

Assignment #2c: Policy Analysis Unessay



Social Welfare in Canada (SSW-122)

November 27, 2023

Indian Act Restaurant Menu

Welcome to the Indian Act Restaurant. All Prices start at \$18.76.

The Indian Act (Our Special)

Was and is our special: A piece of our history that regulates all our menu items: includes trying to control First Nation populations (does not include Metis or Inuit), determines the identity, political structures, governance, cultural practices, and education of First Nations.

If item used by women, they may lose their Indian Status until 1985.

The Years

The 1876: The Original: Comes with important history. Basis of foundation may be changed in the future.

The 1951: The Semi-Revised: Includes elimination of bans on potlatching and other traditional ritual and spiritual practices.

The 1985: The Full Revised: Will remove all remaining enfranchisement clauses and those who indulge who lost status through marriage can now regain it (Comes with Bill C-31).

The Papers

The White Paper: A controversial item that hopes to abolish legal document relating to Indigenous people specially our special (The Indian Act).

The Red Paper: You may know by (Citizens Plus) our counter to our White Paper option.

Residential Schools

Our worst and most regrettable item. The horrors of residential schools are unimaginable.

The Indian Act introduced the residential school system. The point of the residential schools was to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, traditions, families, and cultures to “Westernize” the children. We ask you to wear orange when attending the restaurant to honor thousands of children that never came home.

The Impacts

The impact of our special (The Indian Act) is that no other specials have had an impact on the Indigenous population in Canada. The Indian Act has been around for centuries and has been and still is a piece of history in the legislation of Canada. It has been a part of generations of the Indigenous. Many positive changes have been made to our special but for me as a white person who does not have any consequences from the act, the improvements I would make would come from my trust of the Indigenous community.

Rationale

I chose the food menu to help describe the historical context of the Indian Act. When I started creating the menu, my ideas were processed quite clearly, which I usually do not get to do well. The Indian Act, the policy that I chose “was, and still is, a piece of legislation that regulates every aspect of First Nation life (*Hicks and Stokes, 2021, p. 311*). I tried to have fun with my unessay with clever word play. Some touches I like are how all items are \$18.76, a nod to the the Indian Act being introduced in 1867. “Since Canada was created in 1867, the federal government has been in charge of Aboriginal affairs.” (*Montpetit I, 2011*). Some of the topics on my menu, I felt needed to be taken seriously, such as residential schools which I made sure stood out from the rest of the unessay menu.

To include all five questions in my unessay format as a food menu was challenging. For the first three questions, I answered how the social policy is addressed by showing how the Indian Act discriminated against and how the Indian Act was deigned to control the First Nation population not including Metis and Inuit peoples and how the Indian Act determines the identity, governance, political structures, cultural practices, and the education of First Nation peoples. For the second question about historical context, I included years of revisions to the Indian Act such as 1876, 1951 when “significant revisions to the Indian Act eliminated bans on potlaching and other traditional ritual and spiritual practices.” (*Canadian Museum of History, 2017*) and 1985. I also talked about the saddening stories of residential schools and the children who never came home in an effort to “westernize” the children. Question four asks about how the Indian Act address equity and inclusion. Unfortunately, in this case, the Indian Act was created to accomplish the opposite of equity and inclusion. The entire point of the Indian Act was to try and take governance over First Nation peoples. To take away their cultures and land. The Indian Act created residential school systems. A person could argue that residential schools tried to include First Nation children in the “Western World” but accomplished this by stripping away their culture. The last item on my menu

was the impacts which in my menu included residential schools, loss of status and many more. Before I list my recommended changes, it is important to mention the Indian Act has gone through many different changes and revisions with the hope of benefiting the First Nation population. For that reason, my recommendation is that First Nations peoples should decide what is right for them and was it beneficial. I am not a member of the First Nation community; I am white male and for that reason I should have no say in the Indian Act. My recommendation is that I trust the First Nation people to decide what is right.

There is lots to learn about the Indian Act. Reading about the variations of the Indian Act as well as researching more about the White and Red Papers, I learned even more details and how the Inuit and Metis people were originally not part of the Indian Act. To me, the residential school system is the most important facet. I learned lots about intergeneration trauma and how it affected relationships in families. I remember in 2021 when the unmarked graves were found and when researching for the residential school system, I learned “Current estimates put the number of children who died across the country at between 4,100 and 6,000, but the numbers are believed to be much greater.” (Seeber, E, 2021) At least 4,100-6,000 children... At least is the most difficult part. How many perished? How many families and friends lost loved ones? Thousands...

References

- Canadian Museum of History (2017)* <https://www.historymuseum.ca/blog/further-changes-are-made-to-the-indian-act/>
- Hick and Stokes (2021) Social Welfare in Canada, 4th Edition: Inclusion, Equity and Social Justice*
- Montpetit, I (2011) Background: The Indian Act:* <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/background-the-indian-act-1.1056988>

Parrot, C (2022) Indian Act. The Canadian Encyclopedia
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act>

Seeber, E (2021) Survivor of B.C. Residential School Shares his Story <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/it-wasn-t-a-school-it-was-a-place-to-kill-the-indian-in-us-survivor-of-b-c-residential-school-shares-his-story-1.5514874>