important as the British expected an overflow of settlers from the [Thirteen Colonies](#) to move north. However, this move to protect Aboriginal land ultimately frustrated British settlers and merchants in the colony.

Britain did not want land deals to be done by the settlers to protect Aboriginal interests. The [Royal Proclamation](#) [hints at the reason](#): it notes that British interests were, prior to 1763, responsible for "great fraud and abuses" in obtaining land from Aboriginals that had caused the latter "great dissatisfaction". After all, only a decade earlier, the Mohawk had broken the [covenant chain](#) with the American colonies due to Anglo-American settlement that had occurred on Aboriginal lands without permission. After spending years fighting the French in North America and abroad, the British wanted to gain the allegiance of the Aboriginals to prevent further costly and bloody frontier wars, as more British settlers arrived.

Thus, they ensured that any future negotiation with the Aboriginals was to be in done in public by representatives of the British [crown](#), and that the final results of such negotiations would be recorded in written [treaties](#). The proclamation also gave Britain the right to purchase Aboriginal hunting and fishing grounds, but gave Aboriginals the right to hunt and fish on these acquired lands. This would be very important in future claims and court cases by Aboriginal nations.

In October and November 1768, a conference was held at Fort Stanwix, New York, to fix the boundaries of the reserved hunting grounds provided for in the [Royal Proclamation](#) between all sides of the covenant chain. The [Iroquois](#) thanked the British for 'polishing the chain' when its sides had grown dull.

Aboriginal View of Land Ownership

The concept of land ownership was completely alien to the Native peoples. From an Aboriginal cultural and spiritual perspective, land *cannot* be bought or sold. They saw themselves as the spiritual guardians of the land, not its actual owners. Land was considered a gift from the Creator or Great Spirit, and its resources were to be used for survival purposes only.

Thus, the concept of 'surrendering' land was one that caused great of confusion within Aboriginal communities, and may have contributed to further injustices against the Aboriginals - notably, the signings of the [Upper Canada](#) and other treaties. This Aboriginal view of land ownership is one of the roots to many [Aboriginal rights](#) and land issues today.

The Québec Act, 1774

This act was an extension of the [Royal Proclamation](#) meant to push Québec's boundaries into Aboriginal land located past the Great Lakes into the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. It has been interpreted that the spirit of the [Royal Proclamation](#) was to be kept in acquiring Aboriginal land for the British. From the British perspective, it had two goals: to keep French Canadian neutral in the coming uprising in the Thirteen Colonies, and to keep Aboriginal peoples on the side of the British.

Name: _____

Settlers in the Thirteen Colonies were upset by British encroachment into Aboriginal lands that they considered to be theirs, and considered the *Québec Act* to be one of the "[Intolerable Acts](#)", which were a direct cause of the [American Revolution](#).



Name: _____

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/14 Total

Paragraph answer – 3 marks each

1. Describe how the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Quebec Act of 1774 still affect land claims today.
2. Why did the British Government pass the Quebec Act of 1774?
3. Why were the American colonists angered by these two acts?

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4. When was the Royal Proclamation signed?
 - a. 1664
 - b. 1763
 - c. 1773
 - d. 1784
5. This treaty ensured that any future negotiation with the Aboriginals was to be in done:
 - a. In public by representatives of the British Crown.
 - b. In private by representatives of the Hudson Bay Company.
 - c. In public by any group willing to negotiate deals with aboriginal nations.
 - d. In private by representatives of the Thirteen Colonies.
6. The British signed the Royal Proclamation for all these reasons **except**:
 - a. To integrate New France into the British Empire in North American.
 - b. To ensure Aboriginals had their own land for reserve settlements.
 - c. To give Britain the right to purchase Aboriginal hunting and fishing grounds, but gave Aboriginals the right to hunt and fish on these acquired lands.
 - d. All of these
7. The Quebec Act was meant to keep which group neutral in the upcoming conflict between the British and the Thirteen Colonies?
 - a. French (Canadians in Quebec)
 - b. French (Europeans)
 - c. Spanish
 - d. Dutch
8. Settlers in the Thirteen Colonies were upset because the Quebec Act stopped their expansion into the _____.
 - a. Adirondack Mountains
 - b. Louisiana Territory
 - c. Ohio & Mississippi River Valleys
 - d. None of these