

## THE MUSH HOLE

Students at the Mohawk Institute had their own special name for the school. They called it the mush hole. The name was inspired by the sticky porridge the children ate every morning. The secret nickname gave them a feeling of power, however small it may be, over their circumstances.

## A Strict Role Model

The British North America Act of 1867 [section 91(24)], followed by the Indian Act of 1876, gave Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and the Canadian government complete control over the country's Aboriginal people. The government began to seriously consider establishing Indian boarding schools. Living at these schools, away

from their families, the children could be completely controlled by the staff. Through a process known as assimilation, the children's beliefs and behaviours would be forcibly adjusted to the European way of life.

The model for these schools was the Mohawk Indian Industrial School (also known as the Mohawk Institute) in Brantford, Ontario.

*The Mohawk Institute still stands in Brantford, Ontario. Student groups visit the building and its library today to learn about residential school history.*

