

**Big Idea:** Treaties 6, 7 and 8 boundaries cover most of the land we know as Alberta. These treaties discuss rights including entitlement to reserve land, hunting, fishing and trapping as well as health and education issues for First Nations people.

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study.

### References:

Numbered Treaties

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1360948213124/1360948312708>

The Role of the Indian Agent

[http://www3.brandonu.ca/cjns/17.2/cjns17no2\\_pg227-258.pdf](http://www3.brandonu.ca/cjns/17.2/cjns17no2_pg227-258.pdf)

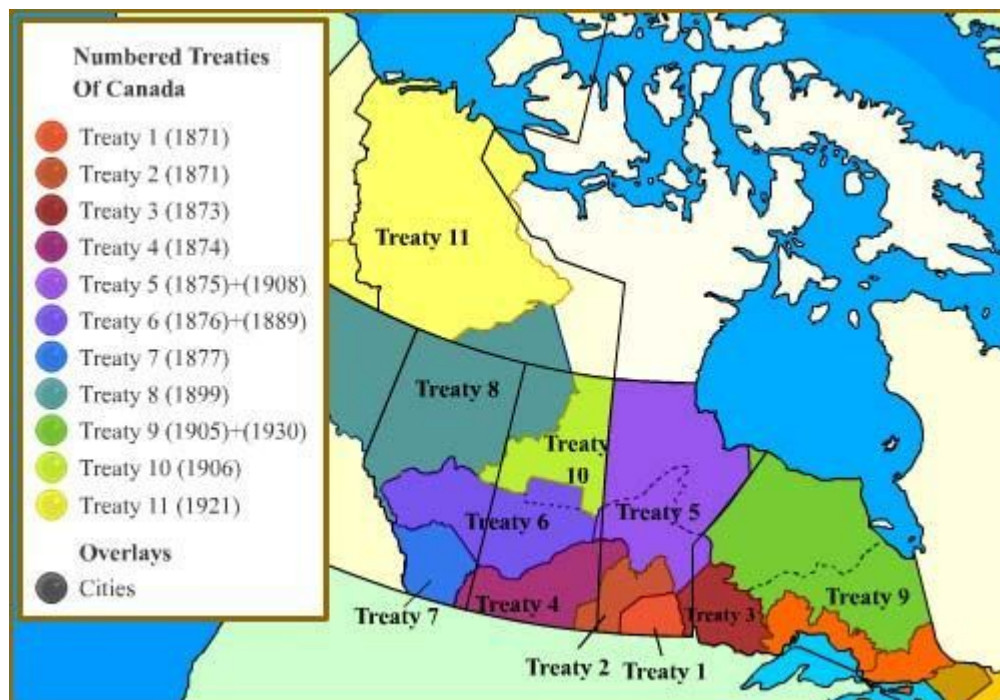
Essential Terminology

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Terminology%20%20%28PD-WT-16a%29.pdf>

### Numbered Treaties

In Canada, treaties are legal documents made between the First Nations people and the Crown. Prior to Confederation, treaties were signed by the British Crown and the First Nations people. Early contact treaties were mostly concerning issues of peace and friendship.

Today there are eleven “Numbered Treaties” which were signed between 1871 and 1921. The government thought the treaties would help to assimilate First Nation peoples into white, colonial society and culture. For First Nations people, treaties were oral agreements that discussed the sharing of the land. These oral agreements were later written by the government, omitting certain oral promises. Oral tradition and spoken words held more importance to First Nations people than what was written on paper. First Nations groups of Alberta and government representatives understood the process of treaty negotiation and signing from very different perspectives.



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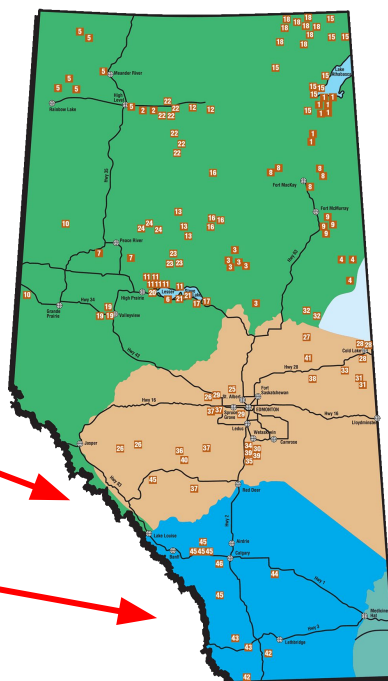


## Numbered Treaties in Alberta

Treaty 8 was signed in 1899

Treaty 6 was signed in 1876.

Treaty 7 was signed in 1877

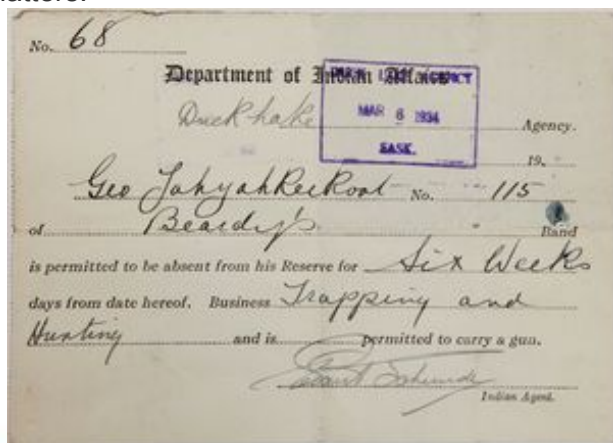


## The Role of the Indian Agent

Much reserve land was lost to dishonest deals by the Indian agents. These agents were assigned to Indian reserves and bands and attempted to act as a liaison between the Government and the First Nations communities. Indian Agents played a large role in the governing of reserves and communities after the making of treaties.

Indian Agents were hired by the Department of Indian Affairs which was created in the 1880's. Indian Agencies controlled a number of different bands and reserves within a geographical boundary. For example, one agency might oversee three different reserves. The Blood reserve was considered so large that it was seen as needing their own agency within the community. The Indian Agents were individuals who ran the Agency and could have several employees such as farming instructors, clerks, ration issuers and interpreters.

When the position of Indian Agent was first established in the 1870's, their role was to ensure social control and social transformation of First Nations groups. Indian Agents had the power to recommend a Chief be removed from council, the power to enforce attendance at residential schools, enforce leaving and entering the reserve which included moving, allow cultural and spiritual practices, define who is in need of rations, and act as a justice of the peace in dealing with legal matters.



*Permit from Indian Agency in Duck Lake Saskatchewan allowing a First Nations man to leave for hunting purposes. Dated 1934*

## Acknowledgement:

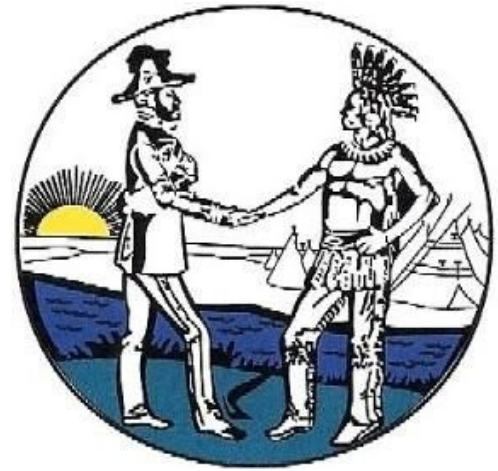
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## Treaty 6

- Signed at Fort Carlton in 1876 and at Fort Pitt a few months later. Additional signings occurred in 1877-1882, 1889, 1950-56. Adhesions were signed in 1877, 1944, 1950.
- 50 Nations signed this treaty including Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota and Dene Peoples.
- At the original signing, approximately 2000 First Nations people came to witness the event.
- It was agreed that a medicine chest (seen as health care) would be maintained by the Indian Agent for use of the band, assistance would be provided in times of famine and pestilence and once bands had been surveyed, the treaty signatories would receive a supplement of \$1000 per year to assist in the cultivation of the land for the first three years. The promise of free education was written in the treaties.



Signed by Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris, James McKay, Indian Commissioner, W J Christie and head chiefs of the Carlton Indians: MIS-TO-WA-SIS (X his mark); AU-TUK-UKKOOP (X his mark); and chiefs: (all signed with X) PEE-YAHN-KAH-NICHK-OO-SIT; AH-YAH-TUS-KUM-IK-IM-AM; KEE-TOOWA-HAW; CHA-KAS-TA-PAY-SIN; JOHN SMITH; JAMES SMITH; CHIP-EE-WAY-AN and councillors. (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).



*Above: Mayor of Edmonton Don Iveson and the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations*

*To the Left: Treaty 6 medals presented to Michel Calliou (Callihoo) in Calgary in 1878 upon signing an adhesion to Treaty 6. Courtesy of the Musée Héritage Museum*

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## Treaty 7

Prior to this signing, smallpox epidemics were killing communities, the buffalo was starting to diminish due to increased competition from Cree and Métis hunters, as well as the mass slaughter of buffalo on the prairies by non-Indigenous groups to make room for the railroad and settlement.

Treaty 7 was signed in 1877 in southern Alberta at Soyoohpawahko, or Bowfoot Crossing. Five Alberta First Nations signed the treaty. The Kanai (Blood), Siksika (Blackfoot), Piikani (Peigan), Nakoda (Stoney) and Tsuu T'ina (sarcee). There was 4000 First Nations people present to witness the negotiations and signing.

This treaty did not include the medicine chest clause, the famine clause and assisting with cultivation clause. Treaty 7 signatories wished to concentrate their agricultural efforts on ranching. With this in mind, the treaty commissioners agreed to reduce the amount of the agricultural implements and seed stock in exchange for an increased number of cattle, with an exception for some bands who wanted to focus on farming. Another significant difference from Treaty 6 is that Treaty 7 states that the Crown will pay for teachers' salaries instead of the maintenance of school buildings. Instead of promising schools on reserve, the only guarantee is that the government will pay the salary of teachers.



*Treaty 7 is seen as unique as there was only 5 Nations that signed. In Treaty 8 there was 24 nations, and 50 nations in Treaty 6.*

Signed by  
DAVID LAIRD, Lieutenant-Governor of North West Territories and Special Indian Commissioner JAMES F MACLEOD, Lieutenant Colonel, NWMP and Special Indian Commissioner CHAPO-MEXICO, or CROWFOOT, Head Chief of the South Blackfeet MATOSE-APIW, or OLD SUN, Head Chief of the North Blackfeet STAMISCOTOCAR, or Bull Head, Head Chief of the Sarcees MEKASTO, or RED CROW, Head Chief of the South Bloods SOOTENAH or RAINY CHIEF, Head Chief of the North Bloods SAKOYE-AOTAN or HEAVY SHIELD, Head Chief of the Middle Blackfeet ZOATZE-TAPITAPIW, or SETTING ON AN EAGLE TAIL, Head Chief of the North Peigan MAS-GWA-AH-SID or BEAR'S PAW CHE-ME-KA, or JOHN KI-CHI-PWOT or JACOB (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).



### Blood Tribe

Population: 13,000  
Language: Blackfoot



### Tsuu T'ina Nation

Population: 2,500  
Language: Dene Suline



### Piikani

Population: 4,000  
Language: Blackfoot



### Siksika Nation

Population: 7,500  
Language: Blackfoot



### Stoney Tribe

Chiniki, Wesley, Bearspaw  
Combined Population: 5,500  
Language: Nakoda

## Acknowledgement:

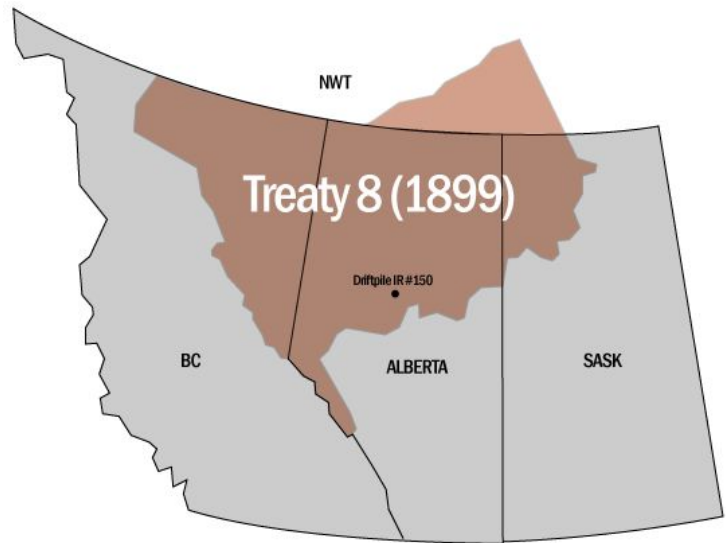
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## Treaty 8

- Signed at Lesser Slave Lake in 1899.
- 24 Alberta First Nations signed the treaty.
- Adhesions were signed in 1900, 1909, 1911, 1913
- Over 840,000 square kilometers of land was set aside; this is the largest land area covered by a numbered treaty.
- In 2000, the Tsek'ehne of McLeod Lake were officially brought into Treaty 8.



Prompted by the discovery of valuable resources in Canada's north, particularly the Klondike gold rush, the treaty involved First Nations whose social organization was different than those of the Indigenous peoples the government had previously encountered in any other negotiations. The terms and implementation of Treaty 8 differ because of their more northern location, some of these clauses mean long-lasting consequences for the governance and peoples of that area.

Treaty 8 is relatively similar with few marked differences. The primary addition in Treaty 8 was there were provisions for individuals who chose to live outside the band. Known as "lands in severalty", these individuals would receive 160 acres. This was a response to the fact that populations were not as concentrated in the North. Farm stock and implements and a suit of clothing for headmen every third year was a unique clause to Treaty 8.



Signed by: David Laird, Treaty Commissioner; J.A.J. McKenna, Treaty Commissioner; and J.H. Ross, Treaty Commissioner. The chief was: KEE-NOO-SHAY-OO and his mark (X); the Headmen were (and they all marked their signatures with an "X"): MOOSTOOS; FELIX GIROUX; WEE-CHEE-WAY-SIS; CHARLES NEE-SUE-TA-SIS CAPTAIN (headman for Sturgeon Lake) (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).

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## Myths and Facts about Treaties

### MYTH: “Europeans just came and took the land.”

FACT: British law in Canada required treaties be negotiated before any settlement in the west could occur. Many First Nations groups entered into treaties because they saw it as beneficial to their people. First Nations groups may have desired to sign treaties for many reasons; however, a lot of communities signed out of desperation. The disappearance of the buffalo had created mass starvation. Smallpox and European diseases were killing the masses and they needed health care. First Nations didn't have “formal education” and saw treaties as a means to survive in a white world.

### MYTH: “All treaties are the same.”

FACT: The general form and scope of the agreements are similar, but the individual circumstances of the treaties have unique clauses. Each treaty is a reflection of the parties' goals and hard fought desires. All Alberta treaties are comprised of all the usual terms such as giving 640 acres per family of five for reserve land.

### MYTH: “Indigenous People get free money.”

FACT: It was agreed on in each treaty of Alberta that all treaty members (those who signed a treaty) would receive \$5.00 every year, this is called a treaty annuity. In order to honour obligations set out in the treaties, individuals who are “treaty” still get \$5.00 per year. This is despite inflation and has not increased or changed since 1899.

### MYTH: “The Métis and Inuit were included in the treaties.”

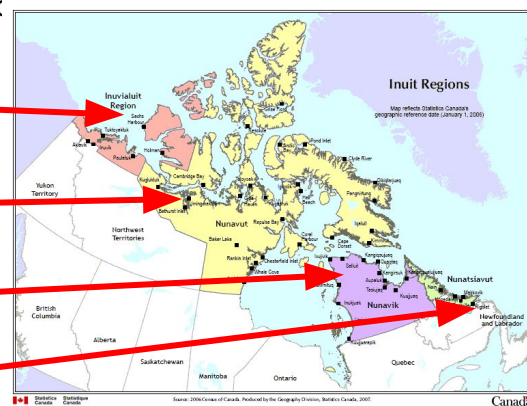
FACT: The Métis and Inuit were not included in the signing of the numbered treaties. The Métis did not sign treaties with the Crown. Because Métis did not sign treaties, they also did not have reserves, or lands reserved for them. Métis people were offered “scrip” which was designed to extinguish Métis title. Scrip was a certificate that could be exchanged for land (land scrip) or for money to buy land (money scrip). For more information see *Conversation Guide: Métis in Alberta (Part 2)*. The Inuit also did not sign treaties. Because of laws based out of the Confederation of 1867, Inuit people fell outside the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs. Based on the wording of Section 91 (24) of the British North America Act which stipulates federal responsibility for “Indians” and no other Aboriginal group, the Inuit were considered “regular citizens”. Canadian Inuit are represented by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), which translates to 'Inuit are united in Canada'. ITK was established in 1971 to help bring the Inuit of Canada together in asserting their rights to sovereignty and governance over traditional Inuit lands. There are no ‘treaties’ signed with Inuit, although Inuit have signed 5 modern land claims with the Government of Canada as early as 1975 (James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement). Each Inuit region in Canada has organizations responsible for their land claims implementation. There are four Inuit regions in Canada, collectively known as Inuit Nunangat. The term “Inuit Nunangat” is a Canadian Inuit term that includes land, water, and ice. Inuit consider the land, water, and ice to be the homeland and integral to their

Inuvialuit (of the Northwest Territories)

Nunavut

Nunavik (Quebec)

Nunatsiavut (Labrador)



### Acknowledgement:

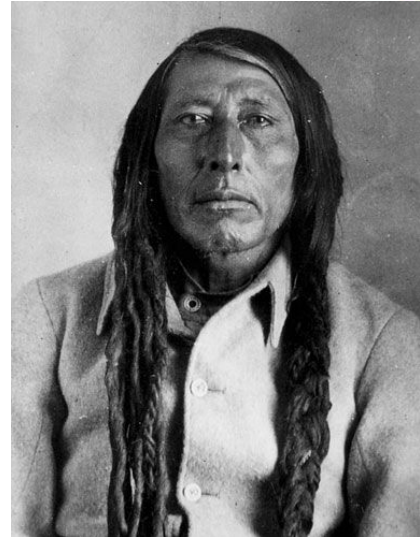
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**MYTH: “All Indigenous people are ‘treaty’ people”**

**FACT:** There were many groups that are not considered “treaty Indians.” If you were any of these groups (described below) you were considered a non-status Indian, this meant that you would not have a recognized land base and would have to spend years fighting for the rights to your original land that was once home to your ancestors. Not everyone wanted to sign a treaty, some were left out entirely in the treaty signing and negotiations, some were not consulted with and were forced away from their homeland. Some First Nations bands were not present at the original negotiations and signed at later dates in adhesions to treaty 6, 7, or 8.

Pihtokahanapiwiyn (c. 1842 – 4 July 1886), better known Poundmaker, later a Chief, peacemaker and advocate for Indigenous rights



- In treaty eight, Conroy reported that the Fort St. John Indians were reluctant to adhere to treaty, he noted that “the Indians at this place are very independent and cannot be persuaded to take treaty...they did not want to take treaty...and had no trouble in making their own living.” This group was admitted into treaty adhesions years later.
- In 1907, the Canadian Government signed an Order In Council that set aside land to establish the now popular Jasper National Park. The Mountain Métis were forced to leave in 1909 and 1910. The authorities seized guns and the families had to flee and settle far away from home. Their descendants now reside in Edson, Hinton, and Grande Cache. The families included Lewis Swift, the four Moberlys-Ewan, Adolphus, William, John-as well as Isadore Findlay and Adam Joachim.
- Pound Maker who was not a chief at that time, just a brave spoke up and said, 'The Government mentions how much land is to be given us. He says 640 acres one mile square for each band. He will give us, he says,' and in a loud voice, he shouted 'This is our land, it isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It is ours and we will take what we want.'

**MYTH: “The Chiefs and signatories understood what they were signing, as did the Government Agents.”**

**FACT:** Treaty negotiation required translators. Weak translation and omissions caused confusion and misunderstanding about the promises and their meanings for the First Nations people. Oral promises made during negotiations often were not included in the final written treaties. It was also important to the signing Chiefs to involve the sacred pipe. In the presence of the pipe, only the truth must be used and any commitment made in its presence must be kept. In that sense, the only means used by the Indians to finalize an agreement or to ensure a final commitment was by use of the pipe. It is undocumented whether the Government Agents truly understood or respected the presence of the pipe in this agreement. First Nations had never been exposed to written agreements, nor did they understand the written English language. They were instructed to sign the letter “X” as a way of showing that they “agreed” to the treaty.

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## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

**Question:** After reading this Conversation Guide, what resonated with you? Perhaps it was something that surprised you, or something you were unaware of? Perhaps it was something that you agree or disagree with? Take turns sharing your thoughts and building on each others' ideas.

### Indian Agents

Some agents did their jobs honorably despite the terrible living conditions that prevailed on the reserves. Many other agents were corrupt, taking advantage of the lack of power of Indigenous groups.

**Question:** How was the role of the Indian Agent integral to the success or lack of success of reserves across Alberta?

### Different Perspectives

[http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp\\_treaties/fp\\_treaties\\_two\\_views.html](http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_treaties/fp_treaties_two_views.html)

Analyze the chart.

**Question:** What differences in the two views of the treaties do you see? Create a Venn Diagram with these differing perspectives. Add your own perspectives, based on what you have learned from this Conversation Guide.

### Making Your Own Land Acknowledgment

Acknowledging territory is a way of showing respect for Indigenous people. It is the recognition of Indigenous presence both in the past and the present. Acknowledging land before a speech, during daily announcements and before assemblies, are essential to establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These simple gestures are key to reconciliation.

**Activity:** Create your own acknowledgment for your treaty area in which you live in. Below is a template. Use the links below and this *Conversation Guide* to help you. Make it your own using your new knowledge of Alberta treaties.

"I wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is in Treaty \_\_\_\_\_ (treaty number) territory. This is within and surrounding the traditional meeting grounds and home for many Indigenous Peoples, including \_\_\_\_\_ (names of language groups). This is also home to the Métis communities of \_\_\_\_\_ (list communities). I also wish to acknowledge the Inuit people who join us in this area and bring with them a rich and beautiful culture from which we learn. I want to acknowledge our Elders in this area who \_\_\_\_\_ (list special contributions and role of Elders) in our communities. I also wish to honour the Elders, Knowledge Keepers and traditionalists who have gone before us and those who continue to walk with us today."

Here are some links that might help you complete your land acknowledgment:

Metis Settlement Maps

<https://metisarchitect.com/2015/07/27/introduction-the-alberta-metis-settlements/>

<http://www.settlementinvestcorp.com/>

Role of an Elder

<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/aboriginal-elder-definition>

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ARPDC



## For More Information

Visual Resource: Reserves, Settlements and MNAA Regions

<http://www.indigenous.alberta.ca/documents/Map-AboriginalAreas.pdf?0.4499285025522113>

First Nations in Alberta

[www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100020670/1100100020675](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100020670/1100100020675)

### Treaty 7

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028793/1100100028803>

Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society

<http://www.makingtreaty7.com/>

The Canadian Encyclopedia

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/treaty-7/>

### Treaty 8

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028813/1100100028853>

Treaty Eight Tribal Association

<http://treaty8.bc.ca/treaty-8-accord/>

The Canadian Encyclopedia

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/treaty-8/>

### Treaty 6

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028710/1100100028783>

The Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations

<http://www.treatysix.org/>

The Canadian Encyclopedia

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/treaty-6/>

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