

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ALBERTA LEGISLATIVE TIMELINES

Summary: Between the 1880s and the early 1900s, the western Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta underwent considerable change in their population and social and cultural landscape as a result of the colonization and displacement of Indigenous peoples and their lands. Federal, provincial and municipal governments attempted to fill the territories with white Americans and Western European immigrants (as the most desirable), and discouraged non-white immigration. Legislation affected the entry and lives of Chinese, Japanese, Black and Jewish people wanting to enter the province, but corporations still managed to draw Chinese and Black labourers whose work was deemed cheaper. Racially motivated legislation that marked this timeframe included the popularly known *Head Tax* of 1884, the *Immigration Act* of 1911, and the *Naturalization Act* of 1914, which were approved in anticipation to the peak of the Ku Klux Klan in Western Canada in the 1920s that fueled “British Canadian nationalism” particularly from the lower-middle and upper-working class populations.

1834. British Emancipation Act: emancipation of enslaved people over 25 years of age and prohibition to introduce enslaved people into certain parts of Canada

1849. Vancouver Island is founded by white British settlers as a British colony

1858. British Columbia mainland is proclaimed a British colony

1834. British Emancipation Act: emancipation of enslaved people over 25 years of age and prohibition to introduce enslaved people into certain parts of Canada

1884. The Federal government bans ceremonial dances as part of the *Indian Act*, such as the Potlach and Tamanawas on the West Coast. Engagement in Tamanawas (or ‘Potlach’) is considered a misdemeanour

1858. The governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island, Sir James Douglas, initiates Black migration to the West Coast by encouraging the migration of “thirty-five Black men and women to the colony from San Francisco.” By 1860, the community grew to a number of 600 people seeking opportunities, safety from discrimination and from recently reinstated rights to slave owners in California.

1866. The island and mainland merge as a colony

1868. British Columbia joins the Canadian Confederation

1880. British Columbia government under Walkem asks Ottawa to prohibit Chinese labour from railway construction

1883. Resolution requesting that the dominion government focus on white immigration to B.C.

1882. B.C. government passes resolution to employ white workers, instead of

1895-1951. Cultural bans were expanded to include Indigenous festivals and celebrations where there was an exchange of money, goods, the “wounding of humans or animals”. People engaging in these activities or indirectly encouraging them were criminalized, facing imprisonment. This included the Sun Dance practiced by the Blackfoot people in southern Alberta.

1905. Alberta becomes a province in Canada

1911. Canada bans the immigration of anyone identified as Black to Canada as a result of pressure from Alberta residents, especially the City of Edmonton, which also passed a resolution banning Black residents.

1916. Women gain right to vote and run for office in Alberta (1918 federally)

1920. Three-fifths of a Calgary neighbourhood signed a petition asking for a ban on Blacks buying a home in the area

1922. Equal property rights enshrined for men and women

Chinese workers (difficult implementation in private sector)

1884. *Act to Prevent The Immigration of Chinese* preventing the entrance of Chinese into B.C. is passed and shortly after declared unconstitutional *

1884. Act to Regulate the Chinese Population of B.C. (also known as the *Head Tax*) limits entrance of Chinese people by requiring all persons over the age of 14 pay an annual \$10 tax, equivalent to approximately \$300, for a work license *

* The last two acts initiated a series of laws preventing Chinese labour, immigration and settlement (which also impacted Japanese people), such as the policies that follow

1890. The employment of Chinese in the coal mines is forbidden

1884. The Federal government bans ceremonial dances such as the Potlach and Tamanawas on the West Coast, setting the example for the criminalization of what was already considered “savage”

1924. City of Edmonton bans Black people from using public swimming pools

1928-1972. *Sexual Sterilization Act* specifically targeting and manipulating Indigenous women into undergoing sterilization such as tubal ligation in Alberta

1929. Persons Case recognizing women as persons

1937. Amendment of *Sexual Sterilization Act* to permit the sterilization of “mental defectives” without their consent

1940. Petitions to ban Black immigration and for segregation; anti-black riot in Calgary

1942. *Land Sales Prohibition Act*

1946. Calgary Board of Education hired the province’s first Black teacher

1946. *Alberta Bill of Rights*, also known as *An Act Respecting the Rights of Alberta Citizens*

1947. Alberta Association for the Advancement of Coloured People

1960. The barring of immigrants based on nationality, citizenship, ethnic group,

1895-1951. Cultural bans were expanded onto Indigenous festivals and celebrations where there was an exchange of money, goods, the “wounding of humans or animals”. People engaging in these activities or indirectly encouraging them were criminalized, facing imprisonment.

1899. Sanitary regulations are enclosed in the Health Act regarding Chinese places of congregation

1900. Unanimous agreement of the House of Commons that Chinese and people of Asian descent are barred from becoming citizens and British subjects

1911. Through the *Immigration Act*, Canada bans the immigration of anyone identified as Black to Canada as a result of pressure from Alberta residents. In 1910, section 38 of the act bars entry to people of racial background deemed unsuitable to the climate and expectations of Canada.

1914. *Naturalization Act* to acquire citizenship requires applicants to prove residency for at least 5 years, knowledge of French or English and proof of “good

occupation, class or region of origin is ended in Canada

1960. Indigenous peoples who were categorized as “Status Indians” as defined in the *Indian Act* gain the right to vote

1966. *Alberta Human Rights Act* and creation of the Human Rights Branch

1969. Amendment to the *Alberta Human Rights Act* prohibiting discrimination with respect to residential rental accommodation

1969. White Paper for the elimination of Indian Status

character,” the latter of which was a synonym of respectability and adaptability to “British” values and culture

1917. Women gain right to vote and run for office in B.C. (1918 federally)

1919. Black workers of the Canadian National Railway under the leadership of J.A. Robinson organize the Order of Sleeping Car Porters (OSCP) “first association for black labourers in North America”, only recognized as a separate category for the collective bargaining agreement by the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC)

1922. Equal property rights enshrined for men and women

1933-1973. *Sexual Sterilization Act* in British Columbia specifically targeting and manipulating Indigenous women into undergoing sterilization, such as tubal ligation

1929. Persons Case recognizing women as persons

1937. Amendment of *Sexual Sterilization Act* to

permit the sterilization of “mental defectives” without their consent

1940. Petitions to the federal government from municipalities and local populations to ban Black immigration and favour segregation

1942. *Land Sales Prohibition Act*

1960. The barring of immigrants based on nationality, citizenship, ethnic group, occupation, class or region of origin is ended in Canada

1960. Aboriginal peoples gain the right to vote

1969. White Paper for the elimination of Indian Status

1970s. Canada Council Grants for students in dance and performance to study in Europe and internationally

1971. Almost four-decade-old neighbourhood of Hogen’s Alley, home to a vibrant Black artistic community, was removed by Vancouver’s municipal urban renewal projects that resulted in the construction

of the Georgia viaduct	
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Emilie Jabouin: Research and Context "Summary of Legislative Changes in BC and Alberta"

Rohan Kulkarni: Research on Alberta Legislation