

## The Royal Proclamation of 1763



In this Proclamation, the British government announced what they planned to do with Québec and all the land they had won from the French.

### What did the Proclamation say?

- Québec would be ruled by a British Governor named by the King and a Council of British military and merchants. When the colony became large enough, the people would also have elected representatives.
- Large areas of land in Canada and to the west of the Thirteen Colonies (the Ohio and Mississippi valleys) were reserved for the First Peoples. Settlers and fur traders were not allowed to enter these lands without special government permission.
- English law and courts would replace the French system, except for laws about marriage and property.
- The *Canadiens* were allowed to speak French and practice their Catholic religion, but Catholics were not allowed to work for the government.
- The government would introduce English and promote the Protestant religion as the official language and religion of the colony.

### Why did the British Government make this Proclamation?

- to be sure that the English language, laws, and religion would be used in Québec
- to attract more British settlers to Québec
- to make Québec smaller in size, cutting off the Montréal fur traders from the west
- to gain the confidence of the First Peoples by protecting their fur-trade alliances and their traditional territories, which were being settled by people from the growing Thirteen Colonies as they moved west.

### For your information:

Later on, in 1774, the British government passed a new law called the Québec Act, to try to win more loyalty from the *Canadiens* in Québec. They realized that the *Canadiens* were not changing to the English language and the Protestant religion. This new law officially permitted the French language, laws, Catholic religion, and seigneurial landholding system to continue alongside the British government. It also enlarged the territory of the Province of Québec.

*Prepare a skit showing the reading of the Proclamation and the reaction of different groups of people to this announcement. How do you think the First Nations reacted? The settlers of New England? The members of religious orders in Québec and Acadia? The French fur traders? The habitants in Québec? The French seigneurs? The British military? The British fur traders? Prepare statements from representatives of these groups.*