

Behind the Red Brick Walls: Uncovering the Social Control and Cultural Genocidal
Motives Behind Canada's Residential School System

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For over a century, one of the darkest chapters in Canadian history was unfolding, the residential school system. Some of the buildings still stand today, serving as a reminder of the cultural genocide that was once happening behind their closed doors and house the souls that have been lost throughout the operation of the school system. The residential schools were institutions where Aboriginal children were placed after being removed from their home reserves and were established for the purpose of educating the “Indian” out of the child. The federal government and the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches operated these schools based on motives that will further be discussed. Firstly, this paper will discuss how the First Nations children were educated within their communities, prior to contact, in an attempt to gain a better understanding of why the government and the Churches sought to change how they were educated. Additionally, this paper will also discuss how, why and when the first official residential schools were established to provide background context to how this dark chapter of history started. The remainder of this paper will serve to confront how these schools enacted a cultural genocide with the purpose of assimilating the children into the Euro-Canadian society and how the poor building infrastructure, poor food quality and nutrition, and the overall neglect from the government and the Churches enforced a genocide of the people themselves. Furthermore, it will be argued that the curriculum of these schools was geared toward replacing and undermining the children’s preconceived beliefs and faith as well as to relegate them to lower class positions upon assimilation. Lastly, this paper will conclude why the overall residential school system failed to achieve the goals of educating and assimilating the First Nations children. The evidence that this paper will provide and explain will argue that the Canadian residential school system was established based on motives of social control with the intent of inducing a cultural genocide.

Before discussing how the Canadian residential schools induced a cultural genocide, it is important to discuss how the First Nations youth were educated prior to these schools and why colonists felt they had to establish an educational reform. Traditionally, Aboriginal children from separate and dynamic communities were commonly taught through knowledge passed down from the Elders.¹ These teachings described a coherent, interconnected world that explained the creation of human beings, animals, and the physical world with relation to the influence of supernatural beings in everyday life.² Commonly, these teaching would be passed down to youth during ceremonial feasts that would bring people together for spiritual, cultural, and economic purposes.³ At these feasts, the children learned from storytelling that would teach them how to live correctly, how not to offend spirits, and how to contribute to the community's physical survival.⁴ For example, one teaching that was passed down was when hunting, a hunter must participate in a ceremony prior to and after the hunt to show respect to the spirits and animals, and as a reward, the animals would give themselves as gifts to them.⁵ Moreover, children were taught through observation as they would follow and observe their parents and grandparents as they carried out tasks traditional to their life work such as hunting and gathering.⁶ Discipline within Aboriginal communities was not common, as personal autonomy was highly regarded and children were raised to respect others, taught their community responsibilities, and trained in self-reliance.⁷ If discipline was employed, there would be minimal physical violence and it was

¹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation of Canada, 2012), 7.

²Ibid., 8.

³Ibid., 8.

⁴Ibid., 8.

⁵Ibid., 8.

⁶Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal Surviving The Indian Residential School* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988), 43.

⁷Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 9.

often mild, fair, and effective.⁸ How Aboriginal communities educated their youth through traditional stories, ceremonial practices, and observation differed from how colonists educated their children by means of formal school-based education. As a result of this difference, colonists believed that Aboriginal peoples needed to be civilized and Christianized to be equipped for the broader, Euro-Canadian society.

Due to this belief, in 1879, the federal government appointed Nicholas Flood Davin, an Irish-born, Toronto-based journalist, to investigate the First Nations boarding school system in the United States with the intention of opening up similar schools in Canada.⁹ At the time of Davin's investigation, the United States was in the process of establishing off-reserve, government-run industrial schools as opposed to on-reserve boarding schools.¹⁰ This school system that Davin discovered, would become similar to the residential school system that would soon be established in Canada following Davin's investigation. The purpose of these off-reserve industrial schools was to remove Aboriginal children from their reserves and place them in one of these institutions far from their home for several years.¹¹ At these schools, the children would be taught life skills that would prepare them to earn a living within the Euro-Canadian way of life.¹² After his investigation, Davin recommended that the government, with the help of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches, establish an industrial school system of its own.¹³ While some Aboriginal communities had already established formal, government-funded schools on their reserves, where the Chief had an influence in the education taught to the youth, Davin thought it was important that the schools be under complete control of

⁸Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal Surviving The Indian Residential School*, 46.

⁹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 10.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 9.

¹²*Ibid.*, 10.

¹³*Ibid.*, 10.

the Churches.¹⁴ Davin supported his argument with two reasons. The first reason was to replace their existing spiritual and cultural beliefs with, what he and other colonists believed, the better faith of Christianity.¹⁵ The second reason he gave was that by employing missionaries as the educators, the government would be able to pay them a substandard rate compared to certified teachers because the missionaries would already be enthusiastic to welcome the Aboriginal youth into the Christian faith.¹⁶ Following his investigation, Sir John A. Macdonald opened up three residential schools in 1883, ran by Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, which became the first residential schools to take root in Canada.¹⁷ Over the years following, the number of residential schools increased drastically and by 1945, for example, there were seventy-six schools along with 8,865 residential students.¹⁸ As the years progressed, the motives behind the residential school system became clear: the schools were not established to meet the government's treaty obligations of educating the children, but rather to contribute to the broader social control movement of ending treaties all together by assimilating its Aboriginal population and creating a cultural genocide.

The residential school system was designed to create a cultural genocide as a means to assimilate Aboriginal youth into the broader, Euro-Canadian culture. Firstly, the schools segregated the youth from anything affiliated with their culture and cultural practices. The first method of segregation was the placement of First Nations children in schools far from their home reserves that would make visitation difficult for parents and running away difficult for students. Upon the arrival at these schools, children were stripped of their clothes and

¹⁴Ibid., 10.

¹⁵Ibid., 10.

¹⁶Ibid., 10.

¹⁷Ibid., 5.

¹⁸Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History Part 2 1939 to 2000* (Montreal & Kingston, London, and Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015): 9.

belongings, some of which had a sentimental value because they were handmade by their family members.¹⁹ Furthermore, the children's heads were inspected for lice, they were vigorously bathed, and their hair, which was often culturally kept long, was cut short.²⁰ The initial treatment that the children received from the Church officials at these schools gave the impression to students that their culture was dirty and uncivilized. This impression was most likely implied in an attempt to gain better cooperation from the children as they were taught to despise their Native heritage and were made to believe the Church's actions were for their greater good. In addition, the children were renamed for the purpose of establishing a new Christian identity as well as assigned a student number, to which they were referred to by more often than their new name.²¹ Also contributing to the enforcement of the new Christian identity was the prohibition of their native language. A past student from the Kamloops Indian Residential School, addressed by the pseudonym Martha, recalled "[they] were not allowed to speak [their] language; [they] weren't allowed to dance, sing because [the Church officials] told [the children] it was evil."²² Children who were caught speaking their native tongue or engaging in cultural acts, such as singing and dancing, were punished. The students' punishment varied from moderate, such as writing "I will not speak Indian any more" on the chalkboard a hundred times, to extreme forms of physical abuse, such as pushing sewing needles through the students' tongues.²³ The schools also censored the lives of the children by means of limiting or forbidding visitation with family and any mail coming to or being sent by the student "was opened and read before ever getting to

¹⁹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 22.

²⁰Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal Surviving The Indian Residential School*, 52.

²¹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 22.

²²Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal Surviving The Indian Residential School*, 58.

²³Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 24; David B. MacDonald & Graham Hudson, "The Genocide Question and Indian Residential Schools in Canada," *Canadian Journal Of Political Science* 45, no. 2 (n.d.): 432.

the addressee or the Indian child”²⁴. The strict censorship was mostly likely used to ensure the students were not writing in their native language, disclosing what was happening within the schools, and coordinating plans to leave the facilities. All of these methods the Churches used and the rules they enforced were done in an attempt to turn the child into a blank slate in hopes that over time, the child would lose their old sense of identity and start identifying themselves by their new, Christian identity.

The treatment of Aboriginal children within these schools was also arguably a genocide of the people themselves. Russ Moses, in his 1965 residential school memoir, recalled that “[they] were not treated as human beings, [they] were the Indian who had become shining examples of Anglican Christianity”.²⁵ The Churches believed that the Native culture was savage, especially in their traditional beliefs and customs, and that recruiting these people into their Churches was doing them a favour. More importantly, it would also prove the religion’s superiority over others if it were able to convert, what the Churches perceived as, such an uncivilized and immoral culture into their faith. The opinion that the Churches had on the Native culture became clear with how the children were treated in these schools. The poor nutrition, building infrastructure and sanitation, as well as the overcrowding within these schools created deadly environments for the students. Regarding nutrition, in Moses’ memoir, he described how malnourished the children were because of the limited and poor-quality food they were fed. He described how breakfast consisted of oatmeal with worms in it or corn meal porridge, which was appalling in quality, and two slices of bread.²⁶ The children were also limited to one glass of

²⁴Russ Moses, letter to the Department of Indian Affairs Branch, December 10, 1965, retrieved from Mona Gleason and Tamara Myers, *Bringing Children & Youth Into Canadian History: The Difference Kids Make* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2017): 372.

²⁵Ibid., 370.

²⁶Ibid., 369.

skim milk, which he described as being unfair since they milked cattle every day and never received the benefits of whole milk or butter from doing so.²⁷ Lunch consisted of one to one and a half slices of bread, depending on one's age, and what became termed as "rotten soup" which consisted of poor quality, decaying vegetables, and scraps of beef.²⁸ Dinner was hardly bigger than any of the previous meals, consisting of two slices of bread and jam, fried potatoes, a bun, and on odd nights, a piece of cake or an apple.²⁹ The food provided for the children at these schools did not provide an adequate, well-balanced, diet which consequently made them unhealthy and more vulnerable to falling ill and the onset of death.

In addition to the poor nutrition Aboriginal children were faced with, the poor infrastructure and sanitation also provided the breeding grounds for illnesses and diseases and the overcrowding within these facilities allowed them to quickly spread. In 1945, just seven years after its construction, a Roman-Catholic school in Cluny, Alberta was found to have not been properly water-proofed, the walls were beginning to crack, the foundation had no footings, the windows did not adequately keep out the cold wind in the winter, and the rooms could not be properly heated.³⁰ Another example of the poor infrastructure of these school, this time causing sanitary issues, was the discovery of the water and sewage problems at three Roman Catholic schools in Manitoba in the 1950s.³¹ One of these schools in particular, the school in Fort Alexander, was found to have fifteen to twenty centimetres of sewage in the boiler room that was seeping into the boys' playroom and threatening to back up toilets.³² Moreover, a bacteriological report on the water within the school revealed that it was contaminated with bacteria associated

²⁷Ibid., 369.

²⁸Ibid., 369.

²⁹Ibid., 370.

³⁰Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History Part 2 1939 to 2000* (Montreal & Kingston, London, and Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015): 199.

³¹Ibid., 202.

³²Ibid., 202.

with feces.³³ In response to these unhealthy living conditions of these schools, many of the principals made multiple reports to the Indian Affairs; all of which were ignored.³⁴ The ignorance of the government in regards to these reports suggests that the Canadian government did not care about the well being of the children. The government was mostly concerned with the assimilation of the Aboriginal children into the new, developing society and spending the least money to do so. This became evident in how the schools were initially built and how within a few years, the buildings were facing problems such as leakages, poor insulation and heating, and sewage and water issues. The overcrowding within these schools was another example of the government's refusal to spend anymore money to open up more schools that would comfortably house all of the children. However, it can also be argued that the overcrowding within these schools was a “disciplinary function by eliminating personal space and denying room for the flourishing of a resilient identity through which one might resist or reject the compulsion of similar bodies all following the same regulatory demands”.³⁵ Regardless of the reason, the poor quality of the buildings and the overcrowding allowed for the creation and spread of illnesses and fatal diseases. In the fall of 1941, the school in Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan reported that 75% of the 264 students each had a cold due to the cold temperature in the building that was much too low for pupil health and good work.³⁶ Due to the sewage and water issues some schools were experiencing, some children were exposed to dangerous diseases such as thyroid fever, an acute illness caused by Salmonella Typhi bacteria found in feces, by which without proper treatment, could be fatal.³⁷ The leading cause of death among the children at these schools was

³³Ibid., 202.

³⁴Ibid., 202.

³⁵Andrew Woolford & James Gacek, “Genocidal carcerality and Indian residential schools in Canada”, *Punishment & Society* 18, no. 4 (2016): 411.

³⁶Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History Part 2 1939 to 2000* (Montreal & Kingston, London, and Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015): 228.

³⁷Ibid., 229.

tuberculosis, which was already a problem within First Nations communities but with the overcrowding of the schools, one child who was infected could potentially infect the majority of the school.³⁸ Whether or not the Churches and the government intended to directly induce a genocide amongst Aboriginal people because of the poor nutrition, the poor quality of buildings and sanitation they inflicted on the children of these schools, many children entered the schools and never left.

The residential schools were also designed to establish and control the inferior social status of First Nations people upon their assimilation into the Euro-Canadian society. The opinion that the Churches had on the Native culture became clear with how the children were treated in these schools. In Moses' memoir, he described how formal education was the most neglected aspect of residential schools³⁹. Firstly, it was clear that the government wanted to spend the least amount of money possible on residential schools and First Nations education because the well-being of the Native child in a changing, formal education and career based society was not one of its priorities. Rather, the government's main goal was to assimilate the First Nations children into society, doing so in the cheapest way, and educate them enough to occupy lower-class positions that would not compete with the Euro-Canadians. The government gave complete control of these schools over to the Churches so that the salaries paid to the missionaries would not have to be on par with those of certified teachers in formal education.⁴⁰ As opposed to their Euro-Canadian counterparts, Aboriginal children received inadequate education. Most of the educators within these schools lacked proper qualifications and were often social misfits because there were no regulations. For example, in 1953, R.F. Davey, the

³⁸Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History Part 2 1939 to 2000*, 210.

³⁹Russ Moses, letter to the Department of Indian Affairs Branch, December 10, 1965: 371.

⁴⁰Ibid., 373.

acting superintendent of education for Indian Affairs reported that of the 198 employed educators working at the Roman Catholic residential schools, seventy-nine had no teaching certificates or had little to no education at a high school level.⁴¹ It was hard to attract good and qualified teachers because of the pay differential between teachers working in public schools compared to those working in residential schools. At one point, teachers in public schools were earning between \$500 and \$650 a year whereas teachers working in residential schools were only making \$300 annually.⁴²

Additionally, the education that the Aboriginal children did receive, despite the lack of qualified teachers, was also used as a way to ensure that they would enter mainstream society occupying lower-class positions, primarily as servants and workers.⁴³ It was believed that the First Nations people did not have the physical or moral get-up to compete with the Euro-Canadians, and so little was invested into their education.⁴⁴ The formal education within these schools consisted of copying and memorizing, with little teaching and talking.⁴⁵ There was no formal testing, instead children were required to answer questions verbatim to the answers in their textbooks.⁴⁶ Academic aspiration was also limited for more than half of the operation years of the residential school system. Only after the Second World War were courses at the secondary level offered to students.⁴⁷ In comparison to education, religion had consistently been of higher priority within these schools over the years, where chapel was held every evening and church

⁴¹Ibid., 116.

⁴²Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 27.

⁴³David B. MacDonald & Graham Hudson, "The Genocide Question and Indian Residential Schools in Canada", *Canadian Political Science Association* 45, no. 2 (June 2012): 432.

⁴⁴Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 25.

⁴⁵Ibid., 26.

⁴⁶Ibid., 26.

⁴⁷Ibid., 25.

was held twice on Sundays.⁴⁸ Many former residential school students recall that their educational experience mostly consisted of religion. Janice Accose, a former student from Cowessess, Saskatchewan residential school, recalled her daily routine was “early rise, prayers, shower and dress, meals premised by prayers, school premised by more prayers, rigidly programmed exercise time, catechism instruction and bedtime, which was premised by excruciatingly painful periods of time spent on our knees in prayer circles”.⁴⁹ Also of higher priority over education was the work and manual labour inflicted on the children. Most residential schools, such as the Mohawk Institute where Moses had studied, had a policy where students, from Monday to Friday, would spend half of their day in school and the other half working.⁵⁰ Saturdays usually consisted of just work and Sundays were dedicated to church.⁵¹ Depending on what work that needed to be done, it was common for the Church officials to have the children miss school to complete the job. Harvesting, for example, would require weeks of long and hard labour and, as a result, some of the children did not attend school until well into the fall.⁵² The work performed by the students was also gendered, which arguably was intentional in an attempt to disrupt traditional Indigenous gender relations.⁵³ Traditionally, Indigenous communities did not have a gendered division of labour because everyone worked together to ensure survival and work done by both genders was considered equal in value. The enforcement of gendered labour was an act of social control to assimilate the Aboriginal children into a society where work was gendered. In their daily work, boys occupied jobs in the trades

⁴⁸Russ Moses, letter to the Department of Indian Affairs Branch, December 10, 1965: 371.

⁴⁹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 26.

⁵⁰Russ Moses, letter to the Department of Indian Affairs Branch, December 10, 1965: 370.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 370.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 370.

⁵³Andrew Woolford & James Gacek, “Genocidal carcerality and Indian residential schools in Canada”, 412.

such as driving horses and tractors, caring for cattle, gardening, harvesting, carpentry, painting, and doing shoe repairs.⁵⁴ The girls laboured in jobs such as working in the market garden selling the produce that was harvested by the boys, sewing, knitting, cooking, housekeeping, and dairy work.⁵⁵ Altogether, the poor quality of education and the limitation to academic aspiration, and the higher priority of religion and gendered, low-skilled work was strategically planned by the government and the Churches to both assimilate and control the First Nations placement in the social hierarchy after successful assimilation. The government invested the least amount of money that would educate the children enough to become functioning members of society, while the Churches worked on replacing the children's preconceived spirituality and beliefs with, what they believed was, their better faith. Furthermore, the Churches trained the students in lower-class, trade work to solidify their lower, working-class positions in society.

By the 1940s, it was apparent that the residential school system was failing to achieve its educational goals, one of which was to achieve social control in creating a cultural genocide and educating the First Nations children to occupy lower-class positions in society. The academic achievement of the students was low and in 1930, only three percent of the residential school students went beyond grade six in their education compared to the thirty-three percent of students in the Canadian public schools.⁵⁶ Further, after completion of their schooling, many children were returning back to their home reserves.⁵⁷ The returning of children back to their reserves made it clear that the residential school system also failed to successfully assimilate the

⁵⁴Andrew Woolford & James Gacek, "Genocidal carcerality and Indian residential schools in Canada", 412; Russ Moses, letter to the Department of Indian Affairs Branch, December 10, 1965, 371.

⁵⁵Andrew Woolford & James Gacek, "Genocidal carcerality and Indian residential schools in Canada", 412; Russ Moses, letter to the Department of Indian Affairs Branch, December 10, 1965, 371.

⁵⁶Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children*, 18.

⁵⁷Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History Part 2 1939 to 2000*, 10.

children into society. Harry Bertram Hawthorn identified the main reason why the residential school system failed in the second volume of his report “A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies: Part 2” that was published in October of 1967 by the Indian Affairs Branch of the federal government. The main reason Hawthorn identified was socialization.⁵⁸ The First Nations child entered the school already at a disadvantage because most of the children came from communities which were low-income, where the men took up seasonal, unskilled occupations, the level of formal education was low and English was seldom spoken, if at all.⁵⁹ Native children within these communities were educated through means of stories passed down from generations that would teach them how to correctly live their lives with respect to the land and living things around them and through observation of how their parents lived.⁶⁰ The culture was also highly valued and persistent and life was contained within the community although some shopping was done in nearby, non-Native communities.⁶¹ In comparison, most non-Native children came from middle-class homes where the school system was geared toward their needs, reflecting middle-class values and expectations.⁶² These children were raised with parents who had an education that was either equivalent to high school or higher, their fathers occupied skilled and well-paying professions, and where family “values were oriented to upward mobility through education and professional status”.⁶³ From the early years of these children’s lives, the parents socialized them by placing an

⁵⁸M.A. Tremblay, F.G. Vallee, & F.G. Ryan, Vancouver: British Columbia University and Others, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies. Volume II*, n.p. (1967): 109.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 109.

⁶⁰Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools: They Came for the Children* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation of Canada, 2012), 4.

⁶¹M.A. Tremblay, F.G. Vallee, & F.G. Ryan, Vancouver: British Columbia University and Others, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies. Volume II*, n.p. (1967): 109.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 109.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 109.

importance on the values of achieving an education that would equip them to carry out the role of becoming a functioning member within their society.

The difference of the social values and expectations between both social groups was where conflict arose in the residential school system. In Hawthorn's words, "[each] major social group has a set of basic and consistent patterns of life which are related to various cultural values. Differences in these patterns account for some of the conflicts which arise when members of different subcultures come into contact for the first time."⁶⁴ Since the First Nations peoples' patterns of life differed from those of the Euro-Canadians, the colonizers believed they needed to civilize these people into their mainstream society. The education that the colonizers placed on Aboriginal children reflected their own cultural values. The Aboriginal children were placed in a strange, school situation that they were unfamiliar with and were expected to grasp concepts that they were never previously taught and start speaking an unfamiliar language with no proper instruction. These children did not come from family backgrounds where formal education was valued, however the expectation of them valuing formal education was still placed on them. Although, as previously mentioned, the children's academic aspirations were purposely limited, many children failed to even complete the education that was expected of them. As a result, the lack of proper socialization was one of the leading factors in the eventual government takeover of these schools in 1969, which took away the control from the Churches, and began their closures.⁶⁵

The era of the Canadian residential schools was one the darkest chapters in the country's history. This chapter revealed the power of the European society as it created the residential

⁶⁴Ibid., 109.

⁶⁵Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History Part 2 1939 to 2000*, 13.

school system to inflict social control on the First Nations people with the intent of inducing their cultural genocide. With the, albeit limited, financial support of the government and the operation of these schools in the hands of the Canadian Churches, the residential school system was designed to assimilate Aboriginal children into the Euro-Canadian society. The creation of these schools was based on the colonists' belief that the Aboriginal peoples' faith, cultural values, and expectations were uncivilized and would become a burden to the country. In an attempt to correct, what was believed as, the Aboriginal peoples' uncivilized way of life, the schools induced a cultural genocide by forcefully removing the children from their homes and placing them in institutions far from their home reserves. In addition, these schools separated the children from their culture completely by enforcing rules and policies that prohibited the use of their native language and the engagement of any cultural practices. The schools also limited or forbade visitations with the children's families. Their daily life was also highly censored and monitored to ensure children were behaving accordingly. The residential schools can also be argued as inflicting a genocide of the Aboriginal peoples themselves. It was clear the federal government wanted to spend the least amount of money on educating and assimilating First Nations youth, at the expense of the health and well-being of the residential students. The cheap and poor-quality of the school buildings as well as the poor-quality of food the children were provided with created dangerous living conditions by subjecting them to the creation and spread of deadly diseases. Lastly, the curriculum at these schools was designed to subject the First Nations children to occupy the lower class ranking in society. This became evident in the quality of education the children received such as the hiring of unqualified teachers and the limitation to their academic aspiration. Further, the schools placed a higher priority on religion in an attempt to undermine and replace the children's preconceived spirituality and beliefs as well as the

training of low-skilled work, such as farming, sewing, and cooking. Evidently, the residential school system failed to assimilate and adequately educate its students, as the academic achievement at these schools was consistently low and many children returned back to their reserves instead of entering the Euro-Canadian society. As of today, many of the schools still stand across Canada, and although they remain empty and unoccupied, they stand as reminder of one of the darkest chapters of Canadian history.

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