



Corporate Colonialism

Private capital has always been deeply interlaced with colonial governance. With the sale of Rupert's Land, for example, the Hudson's Bay Company and CN Rail received millions in dollars and acres of land from the Crown as well as the freedom to leverage these assets and create more wealth over time.

At the same time, treaties — interpreted by the Crown as “land deals” — limited communities' access to land. For instance, instead of receiving a lump sum payment (or capital), treaty terms were outlined as annuities, rations and parcels of land that would be distributed per person or per family. The annuities system also limited First Nations' abilities to save, accrue or invest money promised in these agreements.

Banking on the Crown's duplicity, companies were able to exploit this unfair distribution of land and resources, leading to the accumulation of intergenerational wealth at the expense of First Nations.

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How can we even begin to assess the cumulative impacts of corporate colonialism?

Sociologist Elizabeth Comack has assigned the term “corporate colonialism” to the ways in which the Hudson’s Bay Company acquired and profited off lands granted by the Canadian state through the Deed of Surrender at the expense of Indigenous peoples.*

*Elizabeth Comack, “Corporate Colonialism and the ‘Crimes of the Powerful’ Committed Against the Indigenous Peoples of Canada.” *Critical Criminology* 26 (2018): 455-471.

01. LAND

Land was the foundation of wealth generated by Canadians through re-sale and development. But how much land was distributed with the sale of the HBC?

What Canada Got 1.2 billion acres

Or approximately 5 million square kilometres, at a very minimum

Canadian Rail Companies
56 million acres

First Nations
3 million acres

RUPERT’S LAND

HBC
7 million acres

This research was done by Elizabeth Boyd under the supervision of Dr. Ian Mosby at Ryerson University.

Discrepancies in census data, limited historical documentation along with generally shoddy and confusing financial accounting over the years means that it is difficult to calculate exact numbers when it comes to colonial financial transactions.

What we share here, provides a glimpse into these numbers, and just scratches the surface.

THIS MAP IS A VISUAL
INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

In the “Deed of Surrender”, in 1869, 7 million acres of land were granted to the **Hudson’s Bay Company**. They also received \$1.5 million and were free to leverage these assets to create even more wealth over time.



RESOURCE EXTRACTION

The Hudson’s Bay Oil and Gas company played a pivotal role in the building of Canada’s oil and gas sector. This company was sold to Dome Petroleum Ltd.; with shares eventually sold to Conoco, the multinational oil and gas company for \$1.68 billion USD. Conoco’s operations run by BP Canada Energy Co, supporter of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion today.



REAL ESTATE

The company established a real estate division in July 1873 that focused solely on the selection and sale of lands, to potential settlers. An untold number of Canadians would come to “own” these stolen lands.



LAND SALES

HBC lands rarely sold for under \$10 per acre. In fact, in some instances, they were able to sell for as high as \$34 per acre, in part because they capitalized on the fertile land they acquired in the Rupert’s Land transfer terms.

The “Deed of Surrender” from the HBC to the Crown marked an economic transaction that laid the foundation for Canada’s geography.

It represents perhaps the single largest land grab in the world and a significant basis for Canada’s economy today.

02. MONEY

The value of lands and resources that First Nations received vs. companies is difficult to compare because the ‘deals’ were formulated and designed so differently.

While HBC received a lump sum of \$1.5 million along with other highly lucrative terms, treaty terms were outlined as annuities, rations, and parcels of land that would be distributed per person or per family instead.



Each bag represents \$1 million

Railroad Companies
\$107 million

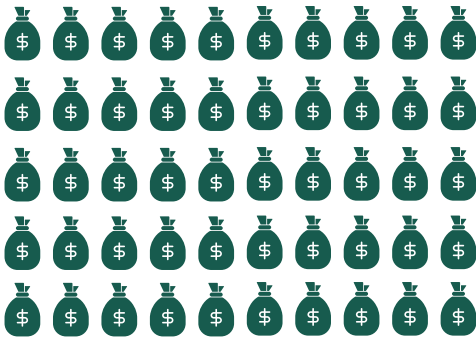


Hudson’s Bay Company
\$97.5 million



\$1.5 million paid out in the “Deed of Surrender”, plus estimated profits of \$96 million from selling the 7 million acres of land acquired over 50 years, for additional lands HBC received, in addition to other ventures including retail and resource extraction across the prairies.

First Nations
\$50 million



Total estimated annuities paid to the Signatories of Treaties 1-7 (1871-2021) following the transfer of Rupert’s Land. Many descendants of treaty signatories never even saw these funds.

5/2 x 12 1/2 Carved

HUDSON'S BAY CO'Y.

Farming, Grazing, Coal & Mineral

LANDS FOR SALE,

IN THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA, AND THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES OF CANADA. THE COMPANY OWNS
7,000,000 ACRES IN THE

Great Fertile Belt!

Extending from the International Boundary northward five miles beyond the north branch of the Great Saskatchewan River, and from the Eastern boundary of Manitoba to the Summit of the Rocky Mountains.

All these lands are carefully examined by competent Inspectors, each quarter section being separately reported upon. Reports have also been received upon the Company's

COAL LANDS

— IN THE —

Souris River District

And the Inspection of the Sections in the Vast Coal Areas of the

Saskatchewan, Bow and Belly Rivers,

Will be proceeded with in the course of the present year. The whole of these lands are now offered for Sale on

EASY TERMS OF PAYMENT!

AND WITHOUT ANY

CONDITIONS OF SETTLEMENT OR CULTIVATION DUTIES.

TOWN LOTS are also for sale in the following Flourishing and Rising Centers of Trade:---

WINNIPEG, WEST LYNNE, PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE,
RAT PORTAGE, ELPHINSTONE, FORT QU'APPELLE,
COLVILLE, EDMONTON, PRINCE ALBERT.

24 Maps and Plans with full information in regard to all these lands can be obtained either personally or by letter, at the Company's Office, in the City of Winnipeg.

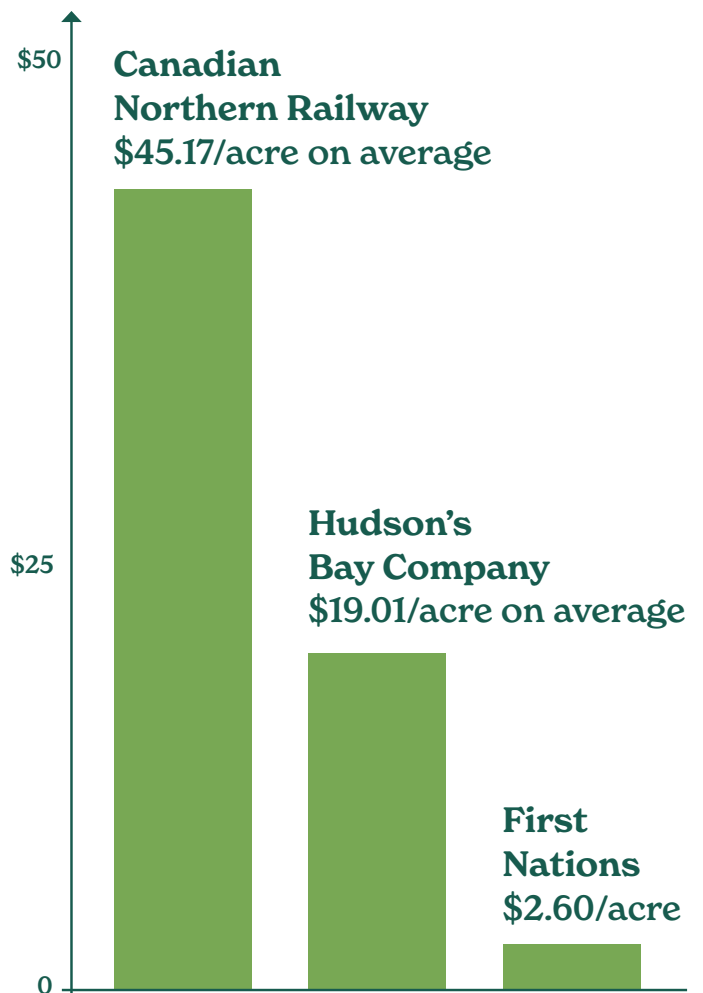
C. J. BRYDGES, Land-Commissioner.

FEBRUARY 1st, 1883.

Hudson's Bay Company Advertisement to Settlers, February 1, 1883. **The Company Own 7,000,000 acres in the Great Fertile Belt!**

In reality, the majority of this land was not acquired by the company until 1924.

03. LAND SALES



While corporations were allowed to sell land at favourable rates, First Nations had a rate set that was at least 10x lower. They were also only allowed to sell land back to the Department of Indian Affairs. While these sales were made by First Nations, they were often coerced into these transactions.