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**"RESEARCHING THE DEVILS": A STUDY OF BROKERAGE  
AT THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, SHUBENACADIE, NOVA SCOTIA**

**by**

**Marilyn Elaine Thomson-Millward**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**at**

**Dalhousie University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
July, 1997**

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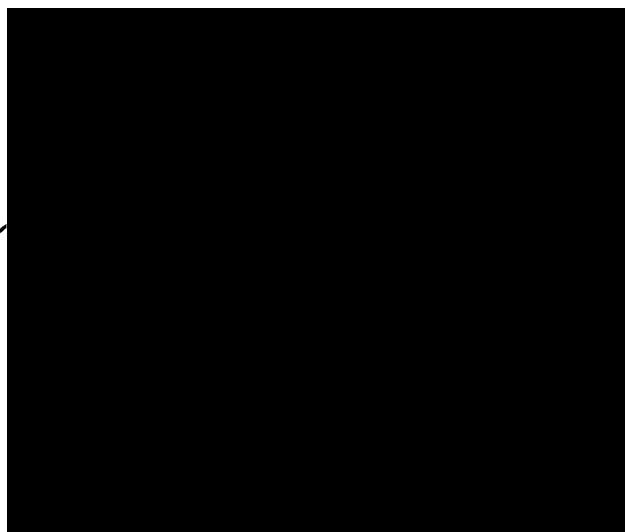
The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance a thesis entitled “Researching The Devils: A Study of Brokerage at the Indian Residential School, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia”

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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**To my Mother  
Eva Ellen (Shilston) Thomson  
who grew tired of waiting  
and "graduated" before I did  
on May 27, 1997**

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## ABSTRACT

In this case history of the Shubenacadie school, those involved in operating the institution have been placed within a patron-broker-client model to assist in assessing their positions and possibilities for power. This three-role model is used particularly as a means of understanding brokerage, or the middle role between Indian Affairs and the Micmac, a position considered here as being held by both the reserve agents and the school personnel. A duality was found as well within the patron and client roles, for the patron was not only the government but the church, and the client was both the child in the school and the parents on the reserve. The agent in the middle, or on site, was responsible for mediation between the government and people, but from that vantage point could alter messages, misrepresenting the client to the patron and usurping the power of the patron; it was at such times of manoeuvre that the middleman became a true broker. The model was considered as a chain with patron and client on opposite ends, or a triangle with power perceived possible from any angle, but it was found to operate more accurately as a web, its crossing and concentric lines of communication increasing the sense of entanglement implied in the word.

Evident beneath this study is the complexity of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School's history, seen through the diverse perspectives of the various groups of actors. Still existing in the conflicting, living memories of its patrons, brokers, and clients, the residential school experience is difficult to assess, but the model has sought to illuminate it by raising questions regarding patronage, fair exchange, mediation, salvation, benevolence, friendship, and the history of education.

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Thank you (in absentia) to Dr. B. Anne Wood, my third committee member, who left to retire on the west coast, and particularly to Dr. John Reid who so willingly agreed to fill her place late in my programme. Dr. Reid made many useful suggestions during the completion of my last draft, giving me insights I would otherwise have missed. I also wish to thank Dr. Stuart Semple, who joined the committee even later and whose verbal support has given me confidence.

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I received endless encouragement, support, and love from my family--my children and grandchildren, my sister and brother, my parents, and my husband. Thank you, every one.

## PREFACE

The documents in the Shubenacadie Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research (TARR) Centre were original and fragile, letters handwritten to government personnel from Micmac people concerning their lands, their education, and their relationship with local federal agents. They were compelling, even those which did not relate specifically to this study, making it easy to work without a break. When someone approached to ask what files I was reading, I explained my interest in the Indian agents whose responsibilities had related to the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. "I see," he smiled, "you're researching the devils."

This study of "brokerage" considers the complexity of the role played by Indian agents as simultaneous representatives of both the government and the native people, especially in their duties concerning education. Other "brokers" involved in the Shubenacadie school were the principals and teaching Sisters of Charity, who worked indirectly for the government through the Catholic church, and whose duties were divided among the state, the church and the children. Within the framework of brokerage theory, this study also comprises a case history of the Shubenacadie school, specifically providing a word picture of the school as seen from within by the principals and Sisters, and referring to aspects of the school throughout. It also provides, through government reports, inspections, and correspondence from the agents, a consideration of the condition of the Indians and reserves in the Maritimes. The study begins with an introduction explaining the question under investigation, the conceptual framework, and

the scope of the work, followed by a critical review of the literature relevant to Indian agents and Indian residential schooling.

The study is then divided into three sections, each containing three chapters. Part One: The Inquiry, sets the stage for the thesis. Because this work is framed by anthropological concepts of patronage, brokerage, and clientage, chapter one reviews the literature which relates to the origins of these ideas. It relies mostly upon the seminal work of J.A. Barnes, Frederik Barth, and Robert Paine, from 1951 to 1974, and uses examples from their studies in Africa, Norway, and the Arctic to compare brokerage relationships and personnel there with the situation of the Micmac people in the Maritime Provinces pertinent to this work.

A brief history of the Shubenacadie school follows in chapter two, to put the study in context and introduce the reader to the place which is central to this work: the institution in which the Department of Indian Affairs chose to educate many Micmac children away from their homes and families, aided by its agents on the reserves and the Catholic religious in the school. It considers the conception and establishment of the school, its curriculum, the health of the students, the matter of truancy, the question of retrospective memory, and the school's closing and destruction. Each is touched only briefly to give a general flavour of the school and its operation, and particularly to locate this study in its own time and place.

In chapter three, further background puts the history of native residential schooling into the wider context of the educational aims and ideas of the time. It questions whether native education was deliberately separatist or whether it was a natural outgrowth from the problem at hand, that natives were a federal responsibility while education was a provincial

matter. The government from the beginning was pleased to trust native education to the churches, in what was the following of a long European tradition and not necessarily a sloughing of responsibility. The idea to be examined here is the historic separation of Indian and common public education, and an attempt is made to relate them to each other and to their times. Early educational ideas were applied to all Canadians, and such notions as the inculcation of citizenship, the teaching of farming and gardening, and the stress on practical skills were rampant in all schools, whether white or Indian.

Part Two: The Religious, introduces the first of the "brokers" of this study, the principals and teaching Sisters working in the Shubenacadie school. It begins in chapter four by introducing ideas of tutelage, or instructive guardianship, and draws upon Noel Dyck's ideas of coercive, or abusively imposed, tutelage. Chapter five presents a discussion on the roles of the administrating principals, who were responsible both for interpreting the government's guidelines for residential schooling and for the children as their legal guardian. The focus is on Father Jeremiah Mackey, who was principal from the school's opening until 1955 (with a five year break between 1943 and 1948), and who then remained resident in the school until his death. The longest serving principal at the Shubenacadie school, Mackey's administrative duties were so onerous as to overshadow his dealings with the pupils; serving as "broker" between the government and the school, his daily concerns were largely with the faulty building in his charge. Instructions he was sent regarding the children were frustrating and ambiguous; nothing was clear except the government's lack of money to support the school and its students. Chapter six follows with a view of the

Sisters of Charity who were in close contact with the children as their teachers, caretakers and moral guardians. They are listed in an appendix, but are largely anonymous in this chapter's account because they did not identify themselves in their handwritten diary, simply called the Annals. This record describes thirty-six years in the life of the school with little or no reference to the classroom, suggesting that the institution was more for child care than for instruction, more a home than a school, and perhaps more for religious than academic education.

The three chapters of Part Three: The Agents, question how the Indian agents in the Maritimes, also designated in this study as "brokers," filled their own complicated roles as interpreters of government policy to the parents of the children at Shubenacadie. Whether seemingly benevolent or domineering, the agents occupied the neutral land between patron and client, trying simultaneously to serve two masters. Chapter seven looks at the position and duties of the Indian agent, examining the role largely through the work of Alan Fry with reference to the literature on brokerage. Chapter eight considers specific examples of Indian agents in the Maritimes as they dealt with their clients, the Micmac parents; and chapter nine deals with the way those parents responded, rebelled, and related to the residential school and the agents. Just as there is some duplicity in the role of "patron," shared by church and state, there is also in the role of the "clients," played by the Micmac parents and children. Their dual clientele role is complicated, first because their attitudes indicated both complicity in and resistance to the residential school system, and secondly because at times their resistance to church- and state-appointed agents put them in

either a self-representing role or in the position of choosing their own middlemen.

Finally, Part Four contains Results and Discussion. Chapter ten views the results of residential schooling in today's terms, considering ideas presented in various retrospective studies and memories, and looking at trends in native education today. Chapter eleven presents a case for casting both school and reserve agents as true brokers in the anthropological sense. It also looks comparatively at social ideas on child care outside the home then and now. Chapter twelve contains a summary of this work and its conclusions.

Appendix A lists Indian agents in the Maritime Provinces from 1868 to 1956. Records of Indian Affairs (housed at the National Archives of Canada) were used to identify these agents, particularly during the years when the school operated. Earlier agents have been identified from the NAC's Civil Service records, and it has usually been possible to recognize those who were also parish priests and therefore acting for two patrons, government and church.

Appendix B lists the Sisters of Charity who served at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, as gleaned from their Annals.

The compilation of this work has been limited partly by a lack of available personal information on the Indian agents who served in the Maritime Provinces during the Shubenacadie school years, and a complete disappearance of the "circular letters" which were sent to them to explain situational policy. (Correspondence files reveal they were not microfilmed with the letters originally attached to them, and neither were they retained among other Indian Affairs archival material until after 1957.<sup>1</sup>) There is also

a lack of information on the Sisters who taught at the school: few survive, and none of those wishes to discuss the school. However, it is hoped the material collected and analysed for this study will inspire further research.



PREFACE - NOTE

1. Pers. comm., Elise Chodat, Librarian, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, May 6, 1994.

## INTRODUCTION

### The problem under investigation

This is a case study of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia, considered within the context of anthropological ideas of brokerage. More specifically it is a case history of the people responsible for the existence, administration, and daily direction of the school, placed within their own time but surrounded by more recent ideas of patronage and mediation. The time span of the study is not specific because the history of the Indian residential school experiment in Canada has century-old roots in the 1600s and cannot be said yet to be completely abandoned. While the Shubenacadie school itself is easily dated, its conception long predated its birth: it could be said to have begun when Edgar Dewdney, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1889-92, expressed regret that the Indians of the Maritime Provinces lacked residential schooling. There were strong advocates for such a school in the early 1900s, such as Father F.C. Ryan, New Brunswick Supervisor of Indian Schools, and A.J. Boyd, Indian Superintendent in Nova Scotia, and although the school was not built until 1929-30, the school's history should include mention of these supporters. Even as the beginning date is hard to pinpoint, so too is the ending, for although there was the closing of the school in 1967 and the destruction of the building in 1986, there is also the continuing idea that the residential school era will live as long as does its memory, through the people who call themselves survivors and victims.

The original intention in this work was to concentrate on the church and government, the two forces behind and within the Indian school system,

specifically to consider the roles of the Indian agents and school inspectors who acted for the government, and the religious personnel who worked on behalf of both Indian Affairs and the Catholic church. However, this study closely involves the Micmac people and their education at one residential school, and because they were directly and irrevocably affected by government policies and church teachings, their story has emerged as compellingly as that of the Indian agents and the school staff. While it is spread throughout most sections, it is specifically addressed in chapter nine which deals with Micmac response.

Anthropological ideas of patronage, brokerage, and clientage are used in this study to animate the roles of the principal actors, although the focus will be on those defined as brokers. Placed between the patron and the people, the brokers interpreted government policy and church doctrine to make the decisions which led the lives of the Micmac. These brokers were the Indian agents who acted on behalf of the Indian Affairs branch of the government, and the Sisters of Charity and school principals for whom there was an additional patron, the Roman Catholic church. The Micmac people were the patronized clients, all government wards, whose guardians were the agents when they were on the reserve and the school principal when they were in the residential school. The main thrust of this work is to study the people positioned in the middle, between patron and client, and to consider their role as middlemen, brokers or go-betweens. Ideas of brokerage will be outlined, and the study will question, in part, whether the school personnel and Indian agents truly tried to represent both patron and client equally, whether they used their positions for their own purposes, whether they were mere government and church employees and factotums,

and whether they can be defined as brokers in the anthropological sense. While an investigation of brokerage in Indian Affairs is the main theme, the study will also reveal the role of the government in pursuing its ideas of education and integration, and that of the Micmac in continued resistance.

### The scope of the research

Ideas presented here grew from this researcher's 1989 M.A. thesis on the history of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School.<sup>1</sup> That study presented a chronological look at native education in Canada, using the Shubenacadie institution as a case study. It included overviews of the development of the residential school concept and the establishment and curriculum of the school, and considered government policies regarding admission and discharge, vacation, and health care. It also investigated official inspectors' reports on the school, and contrasted these with the school memories of some former pupils. The thesis considered the government's expressed aims for native education and compared them with native goals for band-controlled schools, finding the visions and rhetoric similar; perhaps it is less what we wish to accomplish and more how we approach the task that decides success.

The writing of that thesis left several questions in mind. It seemed to suggest that the principal and teachers in the school, while at liberty to interpret the stated curricular goals and to employ their own disciplinary measures, were less in control than it might appear. They could not prevent the admission of children ill with tuberculosis and venereal diseases, although medical examinations were completed prior to application to the school, nor did they decide which children would be permitted to return

home for regular vacations during the summer or under what circumstances they could be discharged. They could not limit enrollment, and a school that was built for 125 children was always overcrowded. These matters of admission and discharge seemed to be the responsibility of the agents, for even when they questioned Indian Affairs about particular cases they were expected to use their own judgement. Did this freedom allow the agents, then, to become all-powerful?

There was also the question of intent in the matter of residential schooling. The government's educational aim for Canadian Indians was to civilize and to mould useful citizens, which can be construed as not dissimilar to its aim for all public education, a preparation for full and responsible citizenship. But if there was a further motive in the case of native schools, to assimilate the Indians into white society so that they would eventually become indistinguishable, did this differ from government policy toward any other non-white, non-English or non-French Canadian?

As well, there was a void in the M.A. thesis which the presence of the Sisters of Charity should have filled. They were, and remain, mostly silent on the matter of the school, particularly since media scrutiny has spoken unfavourably of their teaching and disciplinary methods. What was their attitude toward natives, how did they interact with the children in the classroom and during off-class hours, and in what ways did their religious vocation determine their treatment of their charges? While research for this study did not include any further discourse with the Sisters, it does make use of a source not previously available, the day book kept by the Sisters from the opening of the school to their departure in 1967. Since this book, known simply as the Annals,<sup>2</sup> was written anonymously by a succession of writers,

it does not give information on individual Sisters; however, it serves to show the middle position these teachers filled between the school and the church.

As with any study, questions still remain. This dissertation does not fully investigate the role of the Micmac in their resistance to the school, a subject worth its own study. It does offer a beginning to such an investigation, in its use of files from the Shubenacadie Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research (TARR) Centre. Correspondence from the Micmac people to the government with particular relevance to the school and this study is scant, but serves to show how natives used their own leaders as go-betweens to take community concerns to the government, and to indicate the lack of faith they had in the appointed middlemen, the agents.

An attempt is made to assess the dual role of the priest-agent as middleman between both the government and the people, and the church and the people. Although it is possible to identify some of the agents who were parish priests as well, it is not easy to separate their roles in order to indicate how they dealt with the problems of serving dual patrons, or indeed to identify fully the difficulties that might have arisen in this regard. This subject also begs a separate study.

Instead of highlighting individual agents or teachers and determining how they dealt with their role as go-between, the focus of this dissertation has been on the role itself--the concept of brokerage--using examples from individual cases to illustrate the weight of responsibility, the depth of decision-making, and the breadth of the government's expectations of its brokers, in respect to the operation of one Indian residential school.

It is hoped that this study will perhaps show another side to the residential school issue. It seems given today that former pupils are victims

and survivors who require therapy and help to recover, that the government and church colluded not only to assimilate but to destroy a people. This study seeks not to deny that argument, but to present a wider picture of the time and the situation, and the idea that the people in the middle were dealing with daily problems to the best of their ability and their beliefs.

#### Definition of terms

Because this is a historic investigation, the terms used are those which were in use in the documents studied. While the name "Indian" is not in vogue, it is used here where it is relevant to its source; in citing more recent works, the terms "native" or "First Nations" are used as appropriate to those sources. The name "Micmac" is generally used throughout, except, again, when citing current works using "Mi'kmaw." An attempt, then, has been made to use the terms appropriate to the situation and source.

It is worth noting here that in her relatively recent book, First Nations and Schools: Triumphs and Struggles,<sup>3</sup> Cree teacher Verna J. Kirkness says missionaries used education to civilize the "heathen 'Natives'," for while she uses quotation marks around the word natives, throughout the book she uses the term "Indians" freely. It may be that in some places and to some people there is an aversion to the word Indian, but some native people are apparently quite comfortable with it.

The word "education" generally refers to formal schooling, or "book learning," rather than being used in its broader sense as the learning and socialization which take place in the home or community. In the case of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, "education" means practical and vocational as well as academic.

"Indian agent" means a civil servant employed by the federal government as a local representative of Indian Affairs. (Unlike the situation in the west, agents in the Maritimes did not live on the reserve and were not full-time employees until a scheme of centralization was attempted in the mid-1940s. Contact between agents and their clients, therefore, was limited, which partly explains the Micmac preference to represent themselves or to use their own leaders as go-betweens.) The term Indian agent disappeared and was replaced by Agency Superintendent in the early 1950s. Former Agency Superintendents became District Superintendents and former District Superintendents became District Managers. There was a District Manager for New Brunswick and another for Nova Scotia, while Prince Edward Island was served from the Regional Office in Amherst, Nova Scotia. Later still, individual Band Managers assumed many of the duties once performed by the District Managers.<sup>4</sup> Because the term Indian agent remained in general use even after "agents" had been replaced by "superintendents," it is used in this work to describe both agents and superintendents.

The principals and teachers who staffed the school are also considered "agents" in this study as they too were responsible to the government (and church), and because the principal in particular was guardian of the children in his care until they returned home and reverted to the guardianship of the Indian agent.

Since Indian Affairs in Canada existed under several different government departments (the Interior from 1867, Mines and Resources from 1936, Citizenship and Immigration from 1949, Indian Affairs and Northern Development from 1965), the terms "Indian Affairs" or simply "the



government" are used when referring in general to the personnel of the branches or departments with jurisdiction over native policies.

Because of some personal discomfort with the word "genocide" with reference to government policies regarding Indian residential schools, the word "ethnocide" will be used in preference. Following the definitions of Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn in their 1990 book The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies, ethnocide denotes the "suppression of a culture, a language, a religion" and is a "phenomenon that is analytically different from the physical extermination of a group."<sup>5</sup> Heavily negative, the word "genocide" was coined during the Second World War but eventually came into general use to describe other "disapproved events and ideas even if no killing was intended or involved."<sup>6</sup> Referring to events in the United States, Chalk and Jonassohn argue that ethnocide, not genocide, was at the core of the reservation system and the policy of educating Indian children in boarding schools far distant from their parents and homes.<sup>7</sup>

While some children died in Canadian Indian residential schools, the motive behind this type of education was not the death of the children but their absorption into the citizenship of the country as self-supporting members; that this was attempted by suppressing Indian culture and language and encouraging Christianity certainly suggests ethnocide rather than genocide. In the case of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School it is important to remember that virtually all the children enrolled were already strongly Roman Catholic,<sup>8</sup> so arguments of ethnocide must mean the suppression of culture and language, and not of religion. Regarding language, the enrollment forms for the Shubenacadie school suggest that many of the children already spoke, or were familiar with, English. As for

Indian culture, it seems from the Annals that the Sisters of Charity tried to incorporate Indian dance, crafts and other native depictions in their concerts and holiday table decorations. It may be that the Sisters' concept of Indianness was old-fashioned or inappropriate, but they did attempt to bring into their teachings native culture as they imagined it. Whether or not ethnocide was at the core of this school or of Canadian Indian education in general, this term will be used in preference to genocide.

### Literature review

Several academic studies--unpublished theses--have examined Micmac education. A 1947 B.Ed. thesis by G.G. Currie, titled "Indian Education in Nova Scotia,"<sup>9</sup> outlined the benefits and disadvantages to day and residential schooling. One chapter is devoted to the Shubenacadie residential school, and is apparently based on a personal visit. Some of Currie's findings are outlined here in chapter two on the history of the school. A 1992 Ph.D. thesis by Marial Mosher, titled "Government of Canada and the Education of the Canadian Indian: The Nova Scotia Micmac Experience 1867 to 1972"<sup>10</sup> related general public policy for Indian affairs to the particular policies pursued in, and for, Indian schools in Nova Scotia.

There have been two studies specific to the Shubenacadie school. This researcher's 1989 M.A. thesis, "Canadian Native Education Policy: A Case Study of the Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia," has already been mentioned. In 1990, an honours thesis on the Shubenacadie school was completed at the same university which produced the 1947 history, without making reference to it: Katherine Kearns, in "The History of

the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, 1929-1957,"<sup>11</sup> used the history of the school to illustrate changing Canadian aboriginal educational policies. She subscribed to a negative view of both the policies and the people behind them, and erroneously claimed that the principal, Father Mackey, did not allow most children summer vacations from the school "as he thought their homes to be improper."<sup>12</sup> In fact, it was not his privilege or prerogative to make such decisions at all. While contending that Father Collins was a much more compassionate principal, who introduced several programmes to make the children feel wanted and loved, she contradicts this in the suggestion that he gave quarters to the girls under his care to lift their skirts.<sup>13</sup>

In 1992, Isabelle Knockwood, a former pupil and resident of the Shubenacadie school, published a book written with Gillian Thomas titled Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia.<sup>14</sup> This semi-autobiographical account is full of childhood memories of home and school, focussing on a series of mainly unhappy reminiscences and a quest for personal healing. As oral history this book is effective and affecting, and Knockwood's public readings give evidence of the pain she still feels. As written memory, it is a collection of reminiscences of several people's stories, gathered by Knockwood over many years of researching the school through the eyes of the pupils, and is the only published book about the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School.

There are, in addition, several shorter published accounts which specifically concern the Shubenacadie school. Magazine and newspaper articles include a three-part series by Conrad Paul in the Micmac News in

1978,<sup>15</sup> a story by Thane Burnett in the Truro Daily News in 1987,<sup>16</sup> and an article in Atlantic Insight in 1988 by Heather Laskey (who had previously reported on the school in a CBC radio essay, aired in October, 1986).<sup>17</sup> All of these focus on the difficulty of being a pupil there, and rely fully on negative memories of the school. However, in a 1992 article in the Micmac-Maliseet Nations News, a former pupil testified on behalf of the school, offering another side to the tales of terror found in other published accounts.<sup>18</sup>

The current study is the first history to highlight the role of the Indian agent in the Maritimes, though the topic has been mentioned within other works. Other studies which have considered agents in Canada had earlier time frames, were either overviews or pertained to western Indian agencies, and did not focus on the role of the agent in native education or as a mediator. Following the native political awakening of the early 1970s in Canada, three Ph.D. dissertations considered the government's Indian policy, all of which were limited to the pre-1900s, and only one of which offered a thorough consideration of the situation in the Maritime Provinces. In the 1980s, two M.A. theses focussed on the western Canadian agent in the late nineteenth century, and another, which examined the centralization policy in Nova Scotia in the 1940s, gave some insight into the agents. These works are as follows.

In 1977, Anthony J. Looey wrote about "The Indian Agent and his Role in the Administration of the North West Superintendency."<sup>19</sup> While he focussed on the "unique and strategic position" of the Indian agents, his concern was with western Canada in the 1870s and '80s only, at which time an agent's responsibilities were only sketchily described. His role was

framed by government goals of assimilation, certain prescribed duties, the pressures of local circumstances, and some freedom of personal action.<sup>20</sup> However, Looey cites the Saskatchewan Herald in 1882 as saying that although the agents were "endowed with the fullest discretionary powers in some respects," they were also unreasonably bound by instructions both arbitrary and injurious to the interests they were expected to serve.<sup>21</sup> According to Looey, there were indications that most Indian agents were neither blind nor insensitive to native values and patterns of behaviour, even while acting in accordance with departmental policy and aims. The Indian agent, however, was described by Looey as the centrepiece in the execution of those policies.<sup>22</sup>

Marion Joan Boswell wrote "'Civilizing' the Indian: Government Administration of Indians 1876-1896," in 1978, covering the twenty years of government action which she felt laid the foundation for all future government policy.<sup>23</sup> This detailed work includes a history of Maritime reserves, in which Boswell reports that agents in the Maritimes in that period had little to do and were often part-time employees only; their duties included periodic visits, paying annuities, providing relief, and preparing annual reports. All agents were appointed initially for one year (chiefly by patronage), and had to post a large, annual bond to assure the Department they would not appropriate annuities or land-sale money.<sup>24</sup> Tenure was not guaranteed--work evaluations noted personal failings and assessed honesty--but to avoid outright firing, initially unsatisfactory agents were given a second chance in another agency.<sup>25</sup> At first agents in both eastern and western Canada were from the east, but eventually the government preferred to appoint local men who knew the territory. Since the Indian Act

gave semi-judicial powers to the agent, Boswell said his duties included advising on boundary disputes and family quarrels, retaining land records and wills, and presiding at council meetings. Eastern agents, in addition, supervised farming, schools, and the renting or sale of land. Boswell described the position as marginally demanding but not physically difficult or dangerous, and she praised Indian Affairs for its workable organizational structure, clear lines of authority, and reasonably intelligent and conscientious employees.<sup>26</sup> Government policies, she felt, were founded on the belief that its goals were both worthwhile and attainable, while at the same time providing in the reserve system a setting which may have stifled economic development but unintentionally protected the culture and unity of Indian communities.<sup>27</sup>

J.D. Leighton, in 1975, wrote "The Development of Federal Indian Policy in Canada, 1840-1890."<sup>28</sup> While only one chapter considers the situation in the Maritime Provinces from the time of contact until the late nineteenth century, it is thorough, and suggests that the region's small Indian population meant a less rigidly organized administrative establishment. Because of this, both grants for Indians and salaries for agents suffered, though Leighton describes the agents in the Maritimes as "conscientious and humane men."<sup>29</sup> In the late nineteenth century the Maritimes were enjoying a golden age which did not extend to the reserves. Indians were expected to change inwardly and manifest such outward signs of improvement as the abandonment of nomadism for farming and the acceptance of white societal values. Official neglect was seen to justify itself since it appeared that an inherent defect in Indians prevented them from assimilating or overcoming their own squalid lives.<sup>30</sup>

In 1871, New Brunswick had two full-time agents, both political appointees, while Nova Scotia had seven part-time agents. Leighton likened the Nova Scotian situation to that of Quebec where part-time personnel were "missionaries cum local agents,"<sup>31</sup> though only four of seven in Nova Scotia were Roman Catholic priests chosen because of their Indian mission experience. The semi-nomadic lives of the Maritime Micmac and Malecite were in sharp contrast to the sedentary and agricultural existence of Ontario Indians, where prosperous native farmers had some long-term security, and closely knit communities were easily supervised. Poverty on the Maritimes' reserves, as well as simple geography and history, prevented the development or success of worthwhile, Ontario-style, self-help programmes.<sup>32</sup>

Ideas regarding the creation of concentrated, more accessible, reserves which would discourage native nomadism arose and were supported by the white communities who envisioned the removal of the Indian from much of the land. This plan would allow the expansion of mining and forestry and have the added benefits of first removing Indians from the labour market as they would be occupied instead in developing the new, concentrated reserves, and secondly of centralizing the Indian social problem at the same time.<sup>33</sup> But while an administrative system based on the Ontario experience seemed to work in the west, it failed in the Maritimes, and to the frustrated federal government the fault was obviously that of the Maritime Indian.<sup>34</sup>

Leighton cited low salaries and a federal refusal to pay expenses as the reason some dishonest agents resorted to embezzlement and theft to augment their wages, and noted that honest agents simply lacked

enthusiasm or quit their jobs. In 1872, it was decided that federal assistance would not be given to Indians who were "idle and profligate," but only to those who showed a disposition to advance and help themselves.<sup>35</sup> In New Brunswick it was noted that most Indians "seemed sunk in sullen lassitude" and that their intemperance required the building of two new jails.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, in 1870, Lennox Island, Prince Edward Island, was acquired by the Aborigines Society of London, England, to be used as a reserve, and the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Vankoughnet, declared it was large enough for all the P.E.I. Indians and they should all reside there.<sup>37</sup> This would cure their wandering, which only resulted in their demoralization and the Department's inconvenience.

Generally, Leighton offered a sympathetic view of the civil servants who worked for Indian Affairs: underpaid and badly housed, still they had a strong sense of loyalty to the Department. He saw Indian Affairs as an administrative backwater, ignored by the rest of government and out of the public eye, seemingly unimportant because of the belief that the Department and its clients would eventually disappear through population decline and eventual assimilation. In an atmosphere in which daily operations were routine rather than urgent, employees became introverted, and while immersing themselves in the traditions and administrative peculiarities of the Department, Leighton suggested they became insensitive to changing Indian needs.<sup>38</sup>

In 1986, Jean Manore's M.A. thesis, "Power and Performance: The Indian Agent and the Agency, 1877-1897,"<sup>39</sup> traced the history of the Indian Act to examine and explain the powers of the agent and the political aims of the Indian Affairs Department at the reserve level during that twenty-year



period, and used a case study of two western communities as illustration. Its relevance to the current work is limited because of its time frame and particularity to the western Canadian experience.

Lisa Patterson's 1985 M.A. thesis, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotian Centralization Policy," followed the attempted relocation of the Micmac from the insemination of the idea in 1918 to its abandonment in 1949.<sup>40</sup> Although Leighton has shown that the idea was conceived much earlier, Patterson's work gives a thorough account of a policy that was aimed at government expedience and economy rather than Micmac comfort or convenience. Patterson accused Indian Affairs of exhibiting the characteristic behaviour of a bureaucracy intent on perpetuating itself by ensuring its work is never done, and described the two newly-centralized agencies as having administrators who could not possibly administer them. Initially, in 1942, the two full-time appointees were J.A. MacLean at Eskasoni, and H.C. Rice at Shubenacadie. MacLean lasted almost three years, and resigned noting that nothing promised had come to pass because the necessary factors were missing. The site was isolated, unsuitable, and had no timber resources; there were problems with medical services, communications, law and order; and MacLean believed that the Department had no clear policy on centralization or commitment to it.<sup>41</sup> He was succeeded by F.B. McKinnon, who hoped the Department of Indian Affairs would appreciate the fact that under the existing conditions on the reserve, any agent could only do what was possible. Patterson claimed that McKinnon, a former teacher and clerk of the Shubenacadie agency, displayed the survival instinct needed by those who hope to make a career in the civil service; in fact, five years later he was promoted to Regional



Superintendent.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, Rice, based on the Shubenacadie reserve, was having difficulty managing 1400 Indians in more than fourteen locations in an area 350 miles long by 175 miles wide, and finding it impossible to keep troublemakers from reserves located in other counties.<sup>43</sup>

Two mainland counties, Antigonish and Pictou, were transferred to the Eskasoni agency in 1950, and Rice retired in 1956. J.D. MacPherson (who had taken over Eskasoni when McKinnon was promoted) was moved to Shubenacadie, and replaced in Eskasoni by Terrence W. Boone. But five years later Boone wrote to the Department of his inability to cope with the situation on the reserve, attributing his maladministration to inadequate staff and funding, and he resigned a few months later. MacPherson returned to Eskasoni but became ill and eventually killed himself.<sup>44</sup>

In relating this sorry and unsuccessful experiment in Nova Scotia, Patterson offered some insights into the realm of the Indian agents' duties. The remote administrators in Ottawa had underestimated the agents' role: in 1938 they had described their agents as the cogs of the Department, and noted they had to be firm, sympathetic and understanding, possess some missionary spirit, and be able to win the confidence of their clients.<sup>45</sup> The reality in Nova Scotia was that centralization created the first full-time agencies in Nova Scotia, and gave Indians their first opportunity for daily contact with the agents and their staff. Suddenly, Patterson says, work, wages, housing, food, clothing, and agricultural supplies were all the responsibility of the agent. The plan to relocate all of the Nova Scotian natives to two large reserves was ultimately unsuccessful, and seven years after its implementation the policy was abandoned with half of the 2500

Indians still residing on fifteen of their forty reserves, and ten still living on off-reserve sites.<sup>46</sup>

John Malcolm MacLeod's 1964 M.Ed. thesis, "Indian Education in Canada," written when there were sixty-six Indian residential schools operating in the country (all but one of which was administered by churches) considered several studies conducted on residential education.<sup>47</sup> A 1935 study conducted by a United Church commission on Indian education offered several criticisms of residential schools. They were costly; they broke the tie between child and parent at a critical time in the child's life; they gave the children food, clothing and care but also an attitude of dependence; they rendered the children unfit for a traditional life on the reserve; and in making chapel compulsory they sometimes turned the children from religion after graduation. Advantages noted included that health was better conserved; social contacts were broadening and stimulating; children were taught the important habits of punctuality, regularity and accuracy; and the discipline learned was so valuable to ex-pupils that they desired to have their own children educated in such schools.<sup>48</sup> Another United Church commission in 1958, at a time of educational integration of the native into the provincial school system, expressed the opinion that residential education was still valuable where day schools were inaccessible, for orphans, as homes for students in high schools, and for vocational training for those who did not qualify for provincial vocational schools.<sup>49</sup> In 1957, the principals of forty-four Indian schools operated by the Oblate Fathers met for one week to discuss "residential education for Indian acculturation." They considered that non-Indian schools for Indians could succeed only if the native children were

accepted as equal by their peers, teachers were acquainted with the Indian mentality and culture, and the social and cultural level in the Indian children's homes was roughly equal to that of the non-Indian children's homes--three highly unlikely conditions. They felt segregated schools for Indians were advantageous because each pupil received the same consideration; the teachers were more familiar with Indianness; and the goal of education, specifically to better the Indian people, was more likely to offer them a pride in their ethnic descent.<sup>50</sup>

Peter Twohig's 1991 M.A. thesis, "Health and the Health Care Delivery System: The Micmac in Nova Scotia,"<sup>51</sup> traced the history of Micmac medical care through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, stressing Micmac negotiation with government and participation in health care matters. Although his study did not include a consideration of health matters in the Shubenacadie school, he noted that many mental health problems facing the First Nations have resulted from the breakdown of the traditional family unit and the loss of cultural and spiritual values, two changes in the native population which have been attributed to the residential school system.

In 1995, Vic Satzewich and Linda Mahood's paper, "Indian Agents and the Residential School System" appeared in Historical Studies in Education.<sup>52</sup> Addressing the question of whether Indian agents were the enlightened best friends of Indians or their petty, controlling despots, they sought truth between the extremes, hoping to broaden the understanding of the agents' social position, their experiences, and the constraints under which they worked. To consider the agents omnipotent, they argued, was to deny the reality of Indian resistance. They interviewed twenty-three former

agency Superintendents from several provinces, all anonymously, on how they policed abuse at the residential schools: during their tenure, only nine were aware of allegations of physical abuse in residential schools in their agencies, and two of those nine were aware of allegations of sexual abuse. In these cases, the Superintendents were unable to protect the children because they were not actively involved with the internal operations of the schools: reports to the Department went unanswered, meetings with church officials were unproductive, and there was the problem of proof.

The usual church response to allegations of sexual abuse seemed to be the transferral of the priest involved. One of the problems was that the government was dependent upon the church's involvement in the residential schools, and rumours circulated among the field Superintendents that there was a resident Oblate in Ottawa screening complaints and any amendments to the Indian Act that might reflect upon the schools.<sup>53</sup> Two particular issues mentioned in this paper are relevant to this work. One concerns the commitment of Indian parents to the residential school system through their own demand for placement of their children and their resistance to the closing of these schools. The other is the contradiction in the agents' mandate to both represent and control the clientele. The authors concluded that the one-dimensional portrayals of Indian agents in most of the literature do not do justice to the complexity of the role they played as mediators between Indian and non-Indian interests.<sup>54</sup>

A unique study of the meaning of "Indian agent" can be found in a documentary novel titled How a People Die by Alan Fry.<sup>55</sup> Although fictitious, it bears mention because it drew upon Fry's experiences as an Indian agent in western Canada over more than fifteen years, and offers a

clear, inside job description. Like Manore's study, it gives the reader who might think an agent is all-powerful another point of view, telling much of the frustration and futility the apparently altruistic Fry encountered in trying to "help."

Recently, several popular books have been published about residential schools in Canada. These include Basil Johnston's 1988 Indian School Days,<sup>56</sup> a book of memories about the residential school at Spanish, Ontario, which was written with bittersweet humour. Two others are short novels for children, but are mentioned here because they are Canadian and offer insight into the daily life of such schools. Sammy Goes to Residential School! (1991) by Mary Lingman, a former teacher in a residential school in Ontario, is a fair and balanced account.<sup>57</sup> Shirley Sterling based her 1992 story, My Name is Seepeetza, on her experiences as a pupil in a British Columbia residential school.<sup>58</sup> While the cover blurb speaks of "one of the most blatant expressions of racism in the history of Canada," this could be the straightforward story of any boarding school. In a 1993 children's picture book, "'Mush-Hole': Memories of a Residential School,"<sup>59</sup> Maddie Harper does not tell much about her life in the school: she tells only that she did not know why at age seven she was enrolled, that she was served mush every morning (hence the nickname for the school), and that she ran away at age fifteen. Instead, her story is one of personal healing: because the school left her friendless she turned to alcohol, but after becoming a "born-again pagan" she learned to appreciate herself and her people. Her personal mission is to carry the message to aboriginals in North and South America that the native way is both good and sacred. As a teacher of children, she tells "real stories about Christmas and Christopher

Columbus so they can understand that they have choices and so that they can feel good about themselves." 60

More significant to this work is a 1993 study that is not Canadian, American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930, by Michael C. Coleman.<sup>61</sup> This is a book of reminiscences, recalling more than a hundred Indian voices and comparing them with missionary and government accounts. Coleman also explores the complexity of interaction between the European and aboriginal cultures, and considers to what extent the pupil narrators became cultural brokers, or mediators between the white world and their own. His study stopped in 1930 because of the emergence in the United States in the 1920s of a critical controversy concerning the "culturally intolerant education" of the Indians.<sup>62</sup> The researcher whose experience has been confined by Canadian content is surprised to learn that in the early thirties there was a movement south of the border to make amends to the Indian, even to institutionalize in the schools respect for tribal cultures. For it was in 1930 that the Shubenacadie school was opened in Nova Scotia, founded on principles already apparently abandoned in the States.

Coleman's chapter most relevant to this study is titled "Peers and Mediation." Probably every North American Indian residential school suffered the problem of pupil pitted against pupil, but here we have two different pictures. While some student mediators protected and prepared new and younger students, others preyed and oppressed. In some schools studied by Coleman, domineering behaviour was deliberately cultivated and official mediators were appointed. The chosen pupils performed such duties as hunting runaways and using rulers to rap the hands of children who made spelling mistakes. This was not unlike the prefect system in place in



British schools (as well as in some non-native boarding schools and day schools), where chosen captains could give detentions and even corporal punishment. Perhaps in any type of school such positions of power would lead easily to bullying, and in the American Indian residential schools the mediators not only taught table manners but demanded table treats as well: one boy recalled that his pockets were so sticky and stiff from hiding desserts for his captain he could not use them to keep his hands warm. Some student mediators became recruiters, and as one Apache recalled in a few, picturesque words, occasionally older boys still in school were sent home to "catch" girls who refused to enroll.<sup>63</sup>

The idea of pupil-mediators continued beyond the school years so that graduates were expected to continue in this role even after they returned home. This hope was expressed in questionnaires which were sent to some former pupils in the early twentieth century to ask, "Have you done anything for the betterment of your people?"<sup>64</sup> However, like all education of the time it was a one-way process; pupils were used to relay white culture to the reserves but were rarely asked to explain or share their own beliefs. In one exception, a turn-of-the-century principal was transferred after showing interest in the Hopi themes of one of his student's paintings; of course, to teach your teacher well is a relatively new concept. At the time it was felt there was a fair exchange: the teachers taught, the pupils learned, and the reward for both was the Christianity and civilization of the Indian.

Coleman commented that

Historians have recently emphasized the importance of mediators or "brokers" who straddled the divide between Indian and white cultures and helped interpret each to the other. Further, according to Margaret Connell Szasz, the greatest inroads upon native culture were made through their

young people. Yet the mediatory role of Indian children both inside and outside the school has not been sufficiently examined by scholars...<sup>65</sup>

Coleman's book effectively returns the native to native history and is particularly compelling and significant, not only because it begs comparison with the Canadian situation, but because of the idea it propounds of the student broker, mediating first between the teachers and the new pupils, and secondly between the white world and the reserve. While the current study looks at the Indian agent and the school personnel as mediators between the government and the Indians, and considers possible self-brokerage roles appropriated by the Micmac parents, it does not expound upon the matter of pupil brokers. This is another intriguing idea for further related study from the Micmac point of view.

Besides the narratives mentioned, there are many academic accounts of the Canadian Indian residential school experience which will be considered more fully in chapter ten. Particularly pertinent, because it was early to advocate the idea of letting Indian voices be heard, is the 1967 "analysis from an Indian point of view," the Proceedings of the Centennial National Conference on Indian and Northern Education, held in Saskatoon.<sup>66</sup> Several of the speakers addressed the issue of residential schooling from a western perspective, and although of interest it should be noted that the western experience differed from that in the Maritimes in two important ways. First, for the children in the west, there was for a long time no educational alternative to the residential school, while in the Maritimes these institutions were only for the underprivileged or for those who could not attend day schools. Secondly, residential schools in the west were operating for decades before the one in the Maritimes, and at least in the

early years they served to indoctrinate the children in religions that were not those of their parents. In the Maritimes, the children and their parents were already Catholic, and although the residential school may have offered an unaccustomed daily dose of religion, it was not an alien one.

At the conference, Mary Anne Lavallee spoke of the social adjustments which had to be made by both the children and their lonely parents, the "humdrum" schedule of the school which held children according to their ages rather than their academic achievements, the deviance which rigid rules and control fostered, and the devastation the schools dealt to family lifestyles. "It can be said matter of factly," Lavallee claimed, "that the delinquent Indian parent of today is the product of the type of education he received."<sup>67</sup> Another speaker, Hattie Fergusson, said she received a "very good education" at residential school, but still felt these schools damaged families.<sup>68</sup> Elijah Menarik complained that parents had no choice in sending their children to residential school or in what kind of education they would receive there.<sup>69</sup> At the time of this conference there were still nine residential schools operating in Saskatchewan. The one in Shubenacadie closed that year.

Other native voices have described Indian education and government policies toward it. In Prison of Grass: Canada from the Native Point of View, Métis writer Howard Adams condemned white education for his people.<sup>70</sup> Calling it "culturally foreign and repressive," he suggested that less time should be spent in the classroom and more in "recreational, cultural and community projects."<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, this idea is opposed to the complaints of students and parents regarding the school at Shubenacadie which were more likely to request more classroom time and less outside

work. Adams expressed the idea that native students should not be pressured into learning English,<sup>72</sup> but again, this is opposed to remarks of some former Shubenacadie pupils who felt the greatest value of the school was the fluency they gained in English. It may be that in 1975, when Adams published his book, the first language of the children on some reserves was not English; however, in 1980, at least on two large reserves in Saskatchewan, the children had little or no knowledge of their native language and elders were brought into the schools to reintroduce it.<sup>73</sup> And even in the 1930s, many students starting school at Shubenacadie were English-speaking, and most had at least some knowledge of English.

Adams also spoke against priests, nuns, and schoolteachers for suppressing native children and conditioning them to be quiet and powerless.<sup>74</sup> The goal toward which they pushed the children, he said, that of fitting into middle-class white society, only resulted in self-hate. Adams claimed that the Indian or Métis who was successful in this attainment was seen by whites as pushy and phoney, while the natives who did not succeed were left asking, "You made it, why bother with us?"<sup>75</sup> This may be the problem with any educational goal that seeks to fit members of one society into another, and it is a difficult one to address. It is apparent that the education the Indians received in Canada did leave them straddling their reserves, one foot on and one foot off, but this is perhaps less the fault of the schools which failed to assimilate them, and more to the credit of the Indians themselves who clung to their own ways and kept that one foot inside.

Harold Cardinal's 1969 book, The Unjust Society, offered another native voice to the questions of education and government control.<sup>76</sup> To the government, he said, education was a matter of assimilation, while to the

Indian it offered a way to escape poverty and what he called the tyranny of government. In his call for Indian control of Indian education, he blamed the government for having used education for its own designs. He argued that the government offered no active participation in Indian education until the 1950s, that the missionaries in charge of the schools completely ignored Indian culture, and that the teachers were "misfits and second raters."<sup>77</sup>

In his 1977 book, The Rebirth of Canada's Indians,<sup>78</sup> Cardinal described a native covenant with the Great Spirit "to earn what we get and not expect to have it handed to us,"<sup>79</sup> a responsibility that was thwarted by the "promise of perpetual provision"<sup>80</sup> inherent in the treaties. Cardinal blamed the government for seeing welfare as an easy way to keep the Indians fed without having to find "harder solutions, such as training them to make a productive work force."<sup>81</sup> This argument is particularly curious since one of the government's main goals for residential schooling was to train workers in such fields as farming, carpentry, shoemaking, and the domestic arts. And is the Canadian welfare system simply an easy solution to poverty and unemployment? Another view might show it as a social service or safety net that few recipients, native or not, are willing to forfeit. Even Cardinal, as seen below, resents any attempt by an Indian agent to curtail it.

Cardinal's view of the residential schools seems cloudy, too, in his assessment of the idea behind the reserve day schools that were intended to replace them. Although these schools would allow the children to live at home, Cardinal speaks of "enticements offered to parents who agreed to pull their children out of the residential schools,"<sup>82</sup> as if it had been the parents' decision to place their children there, and as if incentives to have their children live at home were required. The other alternative to residential

schooling, that of busing the children daily to the better-equipped, existing provincial schools, Cardinal saw not as an acceptable solution but as another government scheme. It only widened the generation gap, he said, as "parents lost control of education,"<sup>83</sup> the suggestion here being that parents had had control. While the failure of the provincial schools to solve the problem of how best to educate the native led to the movement toward band-controlled reserve schools, there are still parents who prefer to send their children to provincial schools. Cardinal felt there was nothing at the town schools that "Indian teenagers could even begin to identify with,"<sup>84</sup> but the other side of the story is seeing how reluctantly the children in at least one band-controlled school went to their Cree language classes.<sup>85</sup>

Cardinal's work is also pertinent to this study in his assessment of Indian Affairs:

...in my day to day situation I have to deal with an Indian agent who is consciously and purposefully doing things that hurt our people, perhaps denying a widow who needs assistance her pittance. Or I have to deal with a regional director of Indian Affairs whose aim I know is to destroy our reserves, or to crush what he feels, or has been told, is an undesirable objective on our part, and I have to listen to him utter half-truths to the people in order to beat down their resistance.<sup>86</sup>

According to Cardinal, there were no good Indian agents because good people would have rejected the job. Those who accepted the position had "worked it out in their conscience already," so they could "screw you...because they're being paid to do just that."<sup>87</sup> Another view is of a country so large that its geography forced it to offer its services through a system of dispersed operations or area administration. J.E. Hodgetts, in his study of the public service in Canada, suggests that a wide system of welfare requires "a face-to-face relationship with individuals seeking benefits and

services."<sup>88</sup> The key word here may be "seeking." If people persist in seeking their "perpetual provision," there must be someone on hand to provide it.

The angry and frustrated face Adams and Cardinal present to the matter of native education suggests that there was no good in it, in contrast to the views presented at the Saskatoon conference mentioned above. The speakers there strongly blamed today's ills on the residential schools, but at the same time they acknowledged the beneficial educations they received. Rather than throw a cover of condemnation over the government for its goals and the ways in which it tried to achieve them through various, but all faulty, types of schooling, they narrowed their discussion to the problems they saw in the schools and in the system of boarding children away from their homes. The point, as they saw it, was not that the government offered an assimilative education, but that it did not consider the vast social adjustments that both the children and their parents had to make. While the teachers in the schools may have recognized and dealt with the difficulty of a wide change in environment, it is hard to conceive how the government agents might have helped with the adjustment at home. Certainly, some saw the removal of the children as a benefit to those parents, particularly in the west, who were nomadic and for whom day schooling necessitated being settled. And again, the situation in the east was somewhat different, as the Shubenacadie school was originally meant only for children who were orphaned or disadvantaged--although there is the question of how disadvantaged was defined.<sup>89</sup> There is also the consideration that coming from a culture in which boarding schools were for the elite, in which parents paid for the privilege of such an education for their children, perhaps the

government officials saw only what they were offering and not what they were taking.

Also discussed at the 1967 Saskatoon conference was the age-grade problem, the idea that children had to remain in residential school until they were sixteen despite their achievements. This was perhaps a difficulty in those schools which had classes to grade nine only, although it was sometimes possible for graduates to live in the schools but leave daily for high school. But part of the reason some children completed so few grades by age sixteen was that they had entered the schools at advanced ages with no previous education. For example, in the case of the Shubenacadie school, of the nineteen sixteen-year-old students discharged in September, 1939, twelve had completed the expected grade for their years of schooling; that is, twelve students who entered with no previous schooling and spent eight years in the school, left with a grade eight education. It is notable that four of the twelve attained one grade more than expected, and that of the seven who did not complete a grade a year, five were only one grade behind. One who was at the school only a year and a half had entered at fifteen with no previous education.<sup>90</sup>

One of the leaders at the Saskatoon conference was Howard Adams, whose work has already been mentioned. In his 1968 book, The Education of Canadians, 1800-1867: The Roots of Separatism,<sup>91</sup> he explored the evolution of two different systems of education in Lower and Upper Canada. While this study was concerned only with non-native education, Adams was interested in the history of separatist schools since he believed that a separatist education had been given to Canada's aborigines. This idea will be explored in chapter four of this study, although



the question of comparing and contrasting native education with common, public education in Canada deserves its own full investigation.

The work of E. Brian Titley includes a 1986 paper titled "Indian Industrial Schools in Western Canada,"<sup>92</sup> in which he gives mention to this comparative theme as well, noting that during the time of industrial schools for Indians, industrial schools with similar curricula and apprenticeship programmes were in operation for non-Indians as well. That these were reformatories, Titley suggests, indicates that middle-class Canadians were passing judgement on lower-class families, considering they had failed in parental responsibility. The middle-class intervened with young offenders and incorrigibles by putting these children in a so-called superior environment, showing the same contempt and fear toward the poor that missionaries and bureaucrats were showing toward the Indian.<sup>93</sup>

The main theme of Titley's paper, however, concerns the origins of Indian industrial schools in the mid-1800s, detailing their function and failures, and describing their evolution into "residential" schools by 1923. Based on similar schools for Indians in the United States in the early 1800s, they were recommended as models for Canada in 1847 by Egerton Ryerson (Assistant Superintendent General of Indian Affairs), and urged by Nicholas Davin in 1879, who had been assigned to report on industrial schools in the United States. Titley finds it curious that a type of institution typically intended for youth reform was chosen as the premier model for Indian education;<sup>94</sup> however, it could be said that Indian schools were meant for reform of a different kind, to reshape a nomadic people quickly into a settled, or "civilized," one. Perhaps the industrial school's strict discipline, combined with its curricular split between basic academics and fundamental farming

as well as its stress on good citizenship and self-sufficiency, seemed to contain the right ingredients for the proposed result, though Titley says the policy of educating Indian children in European ways developed from "misguided humanitarianism," following a belief that the Indian would be doomed if he did not adopt European behaviours and values.<sup>95</sup>

Titley distinguishes clearly among the types of Indian schools in operation in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--day, boarding, and industrial--and discusses their movements in and out of favour with Ottawa. Whereas the boarding schools had been located near the reserves, the new industrial schools in the west were isolated from them, and so did not find favour with the parents or the children. Discipline and truancy were problems, it was difficult to attract pupils, and by the first decade of the twentieth century the industrial schools had become the "white elephants of Indian education,"<sup>96</sup> considered non-productive, costly, prone to scandal, and generally unable to compete with the boarding schools. By 1922 many industrial schools in the west were closed, partly as an economy under Duncan Campbell Scott's administration of Indian Affairs, and by 1923 the term "industrial" had passed too, being replaced by "residential." The industrial schools had failed because even at their peak they had not enrolled more than ten per cent of school-aged Indians, and those who attended the schools did not remain long enough to be transformed in the ways intended by the administration.<sup>97</sup> Yet, Titley notes they had their uses: not only teaching carpentry, farming, and literacy, they perhaps inadvertently sowed the seeds of pan-Indian consciousness. Giving the Indian students a common identity

and anti-assimilationist purpose was the ironic legacy of these schools which had intended to obliterate Indian culture.<sup>98</sup>

In 1986 as well, Titley published a book on Duncan Campbell Scott, a civil servant between 1880 and 1932, and Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs at the time of the opening of the Shubenacadie school.<sup>99</sup> The title, A Narrow Vision, suggests Scott was not as successful in furthering native education as the statistical evidence of his tenure indicated: while on his retirement his educational policies had translated to more Indians in school, more regular attendance, and more years of education per pupil, this did not necessarily mean that Indians consciously embraced education as a means to civilization.<sup>100</sup> Instead, the broad aim of cultural transfer from reserve loyalty to a white outlook was thwarted; most students remained Indians, clung to their distinctive culture, and did not invade the white workforce except perhaps marginally. As Titley notes, Indian residential school failure was eventually acknowledged by a joint parliamentary committee; after examining the Indian Act between 1946 and 1948, the committee recommended that integration into public schools should replace the residential school system.<sup>101</sup> Eventually, this, of course, failed as well, and the most effective means of native education is still being debated.

Titley's Scott may have been a cultural supremacist and an assimilationist, but his attitudes on how best to civilize the Indian were not considered untoward at the time. As Hubert Blalock wrote in his 1967 discussion of minority group relations,

(i)t has been almost universally true that white contacts with simple hunting and gathering bands...have resulted in either the annihilation or expulsion of the tribe in question or its complete disappearance through assimilation into the dominant culture. Intergroup competition has been direct and

intense since it has involved competition for the means of livelihood...Such contacts have been as brutal and bloody as any on record.<sup>102</sup>

Randle W. Nelson and David A. Nock, equating civilization with capitalism in Reading, Writing, and Riches, agree that civilized peoples have had three basic attitudes to tribal peoples:

...to kill them, to use them in some non-assimilative manner, or to assimilate them into capitalist society. The latter view came to be seen as the "humanitarian" policy which ought to be followed.<sup>103</sup>

Using this historic principle, Scott's assimilationist ideas could be considered to result less from notions of cultural supremacy than of humanitarianism. It might also be argued that believing one's own culture to have some aspects of superiority rationalizes one's adherence to that culture and its principles; those without an attachment to their own culture might instead embrace that of the other, in effect going native, and certainly some of Scott's contemporaries may have done so. But it hardly seems surprising that an educated and literate civil servant, in charge of hunting and gathering nomads, might seek to give them what he saw as the benefits of his own culture. It should be mentioned, too, that although Scott's political policies toward Indian education may have been defined by his cultural attitude and intended to assist the demise of the Indian as an Indian, his poetry shows a sensitive side which even while predicting this devolution still recognized the poignancy of the situation. <sup>104</sup>

James R. Miller in 1988 published a history of relations between Indians and whites in Canada,<sup>105</sup> charting the deterioration of that relationship from its mutually beneficial beginnings to its present problems: advantageous contact at the time of the fur trade turned into antagonistic

conflict when immigrants settled on former Indian hunting lands. As Blalock put it,

Primitive hunting bands or semi-nomadic tribes cannot easily be exploited for their labor...In short, the natives are generally of little use to the settler--except as suppliers of furs, as guides, or as allies against other, more hostile groups. [When] settlers do arrive, the result is almost universally a competition for land, overt hostility, and the annihilation or expulsion of the native group.<sup>106</sup>

Blalock describes expulsion as the removal of the natives to land which was of no use to the dominant group, although in the case of the Canadian prairies it can be argued that the reserve lands were generally equal to that of the settlers' lands in family allotment and in agricultural capability.<sup>107</sup>

In cases where the weaker group cannot be profitably exploited for its labour (used non-assimilatively in the terms of Nelson and Nock), and where there are great physical and cultural differences between the weak and the strong, Blalock predicts the probability of extreme aggression and violence on the part of the more powerful group. Extermination is particularly likely, he says, where governments are distant and their authority diluted, and where there is no strong religious group interested in protecting the weaker group.<sup>108</sup> This suggests two relevant points: that the use of both the on-site Indian agent to represent the distant government, and the religious mission to offer protection and education, may have alleviated aggression and annihilation. While both the government go-between and the missionary worked toward the assimilation of the Indian into the main group, this attitude must be considered a more "humanitarian" one, as Nelson and Nock described it, than death or exploitation.

In 1991, Miller edited a volume of papers on Indian-white relations

in Canada,<sup>109</sup> in which John Tobias described government Indian policy as having always advocated protection, civilization, and assimilation. Giving Indians special status meant putting them under federal protection from exploitation in their dealings with whites; civilization and assimilation were to be achieved through a system of education which ultimately was intended to solve the Indian problem and render obsolete the need for special status.<sup>110</sup>

Miller's contribution to this volume aims to show that following Confederation Indians played an active role in their own history and were not the victims they have more commonly been portrayed as being. In discussing the 1884 prohibition of the Potlatch he notes that "agents were helpless," illustrating this with a story of an agent who avoided confrontation by declaring a scheduled Potlatch as being not really a Potlatch at all, and quoting Franz Boas as saying, several years after the legislated prohibition, that "there is nobody to prevent the Indians doing whatsoever they like."<sup>111</sup> Miller says that it was not uncommon for Indians to hire lawyers to combat Indian Affairs, or for them to simply defy their agents and the law. He mentions an Ontario case in which the agent was mocked when he tried to prohibit traditional feasts and dances, and describes how the agent's threats were so successfully countered by the Indians that he completely capitulated.<sup>112</sup>

On the matter of residential schooling, Miller says that the common view of these institutions as totalitarian, assimilative, and coercive, describes only the intentions of the government's policies and says nothing of the results. First, while it is sometimes assumed that all Indian children were forced into these schools, Miller says that in fact only a minority were

touched by the residential school system; in the years before compulsory education the agents and missionaries failed to recruit sufficient students to fill them.<sup>113</sup> Miller notes as well that the schools were not particularly successful in eliminating native religious and cultural practices, nor did they suppress native languages to the extent claimed. He suggests on the one hand that the many evangelists who mastered native tongues surely used them in their teaching efforts, and on the other that many parents insisted the schools teach English to their children.<sup>114</sup> Miller qualifies, too, the accusation that the schools separated the pupils from their homes and families, pointing out that most of the boarding schools were located near reserves, and that the few remote residential schools affected a limited number of children.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, Miller mentions several cases in which the Indians themselves were the force behind the building of boarding schools, sometimes because they wanted their children housed while they were away at work. He quotes extensively from a 1902 agreement between missionaries and Ojibwa chiefs which indicates that the Indians were not only anxious to have a boarding school built, but that they largely controlled its operation.<sup>116</sup> Miller also notes cases in which peaceful parental objections to unpopular school staff members resulted in dismissal, and gives examples of successful, violent resistance as well.<sup>117</sup> Where parental challenge against such problems as distance and health were not answered, the schools did not survive.<sup>118</sup> Miller does not deny the goals and coercive tactics of government policy, but rather suggests that the conventional picture of aggressive agents, manipulative missionaries, and victimized Indians needs to be questioned and qualified.

In 1996, Miller published Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools,<sup>119</sup> tracing the evolution of the schools from seventeenth century New France to the typical institution established in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and following it to its demise in the 1960s. In the first part he discusses the establishment of the residential school system, beginning with the traditional native education it was to replace and including early experiments in residential schooling, then explaining the use of the religious as teachers and administrators and describing the expansion of the system across the country. This section is particularly valuable in its detail and analysis of early native education in Canada and its discussion of several ideas pertinent to this thesis. As early as the 1600s, Indian students were expected to be "agents" teaching at home, the Jesuit teachers noting that young, educated Indians would surely help in the religious conversion of others.<sup>120</sup> This idea was carried throughout the aims of native schooling well into the twentieth century, as it was expected that school leavers would take their education, particularly the agricultural and domestic aspects of it, back to their reserves.

Miller shows that the aims and definition of education, the means of filling the schools, the assimilationist goals, and the idea of a one-way exchange were all present in the earliest attempts at teaching the Indians. In the 1600s the French used inducements--presents to parents--to recruit children to their seminaries, and certainly throughout the history of residential schooling coercion was involved. Ideas even at the outset were to completely absorb the Indians, so they and the French would become "one people and one blood."<sup>121</sup> The early missionaries equated education with schooling, so that with no schools there had been no education; and in



addition there was no reciprocity, so that the Jesuits noted an Indian complaint that

You are continually asking us for our children, and you do not give yours; I do not know any family among us which keeps a Frenchman with it. 122

The idea that there was much to teach and little to learn would be a feature of native education throughout the residential school era. During treaty signing on the prairies in 1880, for instance, one chief suggested the time might come when he would exchange children with the Indian Commissioner, so each could teach the other "what is good."<sup>123</sup>

Miller notes that parental resistance was in evidence from the beginning, against separation from their children and French disciplinary practices; as well, there was the real fear of health problems in the school. The pupils resisted too, disliking the unaccustomed confinement.<sup>124</sup> Segregation was also an element of early education, the French preferring to teach the Indians on their reserves away from the negative influence of whites.<sup>125</sup>

Experiments in Indian schooling in the 1700s and early 1800s coincided with a period of British missionary zeal and concern for the spiritual well-being of the indigenous.<sup>126</sup> In 1787 the New England Company started the first Indian residential school in the Maritimes, and (with a break of three years) the school ran until 1826, having educational aims and practical problems similar to those which would continue during what Miller calls the modern era of residential schooling. It was held, for example, that children should be strictly separated from their families since home contact undid the work of the school, and it was found that where the parents were destitute it was easier to secure their children. A school

apprenticeship programme under which children were sent to work with farmers, paid for their keep and instruction, was exploitative as it was used as a method of free--even subsidized--labour.<sup>127</sup> Another early residential school was opened in Manitoba, where again there was an emphasis on agriculture and a preference for children from remote areas because of the beneficial separation from their families. Interestingly, Miller notes that those involved in the fur trade were opposed to Indian education because "an enlightened Indian is good for nothing."<sup>128</sup>

Parental objection to education was not universal, and some Indians wanted literacy and numeracy for their children, even if only so they would not be cheated by white traders. In the 1830s one converted Indian, Rev. Peter Jones, raised funds in England to support his vision of a residential school where the children would be under the complete jurisdiction of the mission, their parents relinquishing control of them; where the proceeds of a school farm would help support the institution; where girls would be taught domestic skills; in short, where religion, education, and manual labour would go together.<sup>129</sup> Other native converts, contrasting white prosperity with Indian poverty, saw the adoption of white ways as a beneficial change.<sup>130</sup> Miller refers to these natives as "broker figures," acting as "powerful agents of social and religious change" as they themselves promoted assimilation and acculturation.<sup>131</sup>

On the matter of using the religious as teachers and administrators in the residential schools, Miller cites from the Davin Report of 1879 that missionary instructors were seen as essential: they would bring to the schools an enthusiasm and motive beyond anything money could buy.<sup>132</sup> He also notes that the federal government's only experience in education

had been in the funding of missions, so it would naturally have turned to the churches.<sup>133</sup>

Miller mentions an "intellectual poverty of social science" in the nineteenth century, when understanding of different racial qualities was influenced by ideas of scientific racism.<sup>134</sup> He notes too that spillover of American Civil War racism meant that by the end of the century in Canada there was racial segregation of Nova Scotia and Ontario schools, that blacks were discouraged from settling the west, and that campaigns in British Columbia conspired to keep out Asians and East Indians. Along with a general attitude of condescension toward non-whites went the idea that civilization was epitomized by Euro-Canadian society.<sup>135</sup> The progress of the Indian toward this state was measured in part by the adoption of thrifty habits and the pursuit of wealth and comfort.<sup>136</sup>

Chapters in Miller's book detail episodes of abuse and resistance, and speak of the directions aboriginal education is heading today. It ends poignantly, as any account of the Indian residential school experience, from one single memory to Miller's thorough work, must. There he cites an open letter from a mother to her child's teacher, asking all the questions that should be considered by any non-native entering a native school, telling all the ways in which the upbringing of reserve children may differ from that of the middle-class white child while being no less rich, and insisting that the teacher-pupil relationship be understanding and respectful.<sup>137</sup> It is a letter to be posted not only on reserve school bulletin boards, but in the staff rooms of all Canadian schools.

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## **PART ONE**

### **THE HISTORIC AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

CHAPTER ONE  
THE PATRON-BROKER-CLIENT MODEL

The anthropological literature abounds with examples of brokers, for the manipulation of others is a fascinating subject.<sup>1</sup>

To assist in evaluating the role of non-natives in the Shubenacadie Indian residential school's policy and administration, ideas taken from social anthropology will be applied to an examination of the people, and an analysis of their motives and actions as related to the school under scrutiny. Specifically, the idea of "brokerage" will be applied, the broker being a bridge between the "patron" and the "client;" that is, the character of brokerage will be examined by considering the government agents on the reserves, and the religious staff in the school, as "brokers." This follows the entrepreneurial model of transaction formulated in 1966 by Frederik Barth, and the patron-broker-client model described in 1971 by Robert Paine, but begins with the 1950s ideas of social networking and the transmission of information found in the work of J.A. Barnes, and Eric Wolf's study of mediation in a Mexican society.

Barnes' work is useful as a starting point, beginning in 1951 when he conducted historical, cross-cultural studies in Rhodesia and Norway which suggest some parallels with studies relating to the Micmac Indians in the Maritimes. For instance, in his work on "The Perception of History in a Plural Society,"<sup>2</sup> that of the Ngoni Group in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), he noted that a reinterpretation of the past in the light of the present does not produce a consistent picture of a society; there is an ambivalence in recollection that, in this case, portrays the past as a life of peace on the

one hand, but an existence under the power of fierce warriors on the other. The Ngoni feel that if they had not been defeated by the British, they would not have lost their land, they would not have become hungry, they would not have lost their customs. While this could, perhaps, be repeated as a Micmac lament, the Ngoni have also complained that they did not become European after being captured by Europeans,<sup>3</sup> a protestation not ever heard or expected from the Micmac. It is also interesting, from the view of an educator, to look at what Barnes says about Ngoni schools today--he notes a trend toward teaching vernacular, tribal histories, based on recollections of elders, and suggests these should be regarded as "written legends" rather than "proper histories."<sup>4</sup> It has since been recognized that the use of oral reminiscence is not an improper method of interrogating the past, and that vernacular ideas can only enhance our understanding of the complexity that is human history. There is further interest, from an ethno-historical view, in Barnes' evaluation of the official British reports of the Ngoni in the late nineteenth century: these "grew shorter and shorter [and presumably more repetitious] with the years for there was less and less to record." Soon public information was little more than an annual statement that the "conduct of natives has been satisfactory"<sup>5</sup> This problem is paralleled in the Sessional Papers in the Annual Reports of the Canadian government on the Micmac in Nova Scotia.

In his 1954 work on "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish,"<sup>6</sup> Barnes defines "network" as a social field of interacting people, consisting of ties of kinship, friendship, and acquaintanceship, or as a chain of interaction between friends, and friends of friends. He likens it to M. Fortes' idea of the web of kinship, but whereas "web" suggests something

two-dimensional, his "network" purports to be multi-dimensional,<sup>7</sup> and considers one society in relation to neighbouring parishes. In each of these, he says, there were one or two bureaucrats living at a much higher standard than the rest of the population, speaking a different language, and moving from post to post without affiliation to any of them.<sup>8</sup> Maybe the colonial elite of Barnes' "Bremnes society," or indeed of any society, is characteristically similar: the agent on an Indian reserve lived in a large house and enjoyed a standard of living higher than that of his clients, he did not speak their language, and he oversaw several reserves with connections of loyalty to none. This perhaps defines colonialism in concrete terms.

In 1959, Barnes discussed a book by Ronald Frankenberg, Village on the Border,<sup>9</sup> a social-anthropological report on "religion, politics and football" in a village in Wales. It is not a study of football, he says, but a social study of people who play football.<sup>10</sup> To relate this thought to the current Micmac study, it might be said that this is less a study of brokerage than a study of people who act as brokers. The term "broker" is used simply as a way of seeing a specific role played by certain people, for some of whom the position was not a full-time activity. Initially, for example, the Indian agents in the Maritime Provinces were part-time employees only, and more than one, during the time the Shubenacadie school operated, was a cleric as well as a government agent. Stories of politicians, Barnes says, are stories of intrigue and manoeuvre, and clashing interests.<sup>11</sup> In considering the role-play of Indian agents as brokers, it should be possible to see how their actions influenced or manoeuvred decisions of government policy, and to see how this policy clashed with a "community in action"<sup>12</sup> --active in being considerably less passive than it has sometimes been portrayed.



To explain the use of the "brokerage model" in the words of Murray Edelman, from his 1964 work, The Symbolic Uses of Politics,<sup>13</sup> it will be applied not simply as an interesting analogy, but as a tool for explanation. In this study, Edelman posits that politics can be a "cool and successful effort to get money from others or power over them," and he notes that the government can benefit and threaten at the same time;<sup>14</sup> actions favoured by one group might appear menacing to another. Considering the early view of the officials at Indian Affairs that the native population was superstitious, ignorant, and infantile, it is reasonable to assume that the natives were ambivalent, at best, toward the efforts of the state to assist them while changing them. When government policies appear ominous to the governed, Edelman suggests, both sides are reinforced in their perceptions of the other as the enemy.<sup>15</sup> The very designation of a group as the "other" classifies it, Edelman says, and suggests the probability of judgement and comparison. The terms with which we name anything (superstitious, ignorant, infantile) define the perspective from which we evaluate it.<sup>16</sup>

In 1956, Eric Wolf considered notions of brokerage in his paper, "Aspects of group relations in a complex society: Mexico."<sup>17</sup> Using the term "brokers," but apparently unsure of it, he placed it in quotation marks; however in explaining it he described a role not unlike that of the Indian agents considered in this study. Their position in the middle exposes them, he said,

...since, Janus-like, they face in two directions at once. They must serve some of the interests of groups operating on both the community and national level, and they must cope with the conflicts raised by the collision of these interests."<sup>18</sup>

Wolf anticipated Paine's 1974 ideas of brokers as self-interested, arguing that they cannot settle these colliding interests because to do so would abolish their usefulness to others. Instead the broker is a buffer, maintaining tensions between the two and not incidentally maintaining his own *raison d'être*. He also must monitor those tensions so that conflict does not escalate beyond his control, in which case he might be replaced by a more effective mediator.<sup>19</sup>

In Clifford Geertz's 1960 work on "The Javanese Kijaji: the changing role of a cultural broker,"<sup>20</sup> he described the broker as a vigorous, imaginative regional leader, placed between peasant and metropolitan life, creating an effective means of union between traditional and modern cultural patterns.<sup>21</sup> This speaks to the role of the Canadian Indian agent, particularly in the west where the agent supported the government's mandate to actively attack traditional life by the discouragement of nomadism, the prohibition of any manifestations of heathenism, and the establishment of industrial schools which were meant to bring the native quickly into the nineteenth century. Geertz speaks of the generally peaceful penetration of Islam into Indonesia, and a comparison could be made with the introduction of Christianity to the western Canadian Indians, some of whom saw easy parallels between their own spiritual myths and the tales of the missionaries.<sup>22</sup> Geertz notes, however, that sometimes the conversion of the Javanese was purely formal: "Under the Islamic veneer...the peasantry remained feast-giving and spirit-worshipping animists."<sup>23</sup> A common claim among Canadian Indians is the non-absorption of Christianity, which was sometimes adopted only externally, although it should be noted that in the east the Micmac embraced Roman Catholicism

whole-heartedly, or at least that through many generations it became traditional for them. Geertz said that in Indonesia too, over the centuries Islam became an important part of the lives of the people.<sup>24</sup>

Geertz's "Kijaji," the local Moslem teacher and "cultural broker," was not only the main communicant of Islam to the peasants, but the main connection between the local system and the larger whole. His duties changed somewhat in this century as he became a new kind of broker, one which Geertz described with a controversial suggestion that is a theme of this chapter: that brokerage is a role of self interest, confused by the possibility that too much success could mean the demise of the position. He argued that brokerage is "a social role pregnant with possibilities both for securing and enhancing his social power and prestige, and for destroying the essential foundations of it."<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the Kijaji was not unlike the Indian agent-Roman Catholic priest in the Maritimes, trying to combine his religious role with that of the political. In this unlikely juncture Geertz noted was mirrored "the conflicts and contradictions which characterize the contemporary, rapidly changing Indonesian society in general."<sup>26</sup> In words which will be recalled in a later chapter, Geertz said the Kijaji worked as "God's agent," and was regarded not just as a mediator of law and doctrine, but of "holy power itself."<sup>27</sup>

In 1966, social anthropologist Frederik Barth published his "Models of Social Organization," or "explanation of social forms."<sup>28</sup> Here he discussed the transactional model, which considered what might be called the transmission of goods and services rather than of information, which Barnes had considered. Barth speaks of reciprocity, and its assumption that both sides are satisfied with a transaction. But since each side tries to

assure that its gain is greater than, or at least equal to, any value lost, a "game of strategy" develops in which the sides make mutual, exacted payments, or prestations, and maintain ledgers of balance. Barth finds that there are limits to the inequalities of gain people will permit,<sup>29</sup> though he also notes that transactions might have different values, as in the case where one side has "faulty information" so that both sides *believe* they profit, though in fact, one side may be disappointed or cheated.<sup>30</sup> This, perhaps, is what happened in colonial America, where exchanges were not necessarily equal, though both sides may have shown satisfaction. Where the transactional model becomes relevant to the study of the Micmac and their agents, however, may be in Barth's sketch of life on a fishing vessel, and the transactions between skipper and crew. Here he uses the term "prestations of submission"<sup>31</sup> in the case where the crew is asked to respect and accredit a skipper's suspect decision, suggesting for the present study the idea that one person in a transaction might proffer something of possible value, and in exchange, expect trust and deference. It is difficult to keep "ledgers of balance" when the transaction is between a government agent and a government ward. In fact, Barth says it is generally characteristic of transactions that the parties differ in their particular circumstances, and have differing needs.<sup>32</sup>

Barth also delves into the market, or entrepreneurial, model of transaction. The entrepreneur is seen as profit-seeking, and according to economics, the largest potential profit occurs in dealings where there is the greatest disparity of evaluation between the two sides he brings together.<sup>33</sup> He speaks of entrepreneurs as bridging what was separated, and if the Indian agent is considered as this bridge, he can be seen as bringing

together the two sides of government and reserve, who are otherwise separated as fully as can be by distance and difference, or indifference. The question of "profit" in terms of Indian agents is perhaps only in salary and satisfaction, but the wide disparity which Barth suggests is necessary for successful entrepreneurialism does exist between the two sides the agent bridges.

Barth writes, too, that cultural integration is a side effect of entrepreneurial activity, that the "flow of value" progressively tends to correct unequal evaluations. It is not a stretching of Barth's view to equate it to the cultural integration the government sought for its native wards. The flow of value (in goods, money, and education) into the reserves was expected to bring equality to the native; the entire philosophy behind the various bureaux of Indian Affairs was to make the native a citizen, or as the accusation has evolved, to make him a white man. There is little, if any, argument remaining against this view of the government's aim.

Barth says that entrepreneurial activity creates "value dilemmas and forces a revaluation and decision on a population."<sup>34</sup> Again, his subjects are the crew of Norwegian trawlers. The fishermen were offered all-year employment on the boats for moderate wages, an appealing offer since the men were often unemployed or working at term jobs for lower pay. But what appeared fair at first was not; in the ledger of gain and loss the fishermen were disappointed and soon quit. Again, to make an analogy to the Canadian native population of the current study, government offers that appeared acceptable or even desirable did not necessarily bring satisfaction in the long term. A frame house in a settled community on the reserve, guaranteed monthly food vouchers, and gifts of seed and livestock, may

have seemed a preferable alternative to an uncertain nomadic life, but it left nothing for the people to do for themselves. Yet, if they didn't stay home, didn't forfeit nomadism, they were criticized for remaining savages and faulted for making day schooling an impossibility for their mobile children. Education may have looked worthwhile at first, until it interfered with custom and lifestyle, and until it was made compulsory and residential. Then came the "value dilemmas." As Barth said of his Norwegians, they began to question the value of free time, and of a regular home life:

Nobody sits down and speculates on the relative value of being regularly with his wife and of increasing his material standard of living until this is a real dilemma of imminent choice; and when this happens people's initial judgement of relative value may be wrong, in the sense of not satisfying them in the long run.<sup>35</sup>

Residential schooling for Indian children may have been deemed valuable; there is evidence that many parents willingly sent their children to these schools. But then did they sit down and speculate on the relative value of being regularly with their children? Barth suggests that when the transactional process begins with a faulty evaluation, the next step is to enter a period of bargaining--this step could not be taken by native parents. Entrepreneurs, Barth admits, are able to present "package deals" which reduce choice; in the government's package of citizenship and civilization, choice was not offered at all.

If the idea of entrepreneurialism appears somewhat alien to the notion of brokerism, the backdrop for the current study, the sense in which Barth utilizes it should be considered. He admits to using the concept in its "most extended sense, to analyse a political enterprise which affects and changes the basic values and very cultural identity of a population."<sup>36</sup> His

Lappish-speaking population in north Norway, culturally distinct from other Norwegians, perhaps parallels the Micmac people of the Maritimes. He described them as "economically impoverished...through centuries of contact they have accepted cultural loans and accumulated a host of discrepant values."<sup>37</sup> They were seen to struggle with a personal identity doubt: on the one side, shame because of being part of an underprivileged minority; and on the other, pride in their strong ethnicity; they appreciated the relative comforts of "the new times," yet were committed to their traditional values. Into this setting came what Barth calls political entrepreneurs: one who offered schools, subsidies and loans for development and other benefits, all of which were highly valued by the people, but which threatened their own values and identity; and a second who offered material welfare in addition to a respect for the Lappish identity. The first might represent the "offers" to the Micmac in the early part of this century, while the second might characterize more recent political deals. Yet Barth's suggestion is telling, that the offer to the Lapps promising identity protection may have been made in an "intellectualized and romanticized form."<sup>38</sup> Perhaps this is the only way other cultures can be dealt with, once they have rejected submission and integration.

In 1967, Barnes discussed some problems of social investigation in "Feedback and Real Time in Social Enquiry."<sup>39</sup> He suggested that among a community's values are information and knowledge about themselves, which they do not openly share. An investigator may use wealth, services or just friendship to extract such information, but the informant may not wish or expect it to be passed on.<sup>40</sup> In the case of the Indian agent, who may not have the trust of the people in the first place, he is rendered particularly

suspect since his job is specifically to pass information along. Barnes says that virtually all social life is based on an "imperfect flow of information"<sup>30</sup> because unpleasant facts are evaded; it could be said that other facts might be evaded as well, were an informant not willing to share community values with a certain investigator, despite proffered wealth, services, or friendship. In the case of the Indian agent again, this suggests the idea that the "bridge" might be a one-way thing. While he is offering the trappings, or trap, of civilization, there may be a river-like flow of information passing from the government, through him, and to the people. Yet there may be little flowing upstream. The agent is in the unique position of representing two sides, a difficult position if the flow of information is imperfect. When looking at the patron-broker-client model, then, it should be considered that even one-lane bridges are intended to invite two-way traffic.

Frederik Barth edited a book in 1967, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,<sup>42</sup> in which collected essays are addressed to "the problems of ethnic groups and their persistence."<sup>43</sup> In his introduction, he discussed the extreme minorities, pariah groups, who are "rejected by the host population because of behaviour or characteristics positively condemned."<sup>44</sup> While he is mainly referring to those in unclean occupations rather than members of specific ethnic groups, he does use the example of gypsies, saying they are condemned primarily because of their "wandering life...[and] flagrant violation of puritan ethics of responsibility, toil, and morality."<sup>45</sup> This could easily be a statement by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, in any of the first fifty years after Confederation, describing the general conditions of the Indian population of Canada. With this application of Barth's idea, it is interesting to consider the reasons for rejection by the host population, and



equally so to consider the very suggestion of "host" and parasitic populations. As for ethnic persistence, it is increasingly evident.

The cultural condemnation of the native in early Canada was not, of course, unique in history. As F.G. Bailey wrote in his 1969 Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics,<sup>46</sup>

Unhappily every society makes these kinds of discriminations, ranging from full members allowed to bear responsibility and to command the corresponding privileges down to categories of people who are defined as scarcely human at all. It is not easy to extricate oneself from this assumption. It comes so readily to judge as good and bad, sensible and ridiculous, admirable and contemptible the customs and values of our society as against the customs of another society. But the truth is that one must *first* perceive and understand differences as just differences and nothing more: the judgement of good and bad is a luxury which comes later.<sup>47</sup>

In a 1969 paper, "Ambiguity and innovation: implications for the genesis of the cultural broker,"<sup>48</sup> Irwin Press described the brokerage role as a group-straddling one through which the broker lives on tension, trying to serve both local and national groups. He pondered the mandate of brokers to innovate, for without some sort of structural permission their innovations could be seen as intrusions, that is, pushing in from the outside. But he cited Geertz as identifying the broker as an insider, "sought as a local spokesman, able to make palatable certain outside phenomena."<sup>49</sup> This suggests the tantalizing idea that brokers may be either insiders or outsiders rather than true group-straddlers, that indeed one outside broker may be placed in a mediating role on behalf of the larger society while the local community appoints its own inside mediator. This is a possibility to be explored and exemplified in a later chapter. With dual brokerage, it is not

necessarily a matter of the inside-outside brokers meeting and mediating, for they may instead choose to work independently and even at cross purposes.

Some of the literature on peasant society explores clientelist politics, giving more concentration to the patron-client connection than to brokerage. In John Duncan Powell's 1970 paper, "Peasant society and clientelist politics,"<sup>50</sup> he defined the patron-client relationship as different from other power relationships in the following three ways. First, the patron-client tie is between two groups who are unequal in status, wealth and influence. Secondly, it depends on reciprocity in the exchange of non-comparable goods or services; that is, the client or lower-status partner receives that which will reduce his environmental threats, while the patron or higher-status partner receives such less tangible rewards as esteem, deference, or loyalty. Powell does note that the bargaining power of the patron is by definition greater than that of the client. Finally, the maintenance of the relationship depends heavily on proximity, or face-to-face contact between the client and patron, usually accomplished through a broker.<sup>51</sup> Powell suggests that clientele systems may be encountered in any developing country where local kinship systems cannot function between the community and the nation.<sup>52</sup> He sees the "contract" between client and patron as informal and unwritten, so that "enforcement, compliance, and performance are bound up in, and limited to, the face to face relationship between the client and broker, or the broker and patron."<sup>53</sup>

Almost twenty years later, Hamza Alavi argued, in "Village factions,"<sup>54</sup> against Powell's suggestion that the patron-client bond signifies a relationship of reciprocity from which each party gains some benefit. His

objection is to the idea that the exchange is considered to be reciprocal, as if it meant equivalent instead of simply implying give and take. Powell clearly defined the actors in the patron-client relationship as of unequal socio-economic rank, and described the exchange as between non-comparable, not equal, goods and services, but Alavi opposes the suggestion of reciprocity as a "paternalistic value judgement."<sup>55</sup> Instead, he posits, "another value judgement would consider the relationship to be based on the exploitation of the...labourer by a parasitical class...,"<sup>56</sup> and he compares patron-client with master-subject, indicating domination and dependence. In the final analysis, he says, the relationship proves to be unequal. It is, of course, so. As cited in the Introduction (page 39), Nelsen and Nock, in their 1978 consideration of "Native marginality in the capitalist system," noted that capitalism has never kindly overrun the conquered.<sup>58</sup>

Assimilation was seen as the humanitarian way to treat the defeated, and as Wilbert Ahern noted in his 1978 paper on "Assimilationist Racism"<sup>59</sup> in the United States, nineteenth century humanitarians, or "friends" of the Indians, were remarkably successful in their crusade to transform the Indian and affect policy.<sup>60</sup> They believed that education was necessary "for all people to share on equal terms in the country's blessings."<sup>61</sup> However, putting complete confidence in schooling allowed the reformers to avoid questions of what Ahern called "blatant conquest" and the Indians' legitimate demands. The reformers' belief that education would allow the Indian to sink or swim on his own merits not only suggested that failure was entirely the pupil's own responsibility, Ahern argued, but assumed as well that Indians wanted to enter white society.<sup>62</sup> Nelson and Nock felt that the natives were obviously satisfied with their own ways of life--

their traditional and semi-traditional modes of production--and that the "humanitarianism of the western interlopers" should have been expressed by teaching the natives more refined hunting and trapping skills, not by "moulding the natives into acceptance of industrial capitalism."<sup>63</sup> It seems naive to suggest that the western intruders did not present improved methods of hunting and trapping; surely at least they introduced gunpowder and the horse which refined both native hunting and warfare. As for industrial capitalism, how would twentieth-century reformers view nineteenth-century reformers if they had not offered education in basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills to an overrun people living in a bewildering, changing environment?

The assimilationist reformers were middlemen of a sort, self-appointed but meeting annually on behalf of the Indian and managing to influence federal Indian policy. At a time when most Americans saw non-whites as inherently inferior, the friends of the Indians considered that all people had the same "diversity of endowment and...high order of talent" as all other races, and felt that the experience of the Indian boarding schools in the nineteenth century United States conclusively demonstrated the equal ability of the Indians.<sup>64</sup> The mission of these schools, Ahern says, was to prepare the pupils to return to their villages as "missionaries of progress," or pupil-brokers.<sup>65</sup> This significant aspect of Indian educational aims, apparent in both American and Canadian schools, will be considered in a later chapter, but as mentioned in the introduction, it is a subject deserving of a separate study.

In 1971, Robert Paine edited a volume titled Patrons and Brokers in the East Arctic<sup>66</sup> to which he contributed a "theory of patronage and

brokerage." In his introduction, and with specific reference to the Canadian north, he defined "patron" as government, the "ostensible source of decisions and favours."<sup>67</sup> A concurrent development was the proliferation of the middleman role, the "intermediary between the government agencies and the communities in the north."<sup>68</sup> This role was necessary to the government because of its far, physical removal from the north, and it grew from the propensity of the government to use Euro-Canadians as two-way transmitters of information--both interpreters of government policy, and local "experts" on native views. Thus, Paine says, were local whites pushed into the middleman role, between the government as patron and the community as client. Paine also speaks of "local patrons," such as missionaries, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the R.C.M.P., who at times act as each other's middlemen, and who have their own vested interests to propagate and protect. Together, the government and the local patrons stand for western culture and values; through the act of lobbying, each patron promotes the specific values it represents. Lobbying, Paine says, is done through acts of brokerage, and the terminology here is of some interest. The word "broker" invokes the German word "brücke," or bridge, while the word "lobby" suggests the idea of a passageway or corridor; both, therefore, imply two-way transmission, and a means of going between. But Paine is careful to distinguish the "broker" from the "go-between": the latter, he says, transmits messages and instructions faithfully, while the former manipulates and processes them.<sup>69</sup> Having clarified this, he designates the middleman in the Arctic as a broker. Since the broker is commonly also a local patron, he is lobbying for his particular "version of western culture;" as a middleman he has means of disseminating it. Since on one side, he is responsible to the

government to direct its policies in the community, and on the other he is spokesman for that community to the government, Paine feels it is clear that a great deal of "selective communication" takes place, both ways.<sup>70</sup> One act of brokerage allows for another; the processing of information means the distant patron loses some control over policy, and its evolution. But since "at all times there must be a policy," the government cannot dispense with its broker.<sup>71</sup>

In his theoretical essay on patronage and brokerage, Paine wished to dispense with market-term confusion and economic definitions of patron and client. "Who is patron?" is not necessarily clear: a merchant's customers, he says, are at once his clients and his patrons. Also, it is difficult to define the client on relative rank alone; a lawyer might represent a higher-ranking "client." A patron, then, cannot be defined simply by who he is, and what he does.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Paine questioned the definition of the patron-client relationship as asymmetrical, as characterizing one partner as superior in his ability to supply goods and services. It has already been seen in Barth's 1966 work that the notion of reciprocity does not necessarily suggest satisfaction on both sides, and certainly need not suggest equality of exchange. But Paine felt that although what each side brings to a relationship is different, it is made "relevant to the relationship."<sup>73</sup> He seems to be suggesting that the patron and client are different in what they possess and proffer, but that their prestations are equal, and that this is not so only where one side is cheated. In fact, he says that the "reciprocal process is *not* lop-sided," when the parties to the transaction value the prestations differently so that each profits, or if the parties differ in circumstances and have different needs.<sup>74</sup> To carry this idea into the current study, where the

parties involved are the Canadian government and the Micmac people, Paine seems to suggest there is nothing "lop-sided" about the patron-client relationship, simply because the two have "situationally or temporally specific and differing" requirements. It is as if balance is said to occur when the client is given what he "needs" and the patron takes, or imposes, what he "wants." The question is, who decides what the client needs? For clarification, Paine says any analysis must precisely define the context and manner in which one partner or his services is deemed superior to the other,<sup>75</sup> and this will presumably justify the decision as to "who is patron."

Paine cites M. Sahlins as saying that "generosity" is the beginning of patronage, as it creates not just an obligation to reciprocate, but also a leader and a follower.<sup>76</sup> This, of course, suggests lop-sidedness in a situation of differing situations and needs, unless there is some equality in relinquishing children in exchange for the freedom to resume a nomadic existence, a choice offered to Indian parents whose lifestyle interfered with their children's schooling. On the other side, of course, was another attitude, that government spending on the Indian could stop only when education had succeeded in achieving integration. It seemed, to officials at Indian Affairs, a fair trade to forget about civilizing the older generation and to concentrate on assimilating the younger one.

In discussing the strategy of the aspiring patron, Paine says he begins by offering items and services that are new, and creating a need for them. At first, there are no stipulations, just an expectation of return. The gifts are there for the taking, and only when stipulations are later placed on them by the benefactor is the recipient conscious of his dependence. Only now, Paine says, can we properly speak of a patron-client relationship.

What distinguishes the two is that the patron's values are distributed and circulated, and the client's are not: the patron's reward is that the client accepts his values.<sup>77</sup> Paine, then, does admit to an asymmetry in the patron-client relationship when it comes to the notion of value.

Paine also agrees to the idea of the dependence of the client on the broker, and the client's need to make prestations of loyalty and demonstrations of esteem. In this context, he feels it is appropriate to consider the God-man relationship as the "archetypal patron-client one," and cites Michael Kenny's 1960 assertion that God is the final patron and the ultimate source of all patronage.<sup>78</sup> Paine discusses the notion that if God is said to love man, then man must in return love God, in which case love becomes the value disseminated by the patron. When it is absorbed by the client and returned as a counter-prestation, what is of note, Paine says, is that although value is passing in two directions, it is only one value--that of the patron.<sup>79</sup>

The idea of God as patron, or "God the Father" is not alien to a consideration of Canadian government and Micmac, where the father-image becomes paternalism. It is clear that the government did look upon the Indian as a child in need of care; Indians were government wards on the reserve, and wards of the principal in the school. The notion of God as patron is also not out of place in considering life in the Roman Catholic-run school itself. It is the essence of most religions that God the patron uses prophets as a bridge to the people or religious clients, and Paine finds "cognitive and functional parallels between earthly systems of patronage and the relationship between God, the Holy Family and Saints, and between these and humans."<sup>80</sup> Since at the core of Catholicism is the idea of



intercessory prayer, it should not appear amiss to suggest that the Sisters in the school were intermediaries between God, the patron, and Micmac child, the client.

Following the patron's strategy of creating a need for transaction, Paine says, comes the next phase in which the patron begins to manipulate the relationship.<sup>81</sup> This is where it becomes inadequate to describe the transaction as reciprocal. The patron directs the client in his "choice" of goods and services received; the client is in the patron's debt, but counter-prestations are not such as would put the patron, in turn, in the client's debt. This is because, Paine reiterates, the relationship is based on an "embracement of values that derive from the patron alone."<sup>82</sup> Once the patron receives loyalty and esteem from an exchange, the question of "who is patron?" presumably is answered.

Paine next addresses the assumption that the patron, as the stronger partner in the relationship and the one making the more material prestations, is in effect making the larger ones. Considering his already-stated position that transactions are not lop-sided, the question that emerges is why clients allow the patron to have control. Paine feels there is little cost to the clients in permitting such control, that while sometimes a patron may support some of the client's values, at other times a client may merely pretend to embrace the patron's values.<sup>83</sup> This possibility has already been noted in Geertz's work on the Javanese conversion to Islam. While Paine has rejected the "big-man" theory of the patron as simply a magnanimous, high-ranking friend to the client,<sup>84</sup> he has also demonstrated that indeed, the patron is the powerful partner in the relationship. What he is denying is that patronage derives from relative status; instead, he insists, it comes from

transactional strategy. It is the patron's "fund of assets," not including his rank, that is the first prerequisite of patronage, and these assets must be convertible into influence. Again, what he requires in return is demonstration that the values he disseminates have been adopted. In the case of the present study, when using the notion of God (the church) as patron and the Sisters of Charity as brokers, the idea that the adoption of values is the prestation required of the Micmac children as clients is clear in these words of one of the Sisters:

The Heart of Our Dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament must have been delighted with the frequency and fervor of the visits made by our little children [to the chapel]. It was not even necessary to ask them to go, they were very anxious to do so and their behaviour was most edifying.<sup>85</sup>

Paine discusses the confusion in the literature between the patron and the broker and cites Adrian Mayer as making a useful distinction:

the patron recruits followers by his powers to dispense favours. The broker...is a middleman attracting followers who believe him able to influence the person who controls the favours."<sup>86</sup>

He mentions G.M. Foster's 1963 work on the go-between as a lever, "a way of access to a patron," but in which he is also considered a semi-patron, for while his main power lies in his influence with the patron, he can help in himself.<sup>87</sup> It may be that in the current study the Indian agent or broker will also appear as semi-patron, making some of his own decisions, such as determining which requests of "his" clients merit passing to the government.

But according to Paine it is, again, the question of values that distinguishes the broker from the patron: it is the values of the patron that are dispensed through the broker. Those who purvey values for which they are not responsible, he says, are not in the role of patron, but are either

brokers or go-betweens instead, and, the go-between is distinguished by faithfulness in this purveyance while the broker might manipulate or make changes as he interprets values which are not his own. Paine suggests that a broker is closer than a go-between to being himself in the role of patron (recalling the idea of semi-patron). Where he is distinguishable from the patron is in the matter of influence, which he usually does not have over either of the parties to which he is the middleman. If he does exert some power over the clients himself, he is not perceived to be using it in order to create his own following or to promote his own values.<sup>88</sup> Paine concludes that all these positions (patron, broker, go-between, client) are dependent upon situation, and since they are "roles," the different parts may be played in turn, or in concert, by the same person. The distinctions are useful, he says, "in mapping the variety of perceptions of strategy in any given situation".<sup>89</sup>

In 1974, Paine produced an argument, Second Thoughts About Barth's Model,<sup>90</sup> against Barth's notion of transactionalism. Transactions, as Barth describes them, imply reciprocity, and an assumption of mutual satisfaction. Paine considers that Barth has neglected power as a variable of exchange, and since exchanges between people of different status are not open to much, or any, bargaining, they symbolize asymmetry. The powerful, he says, can force a "bargain," so that the other party to the exchange must accept "the best under the circumstances."<sup>91</sup> He disputes not only Barth's suggestion of willingness on both sides of a transaction, but that there is a sharing of values between those who transact, both ideas stemming from Barth's notion that transactions afford mutually acceptable gains. There is, perhaps, a problem with ideas of extrinsic and intrinsic

values; Barth's market model considers values as assets that can be traded, but creates confusion, Paine contends, when he discusses cultural integration and treats intrinsic values extrinsically.<sup>92</sup> Is there no place, then, for prestations of loyalty, or adoption of the patron's values? Paine cites A.F.C. Wallace's contention that a cultural and social system is so complex that few, if any, of its members fully understand it, and his correlative idea that the parties to an interaction need not know each other's motives.<sup>93</sup> This presumably becomes more complicated in the matter of cross-cultural transaction, when there are two social systems to comprehend, and when the purpose of a person who is culturally alien becomes even more difficult to decipher.

Paine attacks Barth's assumption that a broker's role is to generate interaction between the patron and client, thus increasing their integration. Brokerage, he says, involves self-interest, so rather than increase integration, the broker would wish to sustain value differences; integration would only render the broker redundant. He cites F.G. Bailey as saying that the function of a middleman is to bridge a communication gap, and once the gap is bridged, there is no more need of the middleman.<sup>94</sup> This pertains, perhaps, to the broker as entrepreneur, seen as profit-seeking by Barth; but when the market model is used as a pattern for a social model (as in the current study), the role of middleman changes character somewhat, becoming less self-serving. This is not to suggest the broker wishes to work toward the demise of brokerage; however, in the case of the Indian agent, this was the wish of his patron. The Indian agent was purportedly in support of cultural integration, and, simultaneously, he did work toward his own demise. In fact, if we are to see the federal government as the patron, we

can also see, through the annual reports, that from the beginning its aim was to outlive the need for patronism. While "patronistic" has become a term of blame placed upon the government by the Indian client, the patron's plan was always to make the client independent. Solving the so-called Indian problem meant removing the requirement of patronage. Like any wish, however, its fulfillment does not necessarily grant one's desire: the government expected the role of Indian agent to die when cultural integration was achieved; now it deals more with native entrepreneurs than white brokers.

The idea of cultural integration as a goal is challenged by Paine again in his mention of S.F. Silverman's suggestion that mediators limit the access of local persons to the larger society.<sup>95</sup> While Paine uses lawyers and unionists as illustration, it is interesting to consider the idea in terms of Indian agents and reserves: if the agent is a successful mediator, does he eliminate the need for the patron and client to meet, and does he, then, keep the Indian "down on the farm" while he safeguards the government officials from the farm's reality? Paine says the positioning of a middleman means that patron and client are unlikely to accumulate knowledge of each other, hindering the possibility of integration, but enhancing the broker's control. He uses Barth's market ideas in suggesting that the broker's concern is to ensure the longevity of his position (and profit), even if it means ignoring the client's best interests.<sup>96</sup> Keeping the Indian on the farm, or reserve, is not even in the patron's best interests, if his true aim is assimilation. The notion that the broker might limit the clients' access to the larger society seems particularly challenging when studying the residential school system. Who was limiting access to the larger society, patron or broker? When cultural

integration was the aim of the government, why was the means segregation in remote residential schools? If the method produced more marginalization than assimilation, what is suggested about the clients' best interests?

Paine cites G.C. Homans as saying that Barth's work shows how men's choices create social institutions.<sup>97</sup> This is where Barth's models are wanting, Paine says, for they assume the presence of choice and profit, equality of prestations, mutual satisfaction, and the integrative results of exchange. Rather than making these notions assumptions, they should become questions: "each exchange must...be viewed in the context of its impinging environment."<sup>98</sup> Distribution of power must be considered, as should the possible roles for a third party, including that of broker. Paine feels these strictures are pertinent to the application of exchange theory in anthropology.

In 1977, Noel Dyck attempted to clarify the confusion surrounding the sociological nature of brokerage through the example of a contemporary provincial Indian association in western Canada in his paper, "Strangers in our Midst, an Examination of Anthropological Thought about Brokerage."<sup>99</sup> Dyck's use of the term "stranger" stemmed from Georg Simmel's 1950 essay which noted that strangers impart qualities and import products into a group which do not stem from within that group,<sup>100</sup> just as brokers do. Dyck saw in the existing literature on brokerage a "great" and "little" tradition. The "great" he exemplified by Geertz's work on the Kijaji in which the broker is seen to provide integration between sophisticated and folk culture. In Dyck's view, this is mere "alleged brokerage" which avoids conceptual explanations. The "little" view is exemplified by Paine, who depicts the broker as self-satisfying and manipulative, not bridging the disjunctions of

social structure but maintaining and exploiting cleavages.<sup>101</sup> Dyck revived Press's question of how and from whom the broker receives his mandate to innovate, but cited Bailey as suggesting that brokers retard rather than facilitate innovation.<sup>102</sup> Dyck derives his own understanding of brokerage in terms of the little tradition. A broker is a "middleman-plus," so that while a broker is a middleman, a middleman is not necessarily a broker. Brokers are not persons in the sociological sense, he says, but brokerage is an activity or an aspect of a role. Dyck agrees with Paine that brokers manipulate messages: they are go-betweens because they are supposed to be faithful, but brokers because they sometimes process their instructions. He notes that in the case of the Indian association under consideration, the clients expect their messages to be presented to the government so that the government hears what they are actually saying; meanwhile the brokers (who are in this case Indians themselves), while sometimes being faithful to that expectation, other times conceal the fact that they make additions or interpretations not intended by their clients.

It is, of course, easy to present to the government exactly what the client said and interpret it as well. An example pertinent to the current study concerns a Micmac mother who decided not to return her children to the Shubenacadie residential school after their summer vacation. When dealing through the Indian agent was unsuccessful, she used the services of a Stipendiary Magistrate to present her case to the government. The magistrate's letter to the Department of Indian Affairs repeated the mother's very words: "[She] says she loves her children and wishes to have them with her." But the plea was interpreted as well: the word "loves" was belittled and negated by the simple addition of quotation marks.<sup>103</sup>

Dyck has difficulty with the patron-broker-client model, because he sees clients as never totally dependent upon a particular middleman or his service. "In any situation where a client is compelled to use the service of a middleman," he argues, "we are no longer talking about brokerage."<sup>104</sup> He sees the relationship as voluntary, so a client may choose to use, or refuse to use, a particular broker; a dissatisfied client can use other services, or just do without.<sup>105</sup> This definition does not dispel the idea that the Indian agent was a broker, for the Indian was not compelled to use his services. Indeed, the example above describes a parent dealing with the government through a magistrate, the broker of her choice. Some Micmac people bypassed the Indian agent and dealt with Indian Affairs directly and others used Micmac brokers; other examples will be presented in a later chapter.

In Bailey's work on "The Peasant View of the Bad Life,"<sup>106</sup> in which he discusses hill peasants in Italy, he notes that every society categorizes people, giving high status to those who are socially responsible and commanding of the corresponding social rights, and deeming the lowest as barely human, marginal, outsiders. The lower the status of those being dealt with, the more they can be considered as objects, and the less necessary it is to treat them with honesty and respect.<sup>107</sup> Peasants, then, may expect government agencies to cheat them, so that

even behaviour which is patently not exploitive, but benevolent, is interpreted as a hypocritical cover for some as yet undisclosed interest; by definition all horses are Trojan.<sup>108</sup>

And the peasants might reciprocate in kind, considering such outsiders as policemen, development officers, health inspectors--anyone, Bailey says, who doesn't come by foot--as people to be outwitted.<sup>109</sup>



Bailey discusses a category of brokers who use religious symbols which are valued by the client in order to be considered insiders: they are successful because they are part of the peasant's known world. This idea augers well for the priest-agent who was a familiar figure among the Micmac; as Bailey says, the saintly figure stood for something the clients valued--"one might call it personal salvation." On the other hand, politicians who present themselves as saintly are "rejected as completely as if they had been government agents."<sup>110</sup> It is easy to see outsiders as enemies.

Bailey provides an aspect to the idea of pupil-brokers considered in the current work which is worth consideration: he feels that one who leaves the peasantry to join the elite, through education or work,

can act neither as a mediator between the two worlds nor as a modernizing agent among his own people, he can in fact only retain the tie with his own people so long as he acts in accordance with their values.<sup>111</sup>

Peasants, he says, have little tolerance for those of their own people who connect too closely with outsiders.<sup>112</sup>

The most effective person to negotiate between the peasants and the elite, Bailey contends, is the village broker, an insider who is paid to aid in communication. This suggests for the current study that the best broker may be the community-appointed Micmac mediator, an idea to be explored in a later chapter. However, Bailey feels that in working for both sides such a broker becomes a half-outsider to both sides, and might only perpetuate the gap in communication rather than seal it.<sup>113</sup>

Culture, Bailey says, can be changed only slowly and as the result of experience. His idea that "modernizers must think small" is relevant to the Indian residential school movement: while massive expenditures might

produce massive new experiences that change culture overnight, as the schools may be said to have attempted, success is rare and it is a poor use of funds "to plan directly that the peasants shall have a change of heart."<sup>114</sup> The later chapters on Indian agents will address this problem, and consider Bailey's idea that cultural brokerage "is a world of mistakes, frustrations, disappointments, anxiety and conflict."<sup>115</sup>

The patron-broker-client model, as elaborated by Barth and refined by his followers and critics, is applicable to a range of social situations and should be particularly useful in explaining the cross-cultural relationship between the Canadian government and the Micmac people, and illuminating the brokerage role of the Indian agents and Catholic school staff.

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CHAPTER TWO:  
THE SHUBENACADIE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

We don't know whether we are teaching them or they are teaching us.<sup>1</sup>

When the Shubenacadie school was constructed in 1928-29, it was one of seventy-eight co-educational residential schools established in Canada by the federal Department of Indian Affairs. It was the only such institution east of Ontario, and the only federally-sponsored Indian residential school ever in existence in the Maritime Provinces. It was built to consolidate Indian education in the Maritimes, to mould the lives of the students, and to "aid them in their search towards the goal of complete Canadian citizenship."<sup>2</sup> It was intended particularly for the underprivileged children of the Maritimes--orphans as well as illegitimate and neglected children--and for those whose homes were located too far from day schools to make daily attendance practical or possible.<sup>3</sup> The building operated as a school for thirty-seven years, from February 1930 to June 1967, and nineteen years later, in September 1986, was destroyed by fire.

A day school had opened in Shubenacadie in September, 1894, and its brief history--it operated initially for only twelve years--is described here to serve as an illustration of the problems of Indian day schooling throughout the Maritimes. The local agent, James Gass, had written to the Indian Affairs Department on behalf of the parents in 1880 requesting a school:

...they seem greatly interested [in] a school which they say they must have, as they do not want their children to grow up in ignorance, as they have done. They have among them one of their own tribe, named Joseph Cope, who is capable of

teaching their children, having got an education in a neighboring city, and they begged me to ask you to assist them in this matter at once. <sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to consider Gass's position as middleman between the parents and the government, and to question how faithfully he transmitted the request. While the idea of the parents being raised in ignorance might have been his own interpretation, it is probable that they did want a school. When one was opened fourteen years later, it was Robert J. Logan, not Cope, who was hired to teach twenty-five pupils. The average daily attendance the first year was only twelve,<sup>5</sup> suggesting that the parents were not as eager for schooling as Gass had indicated. During the following eight years the agency reports described Logan as competent, loved, and patient, a teacher who spent his off-hours telling stories of "white men's ways" to the children.<sup>6</sup> The pupils were described as apt and proficient, and while the parents were said to acknowledge the school to be good, they were not sufficiently interested in education to encourage or ensure the attendance of their children.<sup>7</sup> In 1903, there were seventeen names in the register, but a daily attendance of only six. In the next three years average attendance declined even further, until in 1906 it stood at only two.<sup>8</sup> The school was closed and Shubenacadie children were without an education until 1911.

That year, Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Education, considered the general situation of Nova Scotian Indians:

Although the province of Nova Scotia has been settled and cultivated for very many years, the condition of the Indians in many districts is that of nomads. They have failed after all the years of their association with white people to reside permanently upon their reserves and make their living by agriculture. They are prone to wander about from place to place, selling their baskets or squatting in the vicinity of towns and doing odd jobs for the residents. These habits render it somewhat difficult to give all their children the benefits of day

school education...the actual poverty of the Indians is also a detrimental factor.<sup>9</sup>

In 1912 Indian agent Alonzo Wallace deemed the thirty-two school aged children on the reserve to be sufficient in number to warrant the re-opening of the school, and said the parents had been agitating to have it opened. After warning them that unless they took care to send their children regularly, the school would be closed again, a teacher was acquired. However, as Wallace reported, the children seemed soon to "tire of all educational work" and to have little encouragement from their parents to persist. Although for awhile the attendance was fair, it continued to drop so much that the school was abandoned that same summer.<sup>10</sup> It did open the following January, 1913, remaining viable until it was closed because of the opening of the residential school in 1930, but still average daily attendance during those years was only seven pupils.<sup>11</sup> It was this pattern of poor attendance, typical in the day schools, that had urged government's strong advocacy of industrial and boarding schools.

It may be useful here to give brief mention to the history of industrial schools in Canada, to reveal how the initial pattern of their operation was largely unchanged from the nineteenth century outset through the Shubenacadie school years, and to show how late in the programme a school was opened in the Maritimes. In 1879 the federal government commissioned an investigation into the system of Indian industrial boarding schools in the United States. The resulting Davin Report indicated they were generally found to be administered by Indian agents, or by churches using government contributions made on a per-capita basis. In addition to academic subjects, boys in these schools learned agriculture and trades while girls learned domestic arts.<sup>12</sup> The investigator was particularly

impressed by the schools for the Cherokee, which promoted agricultural self-support, Indian administration of education, and Indian local government.<sup>13</sup> However, Davin recommended denominational industrial schools for Canada, and the first three were built in the west--two in Saskatchewan and one in Alberta--in 1883-84. By the end of 1890, sixteen more industrial schools for Indians had been established.<sup>14</sup>

In 1881 the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, John A. MacDonald, reported that already-established boarding schools had proven their superiority over day schools. As already mentioned, irregular attendance at Indian day schools had been considered the greatest obstacle to the successful education of Indian children and it was seen to result from the neglect of their wandering parents to oblige attendance. However, in commending the multi-purpose education which was available to the pupils of industrial boarding institutions, MacDonald mentioned too their useful attribute of keeping the children separate from home influences.<sup>15</sup> The necessity of separation remained a theme throughout many years of annual reports on Indian education. Edgar Dewdney, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1889-1892, believed that anyone taking an interest in the improvement of the Indian race would unquestionably see that boarding schools could best advance their morals and intellects.<sup>16</sup> Because he saw Indians as having an "innate [and] utter disregard of time and ignorance of its value," he felt the intrinsic worth of boarding schools was their teaching that there should be an object for the employment of every moment.<sup>17</sup> This strict division of the pupils' day into a time for everything remained characteristic of residential schools at least for another half century, and it is

one feature of education that seems consistently to be regretted by today's native writers in their school memories.

In fact, much of the early design of the schools continued through the years of their existence. It was felt that obtaining entire possession of the children during their school years would be the answer to what was called the Indian question or the Indian problem: there they could be force-fed the "habits, customs and modes of thought of the white man,"<sup>18</sup> and they could learn the rudiments of farming and various trades or domestic skills to prepare them for their "expected future existence on the lower fringes of the dominant society."<sup>19</sup> They would be taught exclusively in the English language so they could not remain a community apart,<sup>20</sup> and eventually they would become fit for the full responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.<sup>21</sup> One matter which did fluctuate was that of whether the school leavers should be encouraged to shun the reserves in order to assimilate with whites, or whether they should instead return to their reserves and use their education to elevate conditions there. While the latter idea spawned government experiments with ex-pupils sent to live as farmers in model reserve communities,<sup>22</sup> some officials saw a problem with encouraging "isolation and self-sufficiency at the expense of amalgamation of the races."<sup>23</sup>

Not until 1920 was compulsory education of Indian children between the ages of seven and sixteen provided by statute (although it was the usual practice to encourage residential students to remain in school and away from home influences until seventeen or eighteen).<sup>24</sup> That the residential schools were superior to day schools, especially in the matter of attendance and the provision of manual training, remained a theme throughout the Annual Reports to the 1940s. From the 1880s the main aim

of Indian education stood fast, so that even in 1959 it was still stated to be the assistance of acculturation.<sup>25</sup>

The Maritime Provinces were slow to receive a residential school, although the establishment of such a facility was repeatedly recommended. It has already been mentioned that Dewdney was a strong advocate of industrial schooling for Indians, and as early as 1892 he greatly regretted the lack of such schools in the Maritime Provinces.<sup>26</sup> In 1911, Father F.C. Ryan, New Brunswick Supervisor of Indian Schools, stressed in a letter to Indian Affairs that a central industrial school was necessary to make Indians fit for the battle of life. While he noted that the day schools offered sewing and knitting lessons to the girls, he saw that the boys had no such "means of improvement at their disposal," and suggested that classes in carpentry, blacksmithry, tailoring, and farming were needed to help Indian boys become useful citizens.<sup>27</sup>

Several letters to the Department of Indian Affairs in the early 1920s made clear the perceived need for a residential school in the Maritimes. Heatherington, the Indian agent in Guysborough, wrote in 1924 that such a school was necessary to care for children in cases where there was no nearby day school.<sup>28</sup> Also that year A.J. Boyd, Indian Superintendent in Nova Scotia, recommended the building of a centrally-located boarding and industrial school since he understood that similar schools for Indians across Canada were highly successful.<sup>29</sup> Father Ryan wrote again in 1925 to voice the need for residential schooling to take care of "delinquent Indian children, orphans, and those who will not go to school but run wild." He felt little good had come from having "prosecuted Indian after Indian," and noted

that industrial houses and jails refused to take Indians.<sup>30</sup> Of the existing educational system, he felt it was good only for a few:

...and these few are soon overcome by the conduct of the delinquent so in the end there cannot be an advancement but rather a retrogressive movement, all due to the want of this one institution.<sup>31</sup>

In a 1926 memo, the Indian Department's Mr. Bury drew the government's attention to the fact that although there were over seventy residential schools in Canada, there was none in the Maritime Provinces, and he recommended Truro as a possible site.<sup>32</sup> That year Father Ryan wrote again with an appeal designed to suggest residential schools would be an economic alternative to paying relatives to care for Indian orphans. Such procedure, he felt, was an "alarming financial waste" since the money was being used to promote idleness among those receiving it instead of directly benefitting the orphans. The saving to be realized by creating a residential school for those children would be sufficient to pay for the cost of the building in just twenty years, and furthermore, "the Indian question in the Maritime Provinces would then, and only then, be solved for all time."<sup>33</sup>

These and other appeals found their mark, and on April 12, 1927, Scott, then Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, announced the government's intention to construct a "home and school" for those Indian children living at the time in scattered foster homes and institutions. Plans were well advanced. The school would accommodate 125 children,<sup>34</sup> and offer an education both academic and practical: for the boys there would be instruction in carpentry, farming, gardening, and the care of stock; for the girls, "domestic activity." The school would be part of a farm with pasture,

barn and henhouse, staffed by a Reverend Principal, assistant, farm instructor, engineer-carpenter, labourer, and eight to ten teaching Sisters.<sup>35</sup>

Two months later, Charles Stewart, Minister of Indian Affairs, met with local Member of Parliament, J.L. Ilsley, and Departmental architect, R.G. Orr, to choose a 130-acre farm in Shubenacadie as the school site.<sup>36</sup> The location was said to be one of the oldest Indian properties in Nova Scotia, having been occupied by Indians from as far back as 1713. It had been the home of the Abbé Le Loutre, a French priest who apparently achieved notoriety by inciting the aboriginals against the crown, and in later years again belonged to the Indians.<sup>37</sup>

The chief obligation of the new school, rated in a newspaper article as one of the best institutions of its kind in Canada, was to care for "orphans, half orphans, and illegitimates."<sup>38</sup> Any remaining accommodations were to be filled by pupils from the more than twenty Indian day schools in the Maritimes. These had notoriously poor attendance records: 275 pupils in Nova Scotia had an average attendance of 150, that of the 253 pupils in New Brunswick was 165, and in Prince Edward Island twenty-five pupils averaged a daily attendance of fifteen.<sup>39</sup> The first pupils arrived in early February, 1930, from three Halifax institutions: St. Joseph's Orphanage, St. Patrick's Home for Boys, and the Monastery of the Good Shepherd. By the end of 1931 the school held 146 pupils, already well over official capacity.<sup>40</sup>

Before construction of the school began, the Reverend Father Jeremiah Mackey, a priest of St. Mary's Glebe in Halifax, was appointed Principal of the school and he took residence in Shubenacadie in order to be on site during construction. The Catholic Ecclesiastical authorities in Halifax, who were favourable to the idea of the school, appointed Sisters of



Charity as teachers. When the first children arrived in early February, 1930, there were six Sisters and a Sister Superior in residence (as well as sixteen cows in the barn). For the school year beginning September, 1931, the teaching staff had increased to nine Sisters in addition to the Superior; by the summer of 1939 there were twelve Sisters in all, a number which seemed to be maintained until the 1950s when it dropped by one; and in 1967 when the school closed there were only seven.<sup>41</sup> (See Appendix B for names of Sisters who taught in the residential school.)

It has been noted that the school was intended for orphaned and neglected children, and those for whom day schooling was impossible. Each prospective case was brought to the attention of Indian Affairs by the local Indian agents, who were required to forward an application form for the consideration of the Department. As stated on the form, the minimum admission age was seven, but this could be lower in the case of orphans or destitute and neglected children, so younger children were sometimes recommended for admission to the Shubenacadie school. Although it was generally necessary that the application form be signed by the child's parent or guardian, such consent could be waived by the Department in such cases where the parents could not be located or the agent considered them neglectful. The form was accompanied by a letter in which the agent described the home environment and his reasons for recommending admission to the school, and his judgement of the situation was apparently accepted unquestionably by Indian Affairs. In response to one application form, for example, the agent was given permission to place a boy without parental consent--and here the Department merely repeated the agent's assessment--since his father had apparently not shown much interest in

him.<sup>42</sup> The following are typical reasons advanced by the agent for recommending children for the school:

The child's mother is dead and the father though living is of little consequence.<sup>43</sup>

The parents...are living but they are very poor, and of a roaming nature. They are not living on any reserve in particular, and their children have actually no school to attend.<sup>44</sup>

[The children] ages nine and eleven are wandering about the reserve from one home to another, their father has gone away somewhere.<sup>45</sup>

Mother is of such a character that she is entirely unfit to bring up a child.<sup>46</sup>

The father of these children deserted them some years ago. The mother is in the York County Jail awaiting trial on the charge of adultery.<sup>47</sup>

Father working ninety miles away, mother near but refuses to acknowledge her children or help with their support.<sup>48</sup>

This child is practically a waif. Bufferred about, with no education or much religion, a factotum for anyone who will keep him, he gives promise of being a burden to himself and the Department. The Shubenacadie School is his only social and moral salvation.<sup>49</sup>

The school also at times served a mildly reforming function, according to the following admission requests:

She is of an unruly disposition and is a difficult pupil in the day school and the result is that she will not get much training. I would strongly recommend that she be given a couple of years in the Shubenacadie Residential School.<sup>50</sup>

[He is] a grown boy, father not living at home, rather uncontrollable at home and difficult to get him to attend day school. Mother anxious to have him receive a couple years in the residential school where he can be disciplined.<sup>51</sup>

[She] would not go to school and was very saucy with the teacher...I would recommend that she be sent to Shubenacadie for her own good as well as an example to the others.<sup>52</sup>

It should be noted here that although most admissions were proposed by the Indian agents, they were sometimes initiated by the parents. While occasionally the agent's letter accompanying the admission form indicated the request was being made by the parent, it is difficult to be sure he was faithfully representing parental interests. However, some letters asking to place children in the school were sent to the Indian agent in the parent's own hand, such as the following request from the nearby Shubenacadie reserve involving an under-aged, five-year-old girl:

I find it difficult to provide her with warm clothing, particularly as I am not able to work due to ill health. It will be a healthier environment for her. She will be with her [seven-year-old] sister who can help her in the work.<sup>53</sup>

Following governmental approval of the admission, the usual next step for the agent was to contact the school principal to see if space were available and if he were willing to take the child in question. As one agent was told,

It should be distinctly understood that these children should not be sent to Shubenacadie unless Father Mackey advises you that he will take them.<sup>54</sup>

As previously noted, the dormitories were consistently over-crowded, but Father Mackey seldom turned a child away.

The course of studies for Indian residential and day schools in Canada was intended to mirror that prescribed by the relevant provincial Department of Education, and only textbooks authorized by that department were to be used. It has already been noted that teachers in Indian schools

were to require that English be spoken by the pupils at all times, even during supervised play. They were to discuss with the children "Indian and white life, the evils of Indian isolation, enfranchisement," and to explain "labour as the law of existence."<sup>55</sup> The residential schools were not true reflections of the provincial school system, however, as they were intended to be equally academic and vocational. In fact, according to G.G. Currie, an education student who visited the Shubenacadie school in 1947, its educational objective was two-fold: the development of moral character and preparation for future life, with emphasis on the first. The Sisters were trying to develop in the Indian children a sense of moral obligation to themselves, their fellow students, and their race, and in every activity made an attempt to encourage the development of responsibility, honour, honesty, and accuracy. Vocational teaching was increasingly stressed as being most relevant to the Indian people.<sup>56</sup> Rapid graduation was not seen as a school goal, and Currie noted that it was considered best to sacrifice academic success for the development of moral character and vocational training. He regretted that the sixteen- and seventeen-year-old school leavers were young adults, little inclined to go beyond their grade eight educations in outside schools alongside much younger classmates. Yet he felt the residential school's stress on practical education was justified to some extent, since few school leavers attempted to further their academic training.<sup>57</sup>

Currie noted that the watchwords of the school were discipline, accuracy, punctuality, and cleanliness, notions of which the children were seen to have no concept upon school entry. In addition, the Sisters aimed to instil in the children an ability to deal with people, and to this end stressed reading, effective writing, math, and the value of money. Much emphasis

was placed on English grammar--how to speak correctly and understand others--which the children were said to find difficult. The intent was to prepare the pupils for the future and fit each one for self support, with the "ability to honestly earn enough to eat, to buy clothes to wear and to provide for a comfortable home."<sup>58</sup>

While the vocational half-day component of residential schools is well known, Currie detailed it in a way that makes it appear to be the main occupation of the children at school. For boys the stress was on agricultural training as they learned to run a 125-acre farm with fifty head of Ayrshire cattle, said to be one of the finest herds in the Maritimes. The farm produced each year a thousand bushels of potatoes and fifteen tons of turnips as well as various quantities of other vegetables, and the cattle provided each day 150 quarts of milk, "every drop of which [went] into the children," Currie noted.<sup>59</sup> The farm reduced the cost of operating the school (according to Kearns, one former student recalled that their meals consisted mainly of beef, carrots, potatoes and turnips),<sup>60</sup> so it served a subsistence as well as an educational function. The boys were taught stock raising, dairying, and everything connected with gardening: preparation of the soil, seed planting, caring for the plants and reaping the harvest. As well they were instructed in the marketing of produce, including bookkeeping, and they learned to maintain all the farm equipment, including correct use, operation and repair of tools and machines. They were made to understand the value of outbuildings to preserve their equipment and store their produce, and to provide well-ventilated and sanitary shelter for their livestock. The boys had to perform all farming duties themselves.<sup>61</sup>

The girls' responsibility was to learn all about dairying, milking, cream churning and the care of milk. They also were taught to perform the duties of a housewife, with a particular stress on kitchen work, and all learning was by doing. Besides cooking the daily meat, vegetables, breads and sweets, they were shown how to set tables and serve meals and were instructed in manners and table etiquette. In the laundry they learned the proper way to wash, blue and press clothes and linens, and around the school they were taught to scrub and sweep floors, to dust and care for the furniture. They learned to knit clothes, darn socks, sew and patch, and every article of clothing worn by the girls was made in the school.<sup>62</sup>

From the mid-forties, both boys and girls learned pottery making, using clay from the school grounds. It was felt that they could use this skill after leaving school, provided they had some initiative and encouragement. Pottery was one of the few things at the school said to absorb the interest of the children and provide the pleasure of achievement. "Educators have found it difficult to make the Indian take pride in his accomplishments," Currie wrote. "By developing the sense of pride in one field, we may hope for the transfer of that trait to other fields of learning."<sup>63</sup>

Currie faulted the domestic science lessons for being taught in an "artificial environment," and suggested the school should have appended a small cottage replicating an Indian home, furnished and equipped as such, in which groups of five or six girls would live with a Sister and learn true housekeeping. This would include meal planning, the requisition of supplies, budgeting of household money, and how to entertain guests. The problem with the existing life lessons, he observed, was that since the children were not learning to think for themselves, they made decisions by

seeking the easiest way out. He felt they were not learning responsibility, initiative, perseverance, self esteem, self reliance, or confidence. "Too often," he remarked, "we see Indian children graduate, go back to the Reserve, and soon become as lazy and indifferent as their fathers and mothers."<sup>64</sup> He stressed the necessity to put even more emphasis on vocational training, and suggested a close supervision of the graduates once they returned home, including the diagnosis of abilities, placement in suitable jobs, a closely kept record of progress, and the tactful giving of periodic help and advice. This suggestion is surprisingly similar to experiments the government did conduct in the early 1900s in Saskatchewan, which were apparently successful only until the close supervision ceased.<sup>65</sup> While Currie's work is dotted with dated ideas about Indians and the way to educate them, it is still invaluable as a personal observation of daily life in the Shubenacadie school in the 1940s.

There are indications of harsh discipline at the school from complaints which began following the first half-year of the residential school's operation. In a fragile letter almost lost to age, Chief Dan Francis of the Cambridge Reserve wrote of his disappointment in the education being given to the children:

I thought that school was built for Indian children to learn [to] read and write, not for slave and prisoners like jail...one Indian boy of this reserve was so beaten by Father Mackey he was laid out for seven days. Also young girls do scrubbing the floor on Sunday... 66

The Department did not place much confidence in the Chief's charges, believing the school to be under the management of a competent staff concerned only with the best interests of the children. Indian agent Prince was advised to speak to the Chief, to learn more about the

complaints, and to explain to him the purpose of the school--that children in all residential schools were expected to help with the work in the school and on the farm.<sup>67</sup> The agent learned and reported to Ottawa that the children had generally complained of too much work and not enough study, Three of them said they were lonesome and homesick and were wanted at home by their parents. One had become ill from the work she was required to do on too little food, and one had blistered hands from working with a shovel. Two parents who had visited the school said they found the children dirty and lousy.<sup>68</sup>

In response to the agent's report the government again stated that very little reliance could be placed on the Chief's statements:

...[the] pupils at this school are well treated, and we are sure the Reverend Sisters would not permit any uncleanness or vermin on the children under their charge...[the school] is being conducted in the best interests of the children.<sup>69</sup>

As for the matter of homesickness, the Department was not prepared to give it any consideration.<sup>70</sup>

Two years later, in June, 1933, Dr. H.W. McGill, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, enjoyed an "exceedingly pleasant visit" to the school, and stated he was very pleased with the work being conducted there "in such an excellent manner."<sup>71</sup>

However, the matter of harsh treatment of the pupils erupted loudly during the following school year, and in the summer of 1934, a government commission was conducted in Shubenacadie in connection with the "alleged flogging of Indian pupils" for theft and lying the previous March.<sup>72</sup> L.A. Audette, retired Judge of the Exchequer Court of Canada, heard twenty-four witnesses, including one Sister, the principal, the school carpenter-



engineer, an R.C.M.P. officer, a doctor who examined ten of the children almost twelve weeks after the beatings, and the nineteen accused pupils. The first witness, a Sister, testified there was \$68.44 in a chiffonnier in the Mother Superior's office on the second floor of the school and that most of the money was missing. She noted that they had never found girls to steal, but had several times known boys to do so, and one boy had admitted that morning that he knew and saw the boys who had done it.<sup>73</sup> Three suspected boys mentioned others involved and all were questioned. Some money was found in the boys' beds and hidden in their toilet room; local storekeepers told of certain boys who had been buying such things as cake, candy, tobacco, knives, and gum; and the school's night foreman admitted he had been approached with money and asked to shop for the boys. Father Mackey reported that the theft was taken most seriously and that the R.C.M.P. had been contacted. In the presence of a constable and the school's carpenter/engineer, Edward McLeod, several boys were punished "for being implicated in the thefts and refusing to tell the truth." Punishment was by a strap of seven strands made by McLeod, who had on previous occasions used a smaller, unsliced strap, and two to five strokes were administered to the boys' bare backs or buttocks. Then their hair was clipped and some of the boys were put on a bread and water diet from Saturday night until Monday.<sup>74</sup> Although the witnessing constable testified the punishment caused "no blood, no skin cut," the doctor who examined ten of the boys at the time of the enquiry said they all had marks, and that "the skin would necessarily be broken to cause these marks and [there were] likely to be permanent scars."<sup>75</sup> In fact, in her book of school memoirs Isabelle Knockwood says at least one of the former pupils today has scars

on his back in memory of the incident and the school strap with seven tails.<sup>76</sup>

Audette found the boys guilty of lying and stealing, and stated that in Canada it was quite lawful for a parent or schoolmaster to punish a child with physical force:

For the good administration of an institution of the kind in question, it is obviously necessary to mix rewards with punishments, one being as necessary as the other. It is necessary and expedient to reward success and the pupil who does any good act or deed. It is also absolutely necessary to punish the pupils who transgress the rules and regulations of the institution and who commit any breach of their moral and lawful duties. The punishment must be measured according to the gravity of the offence and not overlooking the complex intelligence of these boys who have all been brought up in the life of Indians.<sup>77</sup>

"These Indians," he added, "in terms of civilization, are children, having human minds just emerging from barbarism." He felt it necessary that the Indians be taught to adjust themselves to the laws of the land and their new environment, and found that the pupils had "undoubtedly and richly deserved the punishment to which they were subjected."<sup>78</sup>

Two years later, in March, 1936, a government inspector found the pupils in the school to be neat, clean, and apparently happy and well nourished. He saw Father Mackey as a man of "splendid executive ability and intensely interested in his work," with a staff "imbued with the same high ideals."<sup>79</sup>

In July of that year, however, the agent from Annapolis County spoke with several former pupils from the school and sent the following observations to Ottawa:

I am rather disappointed at the results. Whether the fault is on the pupils or the method of teaching is hard to say but I have

met bright and sharp children of fourteen years only doing Grade 5 work. I have met a lad who was at school until he was 17 and he was in Grade 5 when he came home. Now this lad is as bright and intelligent as any white lad in the locality.<sup>80</sup>

The school, of course, had been open only six years, and had these boys (no matter their age) arrived at Shubenacadie with no previous education as many of the pupils did, it was not untoward that they were only in Grade 5. This explanation was apparently not considered, however, and the response from the Department's acting secretary was that he was "inclined to feel that the fault is due to themselves--not lack of work by the staff."<sup>81</sup> The agents were not in agreement as to the worth of the school and that September, when delivering children there, the Kentville agent took the opportunity to visit. He sent a glowing letter to the Department declaring the school to be "wonderful" and the staff "all very fine." Obviously, there were conflicting feelings about the school.

It was also in 1936 that a former pupil hired a lawyer to prevent his younger siblings from being returned to Shubenacadie after their summer holidays, his own experience at the school having been so hard. The lawyer wrote to the local Indian agent who, not believing a word of the former pupil's tales of harsh treatment, feared the family "with their falsehoods [would] start new trouble through a lawyer."<sup>82</sup> He passed a copy of the letter to the principal who denied that the complainant had ever been punished at school, dismissing him as a "big body with the mind of a ten year old child." Mackey felt the lawyer did not understand that residential school students were expected to work half the day, and he expressed the opinion that making an Indian work was an "unpardonable sin." He did not know how a lawyer could be duped by an Indian or why he would accept statements from

a boy of limited mental capacity.<sup>83</sup> Still, the bid through the lawyer was successful, the Acting Superintendent of Indian Education deciding not to insist upon the return of the children; however, as in the case of any children refusing to return, they would not be funded for any other school.<sup>84</sup>

That same summer a fifteen-year-old girl who had been in the school for five years was discharged after refusing to return to the residential school and relating her complaints to her Indian agent and the R.C.M.P. She stated that beginning in January she had spent eleven weeks working in the kitchen from 5:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. daily, being excused for a total of only two weeks for school work in that time. She testified that many times the Sister had beaten her over the head, struck her in the neck with a ruler, pulled her hair, and punched her on the back. She also had to "stand on the outside of the windows with a rope around [her] waist to clean windows on the fourth floor with a little girl holding the rope."<sup>85</sup> Father Mackey felt her statement contained lie after lie,<sup>86</sup> and although the girl was returned to the school, she was discharged eleven days later with the excuse that she was needed at home.<sup>87</sup>

It is not surprising that the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs felt it necessary to make a personal visit to the school the following year. What he found was a good official in the principal and a very efficient staff.<sup>88</sup> The few inspection reports on the Shubenacadie school in the existing records appear to be simple and short with no actual detail on conditions. There is some mention in the Annals, the Sisters' journal, of their concern when inspectors came to visit the school, and this will be considered in chapter six.

Truancy seems to have been rife. Although Shubenacadie school records are incomplete, it may be assumed that from the outset there were runaways. The truants were usually caught and returned, having been found by the school principal, an Indian agent, or the R.C.M.P. and their tracking dogs. These escapes may sometimes have been mere pranks, impulsive attempts to break the boredom of relentless regimentation and to seek the exhilaration of running free. More often they were premeditated attempts to return home, because for these children home was a place they might otherwise not see again until their discharge at age sixteen. The truants hoboed on freight trains and they hid on their reserves, sometimes abetted by their parents. Some went into hiding near the school; some travelled as far as Maine. They were both boys and girls though they were most often the former; they were as young as nine years old. Freedom lasted from a few hours to more than a month, but almost inevitably the runaways were apprehended and sometimes spent a night in jail before they were taken back to the school. On their return they were sent to reformatories or kept at the school where their shaven heads made them easier to locate the next time they ran. Yet hope and promise remained, because sometimes, for some children, the return attempts were successful. To detail the tales of truancy would be repetitive and not necessary here, but the very repetition of one boy running away time and again, and the recording of truants year after year in any season suggests that the possibility of success made the attempts worth the probable punishment.<sup>89</sup>

Perhaps one truancy tale bears repeating because it appears in several accounts. Kearns tells of a boy who ran away in the winter and was caught and punished before he received medical attention; the doctor was

not called until the next day when the boy had already lost flesh from his ears, fingers, heels and toes.<sup>90</sup> According to a magazine article on the school, the boy was put in a closet for several days on a bread and water diet before it was discovered that his feet were frostbitten.<sup>91</sup> In a radio essay on the school, this case was mentioned and the boy was said to have been brought back with frozen feet:

...what the Sisters did, they didn't thaw his feet out or put them in water, they just took his socks and peeled them right off with the skin on them. And the boy had to go to the hospital and have...part of his feet removed and part of his toes on the other foot.<sup>92</sup>

According to Knockwood, the children in the school were filed past the returned truant's infirmary bed to see his swollen, purple toes with what looked like moss between them, so they could be warned that this would happen to them if they ran away.<sup>93</sup> From government and police records it can be determined that this boy was one of several runaways that month during particularly cold weather, and Father Mackey noted that they would "not find the going very pleasant."<sup>94</sup> The boy broke into a house to steal tobacco, and led the principal and R.C.M.P. in and out of deep woods until midnight the first night. When he was found in a railway shanty three days later his feet were reported by the mounted police to be in bad condition.<sup>95</sup> Father Mackey, himself fighting a cold, did not find the going pleasant either; after tracking the boy unsuccessfully through wet woods his health worsened and he wrote his report to the agent from his bed.<sup>96</sup> The official records do not indicate how or when treatment for the frostbite was undertaken.

As it was the Indian agents who determined which Indian homes were unsuitable for children and who therefore would be sent to the

Shubenacadie school, the same determination of suitability decided whether the children would return home for summer vacations, although this matter was complicated by the question of funding the travel, particularly for children whose families were far from the school. As P. Phelan, the Chief of the Training Division of Indian Affairs put it in 1941, "I do not see any great advantage in incurring expenditure in simply sending them home for holidays."<sup>97</sup> When summer vacations were approved for some children, their parents were required to pay their railway fare one way and to promise to return them on a set date--usually the parents paid the fare home, as this payment was considered easier to extract than would be the fare back to Shubenacadie.<sup>98</sup> But for children who lived a distance from the school, the Department preferred not to return them at all.<sup>99</sup> As for Christmas, it was departmental policy not to allow any children home. Again, Phelan felt that "no valid reason has yet been given to us why holidays should be allowed at that period of the year."<sup>100</sup> Not surprisingly, there seem to have been frequent parental requests to have their children returned, their success hinging to some degree on the agent's recommendation to Ottawa, and this matter will be discussed in a later chapter.

Although prospective pupils were normally examined by a doctor before being sent to the school, many arrived diseased. Particularly prevalent was tuberculosis, although one of Father Mackey's instructions from Indian Affairs was to "resolutely refuse to receive any pupil who has tuberculosis in any form."<sup>101</sup> That this may have been impossible is suggested by a Halifax doctor's 1939 comment about a child who had "never had tuberculosis--the only Indian child I have ever had under my care free from tuberculosis."<sup>102</sup> The Department's policy on tuberculosis is

difficult to decipher from the records, and neither did the school doctor seem to know how to treat tubercular children. To give one example, two months after the school opened five of the children were found to have tuberculosis. The Nova Scotia Department of Public Health recommended they be removed to a sanatorium, but since they were under twelve they could not go to the facility in Kentville. It was then suggested they be placed on a cure in the school, for the Nova Scotia Medical Health Officer was strongly opposed to sending them back to their reserves.<sup>103</sup> The response of the Department of Indian Affairs to the problem was to ask Father Mackey to send the children to "some institution" at the earliest possible date, with no suggestion that he return them home.<sup>104</sup> Yet several weeks later, after the principal was finally able to place the two worst cases in a sanatorium, he was scolded in a letter from Ottawa for not keeping the school tuberculosis free, and was reminded that sick children must be sent back to their reserves.<sup>105</sup>

Several children in the school had syphilis, and the Indian Department's expressed attitude was that they were in a good place to receive treatment.<sup>106</sup> The school doctor, however, felt it was unfair to the other children, and in a letter to Father Mackey revealed his frustration:

We are apparently getting all the advanced tuberculosis cases and syphilitics in the three provinces shipped into our school and apparently there is no way left for us to keep them out...Please impress on the Department at Ottawa that this is not a tuberculosis clinic and a syphilitic home, and the importance of protecting the health of the other children who came here with the impression that it was a residential school.<sup>107</sup>

The Department also approved the admission of several deaf children. Although the Indian agent noted on the application form of a ten-



year-old boy who had never been to school that he was very defective in hearing, appeared to be mentally subnormal, and would be difficult to teach, he was admitted by the Department.<sup>108</sup> The school doctor could not see the point of having deaf children in the school, but the matter was beyond his control and that of the principal. When one deaf boy was returned home because he could not be controlled in the classroom, the Indian agent applied for his re-admission and returned him.<sup>109</sup> Two boys who were deaf from infancy and suffered epileptic fits stayed in the school for three and five years respectively, although it was said on the discharge sheet that they had attained no grade status and had learned "not much of anything."<sup>110</sup>

The government was reluctant to allow clinics at the school for dental work, eye glasses, and the then-common tonsillectomies, and often the children were denied health care in these areas. Indian Affairs pleaded limited funds and at least once Father Mackey used school money to pay for clinics; unfortunately, it was the budget for the children's vacation expenses which was tapped.<sup>111</sup>

Only a few accidents at the school were reported, and these seemed to be caused by a combination of the carelessness of the victims and a lack of adequate supervision. In 1930, two girls working in the kitchen injured their hands in a mishap with the dough mixer, as one was cleaning the machine and the other, no doubt inadvertently, activated the switch. They were both taken to hospital in Halifax, and one of the girls lost most of one finger.<sup>112</sup> In 1933, a fourteen-year old boy who had been coasting on a forbidden part of the hill reported falling off his sleigh; a few days later he had to have a kidney removed.<sup>113</sup> In a laundry accident in 1941, a girl's hand was caught while she was warming it on the mangle; after four months

in hospital and one of recuperation at the school, she had regained use of her fingers.<sup>114</sup> A fatal accident took place in 1943, when two girls, out with a group picking berries, drowned in a lake which abutted the school lands.<sup>115</sup> This last incident was said to be instrumental in Father (then Monseigneur) Mackey's decision to resign as principal.

Mackey was principal from the school's inception until December, 1943, when he resigned partly because of his own ill health; but this was aggravated that year by a succession of problems with the pupils, including the drowning accident, a diphtheria epidemic, and a series of winter-weather truancies. In his letter of resignation, sent from the Halifax Infirmary, he wrote:

My days at the Indian Residential School are over. I have not been well and I did not have what it takes to continue further. Some of my years there were really enjoyable and we had smooth sailing, and others were tough going...I am going back to a small parish with mixed feelings, some of relief, others of regret.<sup>116</sup>

Mackey was replaced for a five-year period by Father J.W. Brown, who was elderly and also in poor health, and in 1948 Monseigneur Mackey returned to Shubenacadie to resume the principalship. However the ill health which had plagued him during most of his initial principalship continued through his second coming, and in the summer of 1955 the first Oblate to be associated with the school, Father Myles Power, arrived to replace the ailing Mackey. Father Paddy Collins replaced Father Power in 1956, and was assisted for one year by Brother Paul Duffy and for two years by Brother John MacDonald. The latter was replaced by Brother Alex Sampson in 1952. In 1964, Father William Bernardo arrived to assume the duties of assistant principal. Father Collins left in 1966, and was replaced by Father

Michael Kearney, who remained until the school closed the following year.<sup>117</sup>

As the government's ideas were shifting from educating natives in isolationist residential schools to integrating them within the existing provincial school systems, so the usefulness of the Shubenacadie institution faded. Improved school facilities on and near the reserves in the Maritimes were said to eliminate the need for the residential school, and enrollment there dropped from a high of 168 in 1951 to fewer than seventy by early 1967,<sup>118</sup> the year the school was closed. Charles Gorman, an official of the Indian education directorate, felt the school had become a "welfare institution" and Cecil Thompson, the assistant superintendent of the Shubenacadie reserve, described it as outdated and no longer needed. He felt that parents were abusing the school by sending children there only in preference to keeping them at home. The assistant superintendent in Cape Breton, Ernie Skinner, also saw the school as increasingly taking on a welfare role and becoming a convenient place for parents to leave their children when they tired of caring for them. He was said to have been instrumental in the school's closing as he began placing needy youths in his agency in foster homes instead of the school. This move directed federal funding away from the school, and soon the Maritime advisory council on Indian Affairs recommended it be closed.<sup>119</sup>

Interestingly, local Indians were said to have voted to keep the school open, while those from other reserves in the Maritimes favoured its closure.<sup>120</sup> This may say something of parental attitudes toward the school, perhaps simply that those who lived a long distance away did not want their children beyond their reach, while the locals felt they would still be able to

visit them. It may suggest, as a former pupil cited by Kearns related, that some parents felt it was a "real Micmac institution," and that others simply wanted a place to drop their children while they went to the United States for the winter.<sup>121</sup> This latter contention is corroborated by Gorman, who commented on the continuing migratory habits of some Micmac parents well into the 1960s at a time when they had some say about the retention of their children in the residential school. When they left to work for the harvest season in Maine in September they left their children at Shubenacadie, and after wintering in Boston they returned in late March and retrieved them.<sup>122</sup> This, of course, was detrimental to the academic progress of the children, and is reminiscent of Dewdney's nineteenth century complaint that irregular attendance at school, resulting from the nomadism of their parents, was the greatest obstacle to the successful education of Indian children.<sup>123</sup>

The idea that the Shubenacadie residential school had "become" a welfare institution is indicative of its changing roles through the years. The school, of course, had been built intentionally as a welfare institution, but its role as a haven for the orphaned and other needy had expanded to embrace all those Indian children of the Maritimes whose homes or parents were deemed unsatisfactory by the presiding Indian agent, rendering its original function forgotten. The Shubenacadie school served a mild reforming role, although the Saint Patrick's Home for Boys and the Monastery of the Good Shepherd in Halifax remained open to pupils who proved to be beyond the control of the staff at Shubenacadie. There is no record of any girls being sent to the Good Shepherd although several boys were passed to the Saint Patrick's Home--in Father Mackey's memorable

words about one repeat truant, "Saint Patrick's Home is the only place for that imbecile."<sup>124</sup>

A full examination of the admission and discharge policies, the truancies, and the health problems at the Shubenacadie Indian residential school is not appropriate to this work, and details can be found elsewhere. Touching on these matters here is intended first to suggest the complexity of the school's story and the issues involved, and secondly to indicate how decisions were made on important matters, establishing a context for the consideration of the nature and limits of brokerage. A full examination of the legacy of this and other Indian residential schools in Canada is beyond the scope of this study; however, some of the lasting effects of the residential school system on the pupils who remember it will be considered in chapter ten.

## CHAPTER TWO: NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "Indian Boys and Girls Get Valuable Training at School at Shubenacadie," The Halifax Chronicle, Thursday, March 2, 1939, 3. Father Mackey's statement was said to indicate "the humanitarian and democratic principles under which this fine institution [wa]s established."
2. "First Indian Residential School in East: Modern School Is Established At Shubenacadie for Children of Maritime Province Indians," The Halifax Chronicle, Wednesday, June 26, 1929, 9. Report supplied to the newspaper by Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.
3. Ibid.
4. Sessional Papers Annual Report (SPAR) Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) 1892, report of James Gass, Indian agent for Shubenacadie.
5. SPAR 1896, James Gass to DIA, August 30, 1895.
6. SPAR 1898, 1901, reports of Alonzo Wallace, Indian agent for Shubenacadie, September 1, 1897 and October 8, 1904.
7. SPAR 1903, report of A. Wallace, August 30, 1902.
8. SPAR 1906-07, report of A. Wallace, July 10, 1906.
9. SPAR 1911, report of Duncan C. Scott. The word "nomadic" was commonly used to describe the seasonal migration of the Indian in the west as well as in the Maritimes.
10. SPAR 1913, Superintendent's report.
11. SPAR 1913, p. 30.
12. E. Brian Titley, A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1986), 76.
13. Jacqueline Gresko, "Creating Little Dominions Within the Dominion: Early Catholic Indian Schools in Saskatchewan and British Columbia," in J. Barman et al. (eds.), Indian Education in Canada. Vol. 1 The Legacy (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1986), 91.
14. Titley, op. cit., 77.

15. SPAR 1881, report of John A Macdonald.
16. SPAR 1889, report of E Dewdney.
17. SPAR 1890, report of E Dewdney.
18. SPAR 1898, report of James A Smart.
19. Barman et al., op. cit., 6.
20. SPAR 1896 report of Haytor Reed.
21. SPAR 1902 report of James Smart.
22. See Marilyn Millward, "The Ex-Pupil Colony on Peepseekesis Indian Reserve, Saskatchewan: An Influence for Good," in Indigenous Peoples and the State (Papers presented at the 1991 Canadian Association of Geographers Conference, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, June 5,6.)
23. SPAR 1906-07, report of Frank Pedley.
24. SPAR 1932 report of Duncan C. Scott.
25. SPAR 1958-59 report of H.M. Jones
26. SPAR 1892 report of E. Dewdney.
27. National Archives of Canada (NAC) DIA School Files (SF) RG 10, Vol 6053, letter to DIA from Rev. J. Ryan, N.B. Superintendent of Indian Schools, February 28, 1911.
28. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol 6053, letter from Heatherington May 28, 1924.
29. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol 6053 "Extract from the Report of NS Indian Superintendent" A.J. Boyd for the year 1923-4 on Indian Education in Canada.
30. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol 6053, letter from Rev. Ryan October 8, 1925.
31. Ibid.
32. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol 6053, departmental memo from Bury, February 7, 1926.
33. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol 6053 "Extract from Reports of Inspection" made by Rev. F.C. Ryan, Inspector for Indian Schools for New Brunswick May 18, 1926.

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34. Although the school was built to accommodate 125 children, enrollment consistently exceeded this number until 1961.
35. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol 6053, letter to A.J. Boyd from D.C. Scott, April 23, 1927.
36. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol 6053, letter from JL Ilsley to the Hon. C. Stewart July 23, 1927. There was some criticism by at least one fellow Liberal that the farm was being bought from a Conservative, while other local Liberals were favourable, having an interest in the farm as creditors.
37. Halifax Chronicle, June 26, 1929, op. cit.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. SPAR 1931 enrollment tables.
41. Annals, Sisters of Charity Archives, Halifax, N.S. (throughout).
42. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to MacNeil, Glendale NS from Welfare and Training, DIA, October 26, 1937.
43. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter from Murray, Parsboro NS to DIA May 18, 1939.
44. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter from MacDougall, Summerside P.E.I. to DIA September 29, 1939.
45. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053 Letter from McMullin, Truro N.S. to DIA November 9, 1939.
46. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056 Letter from Hudson, Richibucto N.B. to DIA March 30, 1936.
47. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter from McCutcheon, Fredericton N.B. to DIA November 17, 1936.
48. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter from Rice, Shubenacadie N.S. to DIA March 9, 1943.
49. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter from Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro N.S. to DIA January 3, 1937.

50. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter from Hudson, Richibucto N.B. to DIA September 1, 1938.
51. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter from MacDougall, Summerside P.E.I. to DIA September 13, 1937.
52. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, note from Whalen, Fredericton N.B., written on a letter he received from Regina McElligott, School teacher, N. Devon, N.B., dated May 4, 1943, and passed to DIA.
53. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Robb, Shubenacadie N.S. from the child's father, August 6, 1936.
54. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to McCutcheon, Fredericton N.B. from DIA November 23, 1936. It must be noted, however, that often instructions from Indian Affairs were contradictory, and they were in the case of admissions. Sometimes, for example, agents were instructed to mail application forms directly to the principal rather than to Ottawa; also, agents were sometimes told to have medical inspections arranged for the children before sending them to the school and other times they were told the children would be examined by the school doctor on arrival.
55. Programme for Studies for Indian Schools, Register of Attendance, Etc., for the Shubenacadie Residential School, Amherst office of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.
56. G.G. Currie, "Indian Education in Nova Scotia," (B.Ed. thesis, Mt. Allison University, 1947), 35.
56. Ibid. 36.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid. 38.
59. Ibid. 39.
60. Kathleen Kearns, "The History of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School 1929-1957," (B.A. (Hons.) thesis, Mt. Allison University, 1990), 53.
61. Currie, op. cit., 9, 41.
62. Ibid., p 41.
63. Ibid., p 40.

64. Ibid., p 53.
65. Millward, op. cit. 5,6.
66. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053. Unfortunately, this torn, handwritten letter (dated August 27, 1930) is extremely difficult to decipher from the microfilm, and these are the only legible lines.
67. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter to Prince, Kentville N.S. from DIA August 30, 1930.
68. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, report to DIA from Prince, Kentville N.S. September 5, 1930.
69. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter to Prince, Kentville N.S. from DIA September 10, 1930.
70. Ibid.
71. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, thank you note to Father Mackey from McGill, DIA June 15, 1930.
72. The Audette Report on "The Commission, under Part II of the Inquiries Act, to investigate and report the circumstances in connection with the alleged flogging of Indian pupils recently at Shubenacadie Indian Residential School" September 17, 1934. Personal papers of Sister Helen Ralston.
73. Audette Report 2-3.
74. Ibid., 3-6
75. Ibid., 8-9
76. Isabelle Knockwood (with Gillian Thomas), Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia (Lockwood, N.S.: Roseway Publishing, 1992), 154.
77. Audette Report op. cit. ,15-16.
78. Ibid., 16, 18.
79. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, report of Thomas Robertson, Borden P.E.I. to DIA March 19, 1936.
80. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter to DIA from Harry, Annapolis N.S. July 31, 1936.

81. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter to Harry, Annapolis N.S. from DIA August 5, 1936.
82. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Rev. MacNeil, Glendale N.S. from R.H. Butts, lawyer, Sydney Mines October 1, 1936; letter to Father Mackey from Rev. MacNeil October 3, 1936.
83. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Rev. MacNeil from Father Mackey, October 5, 1936.
84. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Rev. MacNeil from DIA October 20, 1936.
85. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, statement made to R.C.M.P. Corporal Murray and Indian Agent Robb, October 1936.
86. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to DIA from Father Mackey October 12, 1936.
87. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Father Mackey from DIA November 2, 1936.
88. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, departmental memorandum June 2, 1937.
89. For truancy details see Marilyn Millward, "Voyages Home: Running from the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, Nova Scotia," in John Lennox *et al.* (eds.), Voyages. Real and Imaginary. Personal and Collective Canadian Issues Vol. XVI (Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), 175-190.
90. Kearns, op. cit., 57.
91. Heather Laskey, "Hard to erase bitter memories of school days filled with fear," Atlantic Insight, February 1988.
92. CBC Radio Essay, "When School Becomes Prison," aired October 12 1986.
93. Knockwood, op. cit., 121.
94. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter to Cameron, Heatherington N.S. from Father Mackey March 13, 1939.
95. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, R.C.M.P. truancy report dated March 24, 1939.

96. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053 Letter to Cameron, Heatherington NS from Father Mackey, March 21, 1939.
97. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter to Father Mackey from DIA July 16 1941.
98. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, undated letter to Hudson, Richibucto N.B. from DIA.
99. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Skinner, Chester Basin N.S. from DIA July 6, 1936.
100. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Spinney, Kentville NS from DIA December 21, 1938.
101. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Father Mackey from Director of Medical Services DIA September 18, 1929.
102. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, application form dated June 1, 1939, signed by J. Blecker, M.D., Children's Hospital, Halifax.
103. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056., letter to Dr. McInnis (school physician) from Dr. P.S. Campbell April 28, 1930.
104. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Father Mackey from DIA May 19, 1930.
105. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Father Mackey from DIA July 8, 1930.
106. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from E.L. Stone, DIA February 16, 1939.
107. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from Dr. McInnis February 11, 1939. There are several references to children suffering from gonorrhoea and syphilis, from the opening of the school. In 1932, Wasserman Blood Tests were done on all the pupils; some were positive "4-plus," which was said to require "a very long time to clear up, if it can be cleared up at all." Tests in 1934 indicated seven children were "4-plus," others were 2- and 3-plus, and others were yet to be tested. In one case, a letter was sent to a child's parents to ensure they were also being treated (April 5, 1932), and in another a child with both gonorrhoea and syphilis (whose older sister had "died from the same trouble" was immediately removed from the school (November 24, 1930), although DIA felt children with syphilis alone were "relatively safe to associate with [and]...less dangerous than some unknown cases among the pupils who have not been examined" (April 16, 1932, letter from DIA).

108. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, application form November 13, 1936 and approval by DIA November 17, 1936.
109. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058. See correspondence on deaf children from Dr. McInnis to DIA November 20, 1937 and to Father Mackey (undated) agreeing that with a school enrollment of over 160 it was impossible to do much for such children.
110. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053. Comments on discharge sheet September 1, 1939.
111. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letters to Father Mackey from DIA May 7 and October 19, 1936; letter to DIA from Father Mackey, October 13, 1937.
112. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, May 20, 1930.
113. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, January 3, 1934.
114. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, May 23, 1942.
115. NAC DIA SF RG10 Vol. 6058. Telegram to DIA from Father Mackey, August 13, 1943; letter to DIA from Father Mackey, August 14, 1943, with accompanying statements made by two pupils, Sister Mary Leonard and Father Mackey; also, Halifax Mail, Friday, August 13, 1943, p 1.
116. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053, letter to DIA from Father Mackey December 1943.
117. Carl Kelly, OMI, The Oblates in Nova Scotia. 1948-1986, 1986, 9.
118. SPAR enrollment tables, (see Marilyn Millward, "Canadian Native Education Policy: A Case Study of the Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia," M.A. thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1989, Appendix C); also, "Shuby Indian School May Close In June," Truro Weekly News, Thursday, February 9, 1967, p 1.
119. Thane Burnett, "Remembering tough times at native school," Truro Daily News, Thursday, August 27, 1987, p 17.
120. Ibid.
121. Kearns, op. cit., 95.

122. Ibid., 90, 99, Kearns' interview with C. Gorman, March 19, 1990.
123. SPAR 1891, report by E. Dewdney, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, for the year ended December 31, 1890.
124. NAC DIA SF RG10 Vol. 6053, letter to Cameron from Father Mackey, March 21, 1939.

**CHAPTER THREE:**  
**A SEPARATIST EDUCATION**

Since the priests, nuns and Protestant clergymen who took over the responsibility of education on the reserves were so obviously motivated with good intentions, if withal somewhat patronizingly, it must be recognized that "separatism" was natural to them and that it is deeply rooted in the Canadian way of life.<sup>1</sup>

As it is impossible to consider whether those involved in the Shubenacadie school acted in ways consistent with given definitions of patrons, brokers, and clients without an appreciation of the history of the school in question, so it is difficult to understand any of their motives or actions without an awareness of the history of Canadian common schools operating during the same period.

One problem with considering native education on its own, as with any issue viewed in isolation, is that it comes to look like a thing apart, apart from its own time and place, apart even from its own relevance. An examination of the people and policies surrounding the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School may yield a particular set of assumptions; for example that the children there--and indeed that in general First Nations children across Canada--received a separatist and inferior education. But when native education is placed in context, it appears that the ideas which spawned Indian industrial schools came from those behind common school education and were not completely dissimilar. Without a sense of the schools that other Canadian children (including non-English and non-French immigrant children) attended during the same period of history, it becomes easy to condemn the ideas of curriculum, discipline, and morality which ran



through native schools, to suggest they harboured a particular and unique way of dealing with the native child, and to decide they were deliberately destructive to one people's way of life.

Certainly, even in the most recent literature, the evidence is convincing that Indian residential schools were an educational "Native nightmare,"<sup>2</sup> and it would be naive and futile to try to counter that assessment. That is not the intention of this chapter. Many native schools have left a negative legacy and left their students with an education to overcome rather than one to build upon. J.R. Miller has concluded that

...the root of the problem with residential schools was not religious instruction, inadequate teaching, insufficient vocational training, or any other specific feature of the schools' operation. The essence of the problem was the assumption of Euro-Canadians--churches, governments, people--that they, because of their racial superiority to Aboriginal people, *knew better* than the Native communities and their leaders what was in the best interests of those dependent groups.<sup>3</sup>

Miller's assessment does not put to rest current arguments that the schools were faulty owing to their curricular emphasis or teaching methods, because such features remain the conspicuous components of residential schooling most often reviled in both academic and popular literature. While the root of the residential school problem may indeed have been Eurocentrism, the problem itself is usually seen as one of inadequate or inappropriate education directed toward the native and against the native way of life. This chapter intends to argue then, not against the idea that Eurocentrism lay at the heart of the residential school system, but rather that it defined schooling for all children in Canada, whether they were born Canadians, immigrant Canadians, or native Canadians.

Had native education been a provincial rather than federal responsibility, the imaginary line between common and Indian schools may never have been drawn. Prior to Canadian Confederation, several colonies of British North America had already enacted legislation for Indian schools, laying the basis for the development of provincial responsibility for Indian Affairs. However, a series of acts was later passed which assigned native education as a federal trust, although education was otherwise a provincial responsibility.<sup>4</sup> This separation has meant that native education is mentioned only peripherally in histories of Canadian education where it is treated as a thing apart, as if it had no relevance to general education movements. Generally, the result of this artificial division has been separate histories of native education which allow no alliance with general education trends, and thus give the appearance that native education developed as a deliberate and prejudicial campaign for the assimilation and elimination of the Indian. While it is accepted that these were indeed aims of Indian education, it is important to recognize that there were parallels between the purposes, practices, and motives behind native education and common free education and that both provincial and federal aims and goals were constructed on similar foundations and expressed with like rhetoric.

Specifically, the ideas of Egerton Ryerson, who in 1846 was appointed Chief Superintendent of Schools for Canada West (i.e., Ontario), influenced both public and Indian schooling. Though one was provincial and one was federal, in both there were common problems of attendance, punctuality, and discipline; included in both curricula were manual and domestic training; they had similar methods of inculcating morals and religion; both Indian and English Canadian schools treated the question of

culture and language in a like manner; and education of all non-British (or non-French) Canadians was likewise toward acculturation.

It has been claimed that Ryerson was the founder of English Canada's public school system. According to J. Donald Wilson, Ryerson considered the common school to be the means of "inculcating loyalty and patriotism, fostering social cohesion and self-reliance, and insuring domestic tranquility."<sup>5</sup> Not just an institution of learning, it was an institution of society, to qualify students "for their appropriate duties and employments of life, as Christians, as persons of business, and also as members of the civil community in which they live."<sup>6</sup> Following his 1846 appointment, Ryerson spent fourteen months travelling and studying European systems of education, a project resulting in his "Report of a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada," which he was gradually to implement within his thirty-year term.<sup>7</sup> He envisioned an educational system based on the "common Christianity" of Canadians, stressing the importance of a Biblical foundation for all schools, in which children would be taught the habits of "toleration, meekness, charity, respect for others, and the acceptance of the established authority."<sup>8</sup> Children, he felt, should meekly accept abuse without active opposition, while remaining kind to those perpetrating the harm.<sup>9</sup> Education was to be for both rich and poor, to fit the child to be an "honest and useful member of the community, and to be of sufficient length to overcome poverty."<sup>10</sup> Ryerson wished the curriculum to be plain and practical, since a classical education had only limited value in an agricultural and commercial country. Besides history, geography, bookkeeping and arithmetic, other subjects recommended were physical education, nature study, and "agriculture, because of its practical application."<sup>11</sup> The Act

provided for a system of inspection, so that schools would be monitored by government inspectors rather than individual school boards.<sup>12</sup>

Only one year after his 1846 Report, Ryerson then laid the ground rules for the operation of industrial schools for Canadian Indians. The aim of the schools was to "give a plain English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic" and was to include gardening and make-and-mend techniques for farming implements. Students were to live together, their domestic and religious education was to be provided for, and it was strongly recommended by Ryerson that the schools be jointly operated by the government and churches, for he felt that nothing could be done "to improve and elevate [the Indian's] character and condition without the aid of religious feeling."<sup>13</sup> The government would formulate the school regulations, and provide inspections and supporting funds, while the churches would administer the schools, assist with the costs, and of course, offer spiritual guidance to the pupils. Ryerson further recommended that during the summers students in the industrial schools should labour daily for eight to twelve hours and study for two to four hours, and that during the winter there should be less labour and more study.<sup>14</sup> Within four years of this report, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society had opened two industrial farming institutions for Indians, established to teach useful trades and domestic skills, and to "inculcate habits of industry and frugality."<sup>15</sup> By the end of 1890, there were over one thousand Indian children living in boarding and industrial schools in Canada.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps, then, Ryerson was also the father of native residential education in Canada.

Both common provincial and Indian day schools shared similar problems of poor attendance. The official view, in the case of common

schools, was that non-attendance was owing to parental indifference, while other problems keeping children from school were distance, want of clothing, and the economic necessity of retaining children at home to help with chores. This latter excuse was a very real one in farming areas. In one Ontario school, between 1845 and 1847, reasons listed in the day book for absenteeism were haymaking, wheat cutting, burning stumps, planting, sugar making, thrashing, and "taking out potatoes."<sup>17</sup> The necessity was genuine to the extent that in one entry, the teacher had decided to follow the example of his pupils and stay home himself to dig his own potatoes.<sup>18</sup> Bruce Curtis, in his 1988 assessment of the problem, suggests that the labour power of farm children was not indispensable to their families, but that their truancy instead resulted from the "obnoxious, inadequate, or less attractive" alternative of school attendance. Fifteen years later, reasons for absenteeism in Ontario remained similar: poverty, children needed to work at home, travel difficulties, cultural conflict (i.e., upper classes not wanting their children to mix with lower classes), parental dislike of the teacher for "scarcely any reason," and parental indifference and drunkenness.<sup>19</sup> If the frequency of teacher abuse and the severity of brutality were as rampant as documented by Curtis, it is difficult to accept that there was scarcely any reason for parents to mistrust teachers. Further, he suggests that pupils themselves resented the role of childhood thrust upon them. Some of them lived as "full-fledged and largely independent" members of their communities, actively engaged as working and producing members of their families, only to undergo the imposition of education in schools where they became submissive children, their days governed and determined for them.<sup>20</sup>

How different, if at all, was the situation for native children in the later nineteenth century? They also were active members of their households as soon as they were physically able to help, they had similar problems of poverty and lack of school clothing, and a genuine distrust and dislike of corporal punishment. In fact, among the reasons the government advocated boarding industrial education for Indians were the needs to overcome parental objections and eliminate the absenteeism caused by the parents' wandering.

In 1895, Haytor Reed, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, felt disheartened "to find the widespread indifference manifested by Indian parents with regard to regularity of, or indeed any, attendance by their children at the day schools."<sup>21</sup> Several years later, James Smart noted in his annual report that no progress could be made in the day schools "when the migratory habits of the parents interfere with regularity of the children's attendance and the home influences counteract those of the school."<sup>22</sup> An Indian agent reported from Nova Scotia in 1902 that the parents did not "encourage the little ones as they ought...they acknowledge the institution to be good, but lack the interest that will have the pupil at school every day."<sup>23</sup>

Not only attendance, but punctuality was also a shared problem. Teachers in the common schools often locked their doors against latecomers, against the wishes of the parents who felt it was their right to decide at what time of day their children should go to school.<sup>24</sup> Yet a "disregard of time and an ignorance of its value" was claimed to be an Indian problem, "innate in him inherited from his parents."<sup>25</sup> The "deleterious home influence" of the reserve was to be countered by the boarding school, in which the recurrence each day at the same hour of all his duties would teach the Indian child the

importance of time.<sup>26</sup> According to Curtis, school was a place "where punctuality and regularity were both moral habits in themselves and means to the other official ends of education."<sup>27</sup> This belief held in both common and Indian schools.

In the matter of discipline, Curtis went into great detail in documenting school practices of "severe physical violence" in the classrooms of the 1850s and 1860s. Officially, it was felt that a teacher had to establish his authority and a pupil had to submit and obey, and that a parent had no right to interfere with any force the teacher might use.<sup>28</sup> Ryerson is cited as saying "A teacher cannot be expected to dispense with the use of the rod in a school, unless the government of all the pupils by their own parents at home is perfect."<sup>29</sup> It was felt that responsible parents would replicate school teachings at home, accustom their children to physical discipline, and abdicate their authority while their children were in school, and that only indifferent parents would counter school efforts by intervening or criticising.<sup>30</sup> However, parents did take "strong ground" against corporal punishment and did intervene, by taking their children from the school, and taking the teachers to court. School punishments included thrashing children on the bare buttocks, pushing them through a trap door into what they were told was a pit of snakes, striking them on the head in rage, and lashing with a switch, the latter correction resulting once with an eight-year-old losing an eye.<sup>31</sup> It is no wonder school became a hated place, a prison. Yet it was the parents who were usually held responsible, for having produced disobedient children, and it was suggested that schools would be "happier" places if parents listened less to accounts of school discipline, and did not believe children's reports about their teachers.<sup>32</sup> The discouragement of children

from telling school tales at home certainly continued into the 1950s in public schools, so it should not be unexpected that it was a feature of the Shubenacadie Residential school in the 1930s. In an incident mentioned in Chapter two, in which a girl complained to the R.C.M.P. about undue work and harsh discipline, she also stated that the "Sisters always tell us not to tell our parents about getting a beating."<sup>33</sup>

Although it was clearly a general childhood characteristic, those in power over Indian Affairs seemed to feel that it was an Indian trait to dislike confinement in schools, that aversion to monotonous work was natural to Indian children, and to consider that parents disliked to have their children subjected to discipline because of an Indian predisposition to regard personal chastisement as a great indignity. Smart noted in his 1899 annual report that Indian parents had a "strong disinclination to apply or have teachers apply, especially to their boys, such discipline as is required to assure attendance and progress."<sup>34</sup> The argument that this supposed cultural discrepancy stood in the way of successful education in Indian day schools was used by Smart to advance the idea of the superiority of boarding and industrial schools, where Indian children could be inculcated with the habits and "modes of thought of the white man," and where they presumably would learn the value of discipline along with the value of time.<sup>35</sup>

In 1893, the government put forward the idea that Indian parental objections to schooling were rapidly being overcome, "no doubt by their observing the kind treatment extended to their children" in the schools.<sup>36</sup> However, the matter of kind treatment had come into question earlier, when it was reported in a Saskatchewan newspaper that physical abuse to a child in an Indian industrial school had resulted in parental opposition to enrolling



their children. Although Indian Affairs denied the allegation, it was neither an isolated occurrence, nor one overcome by 1893.<sup>37</sup>

Indian education became compulsory by 1920, in an amendment to the Indian Act which was strengthened in 1930 so that children aged seven to sixteen (or sometimes eighteen) were compelled to attend.<sup>38</sup> By 1933 it was said that the churches no longer had to "scour the countryside annually in the hunt for new recruits" for their schools.<sup>39</sup>

It has already been mentioned that Ryerson recommended daily labour for eight to twelve hours as part of the education to be provided to Indians in industrial schools. The aim was to teach the children "the necessary arts of civilized life" so they could become part of the larger society.<sup>40</sup> Besides Christianizing, the curriculum was to include such useful trades for Indian boys as shoemaking, carpentry, cabinet making, and farming, and for the girls, sewing, knitting, spinning, and general housework.<sup>41</sup> As an example of the work accomplished by the children, in an Albertan school in 1897, boys concentrated on stock raising and agriculture, harvesting one hundred bushels of potatoes and fifty bushels of other vegetables, while the girls learned household tasks and made fifty dresses, sixty pairs of stockings, and one hundred each of aprons and shorts. In addition, they also learned the four 'r's,' the fourth being religion.<sup>42</sup>

Twenty-five years later, in 1922, curricular emphases continued to be on the practical in Indian schools. It was believed that Indians still needed to be discouraged from aimless roaming and hunting, and encouraged to love their land and to cultivate it. To this end, it was recommended that boys be taught all aspects of farming, including horse care, harrowing, repairing machinery, blacksmithing, and seed selection. Bigger boys should work

steadily, except in the winter months when "they still might be given an hour or so of classwork."<sup>43</sup> Girls, of course, were required to learn housewifery--cooking, washing and mending clothes, keeping a neat house and tending a small garden. The ultimate aim was that boys could "make a real home [and] find happiness in the possession of a good wife and the raising of a family."<sup>44</sup>

Curricular activities in Indian schools continued to be similar, well into the twentieth century. For example, as noted in Chapter two, in 1930 children from the Shubenacadie residential school complained of too much work and not enough study. As to the value of their practical education, Basil Johnston, in his account of his years in an Indian residential school in Ontario, claimed that none of the children from his school ever made a living at anything they learned in manual training classes.<sup>45</sup>

Manual training was also a part of the modernization of common education in Canada in the late nineteenth century. Progressive education corresponded with a period of rapid industrialization, during which a farming, fishing and lumbering country was transforming into a modern industrial state. With the changes came social reformers, who gave particular attention to education in response to the country's new needs. More than ever it was necessary that education be practical and relevant to the lives the children could expect to live. In a 1905 paper written on curriculum for Nova Scotian schools, F. Bolton wrote:

Those things which touch our lives are the things which cause us to think and to develop. And as education is life and life is education, should we not bring into curricula a greater proportion of those things that have a vital relation to life and its interests?<sup>46</sup>

While the aim of practical education in regular Canadian schools was not exactly that of Indian education, it had similarities worth noting. It was necessary for English Canadian children to learn tool and mechanical skills, and most important that they be instilled with a preference for industrial work to fill the jobs that would be available for them.<sup>47</sup> In other words, like Indian children, the other Canadian children were also being trained to improve the lives they were expected to live as adults. A strong parallel is found in the what was termed the MacDonald-Robertson movement of the early 1900s. Dominion Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying, James W. Robertson, had found it difficult to teach new farming methods to farmers, and found strong appeal in the new educational idea of framing the future through the children--attempting to improve farming by systematically teaching new methods to school children. His seed contests attracted the attention of philanthropist Sir William Macdonald, and together they promoted such "new education" ideas as school gardening, nature study, manual training and domestic science.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, manual and especially agricultural training in industrial schools for Indians was intended to improve directly the future condition of the students, and "through them to exert an elevating influence" on their home reserves.<sup>49</sup>

Lessons in morals, character development, and religion were not for native children alone. John Putman, a leader in the Canadian progressive education movement, supplied students at the turn of the century with a new history book, believing that history could teach "direct and explicit lessons on the duties of citizenship and give training in character."<sup>50</sup> Through a moral evaluation of historic events, he put forward the message that Christianity taught humility, brotherly love, self-sacrifice and self-control. Moral

decadance he illustrated by a picture of poverty suffered by an ignorant, hopeless, intemperate people who "never went to church and were under the care of no regular clergyman."<sup>51</sup> Putman aimed to instill all children with high ideals, and recognised the crucial role education could play in a child's moral growth. "Teacher and preacher" had equal opportunities to help children form suitable moral characters; education, he believed, had a spiritual purpose.<sup>52</sup>

A Christian education was seen as the means of salvation for the Indian child also. For his 1887 report, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Thomas White, prepared the following persuasion:

....the emancipation of the Indian from his inherent superstition and gross ignorance is being wrought out thereat, as the light which a knowledge of the Christian religion invariably imparts dispels the illusions in which his benighted though infantile mind have been nurtured from the cradle, and...his intellect expands and develops under the influence of the instruction imparted by those who have taken upon them the laudable but responsible task of helping these poor children of the forest or of the prairie upward and onward...<sup>53</sup>

Ideas of utilitarian schooling predated Confederation and permeated all levels of education. The Nova Scotia Institute of Science in the 1860s to 80s, for example, operated with the idea that practical education would benefit the masses by preparing them to work humbly for a living.<sup>54</sup> In 1885, Nova Scotia passed an Act to Encourage Agricultural Education, and three years later purchased a farm so that student teachers and farmers could learn by doing.<sup>55</sup> The hope, in part, was to promote a rural-mindedness in teachers, which might counter the quick turnover of rural "school marms."<sup>56</sup> By 1894, manual training programmes were underway in thirty public schools in the province, and though the level of instruction was not high enough to produce skilled workmen, the idea promoted was that such training would

develop perception, promote invention, stimulate the intellect, and provide workers with an appreciation for manual labour. Boys would have a constructive avenue for their energies, and those without academic inclination might find other talents.<sup>57</sup>

In the early 1900s, agricultural education was further promoted with the federal Agriculture Instruction Act of 1913, which was meant to counter the evils of city life and enhance rural civilization.<sup>58</sup> Common schools were stressing a blend of school with everyday life,<sup>59</sup> and according to David Jones, a concentration on agricultural education was a "commitment to a simple, easily comprehensible, and cohesive conception of Canadianism."<sup>60</sup> Following the Great War, there was a country-wide call for "agricultural training for teachers, and a modicum of agricultural education for students."<sup>61</sup> But while the promoters of common school agricultural education, such as L.A. DeWolfe in Nova Scotia, felt education should be concerned with more than the intellect, the movement proved unsuccessful and the Act was discontinued in 1924.<sup>62</sup> In 1921 DeWolfe had noted that when farmers sent their children to high school it was with the expectation that they would become professionals, not farmers, for those who wanted their sons to be farmers simply kept them at home.<sup>63</sup> What is significant, of course, is that while ideas of agricultural education in the common school were being phased out, school farming continued to be an important part of native education in residential schools.

A parallel to the moral training in Indian education might be found by looking at industrial school education for other Canadian children. Those who received this particular training were the same types of children as the Indians in industrial schools; that is, both institutions drew their pupils from

the dependent, the neglected, and the delinquent. This included orphans and children of parents who were too poor to care for them or who avoided their responsibilities because of drink and immorality.<sup>64</sup> Placement in Indian industrial-residential schools<sup>65</sup> was also not voluntary, as Indian agents made the decision based on similar views of dependence, neglect, and less often, delinquency. It may be recalled from Chapter two, for example, that in the 1930s, some of the children placed in the Indian school at Shubenacadie were candidates because of their parents' irresponsibility. These parents, it was claimed, did not show much interest in them, were poor and roaming, were thought to be of little consequence, and were generally considered unfit for a variety of other economic and moral reasons.<sup>66</sup>

Diane Matters' 1980 paper on education for juvenile offenders in British Columbia cites child-saver J.J. Kelso as saying that institutionalized children required stimulation to their spiritual forces, and character development through highly ethical teachers and teachings.<sup>67</sup> For the Indian child too, it was said that industrial boarding schools were intended to bring him "into contact from day to day with all that tends to effect a change in his views and habits of life."<sup>68</sup> In Indian schools and in industrial schools there were strict daily routines: Matters mentions time-bells and a schedule of half work and half school.<sup>69</sup> These schools were considered the best agents for advancing a child's morals and intellect: Christianity was expected to remove from the Indian any residual paganism and to lead to the end of native nomadism.<sup>70</sup> However, neither industrial schools for delinquents nor those for Indians were entirely successful in their endeavours. Matters cites the 1911 Annual Report of Provincial Industrial Schools as expressing the following difficult problem:

[To give a boy] a better conception of life, teach him obedience to law and order, build him up mentally and morally, then return him to his home and unfortunately usually to old companions and old temptations and still expect such a boy to remain a good and useful member of society is a big proposition.<sup>71</sup>

Terms in industrial schools for these boys were normally of two years duration only, while for Indian children they were more often eleven or twelve years. Indian children could be placed by their representative agents at five years of age, and sometimes younger, and might stay until they were sixteen or even eighteen; often they did not return home during this time in the interest of federal economy, their reserves being too distant. Even so, the inculcation of desired morals and habits was imperfect, and frequently reports from Indian Affairs expressed the same problem as above:

[It is] advisable that every possible legitimate means should be used to prevent those whose education at an industrial institution or high school has been completed from returning to the reserves.<sup>72</sup>

It was felt that even if their intent in returning home was to benefit their people by making use of trades they had learned or by becoming teachers in reserve day schools, they would suffer retrogression and moral injury by renewing their old associations.<sup>73</sup>

Paul Bennett also wrote on what he called the reforming impulse of industrial schools. In a study of Toronto institutions he indicated their child-saving aspect: according to the Industrial Schools Act of 1874, children under fourteen found begging, homeless, destitute, or living "in circumstances exposing [them] to an idle and dissolute life" could be committed; and parents unable to control their children could apply for their admittance.<sup>74</sup> In 1884 a further category of children was added: those guilty of a petty crime, and the aim of the schools was to rehabilitate and provide

training so the children would become useful citizens in society.<sup>75</sup> Central to the schools' philosophy was practical training and religious instruction, and each day was divided into four and a half hours of manual labour, three hours of school work, and one hour of Bible and devotions.<sup>76</sup> In 1893, The Childrens' Charter advocated the removal of children from institutions and their placement in the care of "motherly and fatherly people" under the direction of childrens' aid societies, and the industrial schools in Toronto entered a period of decline. The schools suffered from chronic government neglect and parsimony, overcrowding, escapes, and charges of poor management, and, Bennett said, officials slowly came to realize that institutions for the reform of the wayward and delinquent could not work miracles.<sup>77</sup>

Institutions for children in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century were not only of the industrial type. Orphanages also abounded, not only to take care of neglected children, but to accommodate child immigrants to Canada who were not placed in private homes. Reformers at the time, concerned with the numbers of paupers, waifs, and so-called street-Arabs in the industrialized cities in England, added to the immigration statistics by bringing these children to homes and institutions in Canada. In his 1976 book on children in English Canadian society, Neil Sutherland says that by 1881 there were forty-six orphanages in Canada. Not unlike industrial schools, it was a characteristic of these institutions that little interest was shown in individual youngsters, while a strong emphasis was placed on hard work and firm discipline.<sup>78</sup> In an 1887 statement by the General Superintendent of the Methodist church, regarding proper child raising, it can be seen that the Reverend Carman could have been speaking



about any industrial school as well as his own Sabbath school. Children looked after properly, he said, would

...come forth holy, earnest, well-informed Christian men and women; multitudes better equipped for the great struggle than their fathers; better furnished in a godly understanding and instructed mind<sup>79</sup>

It was not only Indian children who were inculcated in a foreign religion. In Luigi Pennacchio's 1986 paper, which focussed on Toronto and its large influx of European immigrants in the early twentieth century, he documented efforts made in Toronto schools to convert Jewish immigrants to Protestantism. This was attempted through a club for mothers and children to introduce them to a Canadian culture which included Protestantism, and through church services and the enticement of Christmas toys. The immigrants had a defence, however, in their own religious leaders and their close and closed community. They put forward strong efforts both to thwart conversion by the Christian missionaries, and to open their own religious schools.<sup>80</sup> It was not only upon the Indians that the light of Christianity had attempted to shine.

But for the Indian parents in the late nineteenth century, Christianity was not only a menace to their own religion, but it was a threat to their relationship with their children. Indian "paganism" was blamed for their lack of interest in schooling because

...the belief prevails that the children will be educated into other creeds, which will affect their existence in a future state, and separate them from their parents in the great hereafter.<sup>81</sup>

Yet it was not only during the afterlife that parents felt they would lose their children; they recognised the real possibility that education would also destroy sympathy between them and their children in this life.<sup>82</sup>

A study of Ukrainian education in Manitoba in the early twentieth century by Stella Hryniuk and Neil McDonald mentions that this was a problem for new Canadians as well. The authors indicate there was some parental indifference to schooling when it interfered with farm work, but actual hostility where it was feared the children would be alienated from them in a strange, Canadian environment.<sup>83</sup> Yet other parents were eager for education for their children, to the extent that one mother hitched her skirt and carried her children across a river to school every morning and back again in the evenings. The Ukrainians had come to Canada so their children would have improved chances, and education--the importance of which had been inculcated in their homeland--was part of that expected better life.<sup>84</sup>

Hryniuk and McDonald cite another study on education in Manitoba written by the Presbyterian Rev. Thomas Hart in 1905 on the particular challenges in that province:

When we consider that...almost one-third of the whole population is of other than British origin we can easily see that the task of unifying these diverse races, and making them intelligent citizens, English in speech, Canadian in sentiment, and British in loyalty to the empire, is one of no ordinary magnitude.<sup>85</sup>

The quest for such citizens enveloped all Canadians, whether new, founding, or original.

In his 1979 paper on new education in English Canada, Neil Sutherland noted the enormous power which could be wielded in the schools, where children could be controlled and directed for a large portion of their lives. Schools "assembled children in a way that one could get at them conveniently," and "could be made to contain the whole of the next generation within their walls."<sup>86</sup> This idea is exemplified too in the Indian

Affairs reports for 1890 in which Dewdney recognised the possible power schools could afford over the Indian:

It would be highly desirable, if it were practicable, to obtain entire possession of all Indian children after they attain to the age of seven or eight years, and keep them at schools of the industrial type until they have had a thorough course of instruction...<sup>87</sup>

If not entirely practicable, for many children, particularly in western Canada, such schooling became a reality. Children were removed from their reserves because their homes did not appear to be acceptable according to the standards of the Indian agents who held sway over them. It was entirely within the jurisdiction of the agents to decide which homes were unsatisfactory and which children should be removed.

In the same way, middle-class reformers in English Canadian society made judgements regarding the homes of the poor and the working classes. As Sutherland mentioned, the reform agencies involved "believed that the settings from which they took most of the children were so deplorable that almost any change was for the better."<sup>88</sup> When a family situation was considered "so unsatisfactory that it could not be rehabilitated, the state was entirely justified in taking the children."<sup>89</sup>

According to Sutherland, concerned reformers had no sentimental feelings about the family. It was only an end to a desired product, a new generation which was the best the present one could produce. The only means of saving some children was "immediate and complete removal from parental control and parental influence."<sup>90</sup> It was said there was

...no surer and more effective mode of improving society [than] rescuing...children from dangerous environments, wisely caring and providing for them during their early years, and giving them a good chance for a fair start in life.<sup>91</sup>

Accordingly, it was not amiss to sort into various groups children who needed particular care.<sup>92</sup> Obviously, native Indians were one of these groups, although their special education was not considered in Sutherland's study. As previously mentioned, Indian education is seen as singular, so is not typically integrated into histories of Canadian education.

Although on the surface Canada's Indians and immigrants may seem quite separate, in fact they faced similar problems with the education of their children in English Canadian schools in the early 1900s. Pennacchio discussed some of the educational issues which affected Canadian immigrants, indicated that they suffered a policy of assimilation into the culture of their new country, and described the force with which they tried to inhibit it. "The objective of the public schools directed at the children of [immigrant] peoples not within the Protestant, British-Canadian cultural milieu," he says, "was one of salvation and assimilation."<sup>93</sup> Since adult immigrants were seen as a lost cause and too set in their foreign ways, efforts were concentrated on the salvation of their children.<sup>94</sup>

This idea is not at all unlike the federal government's attitude toward adult Indians. In 1890, Dewdney suggested that Indian parents should appreciate and welcome boarding schools, because with their children gone from home they would be afforded new freedom. No longer restrained at home by the necessity of enforcing attendance of their children at day schools, they would be able to follow their wandering tendencies and "be at liberty to go where they pleased." He thus dismissed the parents as beyond the redemption of civilization, while offering their children "practical knowledge which would fit them for becoming useful members of society."<sup>95</sup> The following year, Dewdney continued his appeal, claiming that education

would convert Indians into "contributors to, instead of merely consumers of, the wealth of the country." This remark is striking, being made by a member of the society which comprised the true consumers of the wealth of Canada. However, Dewdney was not alone in his belief that Indian children required "emancipation...from the condition of ignorance and superstitious blindness" in which their parents were sunk, and that only education and assimilation would provide a solution to the Indian problem.<sup>96</sup> Dewdney's successor, Haytor Reed, felt that

...the Indian problem exists owing to the fact that the Indian is untrained to take his place in the world. Once teach him to do this, and the solution is had.<sup>97</sup>

Pennacchio also noted that school attendance (in Toronto) became compulsory in 1871, which meant immigrant children were "separated from their own ethnocultures by the force of law."<sup>98</sup> While it has already been mentioned that native education became compulsory only much later, Indians were always under the force of law to the extent that they were wards of the government and therefore had no say. The point in Pennacchio's paper which is perhaps most poignant is that immigrant parents reacted to the enculturation of the children by forming groups that have been called voluntary ghettos. The example given is of Jewish neighbourhood groups wherein their own culture and identity could be preserved. What comes to mind is the idea of the Indian reserve as a voluntary ghetto, for while initially reserves were a government imposition, they have come to be guarded homes which the native people have no intention of relinquishing. It has already been mentioned that the government urged any means possible to keep educated Indians from returning home and retrogressing. The fear was that the aim of education was not served if graduates of industrial schools

returned "to the communities of their own race and...to all intents and purposes remain[ed] Indians."<sup>99</sup>

Language rights were of special concern to both immigrant and Indian parents. Sutherland says that immigrants did not understand why it was necessary to forfeit their language and culture to be good citizens, and wished their children to grow up as bilingual and bicultural Canadians. However, it was the intent of English schooling that immigrants should forsake and replace their languages and other manifestations of culture. As the Jewish people opened their own Hebrew schools, other new Canadians, notably Ukrainians, hired their own teachers for private bilingual schools. Other ethnic groups solved the problem by offering weekend schools in their own tongues, and by retaining their languages and traditions at home.<sup>100</sup>

To some extent, particularly in the early years, native parents with children in residential schools lacked this power to fight the acculturation process. Dewdney recognised that Indians would remain a community apart as long as they retained their languages, and stressed the necessity that all children in all industrial and boarding schools must be taught in the English language exclusively. He intended to produce a generation of English speaking Indians, who would be accustomed to the ways of civilized life and would no longer suffer a linguistic disability.<sup>101</sup> While the Ukrainian press in Winnipeg stressed the necessity of learning English and the equally important weekend schools in order to retain the mother tongue,<sup>102</sup> the Indians had neither a press nor access to their children on the weekends. In the elimination of native languages the residential schools perhaps found their highest "success."

This chapter has illustrated several apparent parallels between native education in Canada and general educational trends which formed the basis of schooling for English Canadians. The tidal ebb and flow of curricular ideas moved from a classical to a practical education and at the same time notions of child-saving, offering help to what we now call at-risk children during their formative years, was calling reformers to a mission. Before the formation of the Shubenacadie residential school but at a time when it was being strongly advocated, the Superintendent of Neglected and Delinquent Children of Nova Scotia, Ernest H. Blois, presented his ideas on the elevation of the children under his jurisdiction:

The children of this country are either potential assets or liabilities. On which side of the balance sheet they finally appear depends on two things--heredity and environment during youth,--and the child has no control over either...[and] neither can be clearly shown to outweigh the other in importance. Thus while admitting the importance and fixedness of inherited tendencies, Child Welfare Work is necessarily based on the theory that it is possible and practicable to improve a child's environment and to correct bad inherited tendencies to such an extent that the child's position is changed from the debit to the credit side of the sheet...[T]he object of this office [is] to make it possible for children to have a reasonably fair chance in life...this office stands for Victory,--Victory over inherited evil tendencies and bad environment.<sup>103</sup>

Although these words describe the high expectations and positive intentions of those who advocated industrial and reform schooling for neglected children, they could easily have been addressed to the support of residential schools for Indian children whose heredity and environment were at the time seen as detrimental and deficient. It can be argued that Indians were not particularly singled out for special, prejudicial treatment in either their industrial schooling nor in the acculturation practices imposed upon them.

Regardless of the underlying intentions of educational and social reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and whether or not they could see beyond their ethnocentrism and philanthropy, they defined educational and child welfare systems for all Canadians.

There has been, of course, a difference between native and common education in Canada, but where it lies appears to be in the matter of perceived power. While English Canadian parents fought against brutal discipline practices in the schools, and immigrant parents fought for language and religious rights, Indian parents were sometimes unaware of the problems or else unable to make changes. As wards of the federal government they had no input into policies which affected them and their children in distant schools, and often they did not realize that once their children had been removed to boarding schools they forfeited custody. Their lives and families under the scrutiny and thumb of the Indian agent, they had little recourse against his often arbitrary decisions. Yet, as will be seen in chapter nine, some parents attacked the system with some success in the matter of attendance and discharge. While they fought questions of discipline with less luck, it has been seen in chapter two that sometimes the children themselves succeeded in running and remaining home.

Although only some of the similarities in educational intent and practice for all Canadian children have been mentioned here, and each has been touched only briefly, it is suggested that native education has not entirely been the thing apart it may seem. Yet it is unfortunate that the split exists between general histories of Canadian education and childhood, and specific histories of native education. It has resulted in misunderstandings, and in possible understandings being left uncovered. Were trends in native



education included in general histories of the new education movement, greater similarities than revealed here might become apparent. It is a question that deserves a fuller treatment.

**CHAPTER THREE - NOTES AND REFERENCES**

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57. MacLeod, op. cit., 64, 65.

58. Jones, op. cit., 85.
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62. Ibid., 90.
63. Ibid.
64. Diane L. Matters, "The Boys' Industrial School: Education for Juvenile Offenders" in J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (eds.), Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig, 1980), 53.
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67. Matters, op. cit., 55.
68. SPAR 1890, report of E. Dewdney.
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71. Matters, op. cit., 56.
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75. Ibid., 213.
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78. Neil Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976), 12.
79. Ibid., 17.
80. Luigi Pennacchio, "Toronto's Public Schools and the Assimilation of Foreign Students, 1900-1920," Journal of Educational Thought 20 (1) 1986, 43, 44.
81. SPAR 1898, report of James Smart.
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85. Ibid., 159.
86. Sutherland, op. cit., 51.
87. SPAR 1891.
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89. Ibid., 18.
90. Ibid., 63.
91. Ibid., 92.
92. Ibid., 20.
94. Pennacchio, op. cit., 40.
95. SPAR 1891.
96. SPAR 1892, report of E. Dewdney.
97. SPAR 1896, report of Haytor Reed.
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**PART TWO**  
**THE RELIGIOUS**



CHAPTER FOUR:  
TUTELAGE AND THE RELIGIOUS

Education begins in the home, is systematized by the school,  
and is brought to perfection only by the Church.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of tutelage suggests guardianship in concert with instruction, but since it refers to both the office of protection and the condition of wardship, it equally addresses the position of the teaching Sister in the Indian residential school and that of the student under care. Noel Dyck, in his study of the Indian "problem," defined *coercive* tutelage as an abusive form of arbitrary restraint or guardianship exercised by one party over another, in particular by European Canadians over Indians, and suggests it is the central element of the so-called problem.<sup>2</sup> In his view, those who have attempted to solve this problem have done so with ideological objectives backed by material interests, meaning that their "endeavours to 'help' have never been altruistic in intent or impact."<sup>3</sup> Worse, those people Dyck has labelled "tutelage agents" have had to present their clients as "unable to act appropriately on their own behalf" in order to justify the imposition of their tutelage.<sup>4</sup> Further, in referring to their programs of aid as "Christian humanitarianism," federal officials have implied that their policies merited judgement by motive, not results. Indian agents, Dyck suggested, had to continually deny the worth of the Indian in order to maintain their own position, and the way they defined their clients "turned stereotypical images into reality."<sup>5</sup> Or, as Heather Robertson phrased it, "Indian Affairs makes Indians out of people."<sup>6</sup> The government was simply serving economic purposes, while the missionaries "championed tutelage as an end in itself."<sup>7</sup>

Dyck recognized that all tutelage agents have been certain of the morality of their actions, and have seen a need in the Indian population for whatever particular 'gifts' they were offering.<sup>8</sup> While such gifts as literacy, economic opportunity, and Christianity may have been appreciated, especially required was relief from particular predicaments for the "integrity and survival of their communities' ways of life."<sup>9</sup> The intent was to reduce the Indian to a "captive client" whose "perceived problems and needs justified the...tutelage industry."<sup>10</sup> Even while the native people, in the words of Duncan Campbell Scott, were considered a "weird and waning race,"<sup>11</sup> their final years were to be protected by the government's civilized greed and the church's philanthropy.<sup>12</sup>

Dyck considered the contradictory nature of coercive tutelage, and of course this conflict is illustrated by the very idea of assimilation through education in sequestered residential schools. How was it planned to bring Indians into Canadian society by establishing the system of "segregated and economically isolated reserves"? How could independence be fostered through the control of tutelage agents? Indians were expected somehow simultaneously to help themselves and to do as they were told. But Dyck noted that every generation of agents has failed in its assimilative objective, even though the answer to the "Indian question" has often been expressed as being only a generation away. He asked:

Why have successive generations of tutelage agents--which have included many decent and well-meaning persons--had the effect of being coercive and callous, so at odds with their good intentions?<sup>13</sup>

Dyck cited David Nock's study of a Victorian missionary who could not reconcile his good intentions with the duties of his position.<sup>14</sup> E.F.

Wilson operated an Indian residential school for twenty years (1873-1893)<sup>15</sup> before resigning and retiring, having developed the belief that assimilationist goals and policies pursued through the educational system were not effective or even appropriate<sup>16</sup> Presumably there were other agents whose contradictory roles as patron and middleman were finally found to be indefensible and untenable. Indian agent Alan Fry (see chapter 8) may never have understood why his gifts were not appreciated, but he eventually concluded that he could not help.<sup>17</sup>

The whole question of gifts with reference to Indian affairs is a curious one. There are several definitions, of course: a gift can be given without expectation of return, negating the brokerage role; or a gift can denote a bribe or something given to corrupt, supporting the brokerage role. Then there is the idea of teaching as presenting ideas, which may be rephrased as making a present or gift of knowledge, and perhaps a gifted child is merely one who knows which presents to pursue and which to discard. In other words, most people have the capacity to accept or refuse gifts, while not necessarily letting the giver know which they have done. It is obvious today that much proffered Christianity was not internalized completely or at all; Dyck spoke of native "reluctance to become the spiritual clients of missionaries" and the tangible inducements (gifts) that were offered to early converts. Some pretended to convert for blankets and food; some converted in the belief the new religion would somehow save them from disease.<sup>18</sup> This of course, was less successful an inducement than eternal reward might have been, for once a convert contracted a disease, surely religious faith faded.

The Micmac today are celebrating more than three hundred eighty years of Roman Catholicism, so in the Maritimes the issue itself has faded; however, they are now incorporating native traditions into their church masses.<sup>19</sup> Spiritual leader Noel Knockwood believes that this is not enough, and only "traditional Indian ways" can overcome the social ills introduced by the whites. "Christianity," he teaches, "is not one of the answers."<sup>20</sup> But the question remains: how responsible were religious tutelage agents for social ills?

There is no question that the government could not administer Indian Affairs on the scattered and remote reserves across the country without Indian agents, and that likewise, the church could not minister to its followers without ministers. Considering the economic disposition of the government toward the Indian residential schools, it may be that this particular system of education could not have been established without the financial assistance of the churches; perhaps the government could not even have paid the salaries for the necessary teachers without what might be termed the labour of love provided by religious Sisters and Brothers. That these mediators were indispensable in the fulfilling of government goals for its Indian population has been established; whether the role they filled was that of true "brokerage" or just one of tutelage, coercive or not, is yet to be argued.

The Sisters at the Shubenacadie residential school were there as teachers; they were academically qualified, and the attributes which made them suitable for the sisterhood suggest they were temperamentally qualified to teach as well. In the lives of the Sisters, prayer was to blend with labour, and among all the Sisters' labours, teaching was preeminent:

They came to Halifax as teachers. As teachers they established their mother house...As teachers chiefly they have labored through the century...<sup>21</sup>

From those of St. Vincent de Paul, the Sisters derived their own teachings: "pious philanthropy and inspired common sense." They practiced the virtues of humility (everything is nothing except in God); simplicity (looking only to the objective of God's will); and charity (living in love for God and neighbour).<sup>22</sup> This last virtue was paramount in that it lived in their own title, Sisters of Charity, for above all they followed the commandment to love one another, and especially to love God's "best beloved, His poor."<sup>23</sup> Thus they came to missions such as the Indian residential school as a vocation, as following God's will, and there they were apparently content, for each spring they waited with trepidation for the orders from the Motherhouse which would let them know if they could stay or must move on. They were there as teachers, but perhaps they saw themselves first as mediators between God and the "baby hearts" they tried to fill with a holy presence;<sup>24</sup> the daily life of the school portrayed in their "Annals" seldom mentions the classroom. Their loyalties were to the resident Mother Superior, the Motherhouse at Mount Saint Vincent in Halifax, the Sisters of Charity, the Church, and God. In their position between God and the children, they presumably presented their personal understanding of the power of humility, simplicity, and charity, and taught what might have been a valuable lesson in a residential school--their own belief in the acceptance of God's will. They were mediators in the sense of peacemakers, bringing God to the children and the children to God.

The school's principal, while also concerned with the daily religious and academic life of the school, was mainly an administrator who dealt with the government on matters of the physical plant and the physical health and

welfare of the children. As will be shown in the following chapter, Father Mackey negotiated almost daily with Ottawa on such matters as additions and renovations to the school, the acquisition and repair of equipment, and the medical care of the children--usually requesting authorization for expenditures, as these matters were supposed to be funded by Indian Affairs. While the government claimed that health in the school was of the utmost importance,<sup>25</sup> it reneged its responsibility to ensure through the admission process that it was disease free, and through clinics that regular health care would be given necessary attention. In the matter of contagious diseases it was partly a problem of inefficient Indian agents who allowed infected children access to the school; in the matter of clinics it was a blatant denial of fiscal responsibility: the Shubenacadie school, Indian Affairs wrote, could not expect health care to be funded every year.<sup>26</sup> In his role as interpreter of government intentions regarding the children in his charge, the principal was given more latitude than he might have wished; frequently the stated policy was denied by the actual policy, and many decisions were eventually his to make. Perhaps, as in the case of Indian agents to whom the government conceded power because they knew more about local conditions, there was willingness to leave much of the decision-making in the hands of the school principal. Besides, it was less costly and less trouble for the government to do so, as, for example in the matter of denied health clinics when the government expressed relief that Father Mackey decided to use his own resources to fund them.<sup>27</sup>

The question arises as to whether the "agents" in the school, the teachers and principal, saw their "agency" as primarily one of the government or of the church. Because it was both, and because the

religious school staff answered to both, they had a duality of purpose and of responsibility. It may be that, having dedicated their lives to God, the Sisters and Father were responsible first to the church and to the government second; in this light, curiosity as to their management of this split in accountability is increased. In running the residential school, the church was able to address many governmental concerns, including the suppression of vice, the inculcation of such values as industry, thrift, and time management, and certainly the matter of school truancy. But these could equally be seen as religious or moral goals, and the government, of course, hired the church for this very reason. The role of the teachers and principal, then, was not unlike that of those Catholic priests who found themselves Indian agents on the reserves: already having undertaken Indian work as a religious mission, they shared certain goals with the government which may have enhanced their value as agents. With this thought in mind, the question again is prompted: is it possible to serve two masters?

It has been said that the government "culturally neutered"<sup>28</sup> the Indian, and there was at least an attempt to redefine Indian culture so that it became both "civilized" and Canadianized. As already discussed, this was done through a stress on the acquisition of agriculture, the pursuit of education, and conversion to Christianity. It has also been seen that cultural integration was to be one-way, if only because the government patron saw nothing of value in the existing Indian culture, either worth adopting himself or allowing his client to retain. The word "patron" (from *pater*, father) suggests also the idea of protecting a client, and a similar derivative, paternalism, presumes administration in the fashion of a father to a child.

Since in a historic sense, a patron was also the former master of a freed slave who still retained some legal rights over him, this title for the government in its relationship to the Indians has not been inappropriate.

It is this very idea of paternalism, however, that has become deplorable to Canada's aboriginal people, who have long enough been "children."<sup>29</sup> They were designated so by the earliest missionaries who said they needed "Christianitie for their soules" before they could be "men."<sup>30</sup> In James Axtell's view, this designation of Indians as not quite men could be construed to mean either that they were considered still children of the human race, something less than the human race, or simply people who had not mastered those "Arts of civil Life & Humanity" by which civilization might be judged.<sup>31</sup>

Despite paternalism and patronage, the government's aims of citizenship and civilization for the Indian were not easily to be achieved. In John Webster Grant's history of Indian missions in Canada, he has distinguished between the two goals. Civilization he called a "gift," necessary to Indian survival, but also a universal concept that theoretically allows distinctions between people; citizenship implies both rights and duties, and the latter included conformity and enfranchisement.<sup>32</sup> A law to encourage the gradual civilization of the Indian was passed in the Canadas before Confederation, providing a paradox that John Tobias says was to become and remain characteristic of Canada's Indian policy: while its stated goal was to promote civilization and integration, and to remove all legal distinctions between Indians and other Canadians, the law actually established such distinctions. Indians could be accorded the rights and privileges of civilization--ultimately, that is, enfranchisement--if they



demonstrated the ability to read and write in French or English, enjoyed a freedom from debt, and somewhat subjectively, were of a "good moral character," all of which, as Tobias indicated, required a higher standard than many white colonials could meet.<sup>33</sup>

After Confederation, the goals of citizenship and civilization continued to be emphasized; Indianness was to be eradicated and replaced with Anglo-Canadian values and habits that were to be inculcated through education and religion. Fortunately, these means could easily go hand-in-hand in clergy-run schools, effecting not only a convenience, but an economy as well, as the churches would share in the costs. Conversion to Christianity was a goal the church held in common with the government, and what was required in return for the light of religion was the fulfillment of certain moral obligations. It was a sufficient exchange from the point of view of the church--a simple exchange of rights for duties--similar to the government's hopes in its goal of Indian citizenship. In the case of religious expectations, Paine says, where God is concerned love is the value disseminated, and also that returned.<sup>34</sup>

The government did not offer love but it offered literacy, not a small "gift." It required the churches to include vocational and industrial training in their educational curricula; that both had potential use to society and to the individual was indisputable at a time when the same skills training was advocated for white school children. Whether Christianity offered similar advantages might be argued; but even now, as already mentioned, while some aboriginals are returning to native spirituality others wish to retain their Christianity, sometimes combining it with their traditional beliefs, and sympathetic clergy are incorporating both in their church services. The

question is, then, whether what was given by the Indians for these educational, vocational, and religious offerings created a situation of "fair" exchange, taking into consideration that fairness is difficult to assess and define; a deal that on the surface seems equitable and just can underneath be fraudulent, biased, and even exploitative; what appears fair to one can be seen as unfavourable to another.

It is apparent that those in Indian Affairs at the time knew what was being exacted from the Indians--even though, as has already been noted, it was thought they had little to forfeit and that the changes being offered were obviously only for the better. What those in the Department may not have known was the value of the commitment asked. Government gifts appeared different through Indian eyes; for example, school may have been seen as an opportunity, not an obligation, to families who continued to take their children away on traditional food-gathering trips. Only when these absences were used as reason to remove the children to residential schools was the price of education clear, and it may not have been understood then. But the personnel at Indian Affairs understood that the future lay with the children and that it did not really matter if the older generation was left to wander. It also understood that the parents were suspicious of its intentions and fully aware that if their children were educated in religious creeds that opposed and even denied their own beliefs, there would be a great wall erected between them. And not only was this grave separation to last in this life, but it meant they would not even be together in "the great hereafter."<sup>35</sup> It was not a small price to ask of children that they leave the security of their families to be raised in an entirely alien environment and fashion. However,

it was an incalculable price to demand of their parents, even if those who exacted it did so in the spirit of salvation.

If this suggests the exchange was uneven, it was an exchange nonetheless. As Barth defined it, the notion of reciprocity does not necessarily imply mutual satisfaction or fairness. In fact he refers to prestations of submission:<sup>36</sup> the government gives education and the Indian gives obeisance. Lest this seem shameful and sad, Paine's observation should be recalled that clients sometimes merely pretend to support a patron's institutions and morals, and there is some redemption in the thought that white values were not all internalized and some native values were retained or rediscovered. In the end what the Indians returned for their education should be of some gratification to both sides of the exchange: a new generation of wise and outspoken leaders, the useful members of their communities which Indian education aimed to produce. As Jeanne Guillemin phrased it in 1975:

Indians have become their own religious leaders, their own social reformers, and if not their own anthropologists, at least conscious of having had enough of academic scrutiny. There is hardly an Indian community still existing which welcomes the kind of friendship from whites which is based on the assumption that native Americans need civilizing.<sup>37</sup>

In his essay on the patron-broker-client relationship, Paine struggled with the question of who could be given the title of patron.<sup>38</sup> Having already defined the government as patron in regard to its relationship with the Canadian Indians, there remains the question of defining the role of the church, whose historic aim of Christianizing was utilized by the government to augment its own goals. Within this situation, in which the church assisted Indian Affairs in the matter of civilizing Indians

through the acquisition of Christian beliefs and morals, there is a role complication worth exploration. The church could be considered as a go-between, or broker, in much the way the Indian agent was used by the government to take its goals directly to the people--in this case to instill the required moral attributes of civilization and to teach the skills of literacy and the value of industry. To some extent, the church also can be seen as a client of the government, for example, in the case of the principals of residential schools for whom many dealings with Indian affairs were made through the mediation of the Indian agent, in the same way as it was with the other clients, the Indians.

As for the church as patron, it could be said to give its own obvious justification if only because its clergy are referred to as "fathers" and in this role they dispense paternalism to their clients. And beyond this, there is an argument for the designation of the church as patron simply because it filled this position long before its affiliation with the government in the matter of Canadian Indians, and it was, in fact, their first patron. The church had offered--or imposed--education as soon after contact as practical, even something akin to residential schooling, for one religious order opened an industrial school for Indians in the 1600s, while other missionaries removed some children to boarding schools in France.<sup>39</sup>

Most certainly the church used Christian training in an attempt to raise the Indian to a moral and civilized life centuries before the government assumed that responsibility. The church and government, then, could be seen, not as sharing the position of patron, but as separately filling similar roles. In the case of the church as patron, however, it is only the church organization itself which can be given this designation. Since its ultimate

aim was its own expansion, it held self-interested goals, as did the government, although it could be said that both believed they served a useful purpose for their clients. The church, however, has a public and altruistic face as well, represented by those who have dedicated their lives to its service, such as priests, missionaries, and Sisters, whose role is to intervene in a selfless way between the people and God. Unlike the church as an institution, they are not patrons, but mediators, or brokers of salvation. Christianity was promoted from their personal conviction that it was indispensable for all people in all places whether they realized it or not; this is perfectly, pictorially depicted in John Grant's study of early missionaries to the Canadian Indians in which he shows a minister conducting an outdoor religious service to a group of apparently oblivious Ojibwa people going about their business.<sup>40</sup>

Cornelius Jaenen argued in his look at seventeenth century "Amerindian" views<sup>41</sup> that the Indians resisted French culture and most rejected conversion.<sup>42</sup> He quotes the missionary Maillard (who arrived in Cape Breton in 1735) as saying that "if something appears strange to us in [the Micmac's] way of thinking it is because we have not been educated like them."<sup>43</sup> This is notable first because Maillard apparently recognized something in native culture that he could define as education, and secondly because he appears to have displayed an unusual understanding of conflicting values: a less sympathetic observer may have said instead, "they have not been educated as we have."

Jaenen mentioned too the matter of trade, suggesting that for the aboriginal trader, exchange was viewed non-economically; in fact, that at least into the seventeenth century, pelts may have been given to visiting

fishermen with no expectation of return. The exchange of "gifts" was meant instead to establish rank and prestige, having a symbolic or diplomatic relevance. Jaenen also suggests that the communal Amerindians, not understanding personal property, were "surprisingly honest compared to Frenchmen," but that in coming to recognize the competition between the trading merchants eventually learned to exact high value for their furs.<sup>44</sup> Contact with Europeans, he said, eroded native hospitality. <sup>45</sup>

The Indians were moved by French ceremony and ritual, Jaenen states, and those who visited France were accorded cannonfire welcomes and shown esteem and honour. Gifts of military wear and medals were especially appreciated, the Indians considering them signs of ennoblement, and Jaenen notes this showed a "fortunate cultural convergence," for the French too valued rank and splendour.<sup>46</sup>

As for Amerindian views of Catholic missions, a report of 1639 describes the Indians' astonishment that a group of nursing nuns would take close care of those stricken with smallpox, succouring those the Indians would have abandoned or killed: the savages, the report said, were themselves "quite without the emotion of pity." Jaenen denies this interpretation or value judgement, saying without qualification or example that while sick and old Indians expected to be deserted "there was no lack of pity attached to such action."<sup>47</sup> Jaenen is also curious on the matter of "racism." He states that French feelings of superiority were obvious in views we would today call racist, but he gives no epithet to the corresponding Amerincian view of the French as less intelligent, morally and physically inferior, ugly, and soft or effeminate.<sup>48</sup>

On one hand, Jaenen states there was much about Catholicism that was seen as dangerous to the Indian, citing the interpretation of the baptism of dying infants as hastening or even causing the death, and the prayers as superstitions which could be used for good or evil,<sup>49</sup> while on the other he says the Indians were impressed with "the ceremonial of the Catholic religion" and even found Huguenot worship "very attractive."<sup>50</sup> He states that "religious symbols were greatly distrusted,"<sup>51</sup> while also mentioning the Indians' strong interest in the church and its holy artifacts, to the extent that rosaries became their "most precious jewels."<sup>52</sup>

Although these discrepancies do not enlighten the issue, they do depict well a time of confusing cultural contact; if the Amerindians initially scrutinized the Catholic clergy critically, they did also over the centuries accept Christianity. It is important to consider too, as Judith Fingard, writing about the early nineteenth century noted, there is little evidence of any common concern for native people other than that displayed by dedicated priests and missionaries.<sup>53</sup> Maillard apparently had such influence with them that the government of France solicited his help in the war against the English for control of Acadia; after accepting defeat, he was instrumental in establishing peace between the Indians and the British authorities in Halifax who officially appointed him missionary to the Micmac and Acadians.<sup>54</sup> According to Helen Ralston, Maillard served until his death as "mediator and interpreter between the English conquerors and the Catholic French and Micmac population."<sup>55</sup>

Axtell describes the missionaries less sympathetically, noting they came to America almost heaven-sent--as if the answer to the settlers' prayers--to bring order to the natives' frighteningly fragmented lives.<sup>56</sup>

Indians were less threatening in European-style clothes and housing; feathers and furs, settlements that disappeared who-knew-where overnight were at best disconcerting.<sup>57</sup> If missionaries could control the Indians' whereabouts, and even better, their thoughts, converting them not just to Christianity but to predictable European ways of thinking, the new world would be safe for the old world settlers.<sup>58</sup> As Axtell phrased it,

...unwittingly or not, [the missionaries] lent powerful support to the European assault upon America by launching their own subversive invasion within.<sup>59</sup>

The outward invasion, he says, was "launched on waves of pious intent."<sup>60</sup>

In order to convert the natives, missionaries had to believe them educable, so that from the earliest contact Indians were pronounced not just ready but eager to learn European ways.<sup>60</sup> Even into the twentieth century religious teachers and Indian agents continued to find it necessary to pronounce native children quite as clever as white children, as for example, the Nova Scotian agent from Annapolis (cited in Chapter two) who was disappointed in the accomplishments of his bright wards in the Shubenacadie school.

Axtell, in discussing the schools for "book learning" established by even the earliest missionaries, notes that initially it was boys who were considered the best candidates for education because of the expectation that when they returned home they would become leaders, presumably leading their tribes to civility. They were educated away from girls in what Axtell says is reminiscent of a special, long-term puberty rite; when girls were educated at all it was not in book learning, but in religion and housekeeping.<sup>62</sup> Of course, even this century in Indian residential schools



boys and girls were separated, if not in different buildings, then in different wings, not even coming together for meals or recreation.

The early missionary school master, Axtell notes, was necessarily "patriarchal...serious, pedantic, and strict," instituting in the schools what he calls a "birchen government."<sup>63</sup> He suggests that Indian parents were too fond of their children to chastise them at home, but that missionaries at school administered harsh punishments freely and without compunction. The matter of physical discipline in the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School has been mentioned here previously, and reference given to the numerous published accounts of cruelty emanating from the hands of the principal and teachers. These news stories were said to have had repercussions within the community of Sisters who felt them unfounded or exaggerated, particularly considering that religious life used to be a lot more rigid, and that harsher punishments were then more acceptable socially and common in all types of schools.<sup>64</sup>

During Knockwood's research for her oral history on the school she was able to contact one of the former teachers. Sister Margaret Ellsworth recalled that while discipline everywhere was more rigid in the past, she was sympathetic to the particular sadness of very young children away from home and the tendency they would certainly have to magnify in their memories every negative aspect of the school.<sup>65</sup> As Axtell noted too, in most schools the "medium of instruction and discipline was probably louder and clearer than the message of the curriculum."<sup>66</sup>

The matter of harsh treatment in church-run residential schools is so prevalent that it is almost taken as a given, but seldom is it compared with punishments Indian children received at home. Axtell's comment that Indian

parents were too fond to punish their children has already been noted, and in an early chapter an official of Indian Affairs was cited as saying that Indian parents disliked disciplining their children, regarding personal chastisement as a great indignity. However, the "birchen government" of the schools was not new to all Indian children. Knockwood cited a story of a boy whose mother followed him three miles after he ran away from home, and repeatedly lashed his ankles with a birch switch. She, too, recalled as a child at home being "switched" as punishment, because bushes, believed to have a spirit, were considered good medicine. "Now you're going to get your 'medicine'," she was told, and remembered the sting a long time.<sup>67</sup> According to Michael Coleman in his study of Indian boarding schools in the United States, the severe discipline in these schools, so often cited to damn them, was not as rigid as that sometimes received by the children in their own homes. One boy recalled having his head repeatedly plunged into a pail of water, though he ran screaming and thought he would die; another mentioned initiation rites involving severe whipping. Geronimo, he said, trained boys by making them jump into an ice-covered stream, an order they obeyed because of the switch he held. As in the schools, negative incentives at home included humiliation, open mocking, and ostracism. Even those who Coleman says idealized their traditional upbringings also recognized it was "serious business."<sup>68</sup> Some children found their first peace at boarding school: as one said, "I was ten years old. I didn't know that people died except by violence."<sup>69</sup>

In a 1991 newspaper dialogue, two former residential school pupils with very different experiences offered their perspectives of the past.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, it is not two native voices speaking opposite words, for while

the negative viewpoint is argued by an aboriginal woman, the positive side is presented by the white son of an Anglican priest-principal. How can he counter the anger implied in her statement, "My family had been imprisoned in the Indian residential school system since its inception in the late 1800s"? How can he answer the accusation of "four generations of physical, psychological, sexual and spiritual abuse"? The negative side, presented by Janice Acoose, is emotionally affecting, powerfully moving, and impossible to ignore. Once admonished to sleep facing right, with her hands folded in prayer-position beneath her head, Acoose still fears the white God of the black robes and remembers the daily religious schedule as a nightmare. She writes,

I recognize that such comments as, "surely the residential schools accomplished some good, didn't you learn to read and write?" mask ignorance and complacency. I find myself most perplexed, however, by statements like, "we have to understand that times were different then."<sup>71</sup>

Mark DeWolf, the priest's son, feels that what he calls the "whole truth" must include the protection the residential schools offered from "the evils of the white man's world." This is an echo of James Pedley's words in 1904 as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, when he expected the Indians to become more appreciative of the value of education once they understood the necessity "for *protection* in dealing with the superior race."<sup>72</sup> DeWolf also defends the residential schools in his assessment of the native situation:

The broken treaties, the monthly payments that kept the natives dependent on the government, the shacks in which many of my classmates lived, the heavy drinking and the domestic violence that seem only to increase on Canadian reserves were not brought about by residential schools but by the forces that made the schools necessary.<sup>73</sup>

While he recognizes that the early missionaries separated Indian children from their families and culture, he feels that the more recent religious, like his father, concentrated instead on

...preserving the faith of the well-established Anglican community on the reserve, and helping young natives prepare for a world where the white man's education and skills would be more useful than those of tribal tradition.<sup>74</sup>

In the Shubenacadie school context, it should be remembered that all of the children who attended this Catholic-run school were themselves Catholic, and did not suffer enforced conversion. At the first Micmac History Month observance in October 1994, part of the Treaty Day celebration was the recognition that the Micmac became Catholic in 1610, and as Murdena Marshall of the Eskasoni reserve in Nova Scotia remarked at the celebratory mass, "I have too much respect for our ancestors to believe it [Christianity] was shoved down our throats."<sup>75</sup>

Perhaps speaking as well for other religious agents, DeWolf argues on behalf of his father who believed he was doing the best that could be done and never doubted the value of his accomplishments. But he recognizes that his father was young, had been trained as a parish priest, and probably made mistakes.

What disturbs me is that in our desire to heal native wounds we place all the blame on the very people who, when other Canadians were not interested, tried to help. Where are the kind thoughts and respect for the men and women who did so much good for a population that the rest of Canada (at best) ignored or (at worst) despised?<sup>76</sup>

Unfortunately, he notes, "every attempt to do good runs the risk of unwittingly doing harm."

In a history written by Sister Maura in 1956, the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School is accorded only a page and a half. Most of this space is given to the relation of one story, that of an apparent miraculous answer to prayer. In 1939 Sister Mary Charles, the Sister Superior, was concerned about a virulent streptococcus infection sweeping the school and continuing from one winter into the following fall . As it failed to respond to medical treatment, one evening the Sister was inspired to have the whole school begin a novena to Kateri Tekakwitha, "the Mohawk sachem's daughter," begging her intercession. The next morning, all ten children who had been ill the night before were recovered and able to attend class. "From that twenty-fifth of October as long as Sister Mary Charles was Superior," Sister Maura wrote, "no other case of streptococcus throat developed at the Indian Residential School." The story was corroborated by the school physician, Dr. D.F. MacInnis, some two years later, in a statement issued through the NCWC News Service. In it he repeated the story, adding that the recommended drugs had been administered with no effect. He wrote:

I have been medical attendant at the school since it was opened, and I have been in practice twenty-three years. I am a Scottish Presbyterian. I am not offering any explanation of the cessation of the epidemic, I am simply stating the facts.<sup>77</sup>

It might be added that the doctor was an agent of the government also, having received the appointment apparently as a political favour, though he was frequently in conflict with both the school principal (representing his clients) and the government (his patron). When he was first appointed school doctor, he was expected to physically examine each child in the school twice a year and to perform minor operations. The rates offered, however, were well beneath his expectations:

Your prices offered are contemptible. You must be taking me for a boob. Any medical man who has a good general practice will certainly lose (sic) all interest in Government and Indian work when he is paid such prices. Those are the prices paid any ordinary labourer.<sup>78</sup>

As will be seen in the following chapter, Dr. MacInnis was to have several disagreements with the government over his "Indian work."

His was a patronage appointment, and it might be useful here to mention that in the United States also, faithful party service was the original prerequisite to an appointment to Indian work. During the late 1800s agents there were characterized by their lack of qualification and an often deliberate attempt toward personal profit, prompting the government to appoint the churches to nominate agency personnel.<sup>79</sup> As Robert Utely noted, however, this did not purify the Indian service. "In surprising numbers," he wrote, "the incompetent and even the corrupt slipped through the screen of the missionary associations."<sup>80</sup> In fact, in the 1870s, there was much un-Christian competitive quarrelling over church control of agencies, the Protestants dominating and the Roman Catholics fighting for their share. In a statement replete with retrospective and unconscious humour, the Catholics asserted that Indians had a right to decide for themselves what form of Christianity they favoured.<sup>81</sup>

The Catholic/Protestant competition featured in Canada's history of native education too. Grant felt that early Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries in Canada differed in their concepts of Christian citizenship, the Catholics being sympathetic to the point of believing the Indian could become "a fervent and happy Christian without ceasing to be a savage."<sup>82</sup> This is in stark contradiction to the government's assimilationist goal that would have had the Indian *not* remain Indian. Grant contends that because

early Catholic missionaries were French and in the minority themselves they understood the Indian desire to retain any cultural distinctions, but also suggests that part of the rejection of assimilation was to prevent the exposure of the Indian to the Protestant majority. They regarded the government as a Protestant institution imparting a "Protestant bias to departmental regulations,"<sup>83</sup> and criticized bureaucrats as being "more familiar with facts and figures than with Indians."<sup>84</sup> They had little rapport, then, with the government, and complained of the poor quality of the Indian agents. Bishop John Hines of Saskatchewan is cited as denouncing the agents as "political appointees who neither care for the advancement of the Indians or understand what is for their good," but the government remained unimpressed by any criticism which came from people whose work it was supporting.<sup>85</sup>

Dyck suggested that individual agents "served as instruments of an authoritarian system of Indian administration," and that their individual qualities and inclinations cannot account for the "compulsiveness" that characterized coercive tutelage as presented to the native population by the Canadian government.<sup>86</sup> While recognizing there were both dishonorable and kindly-intentioned agents, Dyck deplored the idea that the "government tutelage apparatus" meant association with religious organizations that were subsidized with public funds.<sup>87</sup> Here he overlooked the cost Indian education might have incurred had the schools not been run by the religious, who were content to work for the love of "God's beloved poor." If the tenet of the Sisters of Charity was stated as humility, simplicity, and charity, it included poverty as well for they were ill-paid in monetary terms (see Chapter 6). And, as already noted, sometimes health care in the

Shubenacadie Indian residential school had to be funded from the pocket of the priest-principal. Public funds may have supported residential schools, but they were trickled rather than poured into this particular piece of tutelage apparatus; According to E.L. Homewood, the churches not only paid the teachers but often supplied the school buildings as well, and in the case of residential schools, the churches also fed and clothed the children.<sup>88</sup>

Speaking against the missionaries, Dyck claimed they supported assimilation and were responsible for urging the government to the policy of enforced school attendance.<sup>89</sup> But were this an insidious idea, why now do we take compulsory and free education as our right? Generally, he said, it was missionaries who worked to destroy the aboriginal institutions of the Potlatch and the Sun Dance.<sup>90</sup> But D.C. Scott is also allotted this particular blame, and in his own defence he claimed that there was the law, and that the Potlatch had deteriorated into an opportunity for debauchery by white men.<sup>91</sup> Dyck stated that missionaries fostered divisions on the reserves between traditional and Christian residents and between children and their parents, and "inflamed cleavages within Indian communities" through the curriculum enforced in residential schools.<sup>92</sup> Yet if the school curriculum was in the hands of the school teachers it was explicitly placed there by the government. To blame the tutelage agents for what they were told to teach is to miss the mark. The programme of studies, as outlined by the federal government for all Indian schools, was to follow the curriculum prescribed by the provincial departments of education, but beyond that, set "suggestions" were outlined for the teacher inside each school register. Besides suggesting religious instruction (Scriptural reading, the Ten



Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Life of Christ, etc.), the following ideas were offered regarding the teaching of ethics:

In the primary grades, instil the qualities of obedience, respect, order, neatness and cleanliness. Differentiate between right and wrong, cultivate truthful habits and a spirit of fair play. As the pupils become more advanced, inculcate, as near as possible in the order mentioned, independence, self-respect, industry, honesty, thrift, self-maintenance, citizenship and patriotism. Discuss charity, pauperism, Indian and white life, the evils of Indian isolation, enfranchisement. Explain the relationship of the sexes as to labour, home and public duties, and labour as the law of existence.<sup>93</sup>

Today we might question this hidden curriculum, but there will always be educational goals that transcend the academic even though they may be more open now. Classroom discussions might centre on self-esteem instead of self-respect, on racial sensitivity instead of Indian and white life, and on the equality of values rather than the installation of specific qualities. But in both cases the idea is one of education for the "whole child," only the definition of whole, and perhaps the definition of ethics, having changed.

If it is to be argued, then, that the church took a family, parental or paternal role in its mission schools and is thus to be designated for this study as a "patron," it is also to be said that those who ran the schools for the government as administrators and teachers were the middlemen between the church and the people, the church and the state. While Paine's view must be considered that market-model brokers are necessarily self-interested,<sup>94</sup> this may not be so in describing those mediators involved in a social or religious situation who, by definition, are probably not self-serving. Such a broker should have at once the interests of both his patron and his client in view, allowing, for instance, an Indian agent to fulfill his dual function, passing orders to the reserve and relaying concerns to the

government without serving any self interests except perhaps his need for work or his need to help. An altruistic, religious mediator who inserts himself between God (the church) and his clients serves God, wants his clients to serve God, and finds his own reward in his dreams of heaven. To this extent, then, although the church serves as patron, the church's representatives serve as brokers, and these include those clergy who are Indian agents on reserves, as well as those in administrative and teaching positions in the residential schools. They mediate between their clients and God, but they answer also to the government.

There remains a question as to the dual duties of the teaching Sisters and the principal in the specific school under scrutiny, and whether the possibility of a "brokerage" role is evident. Although it could be argued that any teacher is in some respects a broker, the Sisters may have seen themselves as answerable only to their religious order. It is clear, however, that the principal recognized his dual accountability because of his frequent and unavoidable transactions with the government. Perhaps he was less a broker than was the Indian agent on the reserve, for the bargaining he pursued with the government on behalf of the children was not at their behest, even if it was to suit purposes the principal felt were in their best interests. On the other hand, he may have had some of the broker's crucial self-interest, inasmuch as the religious goals he pursued were also his own goals, and he may have interpreted any government directives in that light and to his own ends. Also, like the reserve agent, he did stand between the government and the people, and dispense funds to a clientele which may have appeared to give nothing in return but submission and the acquisition

of requisite characteristics. The principal's "brokerage" duties will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The issues broached here are not clear-cut, and they prompt questions. Who is patron, government or God? Who are the clients, the parents, the children, or both? Where is there a two-way exchange? Is mediation brokerage, and is religious brokerage coercive tutelage? These questions are considered throughout the thesis as answers are sought. This chapter suggests that the use of the patron-broker-client model, by its very controversial nature, is a challenging concept to apply to the question of the agents' relationship with both the government and the Micmac people. Where the agents are the religious with a calling to help, the act of brokerage has a clear connotation of spirituality which enhances its image of mediation.

## CHAPTER FOUR - NOTES AND REFERENCES

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**CHAPTER FIVE:**  
**THE PRINCIPALS: ADMINISTRATIVE MEDIATORS**

As I stated last week we have not sufficient money to pay for the work on the barn...so I again paid the men from my personal account. So please let us have more money, otherwise it is the poorhouse or jail for--Yours truly, Rev. J.P. Mackey<sup>1</sup>

The Shubenacadie Indian Residential School was situated on a 130-acre farm which was run by the staff and older male students. Proceeds from the farm were expected to supplement the quarterly per-capita grant, which the principal used to pay salaries and all current expenses, including minor repairs to the school, cost of food, clothing for the pupils, fuel, and small incidental expenses. The federal government was supposed to be responsible for all major repairs, classroom equipment, and medical services and drugs.<sup>2</sup> However, it was never an easy matter for the principal to obtain these funds, and even when limited money was allowed, he had to define priorities. This chapter will give some detail of the principal's extended responsibilities in order to indicate that much of his time was spent solving problems unique to residential schools, addressing the physical rather than the academic or spiritual side of the school. Also it will illustrate how much of his administration required mediation between the school and the government, and will add to a picture of the school's daily routine in a manner not previously considered .

Even before the opening of the Shubenacadie school, Father Jeremiah Mackey,<sup>3</sup> living on site to oversee construction, was writing to Indian Affairs on the matter of insufficient funding. He was to continue to

plead for financial assistance throughout his years in the school, for repairs to the poorly-constructed school, for outbuildings, for farm and kitchen equipment, as well, of course, as for medical care for the pupils. Seldom did his requests receive prompt, affirmative action, even when quick responses were necessary for the children's health.

The government accepted the lowest tender for the school, \$153,000, from Rhodes Curry Ltd. of Amherst, and approved as well the construction of a barn. The school was completed the following June and one thousand dollars was withheld from the contractor in case of dissatisfaction;<sup>4</sup> however, the difficulty in gaining initial satisfaction from the contractor was to set the tone for years of complaint and displeasure with the building. Despite Father Mackey's requests to have the basement floor properly finished before the contractor was paid, it was never completed as a suitable surface for the girls' play room and dining room: it was neither laid according to the specifications, nor considered satisfactory by either the inspector or the architect.<sup>5</sup> The contractors were reluctant to complete or correct the work, the company's president declaring he had "not seen a better concrete floor than what we have put in that building,"<sup>6</sup> and eventually they obtained full payment from the government.<sup>7</sup> Other problems were not so immediately evident, but careless construction overall was over the years to cause the government repeated expense, and the principal continued consternation.

When in early February, 1930, the first children arrived, it quickly became evident that it would be difficult to feed them: the new kitchen stove would not work properly because the chimney had not been built high enough. "It is not safe for me to go to the kitchen today. A mad cook is not a

pleasant animal," wrote Father Mackey to Indian Affairs.<sup>8</sup> It was soon discovered, too, that the school had been supplied with a faulty water pump; the smaller of two pumps, intended for emergency use only, was doing the heavy work expected of the larger one, and although Father Mackey took the matter repeatedly to the pump manufacturer, its Halifax office "washed their hands of the whole affair."<sup>9</sup> A dispute continued for almost two years as to the exact cause of the problem and where to lay blame for the defect, before it was discovered that two missing nuts were causing the failure.<sup>10</sup> Although finally satisfied, Father Mackey had spent much time in correspondence, energy in carrying water for several months during one winter, and worry in knowing the school was without adequate fire protection for a year and a half.<sup>11</sup>

As operating funds for the school were to come in part from the proceeds of the school farm, Father Mackey required more outbuildings and stock than the one barn and herd of cows which were initially provided, and within two months of the school's opening, he requested permission and funds to build further outbuildings.<sup>12</sup> Response to his request for a hen house, implement shed, root cellar, store house, and pig house for twenty-five hogs was delayed,<sup>13</sup> and he was subsequently to report that the lack of proper storage had caused a considerable loss in the school's store of root vegetables.<sup>14</sup>

The following spring, 1931, on learning that the school's carpenter-engineer, Edward McLeod, was to be married in the fall, Father Mackey asked the Department if a cottage could be built for him on school premises.<sup>15</sup> A.F. MacKenzie, Secretary of Indian Affairs, admitted that on occasion "when a valued male employee...wished to marry, the Department

has provided a separate cottage for him," but in this case, it was suggested instead that accommodation be found for the couple within the school building, and that the wife should be given sufficient duties to pay for her room and board.<sup>16</sup>

That summer, Father Mackey repeated his request for a pig house and hen house, as well as a dairy, ice house, and manure shed, but the request was disallowed because of a lack of funds.<sup>17</sup> His next request, in December, 1931, was again for a house for the carpenter-engineer and his wife. It had proven impracticable, he explained, to accommodate them in the school and to provide work for the wife; in fact, the situation had become "very trying."<sup>18</sup> Shortly afterward, the government offered Father Mackey \$3500, but suggested he consider allocating it to the necessary outbuildings unless the staff house were deemed more important.<sup>19</sup>

Given the necessity to make a success of the farming operations, Father Mackey chose to put the funds toward the outbuildings. Since he knew the allotted funds would be insufficient should outside help be acquired, he offered to hire a foreman only and to use the school's bigger boys, who would profit from the experience, for the labour.<sup>20</sup> But the offered funding did not arrive, and just one month later, Father Mackey was informed that only \$1000 would be available that year for school improvements along with the suggestion that it might go toward a previously-requested mangle for the laundry.<sup>21</sup> The principal countered with a request for at least \$1500, which he offered to supplement with school funds in order to build the increasingly-important staff house. In desperation, he said he would be willing, if necessary, to give half his own yearly salary to see the house built.

Were only \$1000 to be available, he preferred to put it to outbuildings than a mangle.<sup>22</sup>

However, in the meantime, repair of leaky windows and doors was becoming an urgent priority. The contractor had promised to remedy the continuing problem, but had not done so. The children and Sisters were using basins and towels to catch water from the windows, and the interior plaster walls were ruined, unable to be repaired with paint. Father Mackey passed on to the Department a quote he had received for exterior caulking of the windows, and asked permission to have the work done, a request which he had to repeat a month later.<sup>23</sup> Eventually, the allotted \$1000 was used in part to repair the leaky windows, with the balance providing a stocked hog house and a dairy-ice house.<sup>24</sup>

In January 1933, for the third time, Father Mackey requested a house for his carpenter-engineer,<sup>25</sup> and that summer an Indian Affairs official visited the school and conceded the need for the cottage. In his report he stated that the carpenter-engineer was indeed a valuable employee, who not only assisted on the farm but did all minor repairs in connection with the school heating and plumbing, and in fact, saved the school a considerable expenditure each year. He also noted much water leaking through the bricks of the school walls, corrosion in the water pipes, and the necessity for both a manure shed and a hen house.<sup>26</sup> As a result, that same month Father Mackey learned that the government was now favourable to the building of the house, and that a limited amount of funds would be made available. Since the thousand dollars allowed would cover only the cost of materials, it was decided that the school staff (which typically included the bigger boys) should again do all the labour.<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately, following the construction of the cottage, Father Mackey's trying situation with the carpenter-engineer was alleviated for only a few months. In February, 1934, it threatened repetition as now the assistant farmer was to be evicted from his home because his landlord wanted the house for himself, and there was no available house for him within a reasonable distance from the school. The government did not take kindly to Father Mackey's suggestion that another staff house be built, and asked that the request be postponed until the summer when funds might be available.<sup>28</sup> At that time, Father Mackey explained that the assistant farmer was now living so far from the school that he could no longer be there, as required, at 5:15 each morning, meaning that whenever the farmer was also unable to be at the school early, the barn chores and milking were left entirely to the boys. "Needless to say," Father Mackey wrote, "that things do not go well."<sup>29</sup> Still, it was regretted by the government that the funds were unavailable. The following April, 1935, \$1000 was finally allocated toward the house, again with the proviso that school staff be used for all labour and hauling of supplies, even though Father Mackey had already indicated that there were no boys in the school that year who were large enough to help. A further three hundred dollar allotment was offered, to be used for necessary repairs to the main building because of the leaky walls and roof.<sup>30</sup>

Father Mackey made the mistake of not immediately using the proffered \$300 for the repairs, waiting to request it until the following January when he discovered that water damage through the bricks had again destroyed the plaster walls and their cork backing in the boys' playroom, washrooms, and bathrooms.<sup>31</sup> He was told, however, that the funds would

no longer be made available because he had exceeded the amount allowed for the staff house.<sup>32</sup>

In 1936, the school did receive an allowance for outside paint, provided again that the labour would be "performed by the school staff, without cost to the Department," and also funds were allotted to repair the root cellar and the rotted barn floor.<sup>33</sup> Because of a wet summer the farm lost its entire field of oats to rain damage,<sup>34</sup> and as well considerable harm was done to the school. The government permitted extensive and expensive waterproofing to be done to the building that autumn,<sup>35</sup> but by the following spring it was obvious that the work had been ineffectual.<sup>36</sup> In fact, despite repeated repairs and 'guaranteed' waterproofings, Father Mackey was still complaining six years later that every window on the front of the school was soaking up rain leaks in pots, pans, and sheets.<sup>37</sup>

One of the school's disciplinary problems was that of boys hiding in the boiler room to smoke, a habit which had predictable consequences in the fall of 1936 when a fire resulted from a carelessly-tossed cigarette butt.<sup>38</sup> Not only was it necessary to cut through the chapel floor to gain access to the fire, but the hose failed to work. The fire had to be fought with buckets of water, but there was little water pressure to fill them.<sup>39</sup> It was not the first time water had been a problem, as for at least two years it had been difficult to get hot water. "Hot water in the taps is quite rare for the summer months," the Sister Superior wrote to the Department, "and care of the sick means travelling over two flights of stairs for even a cup of hot water."<sup>40</sup> Also, bathing was made difficult:

For the past two years...[for] both the girls' and boys' baths we had to carry hot water from the laundry. While this is an improvement over what the Indian had in his own home, nevertheless with the crowd we have it makes a messy job and



takes about every day of the week to see that every child has a bath once a week.<sup>41</sup>

In 1938, Father Mackey asked for an addition to the feed room and hog house, rat-proofing, and butchering space. At the time they were taking their cows two miles to a slaughter house, losing both time and valuable hog feed. "This work we would do without any outside help thereby giving the older boys a good opportunity to learn carpenter work," Mackey wrote, but again there were no available funds.<sup>42</sup> The next year he asked for more barn space, the cow barn having eleven more cows than space allowed, and the horse barn being unable to accommodate two new colts.<sup>43</sup> Obviously, upkeep for the farm was constant, and without a flow of funds, it could neither provide satisfactorily for the agricultural education of the boys nor produce enough food for self-sufficiency.

The first request for replacement of major appliances was made in October, 1940. Of seven original sewing machines, in constant use for eleven years, only four were considered reparable. In explaining the need for these machines, the principal said they were used not only for all the children's clothing but also for Red Cross work, including hospital bed gowns and pyjamas, as well as scarves and sweaters for servicemen.<sup>44</sup> The request was granted, but at the same time Mackey was denied a new fridge, the old one having been condemned by a reliable repairman, or a replacement for the old wooden washing machine. And although the principal reminded Indian Affairs that the school windows and walls were still leaking despite many attempts at repair, it seemed there was nothing that could be done.<sup>45</sup>

In 1943 Father Mackey left the school in the hands of Father J.W. Brown, and returned to parish work in Parrsboro.<sup>46</sup> Father Brown continued

where Father Mackey left, writing to Ottawa for funds. One of his first requests was for a new washing machine, Father Mackey's earlier request not having been heeded. When the government replied that funds were no longer available and that the need should have been mentioned sooner, Father Brown replied that the original request had been made by Father Mackey four years earlier. After Indian Affairs suggested that he merely replace the old wooden slats on the machine, Father Brown actually mailed to Ottawa the wood pulp that had once been the washing machine slats. Two months later the school finally had a new machine.<sup>47</sup>

In 1944, Father Brown requested a heavier tractor as a replacement for a team of horses who had "done their share of work and are now so far crippled as to be no longer serviceable," and a new roof for the school. Brown was told to proceed with roof repairs only, which were to be undertaken using school funds with no help from the Department. That same year he had to expose 125 feet of water pipe from the school extending into the lake to discover the cause of a lack of water, and found the pipes to be full of pea-sized holes, chemically corroded.<sup>48</sup> This was old news to Indian Affairs, for in a 1933 inspection report it had been noted that the hard water was causing the pipes to wear quickly; however, apparently nothing had been done. Now Father Brown wrote that the school would be in a desperate plight if the main line were eaten through before spring, and noted that the pump men and others had told him the only solution was a new pipe line from the lake to the school.<sup>49</sup>

May I respectfully request that this work of replacement may simply not be set aside, cared for in the Spring, or "The Department has not enough funds to care for such costs." We cannot live here without water; we just must have it, and the Department will, I hope, arrange for the work of replacement.<sup>50</sup>

The new pipeline from the school to the lake was not approved until two years later.

In 1945 Father Brown sent Indian Affairs a report on the physical condition of the Shubenacadie school. Roof repairs were underway at his own expense, but thousands of feet of piping throughout the school were in need of replacement. He had installed a new boiler to provide hot water and steam for the laundry, another for "house hot water," and also new shingles for the barn, also at the expense of the school, and indicated the necessity for major waterproofing of the school building to make possible "interior repairs to ceilings and walls brought on by years of delay in undertaking the present repairs."<sup>52</sup> There is no record of a response.

In the spring of 1946, Father Brown had the roof of the coal bin repaired, and sent the bill to Indian Affairs. When there was no response from the Department, the local Indian agent, H.C. Rice, wrote to explain that the work had been necessary and to recommend that Father Brown be reimbursed. The Department required further justification from the principal, who wrote that the roof had to be re-done as the old one was a fire hazard. Rice was sent a letter of chastisement:

It is simply impossible to control our appropriation if the Principals incur expenditures without first obtaining authorization from the Department. I think this account should be paid by the Principal's school funds.<sup>53</sup>

The next month Rice informed Indian Affairs that despite roof repairs, the building was still leaking badly through the windows and bricks, ruining the inside finish, and reiterated the need for replacement of the school's corroded interior water pipes.<sup>54</sup> Not until eight months later did the Department investigate the problem, by sending Col. Bernard Neary,

Superintendent of Welfare and Training, to the school to inspect interior rain damage. Only after Neary declared that almost the entire top floor required replastering<sup>55</sup> did Indian Affairs agree to have the building treated to prevent further water seepage; however Rice was warned to ensure that "Father Brown erects no more outbuildings and does not replace the school car."<sup>56</sup>

Because the matter of insufficient funds was again raised in Ottawa, the decision was made there that replacement of interior water pipes at the school was more important than waterproofing the building.<sup>57</sup> It is not clear whether the pipes were replaced, but permanent waterproofing of the entire building was scheduled for the spring of 1948.<sup>58</sup> In December the job was inspected and no further evidence of filtration of water through the walls was found, yet a letter to Ottawa from the Indian agent in January reported that after heavy rain and gale force winds the weatherproofing had definitely proven to be unsatisfactory, for there were numerous leaks.<sup>59</sup> That July Rice wrote again to inform the Department that during the winter numerous cracks had appeared in the side walls of the school and that under some windows and near the grade the waterproofing material had raised from the brick surface. When it rained and the winds were high, the leaks around the windows were almost as bad as they were before the work was done.<sup>60</sup>

Meanwhile, a new cooling unit was needed for the walk-in fridge, one of the resident employees' houses urgently needed repair, the root cellar required a new roof, the oft-soldered sinks were leaking and beyond repair, and the main sewage line pipe was obstructed with refuse backing into the school.<sup>61</sup> The school files on "building maintenance" end in 1950,

but it is to be assumed that similar requests continued to flow to Ottawa and that repeated refusals continued downstream.

According to Isabel Knockwood, the inferior quality of the building materials had doomed the building from the start.<sup>62</sup> It is appropriate here to question the government's false economy in accepting the lowest bid on the school's construction, for in not providing a solid building, a constant necessity for funds into ineffectual repairs was almost guaranteed.

When Father (then Monseigneur) Mackey returned to the Shubenacadie school in 1948, after it had been in the hands of Father Brown for five years, he found a situation "far from encouraging."<sup>63</sup> In a letter dated November 25, he wrote that the farm was producing poorly, supplying only turnips and beets so that all other vegetables had to be purchased. They had the least number of children in residence since the school opened, a situation that seriously affected the per-capita payments; for while the school had been built to accommodate fewer, at least one hundred fifty children were required in order to meet expenses, according to Mackey's calculations. He found the spirit of cooperation among the staff members had deteriorated in his absence, and that supplies--"from mops and brooms to food and clothing"--were not as they had been. Furthermore, the \$800 in the current account would barely pay the salaries of the farmer, his assistant, the carpenter engineer and the night fireman to the end of the year:

The Sisters of Charity nor the Principal can not possibly get any salary until after the first of the year...it is going to be a lean Christmas.<sup>64</sup>

The Sisters, he continued, were receiving \$25 a month, the same as they had received in 1930, and this he compared to that of domestics who had

come from displaced-persons camps in Germany and were earning \$35.<sup>65</sup> The salary of the carpenter/engineer during that time had gone from \$70 to \$120 monthly. As for the bank account, the figures were now bleak and Mackey compared them with the financial situation of the school one month after he left:

The balance...was \$3584.28 and there was \$10,000 in government bonds...the per capita grant for the previous quarter was received amounting to...a total cash credit of \$20,225.56. There were few, if any, unpaid accounts...When we came back...we find about \$1100 in the bank and outstanding accounts were in the vicinity of \$6000.<sup>66</sup>

Not blaming the administration of Father Brown, he recognized instead that money for major repairs and replacements had come from school funds, when previously, properly, it had come from the government, and he requested the Department to reimburse the school for all such expenditures during the five years.<sup>67</sup> It is not expected that his request was successful, and there is no record in the files of a response to the letter. The following summer, however, Father Mackey was presented with a new car, for which he wrote an amusing note of gratitude:

Just a line to thank you and to let you know the ford [sic] has come. The first trip was out for blueberries, not to [sic] plentiful. The Sisters have not been in the car yet. Some of the more robust ones won't find it easy getting in the rear seat, which may be all to the good.<sup>68</sup>

These examples of institutional problems drawn from the school files should illustrate some of the frustrations endured by the school principal with regard to his responsibilities toward the staff and the school buildings. Even more seriously, the matter of "no available funds" extended beyond the school and its equipment and outbuildings, and into the important realm of the children. A similar pattern of requests made by the principal, denied or

delayed then made again, emerges in relation to the health care of the pupils in the school.

It has already been mentioned that in medical matters the principal had to deal with a school doctor who was not always an ally, and at such times he was positioned in the middle between Dr. McInnis and the government. One matter in which Father Mackey unfortunately interfered was the apparently pointless semi-annual checkup of the pupils: since there were so seldom any funds, why should the children be examined every six months and why should the principal, twice a year, have to request eye glasses, dental care, and tonsil operations which were routinely denied?<sup>69</sup> While it is evident that Father Mackey's questioning of the semi-annual exam was meant to shame Indian Affairs into allowing funds for medical work deemed necessary by the examining doctor, the government instead agreed that physical examinations of the pupils were necessary only annually.<sup>70</sup> Dr. MacInnis took this loss of fifty dollars a year badly, telephoning Father Mackey and "in no uncertain terms [giving him] credit or blame for the procedure."<sup>71</sup> The doctor then resigned, citing violation of contract as the reason, and saying he would have nothing more to do with Indian Affairs. Attempting to discredit the principal, he asked for a thorough investigation into the hospital death from appendicitis of a residential school pupil three months earlier. He did not "consider the people in charge of an institution which would cause such negligence fit people to be in charge."<sup>72</sup> The hospital report, however, said the girl was bright and comfortable the morning after her operation, but that the cold she had on admission turned to pneumonia which in turn caused her death.<sup>73</sup> The Department was

satisfied, but informed Dr. MacInnis that in future he should not wait three months to report suspected negligence.<sup>74</sup> The doctor responded that

...the statement that [she] died of pneumonia is absolutely false. You evidently got your information from the wrong source...I am not through with this case yet. It is amusing to me to note what length a Government Department will go to cover up the Criminal Negligence [sic] of one of its employees.<sup>75</sup>

There is no evidence that Dr. MacInnis retired, for indeed the record shows that he continued as school physician. A year later he wrote to the Department about another school death, although the cause was not given. By the time he was called to the school, he said, he knew the child would not live, but because of his experience with the appendicitis case he believed that

...it is futile to report these cases to the Department as they probably feel as the Superintendent of the school does that they go to Heaven and that it is not worthwhile trying to keep those poor Indian children alive.<sup>76</sup>

As for the futility of regularly examining the pupils, a typical sequence of correspondence, cited here, may illustrate the situation. In April, 1932, in response to a funding request for tonsillectomies and eye glasses, the government responded that limited funds and a necessity for "strict economy" meant that only the most urgent cases could be done, and, also to save expenses, tonsillectomies must be done in the school and not in hospital.<sup>77</sup> Father Mackey wrote to Indian Affairs to plead his case for having the operations done in hospital, where he felt the charges would be reasonable. Remembering the last time the school had been used for the work, he knew it would necessitate the accommodation of one doctor and three nurses at the school for three days, as well as the upsetting of the school routine during day and night. "Our last experience with tonsils," he



wrote, "gave us many uneasy moments and we are not anxious to go through the same experience again."<sup>78</sup> But rather than allow the operations to be done in hospital, an official at Indian Affairs sent the following terse response to Father Mackey's lengthy letter:

I have your letter of June 17th regarding pupils requiring tonsillectomies. Considering all the circumstances, the Department prefers not to go on with this work at the present time.<sup>79</sup>

This pattern continued through the years. Only the most imperative cases were ever allowed treatment because of the costs involved. Father Mackey did eventually win his case regarding the use of the hospital for tonsil operations, though the government continued to suggest first that the use of the school be considered.<sup>80</sup>

With regard to dental work, a visiting dentist made an annual stop at the school for examinations and the government's policy was that fillings were to be done with "cheap material" and that only extraction was allowed in the case of temporary teeth.<sup>81</sup> Even so, dental work was not often performed. In May, 1936, the government informed Father Mackey that his school had had the advantage of a dental and tonsil clinic the previous year while many other residential schools in Canada had not, and that there were not sufficient government funds to cover the cost for all.<sup>82</sup> The principal responded that seven children had "running ears" as a result of enlarged tonsils, and that some had decayed teeth, but his request for funding for even these few urgent cases was denied.<sup>83</sup> When in desperation Father Mackey offered to use his own school funds, the government was pleased to accept.<sup>84</sup>

Disputes between Indian Affairs and the school concerned more than inadequate funding. The problem of careless and inappropriate approvals for admission has already been mentioned, and the principal and doctor had to deal with children suffering tuberculosis, venereal and other contagious diseases, deafness, epilepsy, physical deformities, and what was termed mental retardation.<sup>85</sup> In the case of a boy whose advanced case of tuberculosis on admission was such that he died within two months, the government claimed that his admission had been a "clear error such as sometimes occurs in the best organizations."<sup>86</sup> Father Mackey had to make the best of such mistakes.

This case will be further reviewed here as an example of the frustrating delays which took place in urgent instances while letters passed among the doctor, the principal, the hospital, and the secretary of Indian Affairs. On the evening of September 19, 1938, the sick boy and eight other children arrived at the school after travelling all day. The boy complained of a sore neck and soon a gland in the neck was discharging freely.<sup>87</sup> The doctor examined the boy and wrote a letter to the school principal on September 21st, saying "(e)vidently someone has mistaken our Residential School for a TB sanitorium. Please arrange with the Department for his removal from the school."<sup>88</sup> The next day Father Mackey wrote to Indian Affairs for instructions, and was told that the child "should be disposed of in accordance with the regulations for disposal of tubercular Indians."<sup>89</sup> These rules are not noted in the files, but Father Mackey kept the boy separated from the other children,

...and gave him all the treatment we could. The gland condition in the neck cleared up very well, but just about the time it cleared up, he contracted a cold and bronchial condition.<sup>90</sup>

Next, Father Mackey contacted the provincial Public Health Department in order to have the boy examined and X-rayed, but no one came. Dr. MacInnis decided the child should be taken to hospital in Halifax, where the doctors said he was an active TB case who should be sent to the sanatorium at Kentville. However, while the authorities there were willing to take him right away, they wanted authorization from the Department of Indian Affairs. Rather than wait for such authority, Father Mackey assured them the government would see to the expenses.<sup>91</sup> It is not clear what caused the delay of the next ten days nor why the boy was not moved immediately to Kentville. He died in the Halifax hospital on November 13th.

Within the school files from the Shubenacadie school lies evidence that the principalship of a residential school was an involved, complicated, and strenuous position, with duties far beyond those of a regular school administrator. It involved complete responsibility for a large institution and staff, even to staff accommodation; it involved overseeing a working farm and the legal guardianship of about 150 children each year, the latter including responsibility for the ill and the search for truants. Presumably, it was the principal's responsibility as well to act as boys' disciplinarian, for in media accounts of the school, Father Mackey has been remembered as a cruel man who derived enjoyment from inflicting physical punishment on children, and reference has been made to his years at the school as a "reign of terror."<sup>92</sup> Presumably his philosophy of discipline, while probably in keeping with the attitudes of the time, defined the overall tenor of the school, as that of any principal is wont to do. His responsibilities involved the care of the building itself, and because of faulty and careless construction of the school, this was an endless task. Father Mackey had to manage all this on

limited funds, and although Indian Affairs was supposed to be responsible for major repairs and medical services, these had regularly to be begged.

It has been shown that the principal was the middleman between the school doctor and Indian Affairs, the children and their Indian agents, and the children and the government, but there is no indication that he ever acted as go-between for the Sisters. They, in fact, interceded for him on occasion, as already seen in the matter of the lack of hot water in the school --it may have been hoped they would be more effective supplicants to the government than would Father Mackey writing about yet another fiscal need. It has also been seen that Mr. Rice, the local Indian agent in Shubenacadie, acted on behalf of the school at times, as he did in writing to Indian Affairs to explain the dire state of the school building following rain and wind storms. He also sent requests to Ottawa on behalf of Father Brown for a new cooling unit for the walk-in fridge in 1947 and for repairs to the resident farmer's house in 1948, although there is no indication in the files that he was more successful in getting allocations from Indian Affairs than was the principal.

Rice was chastised by the government following a request from the school when he tried to help Father Mackey acquire new blankets for the children. He first wrote in September, 1947, asking that one hundred fifty worn blankets be replaced by the Department, but was told by the Welfare and Training Division that favourable consideration could not be given, for while it was government policy to supply blankets initially, they would not replace them subsequently.<sup>93</sup> Rice, however, had had access to a store of unused blankets since the end of the war, and not specifically mentioning them, wrote again in January, 1949, to ask for new blankets for the school.<sup>94</sup> Although the request was again denied, Father Mackey had simultaneously

taken it upon himself to write a letter that might summon a sympathetic response: after visiting youngsters in the school infirmary who were in bed with chicken pox, he had noticed how thin the old blankets were. Could the government not supply one hundred thirty-five new blankets, one for each child in the school, through Mr. Rice's supply of War Assets?<sup>95</sup> Obviously disgruntled, the government wrote to the Indian agent that

...in view of the fact that the Rev. Mackey has been informed that we have blankets in our warehouse, the transfer is authorized...It is pointed out that in the future you must not inform any outsider as to materials that are shipped to our warehouse or may be stored there.<sup>96</sup>

It seems particularly miserly of the government to have been storing blankets, which do not store well, for three or more years rather than put them to use for the comfort of their own wards.

These files show an alliance between the principal and the local Indian agent which worked for the good of the school and its children, and indicate that Rice expanded his role as broker for his own Micmac clients to include the native school near his reserve. Although there were several pupils in the residential school that were from his reserve, and he was not officially their guardian while they were in the care of Father Mackey, he still looked after their welfare to some extent by interceding with Indian Affairs on behalf of the school.

It may be of use here to consider briefly another aspect of school administration, that of the daily interaction between the priest-principal and teaching Sisters, although there is no documented description of this relationship at the Shubenacadie school. While the principal was the supervisor of the school, the Sisters had their own supervisor--the Mother Superior at Mount St. Vincent--and from the Motherhouse came orders for

their appointments, transfers, and retreats. From the federal government came the programme of studies for Indian schools, including what might be called the hidden agenda, and from the provincial government came the basic academic curriculum. Because the Sisters were in charge of the childrens' daily care, presumably they reported to the principal at times when his intervention was desirable, such as in cases of serious illness, truancy, or disciplinary problems. As well, when equipment was required or faulty, they would have put the matter in his hands. Even reading between the lines of their Annals, there is no evidence of dissension between the Sisters and the principal.

Still, it is not surprising to learn that in some residential schools there was overt conflict, and it is worth considering the possible strife such a close relationship may have engendered. As Margaret McGovern noted in her 1994 investigation of the Oblates and the Sisters of Providence in western Canadian residential schools,<sup>97</sup> the Sisters most often recalled positive memories of individual priests while at the same time seeming resentful and bitter toward the Oblates collectively.<sup>98</sup> This can be explained in part by the esteem and veneration with which all priests were held, for as the Sisters of Providence were admonished to remember, "they hold the place of God;" furthermore, the Sisters would have valued the bearing of suffering and humiliation in silence and would not speak against a superior.

It is interesting to consider the types of conflict the Sisters at Cranbrook and Cluny residential schools were said to have had with their priests, for it is possible that the situation in any residential school might have presented similar problems. McGovern noted that because it was difficult to define precisely the duties of the principal and that of the Sister

Superior, "mécontentements réciproques" might result.<sup>99</sup> In a case cited, the priest interfered in such small matters as the way the children were dressed, what songs they sang, and how wide the windows were open, and the complaint was that he

...exacts too much from the Sisters. Life is made very hard for them, besides all the work they have to do and the difficulties they are obliged to contend with.<sup>100</sup>

Because of the Sisters, the principal was free from child care, teaching, nursing, and cooking, but the "status of the Sisters was essentially that of being expected to accept what they were given and believe what they were told."<sup>101</sup> One matter mentioned by McGovern is reminiscent of the tales of former pupils in residential schools in which they recall that they were given poor food while the Sisters ate well: in this case, it was the Sisters complaining they had only 40-watt bulbs to work by, while the priest enjoyed 100-watts.<sup>102</sup> Yet there was an underlying loyalty because of all the Sisters invested in their residential school work: "their faith, their health, their very selves."<sup>103</sup>

At the Shubenacadie institution, it seems that Father Mackey and the teaching Sisters worked together to share their difficulties. This included those problems precipitated by the acceptance of many more pupils than the school was built to accommodate, although this difficulty did offer the consolation of increased funding owing to the quarterly per-capita payment. It was apparently government policy, from 1925, to fill the schools to their limit, a measure "considered in the interests of economy, from the standpoint of both Department and churches."<sup>104</sup> It has already been mentioned that Scott considered the Shubenacadie school suitable for one hundred and twenty five pupils, but the enrollment of 146 in the school's first year was the

least number of pupils the school held until 1958. Enrollment reached a high of 175 in 1938, making curious the statement of the architect at the time the institution was built: the school, he said, had "air space" for one hundred fifty-eight, but could accommodate about one hundred sixty-five.<sup>105</sup> During sixteen years of the school's operation enrollment exceeded that upper limit, and the Sisters themselves called the Shubenacadie school the house with elastic walls.

While increased enrollment meant increased funding, financial difficulties were not necessarily alleviated since more children meant more expenses. Perhaps an open-door policy is part of the reason that historically the missions have been poor; of course the religious continued to be involved in native education after it became a federal responsibility partly because they were willing to work for little to honour their vows of poverty. While again recalling pupil complaints that they were always hungry at school, the Sisters' own poverty and hunger was exemplified in McGovern's story of one of the western missions in 1923 where the Sisters were so short of food for over a year that they were actually starving.<sup>106</sup> There is no indication that the situation was nearly so dire at Shubenacadie, but the matter of government parsimony in relation to the residential schools does deserve a full study.

While the typical "no funds" reply to Father Mackey's requests--whether for repairs, equipment, or the children--begs further scrutiny, this chapter has at least exposed the daily frustration involved in dealing with Indian Affairs. This examination of the school's administrative background reveals that as spokesman for the needs of the school building itself, the principal was never fully successful and seldom partly so. As representative



of the children, particularly in his duties toward them in health matters, he failed equally. Yet Duncan Scott reported that the Department was (at least in the west) carefully supervising the health of residential school pupils and offering increased medical and dental attention, not to immediately benefit the children, but to the specific end that "a more robust type of graduate" would be produced.<sup>107</sup> In 1933, he stated that health matters in residential schools continued to receive special attention, and that good medical supervision had been arranged.<sup>108</sup>

The catalogue of daily, internal problems at one school provided in this chapter assists an understanding of the educational history of native Canadians by raising fundamental questions about the relationship between the federal government and the residential schools. Federal parsimony made it difficult for the schools to operate as the model farms they were intended to be, although it could be said that spoiled vegetables and a lack of suitable outbuildings might offer a more realistic view of the unpredictability of the small farms the pupils were expected to operate when they returned to their reserves. Housekeeping inside the school was hampered by such challenges as a condemned refrigerator, a rotted washing machine, worn sewing machines, a lack of hot water, and bathing water that had to be carried a long distance, all problems that could easily have been corrected by Indian Affairs. But again, such insufficiencies might represent life's realities more than a perfectly-operating domestic situation would have done. Still, the very fact of constantly limited funds caused the school to run on an unnecessarily rocky road.

Although the annual reports of Indian Affairs present tables of expenditures for residential schools by province, there is no indication of the

amounts allotted each year for each school, or for what purpose. There are questions of whether other school buildings were as cheaply constructed as that at Shubenacadie, resulting in similar, continuing problems, and of how much was invested by the government in livestock, outbuildings, and upkeep for each schools' farming operations. Further delving might also enable a comparison of costs expended upon each residential school in the important realm of the children's health. The annual report of 1936 indicated that some remedial dental and tonsil work was done annually for residential school pupils, but how often did each school benefit from such clinics? The statement that "this Department would be pleased to be able to do more" in medical matters, suggests an ambiguity between intention and practice that left the children poorly attended.

To detail government expenditures on residential schools, and fully address the contradictions within the educational aims of Indian Affairs is beyond the realm of this work. However, evidence of both conflicting goals and misplaced parsimony lie beneath much of this thesis and both are an important part of native school history. Both problems made the duties of the principals more onerous and time consuming. Perhaps there is a suggestion beneath this catalogue of correspondence that the principal, being left with little time to oversee the daily care and education of the children, may have left the larger part of these duties to the Sister Superior. Certainly the principal, along with other male staff members, has little mention in the Annals.

Still, it is the principal who is seen as being in charge of the school and the pupils, although only in exceptional cases did he have any jurisdiction over admission, discharge, and vacation procedures, these

matters being normally negotiated between the Indian agents and Indian Affairs. This chapter has been meant to assist in an understanding of the role and daily duties of the principal, and to add to the picture painted in this thesis of the inside of the institution.

## CHAPTER FIVE - NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. National Archives of Canada (NAC) Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) School Files (SF) RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter from Father Mackey to DIA, December 11, 1929.
2. Separation of financial responsibility was set out in a letter to J.L. Ilisley from D.C. Scott, March 1, 1929. It is not clear who was responsible for curriculum materials.
3. Jeremiah Mackey was born in 1894 in Springhill, Nova Scotia, educated at Saint Mary's College and St. Francis Xavier University, and studied for the priesthood at Holy Heart Seminary. After being ordained at the age of twenty-three, he served at St. Mary's Cathedral, was curate for two years at Annapolis, and returned for a time to St. Mary's before being appointed pastor at Pugwash. In 1928, at the age of thirty-three, he was appointed principal of the Shubenacadie school. Information provided by the Catholic Archives, Halifax, N.S.
4. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to Rhodes, Curry Ltd., contractor, from Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, November 19, 1929.
5. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, July 2, 1929, and Inspector's report of the same date.
6. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to R.G. Orr, Department Architect, from Rhodes Curry Ltd., July 7, 1930.
7. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to Rhodes Curry Ltd. from Mr. Orr, August 2, 1930.
8. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter from Father Mackey to DIA, March 28, 1930. Five months later Father Mackey wrote on the matter again (September 3, 1930) because the kitchen had been filled with gas the previous week owing to lack of draught, making it almost impossible to prepare meals. Permission to increase the height of the chimney was received in a letter to Father Mackey from A.F. MacKenzie, Secretary, September 8, 1930.
9. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054. The problem was first noted in an internal Indian Affairs memo to Mr. Ferrier from Philip Phelan, May 5, 1930. Relevant correspondence includes letters to the Departmental Secretary from Father Mackey, October 13, 1930, and to the manager

of the Montreal office from the manager of the Saint John office of Canadian Fairbanks Morse, August 4, 1931.

10. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to R.G. Orr from the manager, Montreal office, Canadian Fairbanks Morse, October 14, 1931.
11. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to Canadian Fairbanks Morse from Father Mackey, August 4, 1931.
12. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letters to DIA from Father Mackey, February 27 and March 24, 1930.
13. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055. Father Mackey was informed that funds were exhausted in a letter from A.F. Mackenzie, Department Secretary, April 1, 1930.
14. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, April 11, 1930.
15. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, March 19, 1931.
16. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, response from A.F. Mackenzie, dated March 25, 1931.
17. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, May 1, 1931, and response of May 5, 1931 from A.F. Mackenzie, Secretary.
18. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, December 24, 1931.
19. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter from T.R.L. MacInnes, Department Acting Secretary to Father Mackey, December 30, 1931.
20. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, February 19, 1932.
21. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to Father Mackey from Indian Affairs secretary, March 7, 1932.
22. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, March 22, 1932.
23. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055. Relevant correspondence includes an undated letter to Father Mackey from the Compressed Air Caulking Company, and Mackey's letters to DIA of July 30, and August 8, 1932. The \$1000 allotment was finally made; see inter-departmental memo

- September 10, 1932, and letter to Father Mackey from DIA, September 14, 1930.
24. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055. Use of the funds was finally decided by Father Mackey. The dairy-ice house and hog house, complete with 21 pigs, were completed the following December. See letters to DIA from Father Mackey, August 8 and December 22, 1932.
  25. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, January 9, 1933. On March 1, 1932, one year after his first request for a house for the carpenter-engineer, Father Mackey wrote to DIA for the third time to state that the need was now so great that he would have to attempt the building without departmental help if funds were disallowed. In reply, the Principal was reminded that he must "not proceed with any construction or major improvements at any time, without the concurrence of and instructions from the Department."
  26. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055. Inspection report was done by P. Phelan, June 6, 1933.
  27. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055. Correspondence includes a letter to Father Mackey from R.G. Orr, Department Architect, on June 22, 1933, and to DIA from Mackey on August 4, 1933.
  28. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, February 19, 1934 and response of A.F. Mackenzie, Secretary, February 22, 1934.
  29. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, July 19, 1934.
  30. NAC DIA SN RG 10 Vol. 6055. Father Mackey made the request again on April 7, 1935, and received approval for the house and for school repairs on April 16, 1935. In his letter of April 22, 1935, Father Mackey noted that because of farm work, the staff could not give much time to the construction work, and that big boys were not available. The Department's response on June 7, 1935, was only that the school staff should be used as much as possible, as it was impossible to keep within the estimate.
  31. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, January 27, 1936.
  32. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, response to above from A.F. Mackenzie, Secretary, February 3, 1936.
  33. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letters to Father Mackey from R.G. Orr, and from T.R.L. MacInnes, Acting Secretary, August 14, 1936.

34. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to R.G. Orr, Architect, from Father Mackey, undated but receipt stamped August 17, 1936.
35. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, memo to Dr. McGill, Dep. Supt. Gen. of Indian Affairs, from the Architect, August 13, 1936, and invoice to DIA from Western Waterproofing Co., Montreal, of November 17, 1936, in the amount of \$2306.
36. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055. In a letter to DIA from Father Mackey, April 9, 1937, he mentioned that the waterproofing was not perfect and needed more work.
37. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, note to DIA from Father Mackey, dated May 4, 1943.
38. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, telegram to DIA from Father Mackey, November 19, 1936. See also his further letter November 20, 1936:
39. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, November 20, 1936: "It has always been a problem to prevent boys from making their way to the boiler room, in order to have a smoke, and it has happened that whatever they should be smoking would be thrown away should anyone come along."
40. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055 letter to J.D. Sutherland, Asst. Supt. of Education, DIA, from Sister Mary Charles, November 12, 1936. Approval was received five days later.
41. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, April 9, 1937.
42. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter from Father Mackey to DIA, January 7, 1938. Response on January 11 was that there were no funds and the request should be repeated on April 1st.
43. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter from Father Mackey to DIA, June 8, 1939.
44. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter from Father Mackey to DIA, October 40, 1940.
45. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6055, letter from Father Mackey to Indian Affairs,6. Relevant correspondence includes letter to DIA from Father Mackey, October 4, 1940, and response, October 9, 1940.
46. Catholic Archives, Halifax, N.S. In 1946 Father Mackey moved to a parish in Amherst, and was subsequently made Dean (advisor to the

Bishop) and created a domestic prelate by Pope Pius XII in recognition of his services to the church. He returned to the Shubenacadie school in 1948.

47. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054. Relevant correspondence includes letters to DIA from Father Brown February 3, 1944, and response of February 7; from Father Brown on February 10, 1944 and response of February 15, and again from Father Brown on February 21, 1941. Invoice from the laundry washer manufacturer was dated April 6, 1944.
48. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, undated letter to DIA from Father Brown. (His first request for new pumps had been made on February 14, 1944.)
49. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054. Ibid.
50. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054. Ibid.
51. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to Father Brown from DIA, January 4, 1946.
52. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to Philip Phelan from Father Brown, October 18, 1945. Obviously, the principal was using school funds for work the Department should have financed.
53. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054. Letter to DIA from H.C. Rice, May 23, 1946; and letters from DIA to Father Brown dated May 26 and May 30.
54. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter from Rice to DIA, June 18, 1946.
55. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, inter-departmental mail from Neary to Phelan, February 13, 1947.
56. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter from Neary to Rice, October 4, 1947.
57. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, inter-departmental memo, June 19, 1947.
58. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter from Neary to Rice, October 4, 1947.
59. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054. Inspection was done December 6, 1948; letter from Rice to DIA was written January 7, 1949.
60. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to DIA from Rice, July 5, 1948.



61. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to DIA from Rice, November 14, 1947.
62. Isabel Knockwood (with Gillian Thomas), Out of the Depths, (Lockeport N.S.: Roseway Publishing, 1992), 135-6.
63. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter from Father Mackey to Neary, November 25, 1948.
64. Ibid.
65. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vols. 6053 and 6056, letters to DIA from Father Mackey, January 17, 1930, and November 25, 1948. There are more useful ways to compare the salaries of the Sisters, who each earned \$300 per year when they began in 1930 and were still earning the same in 1948, than with the wages of "displaced" domestics. Using 1935 figures for comparison, their annual \$300 was well below the Nova Scotia average for all teachers which was \$724, and much below the average for rural female teachers at \$519. Province of N.S. Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia for the year ended July 31, 1935, p. xxii. (Public Archives of Nova Scotia.) Also, a more favourable comparison can be made between the \$25 monthly received by the Sisters of Charity at Shubenacadie, and the \$15 per month received by the Sisters at Cranbrook residential school in B.C. from 1934 at least until 1943. See McGovern, op. cit., 106)
66. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter from Father Mackey to Neary, November 25, 1948.
67. Ibid.
68. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter from Father Mackey to Philip Phelan, August 1, 1949.
69. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter from Father Mackey to DIA, March 29, 1933.
70. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter from DIA to Dr. MacInnis, June 18, 1933.
71. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter from Father Mackey to DIA, July 10, 1933.
72. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to DIA from Dr. MacInnis, June 16, 1933.

73. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter from M.L. Scammel, M.D., to E.L. Stone, Indian Affairs, July 20, 1933.
74. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Dr. MacInnis from DIA, August 1, 1933.
75. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to DIA from Dr. MacInnis, August 19, 1933.
76. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Dr. MacInnis from DIA, June 8, 1934.
77. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from DIA, April, 1932.
78. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058. Relevant correspondence includes letters to Father Mackey from DIA on April 21, 1932, and to DIA from Father Mackey on May 9 and June 17, 1932.
79. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from DIA, June 25, 1932.
80. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058. Five years later, in December 1937, the Department still wanted tonsillectomies done in the school. Only after the principal stated that he was "absolutely opposed" did the Department allow the pupils to go to hospital. See letters to DIA from Father Mackey December 7 and 17, 1937, and reply January 14, 1938.
81. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from DIA, November 25, 1933.
82. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter from DIA to Father Mackey, May 7, 1938.
83. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, undated response to above.
84. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058. Relevant correspondence includes letters to Father Mackey from DIA on May 7 and October 19, 1936, and to DIA from Father Mackey on October 12 and November 4, 1936.
85. To cite only a few examples, one "deaf and half dumb" epileptic child was discharged after five years in the school, having attained no grade status. See Discharge Sheet, September 15, 1941, FAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6053. Also, one mentally retarded child with leg brace and crutches, who couldn't talk, was considered by the doctor who examined her for admission, "an ideal case for this type of institutional care." See admission form, June 1, 1939, *ibid.* The government felt

that children in the residential school who had syphilis were in a good place to have treatment. See letters to Father Mackey from DIA, April 16, 1932, and from E.L. Stone, February 16, 1939. Ibid.

86. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from Superintendent of Medical Services, E.L. Stone, February 16, 1939.
87. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, September 22, 1938, enclosing one he had received from Father MacInnis dated the day before.
88. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from Dr. MacInnis, September 21, 1938.
89. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to Father Mackey from DIA, September 24, 1938.
90. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, letter to DIA from Father Mackey, November 12, 1938.
91. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6058, ibid.
92. See the series on the school in the Micmac News, August, September, November 1978.
93. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to DIA from Rice, September 13, 1947, and response September 22.
94. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to DIA from Rice, January 19, 1949, and denial of request January 29, 1949.
95. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to DIA from Rev. Mackey, January 17, 1949.
96. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter to Rice from Superintendent of Welfare and Training, February 15, 1949.
97. Margaret McGovern, S.P., "Perspective on the Oblates: The Experience of the Sisters of Providence," Western Oblate Studies 3 (1994) 91-108.
98. Ibid., 91.
99. Ibid., 92.
100. Ibid., 94.
101. Ibid., 97.

102. Ibid., 100.
103. Ibid., 107.
104. Sessional Papers, Annual Report (SPAR), Indian Affairs 1925, report of D.C. Scott.
105. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, regarding school capacity. See correspondence from Scott to Isley, March 1, 1929, stating the capacity was set at 125; from the architect R.G. Orr to Father Mackey February 19, 1931, stating air space for 158 but that 165 could be accommodated; Mackey's reply of March 9, 1931 that with 140 pupils, every bed would be taken except those in the infirmary.
106. McGovern, op. cit., 99.
107. SPAR Indian Affairs 1925, report of D.C. Scott.
108. SPAR Indian Affairs 1933, report of D.C. Scott.

CHAPTER SIX:  
THE SISTERS OF CHARITY: BROKERS OF SALVATION

Why long for the Foreign Missions when souls need us right here!<sup>1</sup>

In previous studies and accounts of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, two important perspectives have been missing, those of the religious Sisters who taught there and the inspectors who annually made visits and wrote reports. Most of the inspectors' reports so far remain elusive. So too have the Sisters of Charity remained aloof, which is hardly surprising given the tone of recent residential school histories and the attendant revelation that good intentions can have harmful results. This chapter will present the Sisters' perceptions of the school,<sup>2</sup> while occasionally juxtaposing other views, not to try to reconcile the differences, but to show how sharply they do differ and to acknowledge that there are contrasting perspectives.

According to a history by J.T. McNally written on the centenary of the order,<sup>3</sup> the Sisters of Charity first came to Nova Scotia in 1849 as teachers, and operated a school for two hundred children in two rooms with only one row of desks against the wall. They soon added a small orphanage and held charity bazaars to fund it. In 1865, following the efforts of Archbishop Connolly, the Sisters began teaching in Catholic schools in Nova Scotia. Some of the Sisters of Charity were nurses and in 1886 they were asked to open a surgical ward, thus beginning the Halifax Infirmary. That year a ship carrying Irish immigrants to New York stopped in Halifax Harbour en route because three hundred passengers had died of cholera; the thousand remaining were housed in tents on McNab's Island for several weeks under

the care of a few doctors and three nursing Sisters of Charity. Social work occupied the Sisters on their off hours and Saturdays when they visited the poor in their homes or received them in the convent, offering spiritual and material aid. They operated homes for young working girls and for the aged, and an evening school for illiterate adults where always "the spiritual went hand in hand with the instruction." Besides the Shubenacadie school, the Sisters of Charity taught in the Cranbrook Indian residential school in British Columbia. They ran a home in Halifax for unmarried mothers and abandoned babies, and the Saint Joseph's orphanage for children over five.

A consideration of McNally's observations on their methods of caring for the needy in these homes may shed some light on the way they operated at the Indian school. Their aim toward unwed, expectant women was to

[provide them with] a real approach to a normal, happy life, to heal the wounds that life has dealt them and lead them to higher, holier ways of thinking and acting--ways of which most of them have never heard before.

As for the infants:

...what potentialities for good or evil lie waiting in these tiny frames for the development of the years! With tenderest care they are watched over night and day, nursed through sickness and fostered in health.

Some were adopted or placed in foster care, being "saved from becoming institutionalized through childhood and youth," but those who did not find homes by the age of five were sent to the Catholic orphanage.

Here the Sisters receive them lovingly and they become part of a large family of boys and girls with whom they share a happy routine of study and prayer and play.

The orphanage contained chapel and classrooms, playrooms, work rooms, dormitories and playing fields, offering "all the advantages of a well

equipped boarding school." The school followed the provincial elementary curriculum and included training in domestic arts, homemaking, weaving and woodwork. Children who wished further education could attend local junior and senior high schools. Recreational activities included sports, folk dancing, and roller or ice skating, as well as the making of handcrafts. Religious instruction began each day and was central to it:

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the centre of life at the Orphanage; and after that, devotion to our Blessed Mother.

At a Quebec orphanage, also run by the Sisters of Charity, some of the children attended neighbouring schools, and it was recognized that

Association with children outside thus breaks down the barrier created by institutional routine; and the orphans, while less privileged, are made to feel that their chance of success in life is as good as that of more fortunate children.

Of the Shubenacadie school, McNally said that the half session of manual labour did not begin until after the "primary grades" were passed; that all children were encouraged to continue their education beyond the residential school, and that in Nova Scotia (in 1949) "about a dozen are attending university or high school and are doing creditable work." Most important, though, were "spiritual training and the formation of good habits."

McNally's history also discussed briefly the making of a Sister of Charity. While he cited an anonymous laywoman as declaring that the "need of our age is for valiant women, both in the cloister and in the world," the Sister of Charity, he says, was neither cloistered nor of the world but somewhere midway. The preparation for Vows was long and arduous, beginning with a six month period at the Mother House at Mount Saint Vincent where the postulant discovered both herself and the aims, ideals, and practical methods of the sisterhood. She was then given a new name and entered a two year period as a novice filling her days as follows:

From dawn to dark the novices follow the Way of Perfection, guided in every detail by Obedience, which points out to them the Will of God at every hour. Now it is early morning, with prayer and meditation and Holy Mass; now it is the simple round of house duties, and now class. So the day passes, punctuated at intervals by practical instructions from the Mistress, whose sole care is the development and welfare of her charges.

Secular study was limited during the novice's first year to a few periods a week, while she learned to "form herself on the models proposed to her by Holy Church through the Rule." In the second year, she studied "for the particular work for which she seemed fitted," presumably nursing or teaching. After the two year "Novitiate," temporary, first vows of "Poverty, Chastity and Obedience to her Divine Spouse" were taken in a simple ceremony. Only after six years were vows made in perpetuity, the Sister confident "that He Who has led her so far on the Path of Perfection will conduct her to its end."

These glimpses into the vocation of the Sisters of Charity allow some insight into who, in a collective sense, they were, and why they were in the Shubenacadie school. Unfortunately, McNally does not offer any suggestions about their callings or vocations--those attitudes and beliefs which attracted them initially to the order. Although this important aspect of the lives of these Sisters has proven difficult to ascertain, it may be instructive to consider what Marta Danylewycz, in her book on the sisterhood in Québec, has written on the attraction of young girls to "taking the veil." Following the 1854 papal proclamation declaring the sinlessness of Mary, she became "an abstraction of feminine perfection, a model worthy of emulation, and the patroness of celiba[cy]," resulting in the proliferation of women's "Marian societies." Members were encouraged to imitate this model of Mary, to be pure and humble, to read only "morally edifying



literature," and to commit themselves to spiritual and charitable works. Danylewycz says such societies "made women more attentive to God's call," thus enhancing the convents. The sisterhood was less risky than marriage because a novice could abandon her vocation but not her wedding vows;<sup>4</sup> Danylewycz also suggests that it was an attractive alternative to spinsterhood or motherhood:

Under the protection of their vocations, women pursued life-long careers, wielded power, and, on occasion, entered the public sphere. In the final analysis, entering a convent could well mean overcoming the disadvantage of being a woman in a man's world.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding the Sisters of Charity in their roles as teaching Sisters, there is a question of the teacher training they received. As has been seen in McNally's account, they were given at least one year of secular education for their "particular" work at Mount St. Vincent college, and judging from school photographs in that history, were equipped to teach all levels from primary to high school, and in subjects ranging from cooking to chemistry.<sup>6</sup> It may be conjectured that they had at least as much teacher training as most other teachers in Nova Scotia in the 1930s, and perhaps more than many in rural schools. Even into the 1950s it was difficult to attract teachers to country schools, including Indian day schools, because of the prospect of social isolation, and it was found that many of those who attempted the challenge were prompted by the experience to resign after a brief term. Hence, rural schools tended to be taught by the newly licensed or by uncertified permissives. At least by 1960, the Shubenacadie residential school had the benefit of three university-trained teachers.<sup>7</sup>

When the Indian residential school was proposed for Shubenacadie, the Catholic Ecclesiastical authorities were reported to be very favourable to the work, and were prepared to staff it with the Sisters of

Charity, sending one Sister to visit a residential school in Alberta to learn first-hand the methods used in conducting it.<sup>8</sup> The Sisters in 1927 were invited to view the blueprints for the building and offer suggestions, although it is not clear which of these were incorporated during construction. Among the notes the Sisters returned were that there was no provision for manual training or domestic science, and that the fire escapes should be from the children's dormitories instead of the staff rooms. One suggestion which was not used was to cause the principal difficulty in the future as he tried to provide homes for the school engineer and farmer: the Sisters had noted there was no provision for the accommodation of male help.<sup>9</sup>

The scant items in the school files which emanated from the Sisters make it difficult to gain insight into their presence in the institution. Articles and books have provided school memories from some former pupils, mostly unfavourable toward the Sisters' disciplinary methods in and out of the classroom, and it is challenging to try to reconcile these stories with the ideals of the Sisters' order, particularly that their lives were dedicated to charity and the pursuit of personal perfection. Unfortunately, as the years have passed so too have many of the teaching Sisters; those who remain do not want to be interviewed about the school.<sup>10</sup>

Fortunately, one lengthy document lifts the shadow into which the Sisters of Charity have retreated, their Annals, kept at the school as a record of their mission there and now housed in their archives. It speaks something of their actions and even of their feelings, but more of their observations of the daily life of the school; and in its telling is a different tale than has been told elsewhere. A reading of the Annals provides a rosy, perhaps even idealized view of the residential school, as shall be seen in the summary which follows.<sup>11</sup> Its particular value is that it is a view of the school as seen

from the inside, yet it is in partial opposition to the other inside view, that of the pupils. This sometimes stark contrast in perception begs comparison of the Annals with the book on the school by former pupil Isabel Knockwood, whose views will occasionally be interposed here in the tale as told by the Sisters.

Early Monday morning, January 27th, 1930, three Sisters of Charity travelled by rail from the Motherhouse in Rockingham to their mission at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, a "loving God Bless You...ringing in their ears." They soon found to their dismay that the Sister Superior, Anita Vincent, whom they expected to meet on the train, had been in an auto accident and missed it. She arrived at the school later that day, and on the 31st a fifth Sister arrived along with sixteen cows. The animals caused no little excitement in the neighbourhood, and the Sisters "contributed their share by counting the cows as they passed the kitchen window." Two more Sisters arrived with the first thirty children from Halifax to the school on February 5th: ten girls from the Home of the Good Shepherd, six boys from Saint Patrick's Home, and six girls and eight boys from St. Joseph's Orphanage. "The happy little crowd" was described as enjoying a "straw drive" from the train to the school, on two big flat sleds each drawn by two large farm horses. They were given a hot lunch and were assigned "beds, presses, brooms, dust pans, scrub buckets." Classes began the following afternoon in three classrooms, Sr. M. Louisita teaching grades 1-3, Sr. Madeleine Leo teaching grades 4-5, and the Sister Superior in charge of grades 6-7.

The children's daily programme when the school was first opened was scheduled as follows:

6:30 Children's rising

7:00 Holy Mass  
7:30 Breakfast  
8:00 House Charges  
12:00 Dinner  
1:30 Class  
3:00 Dismissal  
5:40 Supper  
6:40 Night Prayers  
7:00 Retiring

This schedule is similar to that remembered from the 1940s by Knockwood, although she added a morning class period from 9:00 a.m. to noon (which must have been inadvertently omitted from the above) and noted that bedtime was at nine. Neither the Sisters' nor Knockwood's timetable allocated the time between dismissal and supper, but according to Knockwood it was spent in after-school play much like that of children anywhere.<sup>12</sup>

One week late for school, twin girls arrived from the nearby Shubenacadie reserve, being the first children in the school who were not from other institutions. Soon other reserve children arrived, brought by the school principal, Rev. Jeremiah Mackey, or by their Indian agents. When the Rev. Fr. McGillivray brought children from the Pictou reserve, he commented that some of them "were rolled up in bags" when they came to him, but he had supplied them with clothing so they were presentable when they arrived at the school. Soon all the children were helping to erect the Stations of the Cross in the school's chapel.

In April the resident children were examined for tuberculosis, and ten were sent to Halifax for x-rays. In May the school had its first accident when one girl lost a finger in a dough mixer mishap. During the next two months, twelve children celebrated their First Communion, and in June the school's first term was completed. Forty children returned home for a month's summer vacation early in July, two so-called defectives were sent to

the Shelburne County Home, and those who remained in the school were presumably children who had come from other institutions. For them, that first summer was a time for vaccinations and tonsil operations, apparently for all.

School reopened in September, and Archbishop O'Donnell visited to speak to the children and exhort them "to respect themselves, to be truthful, and to be proud of their people who have kept the faith for so many years." In October Hallowe'en was celebrated by a concert and party in the decorated refectory. The children bobbed apples in a wash tub, ate taffy apples, peanuts and candy, and played games conducted by Father Mackey who supplied chocolate bars to the winners. All present were said to be much impressed by the "unselfishness and quiet behaviour of the children." In November the pupils made their first public appearance when they were invited to join the village children in decorating the war memorial monument. They made a fine showing, "displaying their patriotism by a red, white and blue badge and singing O Canada." That month a dentist visited the school for two days and examined, filled and extracted over two hundred and fifty teeth.

On December 21st, the children began their first "forty hours devotions." In a procession after mass, there were

nine little flower girls, daintily dressed in white robes with baskets of flowers in their hands and wreaths on their heads. Besides the cross bearer, acolytes and incense bearer, six boys carried red and white lamps.

The subject of the sermon was "Suffer the little children to come unto me," and the behaviour of the children was said to be most edifying.

The school's first Christmas was "preceded by the usual busy days of the tying of and hanging of spruce, making of flowers...preparing of gifts

for our one hundred forty children." The sanctuary and dining rooms were decorated with fir and poinsettias, and the children's refectory held two immense Christmas trees with beautiful decorations and electric lights. Gifts were placed around the base.

At 11 a.m. Christmas morning Santa appeared and distributed toboggans, sleds, hockey sticks, dolls and toys of every description, that so delight the hearts of the young.

During Christmas vacation five girls had their tonsils removed, and by Epiphany all the decorations were down. The school had its first inspection in January, and thus ended the Sisters' account of the school's first year.

The day book kept by the Sisters in the school was written irregularly and without identification, although it is possible to discern different writing styles. However, there is not the aid of different handwriting styles, as in 1950 the previous accounts were apparently rewritten, the whole of the Annals until the school's closing then being contained in a hard-covered 1950 Daily Journal. Some Sisters wrote briefly and simply while others, such as this writer in 1935, wrote poetically and with humour:

What a friendly river! It kept rising and rising and rising and coming nearer and nearer and nearer on all sides, until we were surrounded with the approaching waters of the beautiful Shubenacadie and feared that we would soon be drifting with the current down the muddy stream. If we were not on the peak of the Island, we would have joined company with a neighbouring shanty and sailed into the Bay of Fundy or perhaps we may have stood knee deep in the ice cold water. We may even have been obliged, like some of our neighbours, to take up our beds and walk, but instead we just watched from the window and prayed.

Even when not a daily or even monthly record, when under the pen of some Sisters the Annals were merely an annual summary, still it offers an insight into the school that is truly through the eyes of the Sisters. Religion

pervades, of course, and more account is made of first communicants as in this 1931 entry:

We trust that Our Lady looked with pleasure on those baby hearts which became the dwelling place of her Divine Son for the first time...

and of visiting religious than of school lessons or even the activity of the children with their dust pans and scrub buckets. While the pupils are constantly mentioned, seldom is reference made to individual children except in the sad instances of accidents and deaths, and the proud case of pupil James Prosper who joined the R.C.A.F. and went on to St. Francis Xavier University.

As Knockwood wrote what it meant to be a student in the school, mentioning the Sisters only as they were prominent in her memory, so the Sisters wrote of the school as a mission, telling of the children more as residents and religious charges than as pupils. Holidays were described in inevitable detail; dental, eye, and tonsil clinics seemed to come with more regularity than Father Mackey's correspondence would suggest; and every year in the May Procession, "We [we]re sure that Our Lady smiled down upon her little Indians." The children performed for each school guest with songs, recitations, skits and dance, and once in 1931 for three visitors,

(t)he refectory was decorated with "Indians" and each visiting Sister received a souvenir, a table napkin ring made of birch bark and a rose coloured candy basket which was guarded by a little Indian in feathers, the product of the talent of one of our Indian girls.

This, of course, may have been an illustration of Indianness as seen by the Sisters rather than by the children.

Every summer orders came to the Sisters from the Mother Superior at Mount Saint Vincent, containing the mission list (or "obediences" as they called them) for the coming year. Mid-August, then, was anticipated "with

fear and trembling for its "expectations and surprises," and sometimes it brought "more surprises than expectations." Either way, the orders were apparently awaited in the great fear of being sent somewhere else, somewhere other than the school. One Sister wrote in 1940,

...we await the important letters that come only from Mount Saint Vincent. We await the slow, but steady train to pull in, then the mail carrier, being Father Mackey or some reliable lad, the one who brings us the fatal envelopes. East? West? North? South? for one or two or more of us. [Ten days later...] The train, so eagerly and patiently awaited, arrived at last...but Sister Superior didn't look too cheerful. At once we knew that she had some message to deliver, and some of those fateful envelopes, carrying God's will for the coming year seemed to weigh heavily in her bag.

Once, when a Sister was brought back to the school after an absence of two years, the Sister Superior explained that "the Holy Ghost made a mistake and rectified it." When she was required to leave a second time, she hoped "the Holy Ghost would straighten things out again and bring her back to Shubenacadie." She was said to be "loathe to leave her Indians and her pottery, but like all good Sisters of Charity, does it with a smile."

Several deaths were recorded. In April, 1931, Mary Gehue, "a bright little girl of only seven years" died of an abcess of the lung after twelve days in hospital. The next month Josephine Smith, "much beloved by all," died at eleven of pneumonia in hospital after an appendicitis operation. In September, 1938, James Paul arrived at the school with tuberculosis and at once went to hospital where he lasted only a few days. A month later, "bright and cheerful" Joyce McDonald died of pneumonia. News arrived from hospital in April, 1940, of the death of Irene Mitchell of "pneumonia meningitis." It was believed she "was destined to go to God, since He afflicted her once more, after the complete recovery from the broken leg." In



July that year, a child called only Nancy, who had been ill for some time at the school while awaiting acceptance at the sanatorium, was taken to hospital where she died. She was the first child buried from the school chapel. In August 1943, Mary Ginnish and Doris Atquin drowned, having separated themselves from the group during a berry-picking expedition and taken an old boat, which was "too strong a temptation for them," onto a nearby lake. The Sisters felt sure, however, that "God in his Mercy...overlooked their childish disobedience or forgetfulness." That same year, Colin Bernard died, a "delicate boy" who apparently contracted diphtheria. His mother had brought him to the school only to learn his Catechism and make his first Holy Communion as they lived "far from the church and other Indians." And shortly thereafter Mary Toney died in hospital of tubercular meningitis. In 1947, Mary Agnes Ward, who had been transferred to the sanatorium in Bathurst a year earlier, "died a happy, holy death." She was described as "a good little patient, polite and grateful, pious and obedient." Later that year, Albert Pictou, died in hospital in Halifax. When word of the gravity of his illness reached the school, two Sisters went to the hospital to be with him. In June 1948, three boys were taken to the Truro Hospital for tonsil operations, but Maurice Young tragically died on the operating table. He was buried "beside our Nancy in the cemetery at the Reserve." In February 1949, the Sisters recorded a "sudden call for Monseigneur [Mackey] to anoint Ella Cooper. The dear soul so faithful to her religious duties went suddenly but not unprepared." In January 1959 the Sisters expressed sorrow at learning that 13-year old Mary Marshall had died during Christmas vacation at home. They noted that she was "one of our nicest little girls of last year." Another child, Bryant

Simon, died in March 1965, after having returned home the previous September to spend his last days with his family.

All these deaths, the only ones mentioned in the Annals, number only sixteen. While there may have been other deaths not recorded by the Sisters, it seems that only a small per cent of the children who passed through the school in its thirty-seven years did not survive the experience. This is in stark contrast to the number mentioned in the National Film Board's "Duncan Campbell Scott," in which it is suggested that fifty per cent of the children in Canadian residential schools did not live to benefit from their education.<sup>13</sup>

Discipline is seldom mentioned, though in 1963-4, the list of Sisters for the school year includes one as "disciplinarian of girls" and another as her assistant. The following year the term "supervisor of girls" was used instead, and in 1960 she was called "mistress of girls." Since no disciplinarian is listed for the boys, it might be assumed that the principal filled the role; however, in 1958, when a resident Brother took over supervision of the boys' side of the school, it was noted that he released three Sisters from duty there. There are few indications of the difficulties of discipline, but a telling one in August, 1948, when the obediences arrived from Mount Saint Vincent, only one Sister was to be replaced:

Our list was changed by only one name but what a big loss to the staff it meant to see Sister Mary Leonard destined for the West. Sister is to be replaced by Sister Francis Marian from the West, and it is with much fear and trembling that Sister assumes her duty as Disciplinarian of our seventy Indian girls.

Her apprehension is not surprising, since only two months earlier two girls had planned to attack their disciplinarian with a knife.

Georgina Charles and Cecilia Denny, annoyed about the vacation plans, take a knife to bed to wreak their ill will on Sister Leonard. Plot is discovered and both ladies land in the

Good Shepherd Convent--one in Halifax and one in Saint John. Major McKay [from Indian Affairs and visiting the school for the past week] and Mr. Rice [Indian Agent at Shubenacadie] both approve of action taken.

The intended stabbing may have precipitated the Sister's removal from the school. As Knockwood noted,

No one seems to know exactly what provoked the planned attack. However, it may have had some effect, because the following year Sister Mary Leonard's name is absent from the list of nuns working at the school and never reappeared.<sup>14</sup>

Earlier in the year there had been a different problem with the girls:

All well physically but the discovery of notes of a questionable nature among the girls left us all very sad. Father Brown gave the senior girls a talk on purity which should be a help with tomorrow's confession.

That same year, there was a problem with the school's milk supply, and a worker was hired to build a milk cooler which, it was hoped, would result in less milk going sour. This brings to mind Knockwood's story that the boys who did the milking became tired of drinking skim milk while the Sisters and priest drank cream, and so sometimes urinated in the Sisters' supply as a protest.<sup>15</sup> While she says the nuns never found out, the story at first seems questionable since surely the cream would have spoiled and revealed the treachery. But apparently it did sour, and curiosity is aroused as to whether the milk cooler was able to solve the problem.

Only once are runaways mentioned, although it is known that truancy was a frequent difficulty. This time, in the summer of 1948, the Sisters noted only that "four boys took to the road after looting the pantry. Vain search going on."

But the longest entry in the Annals followed the 1934 incident in which school disciplinary practices became sensational news (see chapter two). Initially, the Sisters simply said that after \$50 was found to be missing,

Father Mackey was notified, the police were called, and "punishment was given." Two weeks later they commented that the press had reported the "over-excessive strapping of the Indian boys" and that Ottawa would be investigating. As for the investigation itself, which took place on the 7th and 8th of June in the local Odd Fellows Hall, the Annals say only that

(t)wo of the Sisters appeared in Court, gave evidence, and returned home. The case was in favour of Father Mackey.

However, that September 30, they celebrated the "Vindication of the Indian School Staff":

Local papers as well as "The Casket" contained the official announcement that Father Mackey was vindicated after an investigation and court action...This news was received with great joy by all.

The Sister in charge of the journal took pains to copy by hand the long report verbatim from "The Casket," October 1934. It referred to lurid headlines, brutal details, and even the "noble children of the forest" who "gave exclusive interviews expressing their condemnation of the occurrence." The Indian Agent, it was said, "'bayed the moon' at the treatment given his innocent charges," and news correspondents "became more than usually incoherent as they played up the situation" and insisted that blame be placed where it belonged. This demand was well satisfied, the report continued, with the decision of the judge that the principal should be "commended and congratulated." The "54,000 word report" was said to be dotted with comments on the merits of corporal punishment, including the following judgement:

A weak punishment to these Indian pupils would have had no effect, would have been turned into derision...if strap, cane and birch are used in the white man's school, as a fair...expedient, why cannot they be resorted to with the Indians? The laws of the land have changed the environment of the Indians and they must be taught to adjust themselves to their new environment.

The most happy days reported at the school by the Sisters were, not surprisingly, the Christmas holidays, when, as in 1940, the "days were skated away." When 1945 brought an early November snowfall,

The shiny double runners, which Mr. McLeod [the school engineer] had so carefully repaired and painted, red for the boys and green for the girls, were put to profitable use. Skates and skis are the only things that count these days.

Double runners, Knockwood explains, sat six to nine children and were made by joining two sleds together with boards.<sup>16</sup>

The children did receive Christmas gifts, both from their families and from the Sisters. In 1937 it was noted that the children had never before seemed to receive "so many nice parcels from home," and that they also were given the "usual books, games, hankies and gadgets." The following year they had two visits from Santa:<sup>17</sup>

Santa was very good as usual and generous with his popcorn, bags of candy, etc., which he distributed in the children's refectory after breakfast. All the children were well remembered and Santa was especially good to those who had no home parcels. The Community Santa was good too, and arrived in true fashion on Christmas Eve.

As noted by the Sisters in 1941, Father Mackey also gave something to the children, "a set of new sweaters one year, a set of zipper windbreakers another year, besides the usual supply of books, games, puzzles and candy." In 1945 there were still wartime shortages, but Santa was generous despite a "lack of dolls and dishes and toys." Two years later it was noted that

All the unfortunates not favoured by a package from home were given a substantial one from Santa's donations left under the tree. The Sisters show much tact and ingenuity in making each one feel that their package is just for them.

In 1948 about fifty per cent of the children received gifts from home, "a big improvement over the years when only a dozen would be remembered by

their parents." However, in 1955 the Annals noted that the children were not always careful with their gifts: they were said that year to be "very good and certainly proved that they did not always destroy their toys on Christmas day."

Knockwood remembers Christmas gifts differently, recalling the Christmas toys being taken away and the dolls being hung on the walls out of reach.<sup>18</sup> She cites another former pupil as remembering

My dad came down with Christmas gifts for me and my brother ...The nuns wouldn't allow us to have the gifts and my father had to take them back home. The only thing we were allowed to have was the candy and the fruit, so we had to eat it all before it was taken from us.<sup>19</sup>

The children's Christmas concert was not necessarily religious as might be expected. In 1956 the disciplinarian, who also led the school choir, prepared an operetta for the children to perform, titled "Santa Saves the Day." The Sisters enjoyed the secular side of the holidays too, as this December 1939 entry shows:

What would Christmas be for the children without a snowstorm!...this year will be marked as an especially good one for coasting. The double runners were keeping Mr. McLeod a very busy man, with extra repairing. The Sisters are often the back seat drivers, and have experienced many a bump, tumble and bruises.

The next month when three Sisters arrived for a visit,

...they were no sooner here, than on went the skates and sweaters, and down to the rink for a skate. Even a little coasting too!

In the days before Christmas, there were "magnificent" evergreen wreaths made by the boys and spruce boughs draped around the rooms. Additional spruce was "tied" by the children for the other institutions run by the Sisters of Charity, Lourdes Sanatorium, St. Mary's, the Vincentian Home, and the

orphanage. There was always at least one decorated tree, chopped in the woods, and as the Sisters saw it in 1939,

There is no fuss made about prices or sizes in claiming our Christmas trees, for those who live in God's wide open fields, and forests nearby, have but to say, "What is God's is ours!"

The Sisters were indulgent as the children listened to Santa on the radio:

The children, young and old, are attentive listeners to the Santa Program at five each evening. The bell for beads must not be rung a moment too soon lest the spell be broken.

On Christmas Eve each year, the children sang throughout the school to awaken the Sisters and summon all the Midnight Mass.

Shortly before midnight, the Angel's Adeste was heard throughout the building, starting on the girl's side, through corridors and finally up the boy's stairs, calling all to make haste and come down to adore Christ.

Or, as one Sister described it in 1956, "The Angels sang the carols throughout the house." Apparently only once was the Christmas serenity broken, and here from the December 24, 1947 entry is perhaps the most poignant moment recorded in the Annals:

Two inebriated Indian parents marred the quiet and peace of the house for some hours until they were finally disposed of by being threatened with the RCMP.

The picture brought to mind by this one sentence touches the imagination with sorrow, showing two parents, perhaps from the Shubenacadie reserve, who may have walked the sobering five miles to the school to see their child or children. It was Christmas Eve, and of course they were lonely, but the Annals do not tell us if they demanded to take their children home for the holiday, or if they just wanted to visit them. In any event, they continued their appeal outside the school for "some hours" before realizing that all they would gain was arrest. Another picture, equally sad, is of the children of

these parents, surely aware of the commotion outside, perhaps watching from the window.

It was, of course, the policy of Indian Affairs not to allow children home for Christmas holidays, even, one assumes, if their homes were as close as the Shubenacadie reserve. Shortly before Christmas, 1938, the Kentville Indian Agent received a letter from the Department which stated the policy clearly and unemotionally.

For many reasons which will no doubt suggest themselves to you, the Department does not allow holidays at Christmas, and I might say further that no valid reason has yet been given to us why holidays should be allowed at that period of the year. There is no question that the children attending the Shubenacadie Residential School receive every possible care and attention, and in addition at Christmas time there are always special festivities which the children enjoy.<sup>20</sup>

It has already been mentioned that not all children returned home during the summer vacation either, and according to the Annals in 1950, those who remained enjoyed "shows, picnics and candy." In the early years this was a matter decided by the various agents depending upon their opinion of home conditions. But by 1952 it seems that all children who had parents or someone else to care for them were able to go home, and of 159 resident children, 104 left for vacations. As it was described that year, the days before summer dismissal were busy ones for everyone. Besides having to record "names, number and destination" of the children going home,

just before the children left for their homes, the works of the house were multiplied and various. Sheets, mattress covers, and clothing that could be put away had to be washed, besides the regular laundry. Children were fitted out with clothing for the journey. Extra cooking for train lunches had to be done. Transport had to be arranged...Report cards were given out. Through all this work the children, nearly 160, must be supervised. Four of our staff were not here during this extra rush. [The Sisters went on retreat at this time of year.]



By 1959, all the children went home for summer holidays, although that year the Sisters said that the renovations had left the school

so attractive that some of the older children should have liked to have stayed here for the summer. Nevertheless, all were duly assigned to some or other home for the vacation period.

This was an interesting time of change in the school, for the farm was for sale and the empty barn was transformed by one of the Brothers into an indoor skating rink in winter and a gym the rest of the year. The boys played basketball and volleyball there, but the girls were said seldom to go to the gym for fear of hay fleas. Besides allowing extensive repairs to the school, the government was now paying women, preferably Indian, to work in the kitchen and laundry as well as to help with the children's mending. This was noted as an appreciated change for the school girls, who then could spend their time "entirely, or nearly so, on their schoolwork."

Also in 1958, Mrs. MacPhee, an Indian woman from Truro, was hired to work in the absence of one of the Sisters. She worked so well that she was retained after the Sister's return to help the girls' supervisor, taking a "keen interest in each child" and doing much to "lighten Sister's burden." When she left because her husband was posted away, a former student of the school filled her place. Mrs. MacDonald, in fact, was one of the twin girls who had been among the first pupils in the school, the first to come from their reserve home rather than another institution, and she expressed her appreciation of the Sisters' work in the school since its opening. When the school opened in the fall of 1959, it was the first time that the newly-arrived Primary-aged children were all, with just one exception, English speaking.

In the earlier years there is no mention of specific graduation exercises for leaving students, and perhaps there were none. In 1938 thirty of the one hundred and seventy-five were discharged, but as the school

records show that the highest grade taught that year was seven, with only fourteen children in that grade, the other sixteen must have left after grade six, and must have been at least sixteen years old to be eligible to leave. Some of them had been in the school since its inception, eight and a half years earlier. The Sisters echoed the old sentiments of Indian Affairs in their thoughts of the school leavers that June:

What is ahead of them, only God knows, but we hope they have profited by the years spent here, and will try to inculcate the virtues and habits they practiced here, into the hearts of those at home.

In 1940 the "day of farewell" was described as quiet and respectful. The children who went home travelled by train, and were driven to the station by Father Mackey. The next year the Sisters noted that the days of June were being counted, the children eager for a glimpse of "Home Sweet Home." The Sisters seemed to have mixed feelings, glad of their lightened loads, but concerned that home perhaps was not as sweet as it should be.

Once again the month of June rolls around...it is pleasant after the year has ended, to look forward to the summer, the smaller number of children, and the relaxation permitted, when the strain and worry of one hundred sixty is lessened to seventy or eighty. It is sad though to look at the other side of the picture, and think of the masses, that will of necessity be missed; the pangs of hunger that will be felt; the freedom, which the children consider happiness!

The Sisters obviously looked forward to summer vacation as eagerly as did the children: one of them, with permission to visit relatives in 1957, was said to have taken "the 'freedom' train for Boston. (O Happy Day!)." In 1955 the Sisters had to admit that they "were happier this year than ever as only thirty-eight children were to remain for the summer." Even so, the Sisters seemed to have had misgivings each June when they sent graduates back home. "Little do they realize what is ahead of them," were the words expressing

their reluctance to let go in 1944. "They have been instructed and warned."

The first time an "Indian banquet" was held for the graduates was in June, 1948.

The ten old enough to leave school were all dressed up in their freedom clothes and lined up in the Reading Room for a course dinner--from fruit cup to ice cream and candy. Father Brown presided and all the Sisters were amazed at the poise and good manners displayed...After the dinner they were permitted to go to the show chaperoned by Peggy McDonald and Jimmy Prosper. All were unanimous in proclaiming the last day the happiest of all.

Three years later the closing exercises included a program of music, recitations, dance numbers, and a comedy skit by the children. Betty Lou Pictou was the first mentioned valedictorian, and many pupils received prizes, including Molly Sabbatis who merited a medal for general excellence. The school's boy scouts gave a display of drills, relays and feats which was said to surprise their audience, and the manual training teacher displayed work done by the boys. Before the children left for vacation, they attended a ceremony at the nearby Shubenacadie fire hall at the request of the Provincial Historical Society of Nova Scotia, for the unveiling of a plaque to celebrate "the first encampment made by the Indians of the Maritimes, the Micmacs over three hundred years ago." The children supplied the singing for the occasion, and as was remarked earlier in the Annals, "our children do sing with their whole hearts."

Of course, most of the children who went home in the summer were expected to return in late August, and the Sisters' words reveal their level of understanding, being never unmindful of how it must have felt to the children to return or to come to school for the first time. In 1939, the Annals speak of what it was like for the newcomers when they first "marched into their respective classrooms":

...this was just one more fright, to be later transformed into joy. Nevertheless the wide questioning eyes told the tale. To have to climb into a big, white high something called a bed was a tremendous accomplishment, but now one has to sit in a big room with everything so shiny--and hear a person in black speak words that are not Micmac! But kindness breaks all barriers and Sister Cyprian conquered! Soon her babes strut off to class feeling proud to say, School! Supper! Sister! Bed! All in! All out!

In 1940 again the Sisters expressed their empathy for the children coming up the hill and back to school. "Slowly and steadily came the line from the train. 'Be it ever so humble' is written all over their faces." In 1947 it was said, "We are welcoming back a few bronzed and weary Indians every hour;" and in 1948, "The children began the mournful return to school and discipline which is so contrary to the Indian temperament."

That year, although the Sister wrote that they were "filled to capacity," the records show that one hundred sixty one children were registered, rather over its intended capability, as usual. The Sisters were well aware that "capacity" meant whatever number of children the government deemed to need their help. In 1936, referring to the large number of children in residence, the Annals astutely record "a full house, but the house with elastic sides always has room for one more."

For the children's entertainment, the Annals speak of sports played with the village boys, picnics, bonfires, taffy apples for Thanksgiving, and "woods days" which seem to have been different outings from those for berry or mayflower gathering. There were movies at the school, sometimes educational, sometimes home movies which showed the children themselves. One, taken at Whycocomagh, was particularly enjoyed as some children were able to recognize relatives and friends from home. Hollywood movies were apparently a "monthly treat," and though few were specifically mentioned in the Annals, Knockwood recalls they were "mostly cowboy films

where the Indians got slaughtered."<sup>21</sup> The Sisters in 1939 recorded a happier attitude:

A movie! the welcome word among the children! Sisters escort the children and enjoy the movies too! Gene Autry was the screen hero of the day.

In 1940 the children saw a movie the Sisters called "their favourite, 'Mickey Rooney'." But it seems they may have liked "Tarzan" even more:

...a better picture could not be selected for Indian boys and girls, letting them see in the picture their loved forests and waterways, while the characters lived again their simple woodland ways. For many a day, one will witness Tarzan right here in the building, in the person of the actors, the Indian boys.

In January, 1940, the Sisters and the children began their war effort, "knitting for the sailors!" The next month, at a Red Cross meeting at the home of the school's physician in Shubenacadie, "the scarves made by the Sisters and children were highly praised." At the meeting in October, a total of two hundred and three pieces knitted or sewn at the school were presented, "a very good showing, it was remarked at the meeting." But by the following March there was less enthusiasm evident and it was noted that all were busy trying to finish their Red Cross work,

...but there seems to be no end to it. One supply goes over to the Red Cross branch, to be replaced with a few more bales of sock yarn, navy blue for balaclavas, and a variety for sweaters, scarfs, and mittens.

It has already been mentioned that the school was inspected by government officials at least once a year, but few reports are extant. The Annals mention the various inspection visits, but with no remarks on how they were rated until 1945, when it was said that Inspector Campbell left "with most complimentary remarks." In 1948 he "wrote glowing reports in the Registers of classes visited," and that December Colonel Jones from Ottawa

made a visit to the school and "was loud in his praise of the work being done." Still, the Sisters seemed to anticipate the inspection visits with some anxiety, as in 1949 they mentioned "the dreaded visit of Inspector Campbell." All went well, however. The cook "made her usual good impression with a delicious dinner," and the inspector "spoke in glowing terms of the work accomplished in the classes."

Several inspectors visited the school early in 1951. In January, Colonel Jones visited again, and was said to enjoy the dancing of the children. In February, Inspector Campbell returned for a two-day visit and "found the work satisfactory," the Sisters wrote, "and judging from a couple of remarks he made, he thought some of the work was above the average." That month, too, a dietitian from Indian Affairs made a week-long visit to the school, observing at each meal "the kind and amount of food consumed by the children," and the Sisters felt she found the children to be "very well fed." This is not as Knockwood remembers the school meals:

I never did get to eat off the fancy dishes or taste the gourmet meals that the priest enjoyed. Instead, I ate potatoes that were often rotten and rancid meat from enameled tin plates.<sup>22</sup>

Two particular successes among the school's graduates were mentioned in the Annals, Billy Crispo, who was ordained in May, 1967, and James Prosper, for whom the school was apparently his only home. In September, 1943, Prosper joined the Air Force, and a farewell banquet was given in the refectory in his honour. According to the Annals,

Jimmy had been here since the school opened. He did very well all along in his studies, was always gentlemanly as well as studious and bright. When he finished Grade 8 he was given a chance to go over to town to attend high school. While there he proved himself worthy of his chance, and on several occasions he surpassed his classmates and led his class. Father Mackey presided at the table...speeches were made while the meal was being served, and the other children

rendered a sing song. It was a joyous evening and everybody was happy, even Jimmy, although he was reluctant to leave the only home had had known for so long.

Prosper is next mentioned in October 1946, when Father Brown drove him to St. Francis Xavier University. He returned "home" to the school for the Christmas holidays and again the next summer, going back to university in the fall and to Shubenacadie again for Christmas. The Annals note, "Jimmy is home from college and will be a great help." In fact, with the assistance of two Sisters and "a few extra Braves," he did an "artistic job in the Chapel." In January when he went back to St. F.X., the Sisters noted, "We are sorry to lose him as he is always helpful in repairs of all kinds." It has already been noted that Prosper was in attendance at the first graduation banquet held at the school in 1948, but the last mention of the boy, dated January 1949, is a curious one: "Jimmy, who spent the holidays home from Camp Hill [Hospital] returned in the Halifax bound car. Let us hope his health continues to improve." His obvious feelings for the school as his home speaks well for the institution and for the Sisters.

The Annals tell little of the school's principals, although one of the writers refers to Father Brown as "good Father Brown" and mention is made of one of his visits to the school in 1940 three years before he became principal:

Father Brown...loves the Indians and is dearly loved by them. Their great tribute is thus worded, "Father Brown is so kind." This simple sentence speaks much in the Indian's way of expression.

His heart condition became evident in October, 1947, and the next month he "took a strange seizure." In the summer of 1948 he was superannuated. "A very definite feeling of sadness pervades the house as our dear Father Brown shares with the Sisters of Charity a hard obedience." He had hoped

to remain in the school for a few more years, until he was seventy. He did visit twice before his death, once in October, 1948, when he regaled the Sisters with "old stories oft told but never losing their interest," and again in 1951, three weeks before a fatal stroke in December.

Father Mackey was the longest-standing principal, from the school's opening until 1943 when he left because of ill health. His resignation was a shock to the community and a concern for the Sisters as they "were losing the Principal, Bursar, etc." The day he departed "dawned much as the day of a funeral might dawn." He visited the school in 1945, and it was noted that the children, especially the older ones, were always glad to see him. He returned as principal following the retirement of Father Brown, and remained in the school until his death in May, 1957. His remains were returned to the school where "a continued flow of visitors, both white and Indian, arrived to pay their respects." It was especially gratifying for the Sisters to see the many Indians from Shubenacadie and the former students. The Annals record that

Monseigneur dearly loved the Indian children, and the tears and wet cheeks testified to all that the feeling was mutual. The visits to the parlor were almost constant and the Hail Marys were surely heard in Heaven...And so Monseigneur Mackey has passed from us, but his little Indian charges will never forget him.

Knockwood's story is different, and she cites one of the students who recalled

We had to line up and go to the front parlour to pay our last respects to the priest who had abused us. All the children were forced to say their prayers...I didn't pray. I just knelt there and I was sort of happy.<sup>23</sup>

Of the funeral in Springhill, Knockwood says that although it was only a one-hour drive from Shubenacadie, no one except the Chief, John Bernard,



attended.<sup>24</sup> Telegrams were sent by the Bishop of Charlottetown calling Monseigneur Mackey an excellent priest, and by Bishop Lieberman of New Brunswick saying he was an "exemplary priest, held in high esteem."<sup>25</sup>

From 1936, the Sisters of Charity also taught in the Kootenay Indian Residential School in Cranbrook, British Columbia, and Sister Paul of the Cross was transferred there as Superior in the summer of 1946. In a letter she sent to Shubenacadie one month later, she spoke fondly of the school she had left behind. The Annals record that she found

the Cranbrook children to be Indians, but Indians of another kind. We do not know if Sister is being partial to the Micmacs but according to her long newsy letter "They couldn't be compared." The Micmac are far superior, better workers, happier, etc. Time will probably reveal the same qualities and Sister Paul of the Cross will be so loyal to her Kootenays that they will probably be fifty years ahead of the Eastern Indians, instead of behind them.

These words suggest that the Sisters' loyalty was not only to God and the church, but to the children equally. When considering the idea of the church as patron and the children as clients, it must be considered that the Sisters perhaps placed themselves between two allegiances. Again the question arises of serving more than one master, but it may be that the very qualities that produce a Sister of Charity are those that permit one to be of service to all. Sisters as servants may not be brokers in the anthropological sense, and the idea both illuminates and clouds the model under scrutiny. For the moment, however, the suggestion of loyalty to the children helps clarify the question of the Sisters' attitudes toward the children, their aims of education, and the way they perceived their mission.

Just as the Annals speak constantly of the children, both telling and suggesting the inside story of the school, so too, in recording their actions and thoughts, do they speak of the Sisters themselves. In true modesty,

whoever wrote the entries did so as an observer of everyday life without judgement of others, and subsumed herself in writing as she presumably did in reality. Their humility is revealed in the entry for November 16, 1934, telling of the Sisters' invitation to join more than ninety other teachers at a Teachers' Institute held at the Shubenacadie (reserve) school.

The Sisters received a cordial welcome and great was their surprise when they were asked to give their views on the subjects discussed, as well as an account of the work they were doing at the Indian School.

The lyricism of some of the entries has already been shown, and this one from August, 1939, indulgently shared here in full, tells of the Sister who wrote it as clearly as it speaks of summer at Shubenacadie:

Evening! down, not by the Swanee River, but the Shubenacadie River, in every respect as peaceful and enchanting a riverside as the famous Swanee shore. Supper had been served for the children in true camp style, cooked and eaten while sitting by the green pasture, near the open fire, watching the waters running along their course. As the twilight closed, the silvery moon rose reflecting its mellow image across the waters. The fire blazed brilliantly--seventy-five dark faces smiling around it, and the old familiar songs rang out into the tranquil young night. Then at Sister Superior's request an evening hymn to Our Lady was [sung]. After "Camp lights out," all ascended the hill, over the playground and up to bed. The Sisters not on duty with the children had Points--their evening visit to the Tabernacle Friend, and they too, surrendered themselves to the care of Providence. Thus passed one of several such evenings--in a summer, spent at Shubenacadie, "down by the river."

The Annals reveal the humourous side of the Sisters as well, as seen in this story of an accident in January, 1936, when Sister Armel slipped and broke her knee while opening a window at night study. The doctor tied it, the school engineer made a splint, and two other male staff members came to take the Sister to the train.

Two good horses were called and off they went to the station. Sister Superior accompanied Sister Armel sitting on the open

sleigh, at the foot of the cot, on a soap box. Sad as it was and serious as it was we shall never recall it without a smile...The cot had to go on the baggage car and consequently the Sisters had to go on the baggage car, and Sister Superior was quite aware of the wooden box beside her and well guessed its contents. Who can tell her feelings! She is the only one, and she is not any too communicative.

Humour in the wake of an accident was revealed again in April, 1941. One of the Sisters fell on the Saturday before Easter while waxing and shining, and "being no light weight fell hard." An x-ray in Truro revealed a broken arm, and a few days later she went by car to the Infirmary in Halifax for further examination.

Lo and behold she came back worse than she went. Sister slipped while stepping out of the car and sprained her ankle, at the same time she hurt the knee of her other leg. It is a tragedy indeed when one cannot find something funny, and as tragic as the whole affair was, it excited quite a bit of laughter.

Jokes on themselves were particularly enjoyed, as illustrated in this entry from January 15, 1948:

A vigorous ring on the doorbell during Mass announced the arrival of our ever-rushed and enthusiastic Mr. Morris [visitor from Indian Affairs in Ottawa] who greeted the Superior with the remark that they really had a genuine Superior at Eskasoni, which left room for conjecture as to his present impressions.

The Sisters' humour could be light: "[We] took twelve darlings to Halifax for x-rays. Left by jitney and returned on the 417." (Father Mackey's car was notoriously in need of replacement.) Sometimes their humour was a little dry, proceeding as it did from bearing crosses. The summer of 1943 had seen the start of a series of unfortunate events, beginning with the drowning of two girls in August. In September a boy went to the hospital in Halifax with appendicitis, and the following day the school was quarantined with diphtheria. Five cases developed and the school was several weeks in seclusion. During the epidemic, a boy who had been ill on arrival suddenly

died. Father Mackey was ill too and was taken to the Infirmary, and on his return encountered an ambulance at the school waiting to take a mortally ill girl to hospital. Winter set in with a vengeance, Father Mackey retired, and there was little enthusiasm for Christmas preparations. The Annals allow insight into these difficult and slowly-passing months in words which could come only from a Sister of Charity: "God was generous with His Graces," she wrote, "in the form of sickness and worry."

The Sisters have already been seen as back-seat drivers on toboggans, and they were mindful of the children's eagerness for outdoor winter sport as well. In January, 1948, it was mentioned that the children were excused from night study just so they could go coasting and skiing, and "the youthful nuns had some thrilling rides on the 'double runners'" too. In 1958, when there was little ice for skating, the hills were said to furnish "a share of gaiety when huge bobsleds went gliding over their crests, filled with laughing, happy children--some of an older growth." Toboggans, however, were the source of accidents, as in March 1938 when Josephine Cloud broke her leg while coasting, and in January 1967 when one of the boys crashed into Sister Helen Patrick's toboggan, fracturing her leg.

The Sisters, then, were not above frivolity, as exemplified further in a 1950 entry in which they recorded the observation of a UFO:

On Friday, September 22, between 7:30 and 9 p.m. the floating masses of light in the sky, spoken of as "The Flying Saucers," were seen by the Sisters. The masses of light continued to pass at intervals of about two minutes, moving in an easterly to westerly direction. The contour of each was very distinct, and resembled somewhat the map of Newfoundland.

In 1958, the Sisters were hoping that when their obediences arrived they would find their numbers augmented, since "twelve Sisters did not

seem to satisfy the constant demands, in time, labour, and services." Although they were disappointed, again they took it with humour.

We found ourselves worse off than before for only ten Sisters were to staff the school this year--"Ten Little Indian Nuns."

Until a Brother arrived in October to help with the boys, the Sisters found it hard, especially when one of their ten was sent elsewhere as a substitute, and "then there were nine."

But the Sisters seemed always to bear their burdens lightly and without complaint. The mission was not without difficulties, and these were mentioned here and there but never in detail. Perhaps it was thought that if something is observed only in passing, so it will pass. The first intimation that the assignment contained any hardship came in 1942, when the government's plans for the centralization of Indians in Nova Scotia were discussed and it was learned that the new model reserve planned for Shubenacadie would feature a school and a hospital, both to be staffed by the Sisters of Charity. It was unanimously felt that before they could agree to this undertaking they would require "special five-year courses in Indian Psychology," but none knew of a college where this course might be offered.

Then, in June of 1945, the school year closed with these remarks:

Thus ends another year, blessed with many graces and blessings. We are grateful to God for His Graces and Blessings, and also for His Crosses, which seemed small enough and numerous enough to chase each other away.

In December, 1947, the school was referred to as the place "where God's unwanted and uncared for find shelter and loving care." And the words "Indian problem" eventually appeared, in June, 1948.

Word came today that four Sisters of St. Martha from Eskasoni were coming to visit us the weekend. They have the Indian problem as we do, so a little discussion should be of mutual help.

In May, 1956, the Sisters were driven to Micmac [Shubenacadie reserve] for a teachers' conference, and there

we enjoyed a very profitable day; discussing our problems with teachers from other Indian schools in Nova Scotia. The day was all too short for all we had to discuss.

In October that same year, three Sisters went to Eskasoni to attend a convention for teachers in Indian schools. The Annals wryly note that "after settling all the problems behind the Buckskin Curtain for another year, they returned to Shubenacadie."

A new kind of inspection came to the school *en masse* in November, 1958, when a busload of visitors, mostly social workers, came to inspect the school and question the worth of the work done there. Three were whites and the rest Indians, and some told the Sisters they came to see for themselves "whether or not it was worthwhile sending children here." The Sisters noted:

The Indian Agent of the particular place does all the deciding. Then too, we get only the problem children, whose parents cannot possibly manage them; also, an occasional orphan case.

Mr. Campbell continued to inspect the institution, and in 1963 he was said to be "very appreciative of the work being done in the school and most understanding of the difficulties." But the school was soon to close. The obediences for 1965-66 brought "the glad news" that there would be no changes amongst the Sisters in the school for its penultimate year. But during the school's final year, one Sister died suddenly and another was replaced. That Hallowe'en the Sisters "established a precedent" by eating with the children: "It was hard to decide which table to occupy," the Annals read, "because the children were all so anxious that we sit at all the tables."

The biggest change that last year was evident in the participation the Indian people were now allowed in the matter of education. In March the teaching Sisters attended a two-day Community Development Seminar on Indian Education in the company of teachers from several reserves, Indian chiefs and council members, and officials from the Department of Indian Affairs. The Sisters were "very much impressed by the sincerity and eagerness of the various Indians who spoke about the necessity of a good education and character formation for their children." They also attended the April Home and School meeting at the East Hants High School, with its theme "the Indians of Canada." One of the Sisters, along with Chief Neven and Mr. Thompson from Indian Affairs, participated in a panel discussion on Indian education and the closing of the residential school.

In May they held a farewell supper for one of the Sisters, well aware that their "own time for final departure" would be coming soon. The long awaited obediences arrived on June 10th, dispersing the Sisters to Terence Bay, Halifax, Quebec, and Massachusetts. They held a final picnic for the school and staff at Montavista, near Enfield on June 13th, sent the children to their various reserves on June 20th, and left the school for the last time on June 24th, 1967.

Although this summary of the Annals might be said to present an idealized vision of the Sisters, it must be remembered that this is the way they presented themselves and their mission at the school. These thoughts, these views, were in the Sisters' own words, written as they pictured their surroundings and their charges. That it contrasts sharply with the interjected pieces of story emanating from the Knockwood memoir shows how the same event as seen by different eyes actually becomes a different event; perhaps it also shows how good intentions can go awry.

The Sisters came from an idealized six years in the Motherhouse on the way to taking their final vows. It has been said they were not cloistered but not of the world either--somewhere midway--yet, it might be considered that they were close to cloistered in the residential school for they seldom ventured from the grounds, only to accompany children to the hospital or to go on their annual retreats. They were surely not of the world, having left it behind their postulancy to take up the pursuit of perfection. While their Annals paint a picture of peace, it may have proceeded more from the Sisters' inner peace than from the everyday reality of school life.

It is interesting to consider their presence in the school as a reflection of their own years of preparation for sisterhood: as novices they began the day at Mass, did housework in the morning, then class, a similar schedule to that at Shubenacadie. Academic study at both the Motherhouse and the residential school was less important than personal development--forming oneself as proposed by the church--and as C.C. Currie noted (see chapter two), the school's objective was less geared to graduation than to the development of moral character, less academic than vocational. As were the Sisters themselves, the children were prepared for "the particular work for which [they] seemed fitted."

It might also be noted that their attitudes toward the Indian children were similar to those they held of the unwed mothers in the Halifax home: that they might help give them a normal, happy life away from "the wounds that life has dealt them," and that they might lead them to "holier ways of thinking and acting." Their feelings toward the abandoned infants were as that of their school wards, that they needed the tenderest of care, holding as they did such great potential for good or evil. It was, of course, a time



when institutional care was seen as a remedy for the environmental and even biological ills of a poor home life, when removing people from unfortunate influences and placing them in ideal surroundings was seen as good for both society in general and the afflicted individual in particular.

The Sisters did not write daily nor did they write of the classroom, so the Annals cannot be said to be a complete record. Thus is this just a chapter of the Shubenacadie story; subsequent chapters will yield other perceptions. That the Indians did not view their institutionalization as did their patrons and agents will be addressed in chapter nine; that they were eventually to resent and regret their residential schooling will be explored in chapter ten. In these chapters, perspectives of the Shubenacadie experience by former pupils, their parents and Chiefs will clash with the views expressed here by the Sisters.

## CHAPTER SIX - NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Annals, Indian Residential School, Shubenacadie N.S. 1930-1967, handwritten account in a hard-covered day book, by the Sisters of Charity of their mission. As it is unpaginated, citations are identified only by date; as entries are not daily, some are listed only under a month or even just by year. Dates are noted as required throughout the chapter, and more specific references therefore will not be given.
2. The "Sisters' perceptions of the school" as presented in this chapter are based solely on the Annals, a source that must be seen in fuller context. See "Note on Sources."
3. J.T. McNally, Sisters of Charity, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1849-1949, February 28, 1949. This is a slim volume with little text and many photographs, and because it is unpaginated, page references cannot be given. Specific to the Sisters of Charity based in Halifax, it does not give insight into other orders, nor does it address the questions of the attitudes of women who are attracted to such groups or of their perceptions of themselves as novices and Sisters. For discussion of these matters, see Marta Danylewycz, Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987).
4. Danylewycz, op. cit., 39-46.
5. Ibid., 160.
6. According to Danylewycz, op. cit., during the later nineteenth century in Québec, the church had become increasingly involved in education, even gaining the right to train, certify, and hire teaching Brothers and Sisters. A large and influential teaching order, the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, claimed that "its noviciate was 'a true normal school' that prepared prospective teachers for their life's work; consequently, there was no need for the state to involve itself in the matter." (24, 25).
7. National Archives of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs (NAC DIA) Central Registry RG 10 Vol. 8598. Although it was difficult to discern levels of teacher training of the Sisters from DIA records, one reference was found in a January 31, 1960 list of "Teachers with University Degree" in the Shubenacadie residential and day schools. In the former, Sisters Mary Clarita and Marie Euphemia each had a B.A., while a secular teacher (the handwritten name is difficult to decipher), was listed as "Miss M.C. Collins B.A., B.Ed., M.Ps."
8. NAC DIA School Files (SF) RG 10 Vol. 6053, undated telegram and letter dated July 11, 1927 to D.C. Scott from A.J. Boyd, Chief Officer for the Department in Nova Scotia; letter from Boyd to Scott, of same date.

9. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6054, letter of November 24, 1927, to DIA from Mother M. Buchmans, Mount St. Vincent.
10. Personal conversation, January 1995, Sister Mary Martin, Sisters of Charity Archives.
11. It should be noted that the Annals was not a private journal of the school, presumably being open at least to all the Sisters and the Mother Superior. It is expected that this would colour the nature of the entries.
12. Personal interview with Isabelle Shay (Knockwood), October 1987.
13. National Film Board, Duncan Campbell Scott: The Poet and the Indians, 1995.
14. Isabel Knockwood with Gillian Thomas, Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie. Nova Scotia (Lockeport N.S.: Roseway, 1992), 125.
15. Personal interview with Isabelle Shay (Knockwood), October 1987.
16. Knockwood, op. cit., 76.
17. Annals, December 1947. One of the Santas was played by "Maurice Young, who filled the suit rather than the role as his tongue cleaved to his jaws when the time for speech arrived. Much hilarity and pleasure came from the visit."
18. Personal interview with Isabelle Shay (Knockwood), October 1987; see also Knockwood, op. cit., 39.
19. Ibid., 38.
20. PAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6056, letter to Agent Spinney from P. Phelan.
21. Knockwood, op. cit., 73.
22. Ibid., 27.
23. Ibid., 140.
24. Ibid.
25. Catholic Archives, Halifax, N.S.

**PART THREE**  
**THE AGENTS**



## CHAPTER SEVEN: INDIANS AND INDIAN AGENTS IN NOVA SCOTIA

He [the Indian agent] must be a man who takes an active interest in the welfare of the Indian and looks on his remuneration not as a means of livelihood but as a means of permitting him to do a social service.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps one of the problems with the central administration of Canadian reserves has always been that requirements and expectations of the Indians were different in the east and in the west. As Harold Cardinal notes, conditions from reserve to reserve are still so varied that it is difficult to determine common needs and aspirations.<sup>2</sup> A British colonial policy for the protection of the Indian had been in effect in the east since 1763, and was expanded to include the civilization and development of the Indian after 1815. Principles of policy were well established by Confederation, and only during the 1870s did they extend into the west.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Indians in the Maritime Provinces, they had been in contact with whites long before many of the western tribes had, and were relatively settled.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, efforts of Indian Affairs were concentrated in the west; the residential school system, for example, was established there long before there was a similar school in the Maritimes. The policies of encouraging agriculture, including supplying seed grain, machinery, and breeding stock, were of importance mainly in the west where it was crucial to the settlement of white pioneers that the Indians be confined to reserves and become self-supporting farmers. Farming reserves were already successful in Ontario, and the fertility of the prairies offered promise that they would flourish in the west; but in the marginal Maritimes the rich agricultural reserve was not a viable expectation. J.D. Leighton felt the officials in Ottawa were hardly aware of

the Indian population in the Maritimes; because it was so scarce and scattered official neglect seemed justified.<sup>5</sup>

In this chapter it will be shown that the government was conscious of the particular problems of the Maritime Provinces' natives and sought to solve them but in an economical way; reports on the living conditions of the Indians will indicate that the poverty of the late nineteenth century continued well into the twentieth and was often ascribed to deficiencies of the Indians themselves. Through discussion of the role of the Indian agents, this chapter will indicate that the government put little monetary effort into Indian affairs in the Maritimes: in the case of Nova Scotia it considered that the relatively small but scattered population could be completely cared for by part-time agents on their off hours, and there was much suggestion that if only the native people would put forward a little effort to help themselves, they could solve their own problems.

The condition of Nova Scotia's Micmac during the later part of the nineteenth century was described in 1872 by Joseph Howe, when as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs he contrasted them unfavourably with the Indians of the former Canadas. The latter, he said, were "courteous, intelligent and reasonable...well educated, well dressed, as careful in their habits and as courteous in their manners as are the highest class of white men." But the Micmac, he felt, had been reduced to shameful conditions "by the neglect of the Government and the indifference of the whites," and the small government grants they received were just alms, not conducive to "industry, thrift, [or] social elevation."<sup>6</sup>

In 1911, Duncan C. Scott as Superintendent General noted little improvement. Although Nova Scotia had long been settled and cultivated, many of the Micmac had remained wanderers, their association with their white neighbours not having induced them to establish fixed residences and

farms. This was one reason it was difficult to educate the children; the other detrimental factor was their "actual poverty," particularly visible in the winter when many of the Micmac were without warm clothing.<sup>7</sup>

In the early 1920s the concern shown toward the Micmac by H.J. Bury, Supervisor of Indian Timber Lands, indicated that they were suffering a bare existence under the gaze of indifferent agents:

The local Indian agent has interests of his own which are to him of paramount importance, and his Indian work is purely subsidiary, consequently it is often the case that the Indian considers, with some justification, that his own interests are frequently neglected.<sup>8</sup>

The agents, of course, did have full-time work other than their Indian concerns, and a 1932 list of Nova Scotian agents indicated their occupations as follows: clerk in men's haberdashery; carpenter and mill worker; tobacco jobber and traveller; carpenter and labourer; fishery officer; doctor; general merchant; radio and battery dealer; butcher; manager of co-operative store; and credit union officer. Three more were farmers, and of the three parish priests, one was absent that summer attending a graduate course.<sup>9</sup>

The economic plight of the Indian in Nova Scotia was mirrored by the low monetary value the government placed on the Indian agent, the position being given part-time status although the condition of the reserves and the Indians themselves suggests their care should have been a full-time pursuit. As Thomas Robertson's 1936 inspection report quoted at the start of this chapter shows, the agents in Nova Scotia were not expected to leave their regular jobs, but simply to add the responsibility of the Indian agencies as occasional social work.

Leighton argues that from the start low salaries and the government's refusal to pay the agents' expenses combined to make it



difficult to keep scrupulous administrators, that some agents supplemented insubstantial wages with embezzled funds and outright theft, while others merely did meagre work without enthusiasm.<sup>10</sup> The picture was bleak in the Maritime agencies because the Ontario model had been unsuitable: the Indians did not take to farming, and they were poor in resources. But the government felt the blame was on the Indians themselves, since they considered that the administrative system in the west, also based on the Ontario experience, was working.<sup>11</sup>

However, the parsimony of the Indian Affairs branch was felt from the beginning in the west as well. In 1884, when Edgar Dewdney was Indian Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, he wrote to John A. Macdonald, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to complain about a reduction in funding which had meant the dismissal of clerks who had worked for the Indian agents. Having no clerks lessened the time the agents were able to spend on the reserves working directly with the Indians; in fact, one agent, who had been directed to limit his reserve visits to once monthly, resigned over the matter, because he had already expended so much work and perseverance to "lick his agency nicely into shape." The agents' time on the reserves could not be limited, Dewdney wrote, because

...the bulk of Indians, require constant supervision, you have to talk with them, think for them, advise them, *work for them* at the same time let them think they are doing their share of it...<sup>12</sup>

In 1880, the Indian Branch had become the Department of Indian Affairs, but was still a minor responsibility of the Minister of the Interior,<sup>13</sup> its lack of importance presumably stemming from the idea that its clients would eventually disappear through population decline and planned assimilation.<sup>14</sup> The Minister of the Interior served as the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, but the decisions were made by the Deputy

Superintendent General who headed the small department in Ottawa. Those who served Indian Affairs in the field were the larger component of the Department's employees; they dealt directly with the Indians and implemented policy locally, on agencies consisting of one or more reserves. According to Brian Titley they had extensive responsibilities:

....they directed farming operations where appropriate; they administered relief when necessary; they inspected schools and health conditions; and they ensured that the rules of the department and the provisions of the Indian Act were complied with. They were also authorized to preside over band council meetings [where] they were often able to influence the decisions made...in 1881 [they were made] justices of the peace...they could then prosecute and hand down sentences for violations of its provisions.<sup>15</sup>

Although agents were responsible to the Department at Ottawa, they were generally allowed some latitude because of their knowledge of local conditions. In 1913, under the direction of Duncan C. Scott, the agents were informed that the "suppression of vice," liquor use in particular, was an important part of their function. They were also reminded of their magisterial powers, and their responsibilities should the Indians defy the criminal code. In regard to schools, they were asked to take an active interest in their inspections, to submit reports monthly, and to control truancy. They were to encourage the Indians in agriculture, industry, and thrift. When expenses were incurred, they were to use band funds first, and justify any financial demands made on the Department. As Titley pointed out, these were not suggestions, but orders, and one Saskatchewan agent who did not live on the reserve, thereby permitting "debauchery," the trafficking of liquor, and the neglect of the farm during his absences, was replaced by an agent who would more vigorously pursue departmental policy. During the Great War agricultural pursuits gained importance, and in 1918 Scott impressed upon the agents the importance of food production for the war effort--their

positions hinged on satisfactory results. Such customary pursuits as dances and potlatches were seen by Scott not only as wasteful, but unproductive; agents worked with the mounted police to prosecute those who violated the new laws against these activities.<sup>16</sup> Indian agents, then, had widely encompassing duties, and were closely supervised by the Deputy Superintendent General to whom they were directly responsible.

Writing about his experiences as an Indian agent in the 1950s, Alan Fry showed that many of these duties persisted. By this time, the person in charge of an agency was titled "Superintendent," and had under him employees on the reserves within that agency called "agency assistants," and this was Fry's proper title, although the Indians continued to call him the "agent." He was responsible for attending band meetings and giving advice on varied matters from the budget to the acceptance of people applying to transfer to the band; he visited remote homes to make sure the children were enrolled in school, and said one of his most time-consuming tasks was finding those "who were supposed to but almost daily simply didn't attend the day school." He issued relief and helped the people complete government forms. Other tasks included assisting in house construction, which involved giving advice on siting and continuing counsel on maintenance, for some families had "no idea whatever how to keep them up." He supervised fencing and ditch-digging, and negotiated with neighbouring white farmers who leased Indian lands for farming and ranching. He no longer inspected schools in the sense of supervising teaching, but he was responsible for maintenance and supplies, and repainting and repairing. He was called upon frequently for problems of all description, from veterinary to marital advice. He worried about his lack of expertise, not only in counselling, but in agriculture, forestry, and engineering, which included irrigation and road building. Sometimes

experts were provided, but most of the time it was a case, he said, of making your own decisions or doing without. In the matter of child neglect, he was responsible for involving the provincial workers when he deemed it necessary, and it was his judgement that took cases to court and his evidence that led to the provincial welfare authorities removing children from home to the care of the provincial welfare authorities. He admits he was not convinced that "a residential school isn't better than a broken home and a drunken mother."<sup>17</sup>

It is obvious that the role of the Indian agent was to serve the interests of the Indian Affairs Department in a continually accountable way. The government defined policy but relied on agents to administer it: expectations of the Department were transmitted to the Indians and results were reported, and it was apparently in the interest of the agent that the reports sent were positive, suggesting that the Indians were progressing as the government wished. In these reports, it is difficult to distinguish the actual attitudes of the Indians from the aspirations of the agents. For example, as discussed earlier, the Nova Scotian agent for Shubenacadie in 1881 had reported that the Indians greatly desired a school, not wanting their children to grow up as they had done. The school opened four years later, and in 1897 the agent described it as successful, with the children making "good progress at their studies;" yet the attendance figures belied the suggestion of success, as for eighteen pupils the average daily attendance was only eight.<sup>18</sup> Although the agent was unable to comply with the government's insistence that Indians become successful in agriculture, there were reported compensations: they "do not take the interest in farming that is warranted under the circumstances," the Shubenacadie agent reported, "but as coopers and makers of baskets and fancy-work they certainly excel."<sup>19</sup> By 1904 he was able to report that education had

produced "an Indian of an advanced type," in conversation, dress, and general deportment.<sup>20</sup> Two years later, the school had closed owing to lack of attendance, but the agent reported the belief "among many" that education was important in offering the children a "different future."<sup>21</sup> It was relatively easy, and certainly important, that otherwise disappointing reports be written in a way that showed the agent was fully supportive of the government's aims. As has been seen, to do otherwise was to risk loss of the position.

Departmental discussions regarding solutions to the problems of Micmac migration and destitution centred on changing the administration of Indian Affairs in Nova Scotia to mirror that in New Brunswick, a similarly-sized province divided into only three agencies. Plans to gather the Nova Scotian Indians at two to four locations, which eventually resulted in the centralization scheme of 1942, had begun over twenty years earlier, and while the idea may have been born of economics, there was some feeling too of solving the province's Indian "problem."

In 1918, the Indian agents in Nova Scotia were from forty-one to eight-one years of age, and were paid between fifty and two hundred dollars annually. One superintendent based in Cape Breton, A.J. Boyd, earned \$1800 a year, making the departmental salary expenditure for Nova Scotia \$4,400. J.D. MacLean, assistant to Scott, in April of 1918 suggested that the nineteen agencies should be replaced by four, at Cape Breton, Yarmouth, Halifax, and either Pictou or New Glasgow, each with a full-time agent in charge. It might have been possible to secure "fairly good [full-time] agents," he thought, at \$800 a year, and if retaining Boyd the cost to the Department would be only \$600 more annually. Scott contemplated the idea, first toying with the option of three agents plus Boyd, and by July deciding that three agencies would be sufficient, cutting the mainland roughly in half with the

third on Cape Breton Island. Instead of hiring three full-time agents at \$800, two could be placed on the mainland at \$1,200 each, and Boyd could take full charge of Cape Breton at his usual salary. This scheme would actually effect a saving of \$200 a year, and having full-time agents would mean that more effective Indian work could be done in the province. McLean's idea, complete with maps he sketched to show railroads and the approximate locations of the Indians and agents, was to be resurrected quite intact several times before centralization became policy.<sup>22</sup>

In April and August of 1919, Bury wrote memoranda regarding the problem of Nova Scotian Indians who were occupying land he said they did not own (particularly in Halifax County), some of whom, living in "wretched shacks and hovels" had been ordered to leave by the landowners. The Indians apparently had explained they did not want to live on their isolated reserves where it was difficult for them to earn a living; they preferred instead to be near railroads or urban areas. The land originally reserved for them was suitable for hunting and fishing, but now the Indians had "progressed to such an extent," Bury said, that they preferred to be occupied, as whites were, with farming, gardening, and working for wages.<sup>23</sup> Boyd had long been urging the Department to purchase land for them in the places they chose to live, but Bury felt this was unwise because there was no guarantee they would not want to wander again. Instead, he felt they should be "induced" to settle on those existing reserves most suited to their needs, such as Indian Brook near Truro.<sup>24</sup>

Such relocation was re-proposed by Bury less than a year later, in February of 1920, at which time he expressed the opinion that Indian administration could not be successfully undertaken by part-time personnel. Since the majority of the agents, giving only part of their time to Indian work, knew very little of the people under their charge, it was necessary for them to

call frequently upon superintendent Boyd or an official from headquarters in Ottawa to attend to matters which ideally should have been easily settled by the agent. Since so many of the Indians had a "habit of travelling," it could hardly be expected that an agent earning a pittance would have the inclination or opportunity to care for them all as the Department would wish. The solution, he felt, was to hire two full-time agents, based at each end of the province at Yarmouth and Sydney, responsible to a superintendent placed centrally at Truro.<sup>25</sup>

Bury tried again in 1924, this time bolstering an economic argument by contrasting the system in Nova Scotia with that of New Brunswick. The combined area of the three agencies in New Brunswick was larger than that of Nova Scotia, and in the latter the Indian population was only ten per cent more. Yet, he said, medical expenses in Nova Scotia were 140 per cent greater. Furthermore, although the real and personal property of Nova Scotian Indians was twenty-two per cent larger than that of New Brunswick's Indians, forty-seven per cent more was spent on Indian relief in Nova Scotia. This was obvious proof, he felt, that if there were better supervision in Nova Scotia, much less would be expended on relief and medical care. Three agents in New Brunswick, he said, in a territory one-third larger having a population only ten per cent less, had administered their agencies for a total of \$27,754.14 compared with \$49,716.39 in Nova Scotia. Reorganization required careful consideration.<sup>26</sup>

In a long, undated report on Nova Scotian reserves, Bury gave a telling overview of the condition under which the Indians were living. Few reserves, he said, were fit for agriculture, putting the Indian under a disadvantage because of their location. Only at Shubenacadie, Truro, and Whycomagh did he consider there was any land suitable for cultivation, and generally there were no grazing lands and limited timber resources.

Since the Indians themselves were not inclined to farming, they would require the assistance of instructors, material help, and the allotment of suitable land before they could be expected to expend any effort. The total agricultural production for all Nova Scotian reserves during 1924 Bury likened to the amount of produce that could be reasonably expected from only one fairly large farm. He reiterated an earlier suggestion of selling the useless and unused reserved land and purchasing more appropriate properties.<sup>27</sup>

Bury estimated the 1924 Micmac population at 2,040, of which 1,500 were living permanently on the twenty-six occupied reserves. This left 540 Indians either living in small shacks near urban centres, or "drifting from place to place...resenting any effort of the Department to assist them to better their conditions."<sup>28</sup> He urged the establishment of an industrial school for the Indians of the province, where they could learn farming, trades, and other occupations. Bury recognized that the Micmac were unfortunate in contrast to the Indians of western Canada who were farmers, ranchers, and lumbermen, and who would see the Nova Scotian Indian as a "ne'er do well in so far as his ability to devote his time and energy to one particular pursuit."<sup>29</sup> Bury felt, however, that the difference was simply one of opportunity. Indians in New Brunswick and Quebec had large reserves and timber revenues; those in Ontario had the same as well as provincial subsidies; on the Prairies the Indians had benefitted enormously from land sales, and in British Columbia they lived in fertile valleys and on dense timber lands.<sup>30</sup>

In 1924, a long letter was sent to the Department from one of its agents, H.S. Trefry, a physician responsible for the health of Indians at the Tusket reserve in Nova Scotia. Over the year of his employ he had studied the conditions of the Indians and considered how their situation might be



improved. He felt that all the government money expended and all the medical care bestowed had not brought them any better health. The Tusket reserve was in a deplorable condition, and he understood the nearby reserve in what he called the "Gravel Pit" was likewise. "I do not know who reserved it," he wrote, "or for what purpose." Tusket seemed to fulfill the objective of keeping the Indian, in Trefry's words, half wild and half civilized, and the Gravel Pit accomplished even less, situated as it was on the outskirts of a "colored settlement." The Indian was supposed to enjoy the "vastness of the forests and the bright lights of civilization, all in one parcel," but even the ingenuity of Santa Claus, he said, could not provide that.<sup>31</sup>

Trefry supplied the Department with a word-picture of the Tusket reserve and its Indian homes. The houses were small, half-finished huts on semi-wild lots, surrounded by small alders and "half-grown evergreens, which are a very poor apology for forestry." The people drank from unsanitary brooks, which were contaminated by local white men who did not care because of not needing them for their own water supply. The Indians, he felt, were "very much misrepresented as being labelled lazy and shiftless," while in fact they were quick and eager to learn. Although they worked hard making axe handles and baskets, there was no lucrative market, so they had to take their wares to the nearest merchant who gave only what he wanted to pay. If whites had no better outlet for their produce, he believed there would be an even greater exodus of workers from the province.<sup>32</sup>

Trefry repeated the solution of disposing of small, unused reserves and replacing them with a large piece of fertile land to which all the Indians would be relocated. He envisioned every family being required to build a small house and outbuildings, dig a well, and till a kitchen garden, all under the eye of a government supervisor who would insist the Indian grow as

much produce and pork as was required by his family. The community, he considered, should be provided with a church, school, and meeting hall, and should include a government farm, similar to established Poor Farms, with a large dairy and orchard for which help would be hired solely from the Indian community. The new reserve could also supply tourists with hunting and fishing guides, and lucrative markets should be established for the Indian crafts. This might read as a fantasy, Trefry wrote, but he believed the Indian was a "pretty good farmer" and that such a reserve would improve the health and morale of "some hundreds of real fine potential subjects." In addition it would lessen the government's considerable expenses which were, under the current conditions, completely without result.<sup>33</sup> The Department responded that five years earlier, in 1920, some scattered Indians had been persuaded to move to the reserve at Truro where the results were encouraging. However, it was found difficult

...to induce the Indians to concentrate, as many of them appear to prefer their present mode of life and resent any form of paternalism which might tend to somewhat restrict their liberty or repress their nomadic instincts.<sup>34</sup>

Apparently around the same time, an undated letter was written to the Department from the office of the Inspector of Indian Agencies for Ontario and Quebec, who had been sent to Nova Scotia to instruct the agents in their duties. His report, however, was not encouraging. He found that most of the Indians put forth little or no effort to grow crops or gardens but relied completely on the government for sustenance. "They live on relief," he wrote, "marry in poverty, raise children and look to the government to provide for them." He offered examples, encountered on his tour, of the Indian attitude toward the construction of their own homes. A man in Cambridge, married and father to a baby, lived in a "miserable shack exposed to wind and weather" and not fit for winter occupation. This man

demanded that the Department build him a better house, and when he was offered the materials to do the job himself, he pointed to other reserve houses, said they were built by the Department, and asked why one should not be built for him too. Two men in Shubenacadie, although willing to construct their own buildings, requested materials and assistance despite the abundance of good timber available for the taking on their reserve. In contrast, one resourceful Indian had cut logs in the winter, sawn them in spring, and built himself a barn. This enterprise should be required of all the Indians, the inspector said, for unless they were "made to go as far as possible to help themselves in the building of homes, I do not think that the Department is warranted in giving everything free." This inspector also encouraged the centralization of the Indians on three main reserves which would be acquired for their suitability to farming and fishing, two pursuits which he felt should then be forced upon the inhabitants. He explained the difficulty of supervising Indians who were scattered throughout their agency, as they were in Cumberland where the agent had to travel 525 miles in his car just to take an Indian census.<sup>35</sup>

In 1926 Bury prepared for Scott a synopsis of his previous correspondence on the matter of reserve amalgamation, and expressed his conviction that a reorganization of Nova Scotian agencies would be economical, would ensure more efficient administration, and would serve to centralize the Micmac on three main residential reserves where they could be supervised properly and effectively. Part-time officials, as opposed to full-time agents, did not have the same incentive to work and were not as loyal to the administration. A full fifty per cent of the Indians in Nova Scotia were drifters, Bury claimed, unable to be cared for by "ill directed part-time agents not familiar with each individual Indian."<sup>36</sup> Scott, apparently convinced, passed Bury's ideas to the Superintendent General. At this time he raised

the previously suggested annual salary for a full-time agent from \$1,200 to \$1,680, hoping to attract "more vigorous and business like" administrators, and he suggested retaining Boyd, at an increased salary of \$2,280. (This compared favourably with New Brunswick agents, who received from \$1,080 to \$1,380.) Once the larger agencies were established, he proposed to centralize the Indians on the three main reserves where they could receive the required supervision. It was impossible, he reiterated, for part-time agents to effect any improvement in the condition of the wanderers, who were a large part of the Indian population. There was nothing constructive to show for the large departmental expenditure on relief, and without administrative reform, the Indians would never be self-supporting. He suggested the new organization should be slated for October, 1927, and that the present agents should be informed that their services would not be required after that date. Eighteen agents would be affected, ranging in age from thirty-one to seventy.<sup>37</sup>

By December, 1931, Scott had determined that it might not be necessary to employ three full-time agents. Boyd had been superannuated and replaced by two Grade One inspectors, J.W. Maxner in Windsor and C.J. McNeil in Antigonish, and perhaps these two, if provided with clerical assistance, would be the only necessary administrators. In March, 1932, by order of the Governor in Council, the deed was done, the eighteen agencies were abolished, and their agents dismissed "for reasons of public economy."<sup>38</sup> The two inspectors then became Superintendents. Maxner, at a salary of \$2,040, was assigned to eleven counties (Cumberland, Colchester, Halifax, Hants, Kings, Lunenburg, Annapolis, Queens, Digby, Yarmouth, and Shelburne) while McNeil, earning \$1,920, was to be responsible for seven (Pictou, Guysborough, Antigonish, and the four in Cape Breton).<sup>39</sup> They learned that all Indian matters in their districts were to

receive their personal attention, that they were to make regularly scheduled inspections, and that they must keep in close touch with matters of relief, medical care, and education. In a letter dated March 17th, they were informed that by the first of April they should have visited each agent to take possession of all agency records. The Superintendents were then to visit each doctor, teacher, and relief shopkeeper in their districts to inform them of the change.<sup>40</sup>

This new administrative plan should have reduced annual departmental expenditure on salaries from \$8,230 to \$4,080. But it remained in effect for three months only. The file is strangely silent on the failure of this particular scheme, which was abolished in July, within four months of its implementation. The two Superintendents were dismissed and replaced by nineteen Indian agents, nine of whom were among those who had been fired earlier in the year. Policy was still said to be for economy: if those rehired had formerly earned in excess of \$200 a year they were now to receive only \$200; if they had previously earned under that amount they were to remain at the old salary. Apparently four of the nine who returned to the job accepted a salary drop of \$100.<sup>41</sup>

That summer, on behalf of Maxner and McNeil, the annual convention of the Nova Scotian Canadian Legion voted to protest their dismissal. Every branch was instructed to send telegrams of complaint, and several are in the file. The two men were "veterans of the Great War who had rendered efficient service" as Indian inspectors, and it was requested that they be reinstated.<sup>42</sup> One departmental response said only that the changes were made with a view to economy,<sup>43</sup> but a longer letter was sent to the Canadian Legion headquarters at Ottawa. In this it was explained that the Department had considered the whole question of Indian service in Nova Scotia and decided the inspection duties could be undertaken by an

Ottawa official. Since the Indian population in the province was very small, affairs could be satisfactorily administered by Indian agents, with the help of government guidance and one or two annual visits by departmental officials, a method which had proven satisfactory for many years in New Brunswick, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island.<sup>44</sup>

In June of 1933, the year after the failed attempt to reorganize the agencies in Nova Scotia, the new Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Harold W. McGill (D.C. Scott having retired in March), made a ten-day tour of the Maritimes and Quebec. He was well pleased with the agency personnel, he wrote, "and could wish I were able to say the same of the Indians under their care." He described them as a "rather poor lot," who had impressed him with the discouraging and difficult job the agents and other departmental officials were facing. He found that the one agent in Prince Edward Island, Father McDonald ("or Father John as he is called"), was over seventy years old but was taking a keen interest and doing good work for his Indians. Of the Shubenacadie residential school he wrote that

...the school is a credit to all concerned but it is too early in its history to forecast its ultimate effect on the Indian population. The raw material in the shape of pupils is of such a low grade that too much must not be expected of the finished product.<sup>45</sup>

He noted that in Oromocto, New Brunswick, the Indians were living in a beautiful location on the Saint John River, with "the finest of soil and a river of fish at their doors." However, he found most of the people "sitting in the sun in ragged, squalid idleness." One elderly man, however, was busy repairing his fish net and had a well-tilled garden, and many others told him they were going to start their gardens "tomorrow."<sup>46</sup>

On practically every reserve I visited I saw a few progressive Indians who are making some attempt to improve their condition. It requires a lot of courage and perseverance on their part to keep going, for when they do manage to produce a

supply of food by their own efforts in agriculture or fishing, the other members of the band descend upon them and consume the results of their industry.<sup>47</sup>

Of the Shubenacadie and Truro agencies, McGill had this short comment:

A number of the members of these bands showed an admixture of Negro blood and while this provides variety, it does not in my opinion indicate improvement.<sup>48</sup>

Ten days after the above report was written, an unidentified inspector who had also toured the province sent a very discouraging, seven-page report to the Department. His sympathy was with the part-time agents, who were being paid only from twenty-seven and a half cents to fifty cents per day for their services. "We cannot expect much in return for such small pay," he wrote, "nor are we receiving much." This was not a reflection on the quality of the agents, whom he considered generally of a "very good standard," but who were doing more work in the paperwork alone than they were being paid for. He did not feel it was possible to improve conditions for the Indians under the present organization, although he agreed that no progress had been possible, either, under the recent experiment of two large agencies. Perhaps he saw the Indians themselves as the problem. While he admitted that even without the Depression some white people were content to be without work, he saw the Indian population as using the economic atmosphere as an excuse for demanding relief. The Depression was a "Godsend to the 'Noble Red Man,'" he said, "which being translated in present day terms might be made to read 'Arrogant Parasites'." The Indian relief problem itself, which he saw as a result of a "too paternalistic government," had grown beyond all reason but had to be considered as part of the larger Indian situation.<sup>49</sup>

Mr. Indian is not all fool. His idleness gives him time for thought. There is always present that tradition that, at some time in the dim distant days of early history, treaties were made whereby it was provided that the Government had to look after and care for the Indian. They were given reserves, free from taxation, they were protected by an Act of Parliament which enables them to deal crookedly with any merchant or person that they are cute enough to get credit from. They have been provided with free education and now no effort is being made to make them pay for medical attention. These having been provided gratis, why not food, then came clothing and houses.<sup>50</sup>

Having said this, he apparently also felt the merchants themselves were without complete honesty, taking advantage of the Indian by charging high prices and giving short weight. The storekeepers did not afford the part-time agents much respect either, and felt they were there only to provide them with Indian business and forward their accounts. Being official suppliers to the reserve, sometimes the grocers stocked clothing and footwear to sell to the Indians at high profits which were actually a cost to the Department. Even as the inspector suggested that such items could be supplied more economically directly through the agent, he saw that they could not expect "small pay, part time" agents to spend their time distributing clothing to their scattered charges. Besides, when the Indians found out,

(and they do find out), that an agent has clothing on hand for distribution, they are after him night and day for their "share" until every last item has been issued. This means that many non-deserving cases are given clothing.<sup>51</sup>

The agents, already doing more work than their pay would warrant, might naturally "take the road of least resistance and accede to any and all requests." The Indians, after all, were "persistent beggars" who would become insulting and even threatening if refused.<sup>52</sup>

According to this inspector, more than any other Canadian Indian the Micmac was nomadic, sometimes squatting off their reserves but still being provided with an agent to look after them. The solution might be the



appointment of a full-time inspector who would travel continually throughout the province with the first essential goal of getting the Indians back on their reserves and compelling them to till the soil. Such an inspector should also visit the three New Brunswick agencies each spring, and spend a week every year in Ottawa to keep close ties with the Department.

I am convinced that, even under present conditions of "Depression," our Indians are not making what efforts they might to assist themselves and they never will until they have someone to drive them to it and that requires an official with more prestige than a part time agent at two bits a day.<sup>53</sup>

The inspector noted that in his travels he had spoken with many white business people to "get local color," seeing some of them working at a financial loss,

...in order to keep their connections against better times, seeing people who once had white collared jobs glad to dig a drain or work in a sewer for an honest dollar and on the other hand an indigent, immoral and arrogantly persistent Indian beggar who is being educated, medicated and nourished at the people's expense.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, however, he recommended the firing of all those Indians who did have jobs working for the Department as police constables. They were handicapped in their work, he said, by being related to some of the people on their reserves, and since in any serious cases the R.C.M.P. had to be called, they might as well ask the Mounties to do the constabulatory duty. In a further attempt to save the Department money, and to show the Indians the need for economy, he recommended that the construction and maintenance of Indian houses be discontinued, "forcing the Indians to, at least, do this much for themselves."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, he also had a solution to the problem of the Indians keeping "useless dogs" and feeding them from their relief rations:

Last year I ordered every dog to be destroyed on North Devon reserve under penalty of relief being withheld. This year there

is not a dog on the reserve. This was done of my own volition and without benefit of law but it worked well and I would suggest adopting it as a general policy and so instructing Agents.<sup>56</sup>

The inspector spoke particularly well of the Yarmouth agent, G.L. Cann, who was regularly on the road as a tobacco jobber, affording him the opportunity to show an active interest in "his Indians." He recommended the firing of the Shelburne agent, Daniel Williams, who was not "enamoured of the job" and would not regret losing it, since Cann could easily care for the Shelburne Indians as well as his own.<sup>57</sup> Cann, he said, had made a remarkable difference to the living conditions of his Indians at little cost to the Department. On his visit the previous year the houses had been "miserable affairs," unfit for winter habitation; this year they had all been insulated with flattened cartons which Cann had saved from his tobacco shipments. It had cost only some laths, nails, and cheap wallpaper to greatly improve these houses, and in addition, for the first time, the Indians had been induced to break some land for farming. All this and more, he said, had been accomplished in one year by a part-time agent with a physical handicap.<sup>58</sup>

The following year, in June of 1934, Bury visited thirteen of nineteen Nova Scotian agencies and submitted a report on each agent. It is useful in identifying the regular occupation of the agents, indicating Bury's view as to their suitability to Indian work, and describing the conditions of the Indians and their reserves. W.O. Bligh was responsible for the Cambridge and Horton Reserves in Kings County, the latter of which was impoverished, with no land fit to cultivate, no timber to cut, no jobs, and no funds to buy fuel. The situation at Cambridge was somewhat better because of its woodland, and since Bligh had until recently been the district forester for the provincial government, his knowledge of lumber was considered useful for directing logging and fuel-gathering activities.<sup>59</sup>

Four of the agents Bury visited were farmers, two of them in Hants County. A.W. McDonald, whose duties were not very onerous, was in charge of only a few Indian families in the Windsor area and his activities on their behalf were restricted almost entirely to granting relief as necessary. Bury advised the Department to dispose of the unused St. Croix reserve, since it was subject to trespass by whites. The other Hants agent (at Shubenacadie) was Allison McDonald, whose assigned reserve was heavily wooded and also well suited to agriculture, although most of the Indians did not show much ambition as farmers. Bury spoke of one notable exception who was a good worker and deserved assistance. Of the agent, he said that although he was an "elderly farmer of a somewhat excitable temperament," he took a great interest in the welfare of his charges.<sup>60</sup>

In Colchester County, the agent, R.H. Kennedy, also a farmer, was in charge of twenty-seven families on the Millbrook Reserve. With some fair land for farming and access to woodland, there was little need for relief. Cabins which had been built on the reserve by the Department several years earlier for the use of nomadic families were still in good repair, and the Indians did a fair trade in handcrafted items which they sold in nearby Truro. F.C. Harris in Digby was a farmer also, responsible for thirteen families in Bear River. This too was a reasonably prosperous reserve, as the people earned their living by guiding fishermen in the summer and cutting timber in the winter for barrel making or for sale to the local mill.<sup>61</sup>

The Lunenburg agent was a physician, Dr. S.P. Young, who died between the time of Bury's inspection tour and the writing of the report. The inspector did not visit Young's Lunenburg agency but telephoned and learned Young had satisfactorily settled a recent land dispute. Bury regretted losing this agent whom he felt to be strongly interested in the Indians. The Halifax County Indians were looked after by a merchant in

Sheet Harbour, R.B. Henley, and Bury interviewed him there. He then visited the settlement at Tuft's Cove, Dartmouth, and reported to Henley that one of the families was in need of relief. The father of five wanted work, but had cancer and was unable to find a job. This is the second case in this report for which Bury recommended departmental assistance because the man showed willingness to work.<sup>62</sup>

Bury saw three parish priests who were agents in Cape Breton. Rev. Angus McNeil was in charge of Malagawatch and Whycocomagh, the latter of which had 1,555 acres, a large quantity of good timber, and Indians who were good lumbermen. At Eskasoni, Rev. A.M. McDonald was found to have no clear idea of timber administration, but Bury explained what could be done and advised McDonald to discontinue relief to able-bodied men. The priest asked for \$100 to hire Indians to repair reserve roads and a bridge so they could haul the lumber they would cut, and Bury recommended he be given this amount.<sup>63</sup>

When Bury visited Rev. D.J. Rankin, the parish priest and Indian agent in Victoria County, he explained the features of timber administration, since Rankin was not clear about his duties. A statement from Fry's reminiscences comes to mind, that as agent "he was not a trained forester and yet the real management of timber lands on the reserves fell to him."<sup>64</sup> Rankin and Bury also discussed the enlargement of the Middle River reserve to accommodate the increasing numbers of Indians. The agent at Sydney was Joseph McKinnon, a retiree whom Bury described as a cripple, unable to do much travelling. He spent time with McKinnon, reviewing recent expense accounts and explaining the duties expected of an agent. Bury recommended that this agent be supplied with \$10 a month to pay for an office and telephone so he would be more easily available to the Indians, yet there were only two telephones on the reserve.<sup>65</sup>

Bury's final statement on his visit to Nova Scotian reserves that year was that although the present system of paying part-time agents insignificant salaries was hardly conducive to effective administration, he had found that the agents, without exception, were taking a personal interest in the Indians and giving the Department full value.<sup>66</sup>

Two months later, in August 1934, Bury visited the three Indian agencies in New Brunswick, and found conditions satisfactory in all but the Redbank, Eelground, and Burnt Church reserves in the Northeastern Division. In the Southwestern agency, under W.J. Griffiths, he found the people living contentedly in comfortable new houses, and employment, though intermittent, sufficient for the Indians to make a livelihood. Chief Noel Polchis, he said, was "particularly industrious and a good type of Indian." In the Northern Division, agent McPhail said there were no complaints and no hardships, and although some roadwork was necessary, it would be completed by the residents as a relief project. However, Bury found the Northeastern agency bleak indeed, with living conditions "that in all my experience, I have rarely seen duplicated." He blamed conditions on four years of departmental neglect, during which time assistance was not given for house repairs or clothing, and relief expended was not adequate. The situation was so alarming that it was arousing widespread public comment.<sup>67</sup>

Bury found that people were dying needlessly of tuberculosis, and in Redbank found one advanced case, a "man lying on a bare couch in a house coughing up blood and apparently in great pain." Bury recommended provision be made to send the man to a sanatorium. In Eelground, two boys of eighteen and nineteen had recently died of tuberculosis, one just before Bury's arrival.

The Indian agent explained when at last the Department agreed to make some provision for these lads by way of shelter and clothing with suitable food, the Indian Doctor told him it was too late.<sup>68</sup>

In both communities the people complained about their relief rations, those at Eelground claiming that the grocer from whom they were obliged to purchase, situated two and a half miles from their reserve, gave them inferior merchandise and treated them discourteously. Bury recommended that their request to use a closer shop, only one mile from their homes, be given favourable consideration. Similar complaints at Redbank were investigated but Bury found nothing amiss.<sup>69</sup>

However, the need for clothing at all three reserves, Burnt Church, Eelground and Redbank, was so severe that he could not overemphasize it. The Indians were unemployed, had been given little help for years, and in fact had had their relief allowances decreased. When they did get clothing, it was out of season, such as the boots they received in the summer: authority to purchase them in the winter or spring had not arrived on time. Now they were all in desperate need of winter clothing.<sup>70</sup>

During his visit to these reserves, Bury was "forcibly impressed" with the inadequacy of the relief the people received. There had been no employment in this agency for the last four or five years, and relief had been cut "almost to the vanishing point." The houses, more precisely shacks and cabins, situated on an exposed point on the Gulf of Miramachi, were in a deplorable condition, actually unfit for human habitation. There was not one without a leaky roof, and although the Indians were apparently content without floors, they did need shingles and lumber to repair the walls. Bury emphasized the absolute necessity for assistance to these people before the cold weather began again.<sup>71</sup>

To illustrate the dire straits of the people, he gave examples from each reserve. It was incredible, he felt, that without any means of support the people were able to live on their small issues of relief. The weekly allowance for a man and wife with five children was \$2.25; and for an elderly couple, the wife ill, was \$2.00. A widow with three children, and a man and wife over sixty-five years old, in each case received \$1.50 weekly. Bury recommended they all receive a thirty per cent increase, which would be a small cost to the Department but would indicate to the Indians that the government appreciated their desperate circumstances.<sup>72</sup>

The following summer, 1935, a tour was again made of the Nova Scotian agencies, this time by G. Armstrong of the Trust Fund and Relief Branch of the Department. He was in the province for three weeks, during which time he interviewed the agents in the evenings until midnight, visited the reserves the following morning, and travelled between the agencies during the afternoons. In this way he met every agent in the province, since most of them were not available during the day time because of their full-time day jobs. Generally, he found the agents to be "fair," and found some of them to be making a particular effort to improve the lot of their Indians. Others, he said, were satisfied to "let things slide, giving sufficient relief to prevent complaints, and hoping to hold on to their jobs until better times are back." He found that in many agencies no records of any kind were being kept, and that letters and vouchers were just thrown into boxes. These agents felt it was too much trouble to refer to past correspondence, and ignored their duty to complete monthly returns. One of the worst offenders was C.A. Cameron of Parrsboro, "who stated he would be damned if he would furnish a return required by the Department."<sup>73</sup>

Armstrong found the mainland Indians to be very poor, unable to get work despite the extensive road building projects underway in the province.

Tourism was down because of the state of the highways so there was no guiding work; baskets that used to sell for fifty cents were going for twelve. Still, there were few complaints, and except for some requests for house repairs or clothing, most seemed content with the assistance they received.<sup>74</sup>

Armstrong noted that the Indians at both Whycomomagh and Eskasoni were all employed. Father MacDonald deserved much credit, having every able-bodied Indian at Eskasoni working, and at the time of his visit ready to load two waiting schooners with pulpwood. As an example of the prosperity there, he cited the case of one Indian who owned a new truck, and whose father had a car, eight cows, and three horses. There was a beautiful church on the reserve, all built and financed solely by the Indians, and Rev. MacDonald said the only outside cash which had been received was the \$100 he had requested of Bury the year before.<sup>75</sup>

Indians on the rest of Cape Breton Island were in sharp contrast. Those in Sydney were not working and depended for everything on the government. At St. Peters, Armstrong noted that there was an unlimited amount of codfish available to the Indians for the catching, but they were too lazy to fish, preferring to eat dry cod obtained with relief money. They would walk twelve miles to the agent's house to tell him they were hungry, when in the same time they could have had all the fresh fish they could eat. The agent agreed to Armstrong's suggestion that relief should be cut to all able-bodied men to force them to fish or go hungry.<sup>76</sup>

The dilapidated homes in the Nova Scotian agencies were described as "board shacks hanging in shreds of tar paper." Armstrong suggested that the agents should encourage the building of log houses, for which the Department would supply roof, windows and doors. It was necessary, he felt, for the Indians to show themselves worthy of assistance



before they would be helped. While some Indians had promising gardens, others received seed and did not bother to sow it, instead accepting potatoes on relief. Armstrong instructed the agents of such Indians to discontinue giving them potatoes after September, to encourage them to grow them for the following winter.<sup>77</sup> This of course meant they would, all the current winter, have to go without.

Also in 1935, less than two months after Armstrong's visit, the Director of Medical Services, Dr. E.L. Stone, made an inspection tour of Nova Scotian reserves. He found little fault with the medical services being provided to the Indians, but was much less easy about the relief situation. "For whatever reason," he wrote, "the Indians are not getting enough to eat, and the children show it." He found a noticeable difference between the physical condition of the children entering the Shubenacadie residential school for the first time and those who had been there for a year or more, which suggests that nutrition at the school was adequate, and at least better than that available at some homes. While Stone hesitated to suggest that more relief should be issued on the reserves, he was at a loss for any ideas other than the preparation of noon meals at the day schools, for both the pupils and any preschoolers who wished to partake. Of the nutrition situation as it was, he wrote,

I am afraid we are laying up trouble in the way of more tuberculosis. What I see now will surely be worse as winter goes on. Doctor after doctor has spoken of this as the most important thing he had on his mind.<sup>78</sup>

Dr. Stone spoke unfavourably of one teacher in Baddeck, describing him as filthy, having tobacco juice running from his mouth, and conducting a school in which children wandered in at will. He was disreputable, furthermore, because his son had fathered a reserve child who was being supported by the Department. Although Stone regretted not showing his authority and

closing the school on the spot, someone in the Department had circled this paragraph of his report for action.<sup>79</sup>

But perhaps here is Stone's most telling remark, and the one most pertinent to this study (with emphasis added):

The agents are better men on the whole than we might expect from the salaries they get. I have seen all but two, or have seen their wives, in certain cases where the latter are the real agents, the men being working people fortunate enough to have jobs.<sup>80</sup>

Because there has been no other reference to this possibility in any of the books and articles written on the role of the agent, the idea seems simultaneously startling and obvious. But as Armstrong had noted, the agents were not available during the day so he visited them in the evening. Who, then, was at home when the Indians came for help? Who did they see when they walked twelve miles to say they were hungry? It is obvious that this part-time job held by the husband was probably at least part time for the wife too, who must have had to deal with many, if not most, of the problems and requests brought to the agent. While some may have been deferred to the evenings or the weekends for the agent's personal attention, Stone's remark indicates that others must have been cared for on the spot by the agent's wife. While the position of agent in the Maritimes was part time, it is quite certain that the job itself was not.

In fact, the records show that women were not just their husband's helpers, but sometimes were actually hired as Indian agents themselves. In Annapolis County, Mrs. A.H. Harnish was agent between May 1912 and January 1918. Two other women continued with the job when their husbands left it. In Lunenburg, Mrs. N.P. Freeman became agent in 1920 after her husband had held the position for eight years, although she herself filled the job for only four months. Mrs. Amy B. Minard became Queen's

County Indian agent in July 1941, when her husband resigned owing to ill health. She held the post for almost a year, until centralization took place.<sup>81</sup>

In a November 1935 memorandum on reorganization for Nova Scotian reserves, Dr. Stone gave the following opinion of the Indians in question:

I do not believe that the Indians of Nova Scotia are more hopeless, all things considered, than were those of the Prairie Provinces thirty years ago. They are not a high-grade people, but they have been under great temptation to prefer relief to work.<sup>82</sup>

The Department, it seems, could not get sufficient reports on the conditions of the Indians, and the following year yet another inspector was sent "to make a general survey," although little that was asked of him had not already been answered by previous visitors. In the spring of 1936, Dr. Thomas Robertson was commissioned to visit each agent and to study the physical features of each agency. He was to ascertain the possibility of employing Indians in agriculture and forestry, and to note how well they were using the resources at hand. He was to judge whether they required additional land, and whether amalgamation was practical; to survey squatters living off the reserves, and study the methods of disbursing relief. Finally, he was to visit the residential school, noting conditions of health and nutrition.

His report of the school is particularly significant. Although he found it "scrupulously clean and orderly," although the children were "neatly dressed, well nourished and cared for," and even though the staff was "doing everything for the betterment of the children," Robertson had reservations about the residential school system itself. These he explained at length and with foresight.<sup>83</sup> He refrained from giving particular suggestions, but instead offered his opinion prefaced by the words, "it is

claimed by some," and continuing to use the pronoun "they" rather than "I" when discussing the ideas he was putting forth. The way "they" felt was that the school should be for particular, disadvantaged children only: the orphaned and those of disreputable or tubercular parents. He gave two reasons for thinking it undesirable to dissolve families by removing the children who had decent homes, and one related to the improvement of the Indian's economic condition. Only if a child were living in an Indian home could he realize the differences between his living conditions and those of the whites, and only by recognizing the difference would he attempt to bridge that gulf. Children living in the residential school, however, under white conditions, would tend to forget the poverty of their homes. When they returned to the reserve and realized the greatness of the disparity, they would be filled with a sense of futility, resign themselves to their status, and lose all ambition to better their conditions.<sup>84</sup>

Robertson's other reason for questioning the policy of residential schooling related to its effect on the Indian family. His words bring to mind much more recent laments which come from the native people themselves, and in this case it is particularly revelatory to see the past with present eyes. Robertson wrote this in 1936, when the Shubenacadie school was only six years old, but it might be remembered here that by the 1920s, according to Coleman, the idea of residential schooling for Indians in the United States was waning: during that decade an "influential group of critics had begun to raise their voices against the culturally intolerant education that had been foisted upon Indians since...colonial times."<sup>85</sup> The Meriam Report of 1928 and the 1933 appointment of John Collier as Commissioner of U.S. Indian Affairs prompted some white Americans to question the system and begin to "make amends for past mistakes, to encourage Indian initiatives, and to institutionalize respect for tribal cultures in the schools."<sup>86</sup> It is possible that

Robertson had been influenced by ideas emanating from the United States, and the "they" he wrote about were the people of the American Bureau of Indian Affairs.

What "they" were saying was that the removal of children from decent homes was not in the best interests of either the parents or their offspring. One of the worst traits the whites saw in the Indians was their lack of filial responsibility and their disinterest in caring for their aged parents, the maintenance of whom thus fell solely on the government. Putting children in residential schools escalated this problem, taking from them any sense of obligation to their parents. Even worse, the pupils were losing the understanding that when they were parents themselves they would have to take care of their own children, and with no one to support, parents were losing the incentive to work. Robertson admitted it was "folly" for him to express these opinions, since he had not done a study on the lives of ex-residential school students, yet he brought it to the attention of the Department as something worthy of inquiry.<sup>87</sup>

While unfortunately nothing was done about the matter at the time, it is clear that his views were far-seeing. As noted earlier, at a 1967 conference on native education, Mary Anne Lavallee blamed the residential schools for delinquent parenting.<sup>88</sup> Hattie Ferguson, a product of residential schools, spoke of "the damage they inflict[ed] on Indian home life by taking away the responsibility from the parents. We are reaping the harvest from that policy today."<sup>89</sup> Elijah Menarik said residential schools produced children who became ashamed of their parents and homes.<sup>90</sup> As Robertson said in his report, the residential schools left the children in a more hopeless condition than they were before.<sup>91</sup>

It is not clear whether any improvements in administration, residential school policies, or the lives of the Indians, followed Robertson's

inspections. It is certain, however, that he was well paid for his reports, receiving for his visit to the Maritimes twenty dollars a day plus living and travelling expenses.<sup>92</sup> Only two years earlier, the Department had been informed by a previous inspector that a widow with three children on the Eelground Reserve in New Brunswick received one dollar and fifty cents a week to feed her family.

Ideas for centralizing the Nova Scotian Indians continued to be discussed before eventually being brought to fruition on April 2, 1942. By September of that year, the two large reserves each had a full-time agent, J.A. MacLean in Eskasoni and H.C. Rice at Shubenacadie. However, MacLean resigned in 1945, accusing the Department of having no commitment to centralization, and of looking at a 20th century problem with a 17th century attitude.<sup>93</sup> MacLean was succeeded by F.B. McKinnon, who had been working as part of the agency staff at Shubenacadie, and eventually, in the spring of 1949, McKinnon was rewarded again with promotion to Regional Superintendent of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Meanwhile, Rice was finding it difficult to oversee his too-large agency from his Shubenacadie headquarters, since centralization had not succeeded in forcing Indians to relocate. In 1950, this problem was partly relieved when Antigonish and Pictou Counties were transferred to the Eskasoni agency.<sup>94</sup>

At Eskasoni, J.D. MacPherson assumed responsibility for the agency in the fall of 1953, but was transferred to Shubenacadie in 1956 when Rice retired. The new superintendent at Eskasoni was Terrence W. Boone, who by 1961 fully felt the futility of his position and resigned. MacPherson returned to the job, but as already been mentioned, became ill and eventually died of his own volition.<sup>95</sup> One of the results of centralization which affected the Indians who had chosen to live on the enlarged reserves

was that they were in daily contact with their agent. Previously, agents had lived off-reserve, but now the Indians were under constant supervision. For the agents, the biggest change was in the breadth of their responsibilities, and apparently a feeling for the impossibility of the task at hand.

While a critique of centralization is not pertinent here, the relevant files are useful because they offer report after report of agency inspections, telling much of the plight and personality of the Indian, and of the way government officials viewed their lives and devised solutions to the continuing "Indian problem." Many inspectors, each with his own focus, were sent to the Maritimes, and sometimes it appears that none knew of the recommendations of his predecessor. When Dr. Stone wondered why the children were not getting enough to eat, did he know that two months earlier Armstrong had advocated cutting relief to make the men fish and depriving them of potatoes to make them farm? There are also the questions of why so many inspections were felt necessary and undertaken, and of how many recommendations were put into policy or practice.

The attitude of Indian Affairs toward the Indians of the Maritimes, particularly in Nova Scotia, are spoken clearly through the cited reports in which they saw them generally as a low class of mostly lazy people. Government solutions focus on ways in which to present self-sufficiency to the people by placing them on arable land near fishing resources, therefore enriching their lives. But the words in the various reports tell how the people were misunderstood or underestimated: they do not centre on how the Micmac saw themselves but on how they were seen, not on where the Indians wanted to live but on where the inspectors believed they would be better off, not on ways in which the people saw their lives improving, nor on what employment opportunities they envisioned for themselves. Instead the inspectors imagined ways to "force" and "compel" the Micmac to live as they

wanted them to live, and decided which people were "worthy" of relief. Instead of funding assistance, the government devised ways to spend less on agents in Nova Scotia, where the part-time field workers were already underpaid and overworked, and sent costly inspectors repeatedly to assess the same situation.

The centralization files of Indian Affairs are pertinent to this work because they speak clearly about the agents, giving information on their lives, their work, and their aptitude. Knowing about their day jobs, their slight salaries, and the large areas over which the Indians under their supervision were scattered gives one side to their stories. Knowing through their correspondence how they handled the selection of children in matters pertaining to the residential school, as will be discussed in the following chapter, will give another.



## CHAPTER SEVEN - NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, inspection Report on Nova Scotian agencies by Thomas Robertson, March 23, 1936.
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3. John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy" in J.R. Miller (ed.), Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 128, 131.
4. Jeanne Guillemin, Urban Renegades: The Cultural Strategy of American Indians (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 147. As she put it, those in the east were "reservation Indians" long before those in the west.
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6. Canada, Sessional Papers, Annual Reports (SPAR) Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) 1873, Joseph Howe's report to the House of Commons for the year ending June 30, 1872.
7. SPAR 1911, report of Duncan Campbell Scott.
8. National Archives of Canada (NAC) DIA Central Registry (CR) RG 10, Vol. 3220, report on Nova Scotian reserves, (undated, but refers to his memo of February 14, 1924, and is presumed to be the same year by its position in the file).
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19. SPAR 1898, report of Alonzo Wallace.
20. SPAR 1904, report of Wallace.
21. SPAR 1906, report of Wallace.
22. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to J.D. McLean from D.C. Scott, April 30, 1918.
23. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memos to the Deputy Minister from Bury, April 23 and August 11, 1919.
24. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to the Deputy Minister from Bury, April 23, 1919.
25. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to the Deputy Minister from Bury, February 27, 1920.
26. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to the Deputy Minister from Bury, February 14, 1924.
27. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, report on Nova Scotian reserves, undated, but presumably late 1924 or early 1925.
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29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, letter to Indian Affairs from H.S. Trefry, M.D., December 20, 1924.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.

35. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, report on Nova Scotian reserves to H. McGill, unidentified in file, January 22, 1934.
36. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to D.C.Scott from Bury, December 16, 1926.
37. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to Hon. Thomas G. Murphy from D.C. Scott, December 24, 1931.
38. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to Governor General in Council from D.C. Scott, February 17, 1932; Order in Council March 26, 1932.
39. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo from Chief Accountant to D.C. Scott, undated.
40. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, letter to C.J. McNeil from D.C. Scott, March 17, 1932.
41. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, unidentified memo to Dr. McGill April 5, 1933.
42. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, telegram to Indian Affairs from the Kings County Branch Canadian Legion, date illegible.
43. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, letter to L.B. Harvie, President, Hants County Canadian Legion from A.S. Williams, August 22, 1932.
44. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, letter to J. Herwig, Canadian Legion, Ottawa, from T.G. Murphy, August 22, 1932.
45. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, report from Harold W. McGill to DIA after ten-day tour of the Maritimes and Gaspé,
46. ibid.
47. ibid.
48. ibid.
49. NAC DIA CR RG 10, Vol. 3220, unidentified inspection report to Dr. McGill, Indian Affairs, dated June 26, 1933. (The report in the file appears to be an unsigned carbon copy, ending "Your obedient servant...Inspector"). Of his words "arrogant parasites, he says he would be glad if anyone in doubt of his terminology would visit the Maritimes as an officer of the Department.
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89. Ibid., 35.
90. Ibid., 44.
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93. Lisa Lynne Patterson, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy," (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1985).
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## CHAPTER EIGHT:

### INDIAN AGENTS AND THE SHUBENACADIE SCHOOL

I feel for these poor creatures, believing that the present time of depression has made their lot a particularly hard one...but what can I do?<sup>1</sup>

A study of the Indian agencies of the Maritime Provinces becomes more difficult with its proximity to the present, for by the 1920s, published government records had grown so scant and scarce as to be virtually non-existent. Before the Great War the annual accounts of individual reserve agents were kept alive and available through publication in the large volumes of departmental annual reports. While any study of Indian Agents before that time has this one complete resource, research into Indian Affairs after it is hindered by a dearth of easily available information. The annual reports before 1918 were garrulous, giving the names of the Indian agents and their staff members, their salaries and dates of first appointment, and individual reports on each agency and each school. There were remarks by the Inspector of Indian Agencies, the Superintendent of Indian Schools, and the Inspector of Indian Schools; as well as tabular school, land, and appropriation accounts. But in 1918, reports that had previously encompassed half a heavy volume of Sessional Papers had dwindled to fewer than one hundred pages. The entire Maritimes were covered in a page; the agency reports were scant remarks under the following catch-all headings: tribal origin, occupations, health and sanitation, and dwellings. Comments could be covered in a paragraph that repeated itself year after year in words similar to this 1918 account of Prince Edward Island:

There is only one agency in the province of Prince Edward Island, as the total Indian population is only 292. The Indians in this province all belong to the Micmac race, which is of

Algonkin stock. They are principally engaged in fishing and basket-making. Some of them have taken up farming. The health of these Indians has been good during the past year. While they may be classed as temperate and moral, there seem to be periodic relapses. They are much the same as their white neighbours.<sup>2</sup>

The responsibility of the reporting Indian agent was reduced from preparing a comprehensive account on all aspects of his agency to writing a few trite lines. As this burden dwindled from serious to trivial, one wonders what may have happened concurrently to accountability.

Although the school was subject to both formal and informal inspections by government agents, few reports have come to light, and by 1930 published Indian Affairs papers no longer included detailed accounts of individual schools. This chapter therefore relies largely on the unpublished Department of Indian Affairs school files, which although full of time gaps contain several admission and medical forms and some of the correspondence sent among the agents, school principal, and secretary of the Department. These files will be considered as they cast light on the role of the reserve agents and the school principals as mediators, give insight into the work of the Sisters, and reveal the efforts of the Micmac to retain their personal autonomy and cultural integrity.

For some Indian agents, either because they served for short periods or because their correspondence has been lost, only one or two letters appear in the government's files on the Shubenacadie school. For these agents, while it might be possible to glean some idea of their own view of their role, any such suggestions would be suspicious and speculative. For others, however, from whom there is more material, it might be easier to gain ideas of their sense of position. The letters taken overall, written as they were by perhaps thirty representatives of agency or other brokerage, should at least offer a perception of the positions of principal and Indian

agent in the same way that the Annals do of the teaching sisters; that is, they will be indicative of the way the writers saw themselves and their roles, although their words and actions might have been construed differently by others.

One of the recurring names found in the government files was that of Charles Hudson, Indian agent in Restigouche, New Brunswick. In June, 1937, he wrote to the officials in Ottawa on behalf of their families to ask if the pupils in the residential school from his agency could return home for summer vacation, provided their parents were living. He would not, he said, approve vacations for orphans, but otherwise felt it only fair. The parents, he wrote, "all have heard that the children from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are going home for the summer vacation and of course those from this agency wish to do the same." He promised to return all the pupils at the end of August.<sup>3</sup> In response, Hudson was told that

As the amount available for travelling expenses is extremely limited, it has not been our practice to allow home for holidays pupils whose homes are a considerable distance from the residential schools they are attending.<sup>4</sup>

It was suggested that Hudson should learn the cost of return tickets for all the children, then ask the school principal to broach the matter with the Department. While there is no evidence of such further correspondence, one of the agency's fathers took matters into his own hands and wrote to Ottawa himself in these words:

Sorry that I got to write to you and tell you that we would like to have our children home for vacation. They never came home since they left home. It's about six years since I've seen them so I like to have them at once. I've told the Indian agent about it last year and he said that the Department would do it...The children wrote to us and they said that they were lonesome they want to come home this coming vacation so do your best to help me so they will be no trouble and one of my boys are 16 and the others are 15 and 14 so that shows they have the right to come home and at the present my wife like to seem them



home at once. She's a kind of one that worries about children so please do your best to help us in this way and then we will send them a fare to come home on.<sup>5</sup>

While sometimes such direct and naive requests were returned to the writer with a reminder that they must be made through the agent, in this case the letter was passed from the Department to Hudson for his recommendation. He responded that the home conditions of the family in question were "good," and that he believed the parents could pay the travel expenses and also would agree to the return of their children at the end of vacation time. Hudson felt that in cases where parents were able to pay travel costs for their children they should be allowed to do so. He did make the suggestion, however, that if the Department would pay travel costs one way,

...let it be the way back, as they will make great efforts to get the money to bring them home but once they are home the parents are likely to say that the Department can pay their way back again, and won't try to get the money to return them.<sup>6</sup>

Hudson was instructed to have the parents forward the necessary funds to the school principal, following which the children would be allowed home. However, he was told, "the Department will be depending on you to see that the children are returned to the school upon the expiration of their leave," and that any return expenses he incurred would be reimbursed.<sup>7</sup> It can only be speculated whether other Restigouche families might have been encouraged to follow this procedure that year to have their children home for summer vacation. At least one other family wrote to Ottawa that summer, and Hudson was asked by the Department to give the request sympathetic consideration. But in this case, the agent objected to the return of any of this family's children, except the oldest who was due for discharge, because of the father's wandering ways. In a letter to the Department he offered his opinion that the father had

...no fit abode for children, and neither will he try to take care of them if he does get them. What this Indian is trying to work out, is to have the children with him in order that he will have a reason to apply for relief and then he will live on such relief and neglect the children.<sup>8</sup>

To the principal he wrote:

I cannot yet see that it would be to [the children's] advantage, or pleasure either, that they should go. As for any improvement in [the father], none can be expected, as I do not feel he will take any care of these children...What he is trying for, is to have the children go home, and then apply to the Department for relief, and out of what he would probably get, he would live himself and let the children go hungry as he did when his first wife was alive. [She apparently died of malnutrition.] I would like to see the children have a vacation, but when I know it would mean to them nothing but hardship I cannot agree to give them any.<sup>9</sup>

The next year the Department once again offered to pay the cost of sending any Restigouche children home for vacation whose parents would pay their return fares in advance, provided the agent deemed the home conditions suitable. Perhaps some negative experiences during the previous summer vacation prompted Hudson's decision that it was "inadvisable to allow any of these children to come home" since, he told the Department, "in all cases home conditions are unsuitable."<sup>10</sup>

During the following summer, 1939, a father wrote directly to Ottawa with a request to see his two boys who were in the Shubenacadie school. He had not approached the agent, for as he explained, "I have ask my local agent Charles Hudson three years ago and he promise me he would send them home for a vacation last year but this was just a promise." The father in this case was seventy-three years old.

I'm sick and total disable cripple I'm not getting better I'm getting worst by worrying for to see my two boys wich are in Shubenacadie school...I wish to make my statements with my boys before I die has I don't think that I'm going to live very long now and I must tell you that my boys are in that school for five years it seem to me that went I see the rest of the young boys

coming to visit there parents it make me lonesome for them not to be send home to see me.<sup>11</sup>

There is no response to this letter in the file, and it appears the request, plaintive as it was, was not honoured. However, two years later, in 1941, Hudson finally wrote to Ottawa requesting to have the children of this elderly couple returned from the school since the father had suffered a stroke and was not expected to last long. Hudson expressed his understanding that official vacation policy was not to allow children home except for a "very serious reason," but stated that he supported this parental request. He also asked that the older boy, aged sixteen (though listed in the school records as fourteen), be discharged in order to help his mother at home, and this request was granted. It is not clear from the correspondence, however, whether the younger son was allowed home to visit his father.<sup>12</sup>

In another case, Hudson forwarded a request that a fifteen-year old girl whose mother was dead be discharged in order to take care of her younger brother and father. He said she was "a big strong girl and apparently knows all about housekeeping," and described the father's request as reasonable. The government approved her discharge.<sup>13</sup>

When requesting residential school admission for his agency children, Charles Hudson at least sometimes offered full descriptions to support the applications. In one case he wrote, "I have tried every means at my command to have these people live peacable and look after their children but it simply cannot be done."<sup>14</sup> To his credit, he did not seem to recommend children to the school, as did some agents, simply because they were fatherless and poor. From a one-parent family of ten, in which the mother struggled to take care of all her children and apparently sent them regularly to the day school, he applied for only one child to attend the

residential school. He seemed to see the school in this case as performing a reform function, as he described this candidate as being

...of an unruly disposition and...a difficult pupil in the day school and the result is that she will not get much training. I would strongly recommend that she be given a couple of years in the Shubenacadie Residential School.<sup>15</sup>

On the scant evidence of these few cases, it might be speculated that Charles Hudson in the beginning acted on behalf of his clients in the matter of supporting their requests for vacation for their children, and on the side of the patron as well in his suggestion that having the parents pay return fares to the school in advance would prevent potential problems at the end of the summer. However, his later blanket description of all the reserve homes as "unsuitable" provokes some conjecture as to what may have changed his mind on the matter of vacation. There is no indication that the children who went home were not returned uneventfully to the school that fall, but there may have been some disruptive feelings of agent-favouritism on the reserve if only some parents were able to pay the return fare, or if he denied vacation to some children because of his negative opinion of their homes or parents, as he definitely did in the one case cited.

Hudson seemed a faithful middleman in the matter of relaying two of his client's wishes to have their children discharged from the school; in both cases he wrote fully and sympathetically about the situation, although unfortunately in the case of the elderly father he was a little late in supporting the request. In his representation of departmental interests, he seems to have recognized that the school was specifically for the destitute and orphaned, or for those who would or could not attend day school; this was unlike some agents who may have felt that poverty or having lost one parent were sufficient reasons for being sent away from home. He did not seem to manipulate the rules in favour of the clients, but he did use his power of veto

in the matter of vacations. It is suggested by the letters his clients wrote directly to Ottawa that they did not regard their agent as a broker in Adrian Mayer's sense of a leader, someone able to "influence the person who controls the favours."

One of Prince Edward Island's agents, Neil MacDougall, had reasons acceptable to the government for sending his agency's children to the residential school. When he requested admission for nine children in 1937, at a time when the school was already operating over its capacity, he was asked to state definitively why each of the children should be placed. Any who lived near the day school, or whose parents could support them, he was told, would not be considered.<sup>16</sup> The reasons given in reply were as follows: parents unable to influence school attendance; orphan; parents extra poor and unsettled; one unmanageable and another an uncontrollable and undisciplined child; grievance between day school and parents; very young and lives too far to go to school in winter; no local school and refused admittance at provincial school. There was also a bright fourteen-year-old boy who wanted to go to school and had his mother's support to do so but not that of his father, who wanted him to remain home to work.<sup>17</sup>

MacDougall seemed sympathetic to his charges, in the case of one child who was not clearly Indian. A white man with an Indian wife, whose marriage had cost her her status, had apparently applied for government assistance and requested that his daughter be released from the Shubenacadie school. "Been as my little girl is not supposed to be Indian," he wrote to the Department, "she has no right there." MacDougall was instructed to verify the girl's status before she could be released. However, around the same time the agent received a letter from Rev. Mackey, the school principal, informing him of the girl's grave illness. On arrival she had been sent to hospital with "a bad type of VD," she had since contracted

pneumonia, and having weak lungs had taken a serious turn. The agent sent Rev. Mackey's letter to the Department along with the information that although the girl did have a white father, the letter about her condition spoke for itself.<sup>18</sup> The Department's response was that no further action would be taken at that time, since, even should the child recover, it might be some time before she would be fit enough to send home. This seems a particularly generous gesture on the part of the government toward a child who was not technically a ward.

Although the school principal was deemed to be the legal guardian of the children while they were in school, their home agents were immediately informed when something as serious as illness or truancy occurred. Letters to MacDougall from the school make it clear that it was the agent's responsibility to let the parents know when their children were gravely ill; when children ran away, the agent was reminded of his responsibility to return them, with an escort, should they arrive home.<sup>19</sup>

Along with an application for a disabled child from his agency to attend the residential school, MacDougall sent the Department an accompanying letter of explanation. The child was described on her medical form as having undeveloped legs and deformed knees, wearing a brace on one and using crutches to aid walking. Her mental retardation was described by the doctor as "improving nicely." This child, who at fourteen had suffered "terrible conditions at her home," never walked or even talked until she went to the Children's Hospital where she was supplied with the brace. In supporting her application to the residential school, the doctor had described her as "an ideal case for this type of institutional care and a lovely child." The agent too, after considering where the girl might best be placed, felt the residential school was the most practical place for her. While the request for her admission came in June and Rev. Mackey indicated he

would prefer the girl to begin school in September, the Department put it in the agent's hands to decide whether she could be accommodated elsewhere for the summer. There is no indication of his decision, so it is not known when the child was enrolled. In any case it is clear that the principal did not deem her as suitable for the school as had the doctor and the agent. By mid-September Rev. Mackey had received from Ottawa permission to return the girl to Prince Edward Island, although he was displeased that arrangements for her travel had been left to him. The depth of his relief in being able to release her, however, is obvious: he arranged to take the child to meet her mother at the ferry, and offered to pay both fares personally, the child's plus any expenses for the mother.<sup>20</sup>

This little information about Neil MacDougall offers only a small suggestion about his role as an agent, but from the two cases cited he is seen to have spent some time in consideration of a suitable placement for the disabled girl, being in correspondence with the hospital, government, and residential school about her case before making the decision. He did not recommend she be returned to her "terrible" home, although she did not escape it long. MacDougall seemed similarly concerned with the non-status family whose child was ill in the residential school, apparently not evicting them from the reserve although he could have done so. While it is not possible to judge him as a "broker" on these cases alone, it might be suggested that in his service he leaned toward his clients, and served the government less. It was not in the interests of the patron to support a non-status family in a reserve house and their child in a residential school. In the sense, then, of having manipulated the values, or rules, of the patron, MacDougall might be considered more a broker than merely a middleman.

C.A. Spinney, an agent in Kentville, Nova Scotia, delivered some children to the residential school in September, 1936, and took the occasion

to tour the building. Thereupon he wrote a glowing account to the Department of his visit , particularly praising the order and cleanliness of the school and offering Rev. Mackey congratulations on the way the school was conducted.

The school is wonderful and Father Mackey and the Sisters that are in charge are all very fine and they certainly are doing their best to give the children their very best attention and each child should be benefitted greatly from the training they get at this school.<sup>21</sup>

In 1938 he made the mistake of not collecting return fares from the parents of those children who had gone home for the summer vacation. The Department reminded him that most agents had the return fares in hand before they recommended any children for vacation, but as he had neglected to do this, he would be reimbursed any expenses incurred in returning the children. However, Spinney was reminded that any parents who did not pay for their child's return travel could not expect to see the child the next summer.<sup>22</sup> It is doubtful whether this threat, presumably passed to the parents, worked; since so often their homes were deemed unsuitable for their children anyway, and with no guarantees for next year even if they paid for this year, it would not seem to be a worthwhile investment. In any case, considering the frequent white lament that the Indian people lived for today and could not see the advantage of saving toward an unknown and unsure tomorrow, it would seem unlikely that they would pay something they did not have to pay. Perhaps, too, they had the understandable attitude that they had the right, without having to pay for it, to see their own children.

In Spinney's case as in that of Charles Hudson, sometimes the clients showed a lack of trust in the agent by writing their requests directly to Ottawa. In 1938, a mother in his agency requested that her children be permitted home for Christmas. While it has been seen that sometimes, some



children were allowed home in the summer, never, until the late 1950s, were they allowed to leave for Christmas holidays. The parents, however, were determined and not satisfied with Spinney's explanation that Christmas visits were against the rules. They sent a man to the school, but in Spinney's words, "they did not get the children. Father Mackey would not let them take them."<sup>23</sup> Of course, since as government wards the children could be passed from the guardianship of the school only into the hands of the custodial agent, they could never be released to a man knocking at the door. Nevertheless, there is a profound pathos in the situation. The woman who wrote the request to Ottawa, Spinney said,

...thought by writing she would be able to get her children home for Christmas. These people think they can have their own way and would like to do so and when they find out they cannot they get mad.<sup>24</sup>

It is clear from reading the correspondence that the agents did not know or understand all the rules. This is perhaps because the government regulations were not only ambiguous but constantly changing. In most cases, for example, the admission procedure required that the agent complete an application form, have it signed by the child's parent or guardian, have a doctor complete a medical form, and send both to Ottawa for consideration. Sometimes the agents were told to complete the application form only (and even were told that the parent's signature wasn't always necessary), and that the school principal would have the child medically examined. This is despite the "rule" that only healthy children could be considered for admission. Sometimes, once the Department approved an applicant for the school, the agent was asked to inquire of the principal whether or not there was space for the child. Frequently Rev. Mackey agreed to take any child, space or not, although for spring applications he generally requested that the agent wait until the next school

year. It may be recalled that the school funds came from the per-capita grant, and it was of some benefit to have an overcrowded building.

Regarding admission without the signature of the parent, this was not uncommon. In one 1937 case, Indian agent A.C. MacNeil of Glendale, Nova Scotia, wrote to Ottawa on the matter of an elderly mother and a nomadic father who wanted to leave his wife and move with the children to a shack which he then hoped to have repaired at departmental expense. MacNeil felt the father would continue to "travel," and that without a woman in the house the children would be neglected. The father would not sign the application form, and the school had space for only one of the four children. According to the decision made by Indian Affairs, it was possible to admit one of the children to Shubenacadie, "the father not having shown very much interest in him in the past."<sup>25</sup> This is a curiously phrased and unsubstantiated statement, based, it seems, solely on the father's wandering reputation, for the agent had not indicated that there had been any past neglect.

In the spring of 1939 a girl was admitted to the school from the Children's Hospital, on an application signed only by the agent. Rev. Mackey was concerned, and wrote to the Department to say that he realized the unsigned application form was no good, but the child's mother was dead and the father difficult to locate. The principal said he had vainly hoped the father might arrive at the school to visit the girl, or to see her brother who had been there for three years. In this case too, the Department approved the girl's admission without a signature.<sup>26</sup> Some years later, in 1947, an agent forwarded an unsigned application form to Ottawa for a boy of nine who was used as a sight-guide for his blind but nomadic father. F.B. McKinnon felt that the boy was not receiving the attention and education he needed, but were he to be placed in the residential school, his father would not be able

to "travel, without any necessary purpose, as much as he has been doing."<sup>27</sup>

Vacation rules, as may have already become clear, were never very clear to the agents. J.H. Langley, agent at Chapel Island, Cape Breton, wondered in 1937 about the proper procedure. He had been requested by one client to learn whether the reserve children would be home for summer vacation, and he wrote to the school principal to ask.

I understood all the children of residential schools were to be allowed to go home during July and August. Kindly let me know if you intend to send all these children home.<sup>28</sup>

Even if the agent were new to the position, his question indicated that he had not been fully apprised of his duties. Vacation must have been permitted for some of the Chapel Island children, for that September one father decided not to return his son, who was "in his sixteenth year," to the school. Langley was apparently supportive and wrote to the principal to ask if he would give the boy's place to a child on the waiting list, since the father was determined to keep him at home. Rev. Mackey passed the request to Ottawa, with some manipulation. He said the boy was actually only fourteen, and added, "I do not know how you feel about it, but as far as I am concerned, I would insist on his coming back to school." The Department agreed, and let Langley know by letter that he must make arrangements to return the boy.<sup>29</sup>

There is often some discrepancy noticed between the age the parents think their child is, and the age that appears on the school records. It is possible that parents pretended their children were older than they were to support their case for having them returned. On the other hand, it is quite possible, in the case of the elderly couple cited above, for example, that after eight years without their boys they simply did not remember their ages. In a

situation described in 1937 by the Bear River agent, S.E. Darris, as "very special," it was requested that five children from one family be admitted to the school although the youngest was only four years old. Rev. Mackey agreed to accommodate all the children, but asked for birth or baptismal certificates for the school records.<sup>30</sup> It is not clear whether this was standard procedure, but it is the only such mention in the files.

In that case, Darris had difficulty placing the children as the father refused to part with them. However, they were admitted and the following summer their father made an "anxious" request to have them home for vacation. While the agent apparently supported the father, he was told that "Department funds are not sufficient to permit us to allow all children from residential schools to go home for the summer holidays," and approval was withheld.<sup>31</sup>

In 1940 the mother of five children in Darris's agency died, leaving them with a father who was not able or willing to provide them with proper food or care. The agent asked for immediate permission to remove them to the residential school, but his response from the Department was that since the school was filled, and since it was spring and not a usual time for new admissions, he should arrange to place them in September. The insistent telegram Darris then sent to Ottawa is not in the file, but the suggestion is that he felt the case could not wait another day. What he received in response was a reminder that he was not to send telegrams to the Department unless they were urgent and brief. He was also told that his original instructions had been sufficient, that he must make suitable arrangements for the care of the children with their father or in another reserve home. Furthermore, should the father find work and then refuse to support the children, as Indian agent he should take the usual court action.

The Department is not asking you to do the impossible, but in times such as these, even Indian parents must assume some responsibility for the support of their children.<sup>32</sup>

Two of the family's girls were admitted to the school in the fall, and a few months later Darris decided the seven-year-old son needed institutional care as well and made application for his admission. However, along with the form he sent a note explaining that the father felt he could not get along without this boy as he was needed at home to care for the two younger children. Hesitantly, Darris wrote,

...he won't allow the younger ones to be boarded out...[and] unless he consents for me to take the boy...there is no way to make him, I suppose...please advise. <sup>33</sup>

But the Department was unmoved by the agent's indecision, and hence, the boy's plight. Official response to the request for advice was that

It appears...that you consider the home conditions satisfactory and under these circumstances the Department has no objection to the boy remaining with his father. <sup>35</sup>

Of course, the child's home conditions were not acceptable to Darris, and it is curious that the Department did not suggest admission without parental permission in this case. Perhaps there was little patience with the agent himself since he did not seem to know what to do or how to help. Maybe he was not suitably ruthless; he felt the children must be removed from the home but could not make the decision, against the father's wishes, to send the boy away to school or take action to find other homes for those who were too young. Whether or not he was suited to the position, he apparently did not receive much support, or even instruction, from Ottawa.

In 1939, Edward Harry, the Indian Agent for Annapolis, had occasion to send a seven-year old boy to the school. However, saying he felt sorry for the boy, he accompanied him and sent a travelling expense

form to Ottawa: "to convey Indian lad to Shubenacadie School, taxi 154 mile each way, \$15, 2 meals at 50 cents." In explanation, he wrote:

The journey is a very tiresome one for the lad so young that it was out of the question to send him on alone so I accompanied him by car. The train service being rotten one takes the best part of two days to get there and back, having to wait at a wayside junction two and a half hours each trip, so being able to arrange what I thought a moderate price for hire of a car I went the most direct route.<sup>35</sup>

There were no reported repercussions, but the Department apparently did not approve of such over-protection. Two years later the Shelburne agent, F. Jackson, did not take the matter upon himself but requested authority to send someone to accompany an eight-year-old boy to the school, and was refused. "The Department," he was informed, "does not see any necessity," and Jackson was told to give the boy a letter to present to the conductor so the train officials would watch for his transfers. It must have seemed a long journey to the small boy travelling alone, who was to leave Shelburne at 11:00 in the morning, arrive in Halifax at 6:30 that evening, await a second train at 7:45, and finally arrive at Shubenacadie at 9:00 p.m. The school principal, Jackson was assured by the Department, would meet the boy at the station.<sup>36</sup>

J.S. Robb of Shubenacadie, like most agents, was not fully cognizant of the rules under which he was working. In August, 1937, he wrote to Ottawa about a thirteen-year-old boy who had never been to school, and whose parents claimed to be teaching him at home. "The boy winked at me when the statement was made," he wrote. The father was prepared to move his family to a reserve with a day school should Robb insist on formal education, but the agent wanted to send the boy to the residential school anyway. "What authority have I regarding sending children to school against the parents' wishes?" he inquired. However, in the usual vague way the

Department had with passing important information to its agents, the response was only that the school was already full and no new admissions were possible.<sup>37</sup> Even this answer was not strictly true, for there were frequent cases in which the principal agreed to make space for extra children. Furthermore, shortly after Robb's request, the admission of a child from another agency was approved with the simple note to the agent that the forms had been received and the principal should be informed of the Department's approval.<sup>38</sup>

The following month, a Shubenacadie mother wrote to Robb to request the release of her ten-year-old son from the school because he was "inclined of taking fainting spells." She wanted to take this boy, her only child, with her as she was returning to her home in Saint John where she would enroll him in a Catholic school. Robb made enquiry about the boy's health at the school and was told by the principal that his attendance was perfect at class and meals and that there was no illness of any kind. This was corroborated by the school doctor, who certified that although the child did occasionally faint, and might have *petit mal*, there was no indication of a cause. Robb sent all correspondence on the matter to Ottawa with the notation that he did not agree to the discharge. In fact he asked the Department to send "a good sharp letter I can read to this lady," the boy's mother. Commenting that the child was in "good health," the Department denied the mother's request.<sup>39</sup>

Several of the Indian agents whose correspondence appears in the files had the title "Reverend," and it is assumed they were Roman Catholic priests. Confusingly, the former Regional Director of Education for Indian Affairs in the Maritimes, Charles Gorman, says that while the term "Reverend" probably does refer to Catholic priests, "no priest served as an Indian agent." They may be mentioned in the records, he feels, only as local

parish priests who supplied statistics to the Department or distributed relief on the reserves.<sup>40</sup> However, A.A. Johnston's history of the Catholic church in eastern Nova Scotia which traces Micmac Catholicism from the 1600s mentions several of the early priest-agents.<sup>41</sup> In fact two years after Confederation, when Nova Scotia was divided into seven Indian agencies, four of the appointed agents were the resident Catholic parish priests. Priests continued to fill the role of Indian agent from time to time in most Nova Scotian agencies, particularly until the turn of the century. Three agencies are notable for having a succession of priest-agents over many years: Inverness, from 1878 to 1932, Pictou from 1881 to 1901 and again from 1932 to 1938, and Victoria from 1871 to 1893 and again from 1927 to 1942.<sup>42</sup> As Indian agents, these priests filled an important role on behalf of the residential school pupils and their parents, acting for both the government and the school. It is notable, however, that according to the civil service files none of the Indian agents in New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island, equally involved with the school at Shubenacadie, was also a priest.

The collected school correspondence also indicates that these Reverends were Indian agents. While they enjoyed an apparent church connection to the residential school, they seemed no more aware of the government's rules for procedure in the matter of admissions than did the other agents. In 1940, Rev. A.R. McDonald, Christmas Island agent, was directed by Philip Phelan of Indian Affairs to complete and sign the application form, have it endorsed by the father or guardian, and mail it to the school principal who would arrange for medical examination.<sup>43</sup> This is, of course, contrary to other directives which told agents to have the applicants examined first (since, it may be recalled, only healthy and tuberculosis-free children were supposed to be allowed admission), mailing both application and medical forms to Ottawa for approval, and finally writing



to the principal to ascertain if he would accept them. But the church connection seems somewhat significant, judging from another situation involving Rev. McDonald. That same year the Department informed the school principal of several orphans in the Eskasoni agency who were being cared for by guardians at the Department's expense, and since it was preferred that these children have institutional care, Father Mackey was instructed to contact Rev. McDonald with a view to having them admitted to the school.<sup>43</sup> This is peculiar procedure, rather the reverse of the usual method for procuring pupils.

It might be safely assumed that Indian agents who were also parish priests would display a double interest in the Indians. As agents they were responsible for the material condition of their charges, but as priests they oversaw spiritual welfare too. Being parish priests they probably had more personal knowledge of the people they oversaw, and a deeper stake in their condition, than did lay agents. If unpopular as an agent during the week, what congregation and support could be expected on Sunday?

In 1938, Rev. Ernest Chaisson, the new Pictou agent, assisted the R.C.M.P. in apprehending a truant boy from the residential school. It was the second time the boy had escaped from the school, and this time he had tricked each of two Sisters into believing he was in the care of the other one as he made his getaway. Leaving a trail of stolen bread, he was soon caught and returned to the school, only to escape again the very next day, departing unnoticed after being sent from the classroom for what was probably a deliberate misdemeanor. The R.C.M.P. were aware that he had made his way home to the Pictou Landing Indian Reserve, but could not find him for the simple reasons that as soon as their patrol entered the reserve, word was passed and he had time to hide in the woods, and his parents, suspected of duplicity, denied seeing him. The new agent, Rev. Chaisson,

then volunteered his assistance. He knew his presence would cause the boy and his parents no alarm, and he had no difficulty in apprehending the truant. His request of the police to return the boy to the school personally was granted. While from one point of view it might seem that Rev. Chaisson was not acting for his clients in this instance, perhaps he thought to be of some fatherly guidance to the boy on the long drive to Shubenacadie. If so, he was unsuccessful as the boy soon escaped from the school again. Although he must have been more difficult to catch this time, eventually the priest again prevailed and again accompanied the boy to school. Three days later he escaped once more, to be caught this time by the R.C.M.P. It is not clear whether Rev. Mackey finally made good his threat to place the boy in the reformatory, St. Patrick's Home for Boys in Halifax.<sup>45</sup>

Rev. Chaisson was involved in the admission to the school of several semi-orphaned children, whose motherless homes he deemed unstable. But in the two cases which appear in the records, he apparently gave the fathers ample opportunity to prove to him that they were adequate parents before removing the children. He did not interfere when two motherless children under ten were cared for by their teenaged sister, but when she left home and their father neglected them during the next five months, he had them admitted to Shubenacadie. After another mother on the reserve died, the priest visited the father to ask how he intended to care for the children. He was satisfied that another couple would move into the home to look after them, but they soon left and the children were neglected because the father was away from home so often and there was no one to prepare meals. One boy went to school fairly regularly while the other went only occasionally, and then sometimes intoxicated. Rev. Chaisson approached the father about the residential school, and found him to be against the idea, "believing, wrongly of course, that children there are not

well cared for." It may be that the father had ill feelings toward the school, because it was his older son who had escaped so often and had been threatened with a sentence in the reformatory. However, in what he felt was the interest of the children's welfare, Rev. Chaisson prepared unsigned application forms for the two younger sons and wrote to Rev. Mackey to see if he would take them.<sup>46</sup>

In 1937, Rev. W.V. McCarthy, Indian agent in Parrisboro, received several complaints from the school that one of his charges had not returned following summer vacation. The priest warned the boy's guardian through several letters and phone calls, and eventually enlisted the R.C.M.P. who found and delivered the boy to school.<sup>47</sup> However, in a similar case at the same time another father was successful in keeping his children at home, presumably just because the principal was satisfied to release them. Rev. McCarthy claimed that the father of the two boys in question had initially "begged" him to have his children admitted to the residential school, but because of some "foolish tales" told during their vacation by his sons was reluctant to return them. However, recognizing the authority vested in the R.C.M.P. in these cases, the father followed proper procedure and first sent the boys back to school then requested his agent to have them released in order, he said, that they could be at home to help their mother. Rev. McCarthy seems to have been of two minds about this case, perhaps being annoyed with the father over its particulars, but he did admit to the principal that the family in question was "one of the best as regards cleanliness and behaviour." He left the decision to Rev. Mackey, who was glad to release the boys since he himself had had "no end of little trouble with the father of these children," and because their discharge would make space for two urgent cases awaiting admission. The matter took an unusual turn in May, 1938, only six months after the release of the two boys, when Rev. McCarthy

wrote to the Secretary of Indian Affairs because both he and the father wanted the boys placed back in the school.

Much against my advice and wish, you allowed [a father] of this agency to withdraw his two boys this year from the Shubenacadie school. He now comes to me and admits that I was right. He now proposes that [the older boy] be returned to the school or sent to the reformatory at Halifax, as not much good can be had of him.<sup>48</sup>

However, the Department's reply indicated that since the agent had appeared to recommend rather than advise against the discharge, and reminded Rev. McCarthy that because the principal seemed "glad to get rid of them," it had been agreed to send them home. Still, it was decided to return the older, difficult boy to the school, provided Rev. Mackey would accept him, although the outcome of this case is not on record.<sup>49</sup>

Rev. McCarthy may have viewed the residential school as serving a moderate reform function, for while this father was said to want his son placed in the St. Patrick's Home, the agent felt the boy's bad behaviour was exaggerated and that placement in the reformatory was not necessary. It is also possible that he saw the school as a more appropriate, less severe, place for purposes of behaviour modification. McCarthy did, in another case, express his vision of the school as more than a residential place of education for children without suitable homes. With one application he noted that the boy was

...practically a waif. Buffeted about, with no education or much religion, a factotum for anyone who will keep him, he gives promise of being a burden to himself and the Department. The Shubenacadie school is his only social and moral salvation.<sup>50</sup>

This view of the school is rather different from that of agents who were not also priests, for in no other case for admission in the files does the suggestion of the school as an institution of moral virtue appear. Yet, rather than give undue importance to this agent's interest in the boy's salvation--

not forgetting he was a priest--it might be remembered that in 1937 not only residential schools, and not only Roman Catholic schools, were interested and involved in the moral upbringing of children.

A Cape Breton priest-agent, Rev. D.J. Rankin, appeared once in the files in 1940 when he requested the return to residential school of a girl who had been discharged when she was eleven. She was living with her grandparents, who were "anxious" to have her go back, and she herself wished to return. There was the example at hand of another reserve girl who was said to be a splendid school success, and the agent believed that could this girl return, she would come home after a few years "equally prepared to do useful work." However, his request was denied because the girl was then seventeen, and the Department felt that since the number of applicants was so high, it was necessary to adhere to the Indian Act regulations that stipulated sixteen as the leaving age.<sup>51</sup> This rule could be bent and broken, however, but it was usually at the behest of the principal who sometimes made successful cases for retaining small, "deficient," or orphaned children an additional year. Occasionally, overaged children were also allowed to remain if their residence at the school permitted them to attend the local high school.

The best illustration of an Indian agent's views of his role is offered in a 1933 letter to his Member of Parliament in New Glasgow. Rev. A.A. Johnston was looking for some governmental intervention on behalf of this agency, after having made several recommendations to Indian Affairs for improved reservation housing to which he had been "plainly told that the Department had no funds with which to build houses." All he received were two \$51 payments, one for some very necessary repairs, and the other "to build a shack for an Indian whose children were suffering from exposure to the elements." His letter continued:

Perhaps you can sympathise with the unenviable position of an Indian Agent. There are really a number of Indians for whom houses should be built...but I am always informed that the Department has no funds for exceptional expenditures and that expenses be kept down. Added to all this I am given the disconcerting notice that these poor wards of the government must apply only through their agent...I was given the unencouraging notice that my expenditure for relief in this agency is entirely too high and that I must reduce this amount, telling the Indians to be self reliant and attempt to support themselves and their families by agriculture, fishing and other work...it is impossible for them to get remunerative work or to sell their handiwork and so I believe that the government should give them extraordinary aid in these extraordinary times.<sup>52</sup>

If Rev. Johnston received a response or any assistance, it is not recorded. However, his attitude toward the Indians was still apparent some years later when in 1937 he supported their wishes in a custody dispute with the child's mother, an off-reserve white woman. She had married an Indian and given birth to a daughter, but abandoned them both shortly thereafter. The child was raised by her father until his death, then by her grandmother. After the grandmother died and the girl was in the home of another relative, the mother reappeared and sought to take her daughter who was now ten years old. "The Indian people do not agree that she should go to her," Rev. Johnston wrote to Ottawa on August 29th, and he asked what legal recourse could be taken, and whether the child could be placed in the Shubenacadie school. It seems that within only one day the Department had received the agent's written request, dealt with the problem, and approved the admission, and the child was in the school on August 30th.<sup>53</sup> What is of particular significance in this instance, other than the apparent speed of both the mail and government action, is that the agent supported the Indian people against the wishes of a woman who was not only white but the natural mother of the child in question. Reverend Johnston's handling of the

situation seems wise beyond its time, for it is only recently that the effects felt by Indian children raised in white homes are coming to be discussed and understood. During a time that today's opponents of the policy might call the ethnocentric era of Indian agent power, it was not unusual to recommend that neglected Indian children be removed from their reserves and adopted by white families for the sake of what appeared to be a better home life. In this case, since the Indians claimed the mother had a "shady reputation," her suspect home life may have influenced Rev. McCarthy's support of their wish to prevent her from having custody of the girl. But both he and the people of his agency apparently preferred that the girl be raised an Indian, and saw the residential school as a refuge for her.

Race comes again into a 1939 case in which a man, whose home neighbored a reserve in Lunenburg, tried to have an Indian child sent to the Shubenacadie school. He wrote to the Supervisor of Attendance for provincial schools complaining that an eleven-year-old boy was not going to school. "There is a law for white children," he wrote, "and it should apply to Indians to[o]." The provincial authorities sent copies of the letter to both Rev. Mackey and the agent, Dr. W.B. Skinner. The principal agreed that were the case as stated in the letter, he would be glad to accept the child, but the agent felt the child was receiving adequate education at home and that the letter had been sent because of personal grievance. It had been written, he said, by "an uneducated colored man (emphasis in original) with whom I have had some trouble in keeping from trespassing on the reserve," and whose trespasses had been reported by the mother of the child in question. Dr. Skinner noted that the mother objected strongly to having her son sent to residential school, and that since she was having him tutored privately to some extent, he expressed the opinion that the boy's training was adequate. The Department agreed that no action was necessary.<sup>54</sup> But in fact,

whether or not the letter-writer was vengeant, he was quite correct to surmise that schooling was compulsory for Indian children. Since this means that the boy should have been in a local day school or in the residential school, which had been built to accommodate such cases, it seems surprising that both the agent and the Department were willing to overlook the avoidance of formal education. On one hand, Dr. Skinner supposedly had not already applied for residential schooling for the boy because he was satisfied with the home schooling, but on the other there is the question of whether a complaint by an "uneducated colored" trespasser was deemed worthy of any consideration at all.

Of course, any discussion of the attitudes of an Indian agent based on only a few pieces of correspondence is unfair and inconclusive. It is not easy to definitively describe an agent's motive, sympathy, concern, power, or brokerage. Since he was often not in touch with the expectations the government had for him, and perhaps even less with those his clients held, his position was an ambiguous and therefore uneasy one. Impressions of power are as elusive as those of brokerage.

But brokerage aside, what emerges more obviously from the correspondence is a new view of the chain of command. It was not the straightforward one that appears on the surface of the imagination, the idea of a set and proper procedure in which a petitioning Micmac approaches his Indian agent, who passes along the request to the government in either a direct or manipulated form, who receives clear orders and relays them to the petitioner. The process, like the rules, was much less determined and less understood. Frequently the Indians bypassed their agents completely, either from mistrust or the idea that a direct petition might be quicker. Even the agent has been seen as using a Member of Parliament as a mediator between the government and his agency's concerns when he could get no



official satisfaction. As will be seen in the the next chapter, the clients often appointed their own agents, people they perceived to be either more powerful or more reliable. There was not a clear person at the bottom of the chain, a well-defined man-in-the-middle, or a top power, for power could be wielded from any of these positions. Being on the bottom did not mean being dismissed and downtrodden; being on the top did not mean being all-knowing and all-powerful, for much confusion started in Ottawa and found its way to the reserve, where rules were recognized as inconsistent, indecisive, and open to challenge. All along the chain of command, the participants tested the strength of their positions and power.

**CHAPTER EIGHT - NOTES AND REFERENCES**

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5. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6056, letter to DIA from Redbank parent, June 9, 1937.
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28. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6056, letter to Rev. Mackey from J.H. Langley, July 2, 1937.
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31. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6056, letter to S.E. Darris from DIA, May 27, 1938.

32. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6053, letter to DIA from S.E. Darris, April 5, 1940; letters to S.E. Darris from DIA April 12 and May 4, 1940.
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35. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6053, letter to DIA from Edward Harry, September 27, 1939.
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51. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6053, letters to DIA from Rev. D.J. Rankin, May 28, 1940, and undated reply.
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## CHAPTER NINE: CULTURAL TENACITY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIATION

It is quite unnecessary for you to make your representations otherwise than through the regular official channels of the Department and...in doing so you are not furthering the interests of your people in any way.<sup>1</sup>

In 1902, James Smart of Indian Affairs lamented the fact that industrial school leavers simply returned to their reserves, still Indians after all their white education. Their persistence, their refusal to integrate and amalgamate, continued to be regretted throughout most of the twentieth century until eventually aims of assimilation were abandoned as futile and in any case, interpreted as inappropriate. One century had passed between the federal assumption of Indian affairs at Canada's Confederation, and the closure of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia. In spite of their education, many of the Micmac in the Maritimes remained economically dependent on the government.

It could be said, then, that the federal government has continued to patronize the country's aboriginal population, although it has done so with diminished status. Relative status, according to Robert Paine, is part of what defines patronage, although he suggests that it is less rank that decides who is patron, and more the possession of a fund of assets that is convertible into influence. This fund in the case of the Department of Indian Affairs literally has been and remains a monetary one. During the residential school era, funds were disbursed to principals as per-capita payments; or to the Indian agents as salary, reserve capital, or relief for the clients. The agents in the schools and on the reserves were charged with using these funds to exert influence in favour of the government and its required return: in the schools the return was to be an educated generation of useful citizens, and on the

reserves it was to be a community working toward self-sufficiency through agriculture, and Canadianization through the social values of the patron.

The problem with trying to encourage agriculture in the Maritimes was its geography. If it were difficult to produce happy Indian farmers on class one land in Saskatchewan, it was perhaps impossible on the unyielding and rocky reserves of the east, particularly in much of Nova Scotia where class seven land is the most common.<sup>2</sup> There was some possibility of success, however, on Shubenacadie's class 3 farmland; however, the agent on the Indian Brook Reserve near Shubenacadie in 1897 noted that the Indians did "not take the interest in farming that is warranted under the circumstances" (although it may be recalled that he did commend their excellent basket-making).<sup>3</sup> Around the same time, another Nova Scotian agent said the Indians on his reserve, "like most other Indians, would rather do almost any other work than cultivate the land."<sup>4</sup> By 1911 the situation had not changed. In Duncan C. Scott's annual report he wrote that although Nova Scotia had been settled and cultivated for many years, the Indians had not made permanent homes nor taken to farming; that is, to use Smart's words, they had somehow remained Indians. They were prone to wander about, he said, selling their wares, or squatting in places where odd jobs were available.<sup>5</sup>

As competent as the women were at producing baskets, the Micmac men were adept at making hockey sticks and axe handles, and even despite the eventual vocational efforts at the residential school, these occupations prevailed. The high departmental expectations that residential school graduates would successfully compete in the white work force were less enthusiastically embraced by the Indians themselves. In an unsigned letter to the Truro newspaper in 1931, a Micmac elder expressed the belief that educated Indians would never find work, for what white businessman would



not prefer to hire another white man? In the past forty years of Indian education in Nova Scotia, he said, "not one single Injin" was able to use his schooling to support himself. He scoffed at the ideas circulating that within ten years the residential school would be producing priests, doctors, lawyers, and teachers, and ended with the wry observation that

...three months after an Indian Priest is ordained and Indian Doctor and Indian Lawyer graduates you will find the three working together at baskets and handles.<sup>6</sup>

In 1937 the residential school at Shubenacadie had been in operation for six years, and M. Christianson, General Superintendent of Indian Affairs, had spent "a whole afternoon" visiting the institution. In his report to the Department, besides mentioning the structural problems from which the school had suffered since its opening, he commented on the fine farm and the efficient staff. But he also expressed his concern about the future of the pupils. Year after year the graduates would be returning to their people, he said, and in a short time would be asking the government for financial assistance. He noted that the Indians in Nova Scotia were living on relief and the "sale of Indian handicrafts, such as baskets, axe and pick handles." He commented on the expertise of the adults, but lamented that since the school children were not being trained in this work, "they will have absolutely no means of making a living when they return to their homes."<sup>7</sup>

Rev. Mackey countered that the market for such items was already oversupplied, and that if the school instead continued to teach the boys to do things not already done on the reserve,

...we are bettering their own chance and leaving the market for baskets, etc., to those who need it most. Again, these boys are only sixteen years of age when they leave here, and if they want to learn basket making for a living, it is not too late.<sup>8</sup>

The matter of "handicrafts" was not closed, for by 1941 the aptitude of the children for the making of pottery had been discovered. The school was visited that year by E.K. Ford, the Provincial Inspector of Technical Schools and Mechanic Science Departments, and he expressed his opinion to the Department that the children's skill as potters would be a "valuable addition with economic possibilities to the commercially known one which the Indians possess, the making of baskets."<sup>9</sup> After ten years of residential schooling in the Maritimes, it had been felt that the graduates were not giving the patron the expected and necessary return of a self-sufficient Indian population, and as far as employment was concerned, were doing little to change the situation on Maritime reserves.

In 1948 an exchange of letters between the Member of Parliament for Colchester-Hants and the Director of Indian Affairs showed that white attitudes toward Indian aptitude had not changed. F. Stanfield, the M.P., expressed his opinion that although the Indian men were lazy and would do nothing, something would have to be done to provide work for the people of the Shubenacadie reserve. R.A. Hoey from Ottawa agreed, and thought that plans might be discussed for establishing industries on the two large Nova Scotian reserves. He thought perhaps glove making, a small shoe factory, or "the production of axe handles" would be appropriate.<sup>10</sup>

Besides geography and the unchanging economy of the Maritime reserves, one of the problems on the reserves was the matter of limited choice. While some parents wanted their children in school, others had them forcibly removed, but in either case there was no apparent value in the elementary learning offered at the residential school. The immediate uselessness of education was clear: if it could not be traded for employment options, of what value was it? The Indians had no input into the decision of who would oversee them at home, and in cases where it was felt that the

appointed agent could not accurately relay reserve concerns and needs to Ottawa, of what use was he to the people? What could be done when there was no apparent choice?

At least from the beginning of the school's operation, the Micmac people had no fear of taking matters of mediation into their own hands. On occasion they chose to speak for themselves, and it has been seen that sometimes their pleas were successful, or at least considered. That made it worth the chance of writing to the Department personally, even if direct petitioners were usually told they should follow proper procedure. When they thought their own efforts would not be enough, but did not trust their agents and supervisors, they approached the people they perceived to have the necessary power to represent and help them. These agents of choice--doctors, lawyers, Indian chiefs--were not always welcome intruders as far as the government was concerned, and not always useful ones to their clients, either, for although they relayed messages, they did not necessarily do so in a helpful manner. Because of this they were of even less use than the reserve Indian agents, since to the government they were illegitimate mediators. But for the clients, it was obviously difficult to determine the most likely route to satisfaction.

The Indian Affairs school files offer several examples of Micmac recourse to alternative mediation. In a case on J.H. Langley's Cape Breton reserve in 1941, the mother first went through what she thought was proper procedure to keep her child home from the residential school following the summer vacation. She informed Langley of her decision, he wrote to the school principal to let him know, and Rev. Mackey told Langley that the matter of dismissal was not quite so easy. (Incidentally, this is another example of an agent not knowing or understanding the rules with regard to the school, and the necessity to have departmental consent for discharge

just as such permission was required for admission.) The principal explained in a letter to the agent:

...we are not accepting the decision of [the mother], and will write to the Department suggesting that unless some very good reason is given for their dismissal, that they be obliged to return to the school. If they are not sent back willingly and soon, the matter will probably be placed in the hands of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.<sup>11</sup>

During the next three weeks, the mother overrode the agent's authority and sought the advice and assistance of both her county councillor and a stipendiary magistrate. She had the councillor write to Langley explaining that the children's father was ill, that the mother required them to help in the home, and that she would send them to the local school. At the same time, she asked the magistrate to write to the Department on her behalf.<sup>12</sup> In his letter to Ottawa, he explained the situation thus:

They [a boy of nine and a girl of fourteen] have been with their mother for the summer holidays and wish to stay on. [The mother] says that she "loves" her children and wishes to have them with her. She claims that she can provide for them and that their stepfather is willing to have them. She also wishes me to say that she will send them regularly to the good school in Barra Head.<sup>13</sup>

In response, the Department requested that Langley assess the circumstances of the family, and that if he felt the parents could care for the children and would see to their education, it would be agreed to discharge them.<sup>14</sup> But Langley explained that he had visited the family twice to advise them to return the children to Shubenacadie, noting the mother's plea--not this time that the father was ill but that she herself was unwell, had to work, and needed the children's help at home.<sup>15</sup> Still the Department did not make a firm decision and left it in Langley's hands.

Unless you are definitely assured that this woman is in a position to properly care for her children and send them regularly to a day school, you should take immediate action to

have them returned to the Shubenacadie Residential School.<sup>16</sup>

Langley responded that in his opinion the mother would neither care for the children nor send them to school. She had told him she needed the girl for housework and the boy to provide wood for fuel. "You can readily understand," he wrote, "what their school attendance would be like." While the children told the agent they did not want to return to Shubenacadie, he felt it was the best place for them.<sup>17</sup> They were, presumably, returned.

What is interesting about this case, besides the agent's lack of knowledge about procedure, is that Indian Affairs insisted he take full responsibility in assessing and deciding upon the situation. This is quite the opposite of the one cited Darris case (last chapter) in which the Department, apparently impatient with the agent, took all decision from his hands. Moreover, the mother attempted to go beyond the authority of the agent, not directly to the patron, but to other people of power she believed could and would help her. The councillor was of little assistance, simply stating the mother's wishes with no attempt to support them. The stipendiary magistrate, on the other hand, was of even less help, having belittled both the mother and her request: not only did he offer no plea on her behalf, but using such words as "she claims that," and "she also wishes me to say," he swept her sincerity aside. He was offensive, too, in denying her feelings for the children, undermining its possibility by underlining and putting in quotes the word "loves." In considering the magistrate's position as a mediator for the woman in her dealings with the government, it might be assumed that she consulted him because to her the agent and the government were one. In fact, she would have had reason to believe this, for although the agent twice wrote to the Department for advice the patron wanted no say in the decision. Therefore, the agent acted solely for, and seemingly as, the

government. But the mother's chosen broker did not support her either, certainly manipulating her request by his judgement upon it.

In a 1930 case already cited (see Chapter 2), Chief Dan Francis bypassed his agent, W.S. Prince, by writing directly to Ottawa to complain of what he considered slavery and imprisonment of the children in the residential school. Although the Chief was given the courtesy of a response, Prince was charged with the responsibility of assuring that Francis visited the school "to satisfy him that there is no ground for any complaints," as it was deemed important for the facilitation of future recruitment that the Indians themselves were favourably disposed toward the school.<sup>18</sup> As investigation of the grievance was also put into the hands of the agent, Prince learned from Francis that the children were complaining generally of homesickness and loneliness or simply being wanted at home, and the parents were protesting that the children were unclean and lousy at school. The benign nature of the complaints occasioned some relief in the Department where it was decided they were hardly worth consideration. It is interesting that Prince was not asked to interview the children and he did not, nor did he assess the validity of the charges, for example, to learn if the children had indeed returned home with lice.

On one reserve in Nova Scotia the Micmac people seem to have found the perfect middleman, one who would never misrepresent them or manipulate their requests in a manner that would deny them. The "Christmas papers," held at Shubenacadie's Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre (TARR), indicate that over the years Chief Ben Christmas of the Sydney reserve sought not only to represent his people, but to inform the government when there was some dissatisfaction with the appointed Indian agent, and even to make suggestions for a suitable candidate.

Ben Christmas, who became Chief of the Membertou band and also President of the United General Indian Council of Nova Scotia was apparently an articulate and ardent spokesman for his people.<sup>19</sup> In 1924 he wrote directly to D.C. Scott to complain that the Indians of Cape Breton were living in poverty while A.J. Boyd, the Indian Superintendent for the Maritime Provinces, was living on two salaries, for he was a general merchant as well as drawing "high" pay from Indian Affairs. In the latter position, Christmas contended, he had proven himself a failure and was "not capable to protect an Indian."<sup>20</sup> In 1926 Christmas wrote to his Member of Parliament with further complaints against Boyd. He referred to a previous petition calling for the dismissal of Boyd, which the people of his reserve had forwarded to the government in 1921, and to which no action, other than a note of acknowledgement, had been taken. This was a third request that Boyd be dismissed without delay, and though strongly worded, the accusations were vague: Boyd's conduct was improper, he was a complete failure as far as Indian welfare was concerned, he seldom visited the reserve, and when he did gave no satisfaction.

Boyd's latest offence was in admitting to Christmas that he would "do nothing only when instructed from the Indian Department to do anything."<sup>21</sup> It is assumed from this that Boyd did the routine tasks expected of his position, but did not take initiative in matters which were beyond his specific authority without reference first to Indian Affairs; however, all Christmas could see was that "if no instructions come for any length of time [he] will draw his salary just the same for doing nothing."<sup>22</sup> Christmas took the opportunity to remind the government that the reserves in Nova Scotia were "deplorable and a disgrace to civilization,"<sup>23</sup> and to blame these conditions, as well as the slow progress of education, on the inactivity of Boyd. He did have a suitable replacement in mind, Dr. C.J. Sparrow, a

former Indian agent whom the Indians had unanimously chosen at the time of their 1921 petition. Sparrow, he said, had the "proper spirit for Indians, [had] rendered excellent service for the Indians," and had their confidence.<sup>24</sup>

Six months later, in January, 1927, he telegraphed his Member of Parliament again, this time with reference to the unemployment on the reserve.<sup>25</sup> The M.P. responded that he had referred the matter to Boyd. "In future," he wrote, "I should be pleased if you would communicate with him in regard to matters of this nature."<sup>26</sup> But Christmas was persistent. Two years later, in 1930, he received a letter from the Inspector of Indian Agencies, G.J. O'Neil, in response to one he had written about relief for his agency. In it the inspector simply told him that all reservation matters were to be handled only through "the regular channels namely the Indian agent."<sup>27</sup>

With regard to the complaint of Christmas that Boyd could not satisfy or protect the Indians in his agency, he might have underestimated or misunderstood Boyd's motives. For example, it might be recalled (see Chapter 7) that in the years prior to 1920 Boyd was on what might be phrased the "Indian side" in the matter of early urgings of the government to relocate the various bands on fewer, larger reserves. At a time when the popular view of Indians said to be squatting on land they did not own was to force them to move to land the Department considered suitable for them, Boyd was urging Indian Affairs to sell some of the unused Indian lands and purchase for them land in those places the Indians were themselves choosing to live.<sup>28</sup> That this did not happen does not negate Boyd's attempt to speak on behalf of the Indian.

In 1930 or 1931 Christmas wrote to his M.P. again, with a "serious complaint about the local agent, S.E. Muggah."<sup>29</sup> One of the band members had taken his sick baby to the doctor who had recommended



immediate hospitalization. The father went to see the Indian agent about the matter, only to be refused admittance at the front door and told to go to the back. There the agent still tried to keep the man out of the house. When he was told about the sick child, and the family's need for coal, the agent was said to have refused, saying, "No I cannot give you coal. I've got your number."<sup>30</sup> This colloquialism suggests that the agent was familiar with the ploys of this particular petitioner, and was not prepared to negotiate. The letter from Christmas, however, did not explain what was done for the baby, nor is there evidence of a response, but since it was January it can be assumed that the need for coal was urgent, and the baby's illness was perhaps related to the cold house. In a case such as this, when the complaint was against the Indian agent himself, the road to recourse obviously had to be through someone other than the proper representative. It is unfortunate that the documents allow the matter to rest there.

Muggah was apparently dismissed as Indian agent, but according to a letter to Christmas from the agency inspector, he was reinstated in July of 1932. His dismissal is not particularly significant, therefore, since in the spring of that year every Indian agent in the Maritimes had been fired by the Department (see Chapter 7). As will be recalled, this had been done simply for the sake of governmental economy, and the agents were replaced by two inspectors. However, in a matter of two or three months, because of political pressure and the realization that the change was not cost-saving, all the agents were rehired or replaced and the inspectors fired instead.<sup>31</sup>

Chief Christmas again acted as agent for his people in the summer of 1932 when he wrote to Rev. Mackey at the residential school on behalf of a parent who wanted her child to remain at home following his vacation. The boy's mother apparently had asked Christmas to explain her reasons and good intentions. His letter to the principal is torn and not fully

decipherable, but the woman's complaints are made clear. In the two years since her son had been at school she had not only discerned no evidence of his educational progress, but had been astonished to see he had lost his "own graceful tongue." She was dismayed to realize that in the school the Micmac language was discouraged rather than encouraged, and disappointed that her boy could no longer pray in his own language. Furthermore, he had been ill all summer and unable to enjoy his vacation, but as soon as he recovered she wished to teach him his Micmac prayers and enroll him in the Mission Church Sunday school. The mother was even willing to "make good that waste of money paid for his return ticket," and was praying he would be granted a leave of absence from the residential school.<sup>32</sup>

The problem with old letter files, both from Indian Affairs or the TARR centre, is that since they are incomplete they leave much room for conjecture. Was there simply no response to the request from Christmas, was it lost, or did the Department deal with the matter only through the school and agent so that Christmas had no written record of the outcome? In any case, it is clear that the parents who agreed to send their children to Shubenacadie did not know what "education" entailed. They certainly were not aware, initially, of the government's assimilationist intentions in the matter of native language, and that this educational aim would render any Indian agent unsympathetic to a plea such as one lamenting its loss. With that consideration, the mother went to the right middleman in her chief, except that it can be inferred, from the frequent reminders in his papers that he was not communicating through the correct channels, that the Department may have simply dismissed many of his petitions on those grounds.

Christmas took it upon himself in 1933 to send a telegram to Ottawa to inform the Department of the starvation on his reserve.<sup>33</sup> Response came from Muggah, still the local Indian agent, who found it "strange that you have not reported same to me."<sup>34</sup> It is curious that Muggah himself did not investigate the situation, but that Constable Gould, presumably of the R.C.M.P., had been instructed to do so.<sup>35</sup> Once again there is the frustrating lack of further information about the case.

By the following year Muggah had been replaced by Joseph McKinnon, another agent who did not meet the approval of his charges. The complaint to Ottawa this time was with reference to the agent's improper procedure during a reserve election for a chief and councillors, when he was accused of having firmly ordered every voter to sign the ballot. The voters felt they had to obey the agent, who then had possession of the identified ballots and was suspected, "judging by the things that have happened," of using them for his own purposes. The eleven signatories to this petition felt that the agent's illegal action in this matter was sufficient to have him dismissed.<sup>36</sup> The Department asked McKinnon to reply to the charges, but he wrote that he would not give a response to any "irresponsible follower of any pest agitator." He claimed that their petition was not very clear in any case. He had no idea what things had happened since the election that he was believed to have caused: "The California flood? The Duke's marriage? Assassinations in Moscow?" Certainly, he stated, he had gained nothing from the election.<sup>37</sup> And he was apparently not dismissed over the matter.

Three years later, in 1937, the tables were turned when McKinnon informed Christmas that there had been a complaint made against him. It was hearsay, surely, judging by the trail of the tale: the Reverend Father who was Indian agent at Wagmatcook had called the Sydney agent to say that he had been informed by the Reverend Father Indian agent at Eskasoni

that the latter objected to some of the activities of Christmas and that he "must put a stop to them." The only offence was a vague reference to "the collection of monies amongst the Indians," and McKinnon's letter to Christmas was sent simply to advise the chief of the complaint.<sup>38</sup> While such an imprecise accusation with no further information is not of much use in an analysis of the relationship between the Micmac and their agents, it is significant only because of its suggestion that the agent, although he had previously been at the receiving end of a serious complaint by the chief, was not taking the opportunity to investigate charges against his own accuser. He not only just passed the information to Christmas, but by describing the chain of accusation, let it be seen as idle as it perhaps was.

In 1946 a detailed letter was sent to the Secretary of Indian Affairs, once again to complain about the Indian agency.<sup>39</sup> This time there was little that was vague about most of the accusations against the agent, and in addition, problems were outlined with reference to two members of the agency staff. What makes an awareness of these grievances valuable is that each complaint represents an Indian voice explaining the client's expectations of the duties of those in charge of an agency.

The Indian agent, contrary to his full-time position, was said to be often absent from the reserve on non-Indian business, and while he was away he was obviously not attending to the "unemployed, aged, physically incapacitated." In short, this was "a deliberate attempt to escape responsibility." He turned the people away when they approached him, ignored the doctor's recommendation for milk and proper care to the children, and not only neglected to register children for family allowance but sometimes requested cancellation of these monthly government payments without proper investigation. In the matter of employment, he did nothing to establish permanent industry for Indians, he gave employment to unskilled

white workmen rather than to Indian workers, and in other ways "failed to provide employment for many able-bodied Indians." He was said to "practically throw money away without constructive benefit to the Indians concerned."<sup>40</sup>

While some of these complaints were not direct and clear, those against the two staff members were pointed and precise. The clerk was said to have been on the reserve under the influence of alcohol, to have used the agency truck for personal benefit and pleasure, and to have given away Indian Affairs property to white friends. He delivered clothes, shoes, and blankets intended for the Indians to his own home, again using agency trucks, and because of his untruthfulness the Indians had no confidence in him.<sup>41</sup>

Complaints against the second staff member were similar. He supplied forbidden liquor to Indian homes, and used the agency truck for pleasure-driving with women. He took paint which was intended for use on the agency. While conducting a river drive he lost lumber through his incompetence, and he "supervised lumber operations at costs without doubt far in excess than prevailing prices in lumber yards."<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not known who wrote this list of complaints to Ottawa, although the words "we feel our organization cannot and will not support nor co-operate with our local administration of this kind," suggests that it was drafted by an Indian political group, perhaps the United General Indian Council of Nova Scotia of which Christmas was the president. It is not known either whether the letter was actually sent, as there is no answer in the file to any of these complaints. Still, that is immaterial, for what matters is that the list alleges corruption of those responsible for the agency in a way no previous charges did. The agency assistants were not only seen to be using government supplies for personal benefit, but in doing so were

denying them to the Indians. The charges of liquor offences, at a time when liquor was forbidden on the reserve, were a serious indication of a corrupt civil service and inattention to the responsibility of the position. The lumber charges are harder to evaluate. Losing lumber on a river drive may have been incompetence or mere ill fortune, and the lumber operation charge is likewise not clearly explained. But the bottom line is that the Indians had no confidence in the agency staff.

As far as charges against the agent himself are concerned, this list is less precise in its accusations and therefore more difficult to assess. What is obvious, however, is that the Indians perceived the agent's job to be much more than mere middlemanship between the government and the people. Although he was seen to pay insufficient attention to the needy, aged and incapacitated, what they expected him to do is not explained. Did they want personal care or help with daily chores, or was it a matter of not enough financial relief? That he "turned out" those coming to him for assistance is also not clear, for without specific details it is not known whether the assistance requested was either within the agent's ability or his mandate. Failing to register children for family allowances could mean that he left it to the parents to complete the forms given to them in the hospital. It has already been noted in the case of Alan Fry, that one of his tasks was to help complete government forms; it is probable, however, that this was not an official duty but something simply expected of him and assumed by Fry because he was conscientious. The agent was also accused of recommending the cancellation of family allowances without proper investigation. This payment went only to mothers whose child was living with them; if a child was cared for elsewhere or was in residential school the mother was not entitled to receive it. Again, this charge is difficult to assess without more particular information. That the agent was expected to "provide

employment" and "permanent industry" may have been beyond his capability, particularly on the Sydney reserve.

It must be considered that 1946 was the heyday of centralization, a time when many of the Indians of Nova Scotia were removed to the two large reservations at Eskasoni and Shubenacadie. According to Daniel Paul, those who moved were told there would be jobs, houses, schools, and plentiful food on the new reserves, but most of all, they were promised self-sufficiency.<sup>43</sup> While this obviously meant employment, presumably provided by the agent, it was a benefit for which the Indians were required to relocate.

The petitioners stated that the agent was supposed to be a full-time employee, and it is not surprising that they complained because he was frequently off the reserve. However, it must be considered that in 1942, with centralization as the latest solution to the Indian problem, Nova Scotia had been re-divided into only two agencies, with the result that the government dismissed the many part-time agents and hired two full time ones. But the new system would have worked only if centralization had been successful, for then each full-time agent would have overseen all his charges on one large reserve. As it was, however, many of the Micmac were against the policy and did not relocate, so that the agent had become responsible to oversee the one amalgamated reserve as well as many, separate and far-removed smaller ones. For example, H.C. Rice, the agent at the mainland reserve of Micmac (Shubenacadie), when reporting in 1949 on conditions within his agency, listed thirteen inhabited reserves under his responsibility in addition to the "centralized" one.<sup>44</sup> It is obviously impossible that a full-time agent could be in fourteen places at one time. Regarding the similarly large Cape Breton agency and the complaints against the staff, the

accusation was certainly unfair that since he was off the Sydney reserve he was attending to "presumed non-Indian business."

It might be remembered that Rice was the agent who informed the residential school principal of the blankets stored as "war assets" on the Shubenacadie reserve, and that because of this indiscretion the worn school blankets were reluctantly replaced by Indian Affairs. One wonders why war assets were stored on the reserve, and whether the material stores the Cape Breton agent was said to be holding at his own home in the 1946 complaint were "war assets" too, similarly not destined for immediate delivery to the Indians. The situation is curious to contemplate. The people on the reserve, seeing the agent hoarding stores, might naturally presume he was either using them for his own purposes, or refusing to distribute them for different, questionable reasons. But the agent might have been sent the stores with no orders regarding their use; for example, would Rice have told Rev. Mackey about the blankets if he knew they had a different destination? The entire matter is difficult to unravel. It may be recalled that in 1947 Rice had petitioned the government for school blankets; in 1949 he repeated the request, but in the meantime had told the principal about his cache of government blankets. Did he already have these "war assets" in 1947, in which case it was about time a use was authorized for them? Or were the blankets sent following the petition, and if so why were they intended to be stored instead of used by the school? While it is easy to be sympathetic with the native point of view that the agent hoarded supplies, there is also another side of the situation to be seen: that of an agent given items that could have been used but which he was ordered to store.

Regarding the failed promises of centralization (centralization itself was a failed promise), Paul explains the understanding of the Micmac people who agreed to move to the amalgamated reserve was that those who



had children in the residential school would be allowed to keep them at home. The reason they had been removed in the first place was because "their dwellings were unfit for human habitation and the health of the children was at risk," but the new homes on the centralized reserves would presumably be "suitable." It is not clear whether any children were indeed returned from the school to their new homes. However, as Paul explains it, the newly constructed houses were built on foundations of inferior concrete that soon crumbled, and the green lumber used for the walls became warped beyond repair. It was not long before they were judged unfit, too, and demolished.<sup>45</sup>

That the native people across Canada resented their agents is common knowledge. Judging from personal experience in both Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, the largest house on the reserve, the one that used to be inhabited by the agent, is still displayed to visitors with discernible umbrage. Part of this lingering animosity can be understood from Paul's description of the agency staff's housing compound. To Paul, they lived in "luxury beyond imagination," with "insulation, central heating, electricity, and indoor plumbing." The inside was *finished*. Paul's house was an uninsulated shell, with kerosene lamplight, well water, and heat from a wood range. Furniture was made by his father from rough lumber; sheets and underwear were made from flour sacks. To complete the picture, Paul says the 98-pound flour bags had been carried home the five miles from Shubenacadie. Instead of supermarket meats they ate wild porcupine; lacking milk they drank black tea.<sup>46</sup> Little wonder the Micmac people watched with resentment as government stores were carried into the agency staff's homes.

It has been seen that Chief Ben Christmas was an active spokesman for his people for over thirty years, from the twenties to the fifties,

outspoken apparently on every aspect of Indian Affairs. He was an adamant opponent of centralization, and as Cape Breton agent McLean described him, he was "considered to be somewhat more intelligent than the ordinary Indian."<sup>47</sup> While Paul has found this remark offensive, perhaps to McLean more intelligent meant more articulate, more vocal, more aware. It was Christmas who had instigated the Indian opposition to the centralization scheme, McLean felt, and in a letter to the government suggested that no notice should be taken of letters against the policy, whether signed by Christmas or anyone else, for "regardless of whose name may be used as a signature, Mr. Christmas is the man behind the gun."<sup>48</sup> Perhaps his voice, echoing like Powassan's Drum, did indeed help centralization to fail. Perhaps his exposés of agents helped their decline as well. In 1951 the former agents were renamed Superintendents, although as Fry explained, they were still called and considered "agents" by the Indians. In 1971 the agencies were dissolved and the District of Nova Scotia was established, with one District Superintendent for the province.

The school of written complaint which had been perfected by Christmas was later continued by native political groups. In 1957, Andy Paul, as president of the National Indian Brotherhood, wrote letters in the Christmas tradition to his local councillor in Glace Bay and to the Director of Indian Affairs, on behalf of a former soldier from Eskasoni who was unable to find work. He had joined the army on the advice of his Indian agent and had served for three years, partly in Korea. On his return home, he asked the agent to help him find work, but McKinnon told him to travel around the Maritimes to look for a job. Without transportation this was not useful advice, and efforts to find local employment had failed. Paul's accusation to the government was that "after you are finished with him no one cares."<sup>49</sup>

Sometimes job applications or requests were sent to Ottawa directly by the Indians, presumably after they had been unsuccessful in finding work on their own or with the assistance of their agents. In January, 1941, a Halifax County woman wrote because the previous fall she had asked her agent, Corporal Harold Johnson (probably of the R.C.M.P.) to have her daughter admitted to the Shubenacadie residential school, since local road construction made it impossible for the girl to continue at the local convent school. She visited the residential school and found it to be a "wonderful place" which she wished she could attend herself. She noted that it offered "useful knowledge...especially the beautiful pottery," and felt such an education in the residential school would suit her daughter for eventual work in an ammunition factory. "I sure would like to have a job in an ammunition factory too," she wrote, "but they don't give us Indians a chance to do our bit."<sup>50</sup>

There were direct requests, too. When the school was first opened, Chief Isaac Peters approached his M.P., A.E. MacLean, about the possibility of a position in the new institution. MacLean supported him, and relayed the request to Ottawa with the remark, "I wish it were possible for the Department to give him some work along this line as I feel that he would make good." But Scott responded that it was the Catholic church, not the government, that hired staff. Even the staff's salaries were paid by the church and did not come from the government, except indirectly, through the per-capita grant. He therefore could not consider the chief's application, and he apparently did not pass it to the school, either.<sup>51</sup>

But the problem was still that white people were seen to be hired for what might have been considered Indian jobs. In 1934 another Cape Breton man applied directly to Indian Affairs for work as a night janitor in the school. Believing right to be on his side, he explained that he had a large family to

support and "not work of any kind to be got," and that since the school was an Indian institution it would seem that Indians should be preferred to work there. While the large family was irrelevant, perhaps, the point was that the government was paying relief to support people who could be working, if only Indian jobs were given to Indian people. The application again was not considered by the Department, but in this case it was passed to Rev. Mackey for response. Unfortunately, the answer was that the principal had received many applications from local men, and was sorry to disappoint him. But two years later the same man wrote to Ottawa again. All he wanted was manual labour, a kind of work for which Indians could be hired. He understood that Rev. Mackey generally employed white men, but since the Department operated and controlled the school, surely a word on his behalf would help him get work.<sup>52</sup> It apparently did not.

Following more inquiries, in 1939 the Department broached the matter of hiring Indian workers with Rev. Mackey. Why were no Indians employed at the school in any capacity? In his response, the principal mentioned the case of one former residential school pupil who had finished high school and become a qualified teacher. Although she had been recommended to a post at a reserve school, the (unidentified) Indian agent had been vehemently opposed to her hiring. He had tried Indian teachers in the past and found either that they were "no good or that the Indians themselves refused to co-operate" with them. Learning this, Mackey considered offering her employment at the residential school as a last resort, then had decided "it would not work out to the advantage of anyone."<sup>53</sup>

In the matter of hiring Indian men as labourers, the principal knew of no Indian who could in any way replace one of the existing staff members. Besides, at those times when the school did hire extra labourers, all the capable Indians had gone to Maine to pick potatoes.<sup>54</sup>

The 1958 hiring of an Indian woman to help in the school in the absence of one of the Sisters has already been mentioned (see Chapter 6), and it is assumed that during the 1950s at the Shubenacadie school, as in other residential schools across the country, Indian women began to work in the kitchen and laundry. However, it is interesting to consider the remark of Dan Paul that since the white community considered Indian men lazy, it was easier for Indian women to be hired off the reserves. This, he said, was not only because of a demand for domestics, but because Indian women were viewed as "less threatening" than Indian men.<sup>55</sup>

Since work was hard to find, either because of the economy, Indianness, or living in a remote area, the relief rolls on reserves were high. The problem was that a family on welfare was a strong candidate for losing its children to the residential school since it was apparently cheaper for the Department to keep them in an institution than at home, and while they were in school, the government was satisfied that no one was abusing the funding. Being on welfare was also a reason not to have children returned for summer vacations, for as agent Darris was told, the government had to be assured that the parents could maintain their children without wanting extra relief. While Darris has been depicted (in Chapter 8) as insecure and indecisive, he was either not aware of the exact rules or he realized they were not exact.

Confusion over the matter of vacation is rife throughout all the letter files; no one, not the Department, the agents, nor the principal, displayed any consistency in the matter. Perhaps some of the misunderstanding arose from the problem of who was the Indian agent for the children when they were in the school. While the principal was their legal guardian while under his care, some of them did go back and forth and they were the responsibility of the agent while on the reserve. While the agent was obviously required to

decide who could go home for vacation, trying to separate the actual from the proper procedure is not simple. It is assumed that instigation for return came initially from the parents, who either approached the agent or ignored his authority and wrote letters to the school or Indian Affairs. The Department's usual reply was that if the home seemed suitable to the agent, vacation could be allowed, but sometimes there were questions of who would pay for the travel, and sometimes there was the simple statement that the department could not afford to support vacations and could not see why they were necessary. Confusion over procedure accelerated with a letter from Rev. Mackey to Indian Affairs in 1939. That year, in what seems an unprecedented move, the principal wrote to all the agents with children in the school about their vacations. That is, he wrote to all but Darris, apparently still nursing a year-old grudge against the agent. The previous year, he said, Darris had written directly to the Department about vacation for the children of one family, and had been refused. Mackey felt that Darris should have written to *him* to ask for the children, and says he would have returned them. So that year the principal simply wrote to everyone else.<sup>56</sup>

Besides this idea being contrary to usual vacation procedure, it suggests some confusion regarding the questions of who is agent and who is patron. If the reserve agent and the school principal were both the middlemen between the government and the children, depending upon who currently had custody, then it would seem unnecessary for the principal to deal directly with the reserve agent. But he did so often, always at times of non-return from vacation, and also when children were sick, truant, or dead. In these instances, the principal was taking the role of the patron, asking the agent to deal with the parents. However, if Rev. Mackey considered himself a co-patron, then it should not have mattered whether the agent made his vacation requests through the principal or the government. And were he a

co-agent, he should have continued to make recommendations, not decisions as he did in this case, about vacation.

But when the rules were non-rules, and decisions instead were at best situation-specific and at worst haphazard, understanding roles became difficult for the actors. Where there were no fast rules for admission to the school, there was a necessity for constant correspondence between the reserve and the government. Since there was no consistency, the agent did not know when he could dispense with parental approval, medical examinations, or detailed reasons for an application. He was not in a position to give a clear answer to any parents making enquiries about the return of their children, not even to what would be expected of the parents financially. He did not know if he was to purchase clothing for children before their journey, or if he should accompany them in cases where they otherwise would be travelling alone. In his job, every case was individual. While it could have been reassuring to the Micmac clients to know they would be treated as individuals, it was more likely threatening, because they never knew what to expect. If they perceived the agent as treating them differently, or less fairly than someone else, they would soon lose faith in him. Perhaps the position of agent really was an impossible job.

While the agents were in place to serve their clients, the people probably saw them as masters rather than servants and believed them to be at least somewhat powerful. However, even this is questionable. That they went over their agents' heads as frequently as they could indicates either that they mistrusted them or they did not truly believe they held much power at all. Since the agents were hired by the government it might be assumed they answered only to Ottawa, in a reliable, long-distance, patron-mediator relationship. In fact they were subject to supervisors closer at hand, for the inspectors of education who regularly visited all the day and residential

schools used their reports to voice their opinions to the Department on the competence of both the teachers and the Indian agents.

In 1936, Thomas Robertson, the inspector for the Maritimes, visited day schools in Truro and Shubenacadie and commented on the agents at both reserves. Of Truro's Mr. Fox, Robertson said the agent had made a good start and was expected to make a big improvement on his reserve. But of the Shubenacadie agent, he wrote:

While I am satisfied Mr. Wallace is honest and will carry on the work to the best of his ability, yet he is timid, fearful of getting entangled with the law, lacks initiative, aggressiveness, and in my opinion is not at all suited for the position.<sup>57</sup>

This negative assessment of the agent's qualities suggests that his honesty and hard work were not enough, that his mild manner meant he would be a poor agent. Yet, to the Micmac people perhaps the opposite, aggressive, qualities would have been a poor recommendation. Surely what was important to the Micmac people was to have as agent someone they could trust with their petitions and their welfare. But, as has been seen, their frequent forays into self-representation or the hiring of other agents of their choice suggests that the qualities the government deemed necessary for an agent were not necessarily those the people would have valued. But often, if they did not have a spokesman of their own people--someone in their agency with the abilities of Ben Christmas--it was still a matter of no real choice. The files are full of examples of doctors and lawyers who did not help at all, who clearly manipulated the requests in a manner that would ensure their denial. This may not have been clear to the people who did not read the representations that were sent to the government on their behalf. On the other hand, petitions from their own agents were frequently sympathetic, but where requests were denied, the people had no way of knowing how well or warmly their interests had been presented. An agent



who could not satisfy requests was just another arm of the same, mistrusted government.

Throughout this study, even in chapters specifically related to agents, teachers, and principals, the aboriginal voice has been heard. Parental petitions have been considered in order to judge the way they were handled by the agents and settled by the government, but besides the separate stories they tell, they speak of an active reserve resistance. The voice of the child in the school, however, is almost totally absent, both from this thesis and the written record. There is the one story of the girl who did not want to return to the residential school and made a written statement of protest against disciplinary procedures there for the R.C.M.P. (see Chapter 2). And there is one letter in an uneducated hand in the departmental school files.

This second girl was not petitioning the government herself, but writing to her sister to ask for help in her wish to be discharged from the school. The sister enclosed the letter when she wrote directly to Indian Affairs; hence its preservation in the school files.<sup>58</sup> In this case, the woman sought a higher authority than the agent for a good reason. Initially, she had written on the matter to the agent, Dr. B.W. Skinner, in June of 1936 to ask that her own children be sent home to Gold River for the summer. In that letter she assured the agent that the family was fine, had a productive garden, would be able to give the children "good clean comfort," and would see they attended church. For an unknown reason, Skinner was not favourable to this request, and sent it to Ottawa with the simple notation that he would advise against the children coming home unless it were the usual procedure. J.D. Sutherland, Acting Superintendent of Indian Education, sent the typical response that children who lived far from the school, or those whose homes were reported to be unsatisfactory, were not permitted

vacation. The agent was assured, however, that the children would have an eventful and amusing summer at school. Interestingly, Sutherland had construed from Skinner's few words on the matter that the home conditions were unsatisfactory, and he intended to instruct the principal not to allow the children to go home.<sup>59</sup>

That same June, the pupil, who was over sixteen and presumably should have been discharged on that ground, wrote in reply to a letter she had received from her sister. This petition is long, repetitive, and not always legible, but because of its singularity is reproduced here as fully as feasible. Bracketed words have been deciphered with some speculation.<sup>60</sup>

...I was glad to know that you want me this summer. I know you always want me. It's too bad to tell you that you shouldn't be expecting me home this summer. Why don't you write and tell him you want me this summer. Try hard and I'll pray that Government will let me go home...If you knew how much I want to go home you would jump over this roof. Every day I [expect] some telegram or letter that you got a letter from Government and saying that I'm to go home. Write a letter to Government and tell him you want me home. If you [try] to get me home I'll be so grateful to you [once] I get home...Please dear sister try and get me as soon as possible. I long to see you people very much. I wish I'd get work when I get home [with] you...I think I'll be better off someday. I know how much you cared for me since I could remember and I appreciate it too. If daddy and you write to Ottawa and Indian Agent writes to Father Mackey after you get letter than maybe I'll get home. Never disappoint your sister. Pray hard for me and I'll do the same.<sup>61</sup>

The reference to "daddy" is particularly poignant, since she also writes,

If daddy only would stay home I'd be home long ago. But one minute he's here and another minute he's there. I suppose daddy doesn't care if I go home or not.<sup>62</sup>

While nomadism was the traditional way of the Indian, and for the pre-residential school generation there was no reason to change, perhaps if parents had realized how it affected their children in school there would have been reason enough. The children of parents who "travelled" were

prime candidates for residential schooling initially, and they were the ones whose homes were always too unsuitable for them to visit summer after summer.

As mentioned, this letter exists only because it was sent to Indian Affairs by the sister of the student. With it she sent her own letter, explaining she had "adopted" or looked after her sister from the time their mother died until she went to school about eleven years earlier.<sup>63</sup> It is disappointing that this is yet another story without a resolution in the files; however, it might be assumed that the request was granted, particularly if the girl were eighteen as her sister said. Rev. Mackey required special permission to retain an overaged pupil, and this was given only in exceptional cases.

While it might be merely a matter of grammar, this girl's plea, "write a letter to Government and tell him..." is telling too. It may be that she perceived "Government" as "he" because in a personifying way, she saw this "ruler" as all-powerful. The idea of the Indian agent as the government itself has been considered here as well, and perhaps to some of the Micmac, "he" with the power, was always just one person. A man in Ottawa, a man in the agent's house, a man in R.C.M.P uniform, could be one and the same: authority with one long arm. Whether it was encompassing or accusatory, it belonged to "Government" with its many faces and one mind.

**CHAPTER NINE: NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research (TARR) Centre of Nova Scotia, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Finlay MacDonald, M.P., from D.C. Scott, May 6, 1926.
2. See Canada Land Inventory, Soil Capability for Agriculture, 1:250,000 map sheets. Classification scheme goes from 1 (best) to 7 (worst). Highest category occurring in Atlantic Canada is 2 (very rare). By today's standards, commercial agriculture is feasible on classes 2, 3, and with difficulty on 4. By standards of 100 years ago, subsistence agriculture was possible on all classes down to class 5, though classes 4 and 5 would have been considered marginal. Classes 6 and 7 have always been sub-marginal. The modal (most frequently occurring) category in Atlantic Canada is 7 (7 in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, 3 in P.E.I., and probably 4 in New Brunswick). The average category in Atlantic Canada is probably 6 (7 in Newfoundland, 6 in Nova Scotia, 5 in New Brunswick, and 3 in P.E.I.). Two-thirds of the Shubenacadie land is class three, while one-third is class five.
3. Sessional Papers, Annual Reports, Department of Indian Affairs (SPAR) 1897, report of Alonzo Wallace, Shubenacadie Indian Agent.
4. SPAR 1896, report of F.A. Rand, Parrsboro Indian Agent.
5. SPAR 1911, report of D.C. Scott.
6. "Glooscap 2nd," letter to the editor, The Truro Daily News, January 3, 1931, 8.
7. National Archives of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, School Files (NAC DIA SF) RG 10, Vol. 6053, letter to Rev. Mackey from DIA, June 14, 1937, enclosing a memo from M. Christianson to Dr. McGill, June 2, 1937.
8. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6053, letter to DIA from Rev. Mackey, January 30, 1937.
9. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6055, letter to DIA Superintendent of Training, Philip Phelan, from E.K. Ford, Inspector, Technical Schools and Mechanical Science Departments, March 8, 1941.
10. Daniel N. Paul, We Were Not the Savages (Halifax: Nimbus, 1993), 300.
11. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6052, letter to J.H. Langley from Rev. Mackey, September 3, 1941.

12. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6052, letter to J.H. Langley from Councillor Richard Nevins, undated; letter to DIA from Langley, September 22, 1941.
13. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6052, letter to DIA from F.C. Cotton, Stipendiary Magistrate, September 20, 1941.
14. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6052, letter to J.H. Langley from DIA, September 26, 1941.
15. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6052, response to DIA from J.H. Langley, undated.
16. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6052, letter to J.H. Langley from DIA, September 30, 1941.
17. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6052, letter to DIA from J.H. Langley, September 30, 1941.
18. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol 6052, letters to W.S. Prince and Rev. Mackey from DIA, August 30, 1930.
19. Paul, op. cit., 291.
20. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Dr. J.A. McDonald M.P. from Ben Christmas, dated only July 1926.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Telegram is not in the files, but is referred to in a response from the M.P.
26. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Ben Christmas from J.D. McLean, January 24, 1927.
27. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Ben Christmas from G.J. O'Neil, January 30, 1930.
28. See NAC DIA RG 10, Vol. 3220, memo to the Deputy Minister from Bury, April 23, 1919.
29. TARR, Ben Christmas papers. Date difficult to decipher because of typing strikeover.

30. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Finlay MacDonald, M.P. from Ben Christmas, February 6, 1930 or 1931.
31. Personal communication, Bill Russell, National Archives of Canada.
32. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Rev. Mackey from Ben Christmas, August 10, 1932.
33. Telegram is not in the files, but is referred to in a response from the agent.
34. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Ben Christmas from S. Muggah, March 15, 1933.
35. Ibid.
36. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to DIA from Councillor Peter Googoo and ten others, November 14, 1934.
37. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to DIA from Joseph McKinnon, December 7, 1934.
38. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Ben Christmas from Joseph McKinnon, April 29, 1937.
39. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, unsigned, apparant draft of a letter to DIA, May 23, 1946.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Paul, op. cit., 292.
44. Ibid., 293-97.
45. Ibid., 292.
46. Ibid., 283.
47. Ibid., 291
48. Ibid.
49. TARR, Ben Christmas papers, letter to Angus MacDonald, from Andy Paul, January 23, 1957, in which he refers to having written to DIA on the matter.

50. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6052, letter to DIA from parent, Cole Harbour Road Reserve, January 31, 1941.
51. NAC DIA SF RG 10 Vol. 6052, letter to DIA from A.E. MacLean M.P., undated, and response from D.C. Scott, March 24, 1930.
52. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6053, letters to DIA from Wm. B. Young, September 25, 1934; reply September 28, 1934; to DIA from Young dated only 1936.
53. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6054, letter to DIA from Rev. Mackey, January 30, 1939, referring and replying to DIA inquiry.
54. Ibid.
55. Paul, op. cit., 300, 301.
56. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6053, letter to DIA from Rev. Mackey, June, 12, 1939.
57. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6055, letter to Dr. McGill from Thomas Robertson, March 20, 1936.
58. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Mrs. Charles Toney, dated only July 1936.
59. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6055, letters to Dr. B.W. Skinner from Mrs. Charles Toney, June 26, 1936; to DIA from Skinner, undated; reply to Skinner from J.D. Sutherland, July 6, 1936.
60. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6055, letter to Mrs. Charles Toney from sister in residential school, June 27, 1936.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. NAC DIA SF RG 10, Vol. 6055, letter to DIA from Mrs. Charles Toney, dated only July 1936.

**PART FOUR**  
**RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS**



## CHAPTER TEN - THE LEGACY OF INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLING

I was so determined to prove those Sisters wrong--that I was not a "jackass" but a human being who had brains and had the potential to make someone of myself. I was determined that they weren't going to break me like they did to so many other Indian children.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter the Indian residential school system will be reviewed through its contradictory yet unchanging aims, for while the government's admitted goal was the assimilation of Indians into the general citizenry of Canada, its goals for school-leavers were cloudy and confused. Also considered will be native participation in the establishment and continuance of the schools, and even native contribution to the sense of abandonment and bewilderment the children felt as pupils there. It mentions both negative and positive recollections of the school at Shubenacadie, but ponders the lasting legacy of social problems said to emanate from the residential school system in reserves across the country. It considers the closing of the schools and their transfer to native control, and notes that some problems, such as truancy, continue. The residential school story is brought to the present with the class-action suit of Shubenacadie school "survivors" against the church and the government, and discusses J.R. Miller's conclusion that the Canadian people are responsible for what the government does in their name.

The quotation at the beginning of the chapter speaks the words of Sister Dorothy Moore, a former pupil in the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, who although remaining much affected by her experiences there has since undergone what she terms a "spiritual reconciliation" with the Catholic church and has herself become a nun. Memories continue to haunt her, however, of the corporal punishments she

both witnessed and experienced. Because she had a poor command of English, she had many learning difficulties and was punished severely when she failed to understand something, particularly arithmetical concepts. She recalls frequent mental and physical punishments, mostly for insignificant reasons, being administered by the Sister in charge of the girls, while other Sisters were much nicer and even the classroom teacher who punished her "so severely" was kind to her outside of class.<sup>2</sup> She sometimes speaks publicly on her experiences, but asks why she should be telling white people about the problems of Indian education today, when it is the whites who should be explaining to the Indian where they went wrong.<sup>3</sup>

There is so much to tell, Micmac poet Rita Joe says. She was one child who put herself into the school, writing to the Indian agent to ask if she could go to Shubenacadie for safe keeping after withstanding a series of unsatisfactory foster homes. She has fond memories of the Sisters, but also speaks of abuse, although like Moore, she remains staunchly Christian:

The way I am, the way my people are, we don't hold grudges. Maybe in the back of my mind it is there, somebody hurt me at one time, but the spiritual part, I have survived. Who's my backup I think...the big guy upstairs, the big Christian guy...I believe totally because I've survived so much misery.<sup>4</sup>

Still, Joe has not forfeited her Micmac spirituality either; she believes too in her prophetic dreams. And when dancing at pow-wows she begins by dragging her Parkinson's affected foot and left side and finishes light-headed and light on her feet, finding temporary relief through what she calls ceremonial medicine.<sup>5</sup>

However, negative school experiences have turned some former Shubenacadie pupils away from the harsh Christian god and fully toward native religion, and they are now practicing and preaching

...Native Spirituality which attempts to bring back Micmac religion before it was sullied by Christian missionaries' narrow view of religion and life.<sup>6</sup>

Noel Knockwood, a former pupil who lectures on native spirituality, says that forfeiting Christianity has allowed him the freedom to be honest with his past and his memories of Shubenacadie:

I, for one, will testify to the cruelty, beatings, whipping, etc., at any formal tribunal or court in Canada. I can say this with a "free" spirit, because I'm no longer a practicing Catholic...I'm free from the Christian way. I believe in God the Great Spirit, and I pray to him alone.<sup>7</sup>

According to a magazine account of the Shubenacadie school, the Sisters of Charity felt some of the published accounts of oppressive discipline in the school were "unfounded or exaggerated," particularly considering that "religious life used to be a lot more rigid," and that "harsher punishments were then more acceptable socially." It was suggested too that the adjustment for children and nuns both would have been very difficult because they led such different lives. In retrospect, one Sister who taught in the school said she realized the sadness of very young children away from their homes, a situation that she felt would cause every negative aspect to be magnified. "Over the years," she recalled, "I have marvelled at how well they did in spite of living in a different environment and being taught in a second language."<sup>8</sup>

Negative memories of Indian residential schools dominate accounts published in books and articles, and one has to scour to find something positive. As the editor of the Oblate Missions wrote,

To deny that there was any type of abuse in any school over all the years they were in operation would be wrong. However, any attempt to tell the other side of the story, particularly in the eyes of the media, comes across as so much whitewashing.<sup>9</sup>

However, the Micmac-Maliseet Nations News saw fit in 1992 to publish a short article by a former pupil who was at the Shubenacadie school from 1955 to 1962, in which she praises the care she was given there. She says the children never lacked anything, and that after the poverty of Eskasoni it was a change for the better. She was not forbidden to speak Micmac and conversed with the Sisters by using older girls to translate. She recalls kindly health care, learning music (including how to play piano, organ and flute), and that although she sometimes went home for summer vacations, the "summers that I got to spend at Shubie were the most peaceful and tranquil ones that I remember."<sup>10</sup>

We were taught love, care, responsibility, good manners, politeness, respect for others and how to pray and give thanks to God for what we had. When a child disobeyed, they got punished...[by] being deprived of television, being sent to bed early, or not being allowed to play.<sup>11</sup>

Bernice Logan, a former missionary teacher in two residential schools, says that "wherever human beings live and work there are failures and shortcomings." She feels that those who gave "years of their lives to help educate disadvantaged aboriginal children" do not consider the residential schools a "tragic experiment in social engineering," as the media have claimed.<sup>12</sup> Defending herself she writes:

I am not racist, I do not have a superior attitude toward Aboriginal people, I am not an offensive person, the former students of Shingwauk Indian residential school were very kind to me at the school reunion in 1991...<sup>13</sup>

Of course, argument at this level could continue indefinitely as different eyes, individual memories, and personal experience allow the same event to be recalled with unique perspective. For example, it is difficult to know what Christmas was like for the pupils at the Shubenacadie school as they saw it; individuals experienced it individually, and probably too it

changed as the years passed. It is impossible to reconcile the Sisters' notes (see Chapter 6) that children who did not have parcels from home received one instead from Santa and were made to feel it was particularly for them, with one pupil's recollection that the nuns would not allow him to have the gifts his father brought to the school. The Sisters said the children received dolls, books, games, puzzles, candy, and clothing, while a former pupil says they got no more than an orange:

Many of the children would spend the year there, far away from their family, and each year at Christmas they would be given an orange. It would mean so much to them, it was so perfect and the only thing they got, that many would just put it on a shelf and look at it until they would have to throw them away in March.<sup>14</sup>

It is difficult to form one clear picture of any aspect of the school from this kind of collage. On the other hand, sometimes a double exposure can reveal an educational situation that remains a universal problem, that of schooling those who are deemed by the educators to be disadvantaged. Consider this description by Jim Cogan of a school that while not for Canadian aboriginals might as easily describe their residential institutions:

See one and you've seen them all, might be the harsh verdict. Certainly the architecture is unvarying...a garden or small orchard...a level area used for games and sports...in embryonic form: a workshop with a few basic tools, a so-called library with four shelves of not always useful books...a laboratory with rudimentary equipment hopelessly out of date...staff...range from the dedicated to the demoralized. But before you judge them, consider their difficulties--their pitiful, sometimes non-existent pay, their social isolation, the absence of resources, and above all, their frustrating knowledge that only a very few of their pupils will benefit in any real way from their work...<sup>15</sup>

Cogan continues, speaking of the pupils:

[At recess] they enjoy a temporary respite from lessons conducted in a strange language...If they are lucky they may get some paper qualification based on a curriculum which has no relevance to their immediate lives. It will not qualify them to move on to better things...People are being deceived by the

importance of formal education...Schools are pretending to offer a passage to a better way of life but they are not.<sup>16</sup>

These passages could speak of Indian residential schools where most of the children worked a garden to learn farming, a pursuit the government wished to entice them into continuing on their reserves, although certainly in Nova Scotia this did not happen. Their manual labour workshops did not qualify them for the trades they learned in rudimentary fashion only. The school library, according to some pupils, was never used by them. The curriculum was not relevant to their lives, and the content of their "Dick and Jane"-type readers was beyond their experience. Sisters who taught in these institutions were isolated--even, as has been suggested, almost cloistered--and they knew they would be sending most of their pupils back to the reserve with no more than a basic education, unable to truly benefit from their teachings.

Cogan is not speaking of Indian residential schools, however, but of rural schools today in west Africa. As in Africa, the residential schools in Canada may have increased the number of youths with a basic education, but it did not necessarily further their employment opportunities. Cogan condemns a system of education that only "pretends" to offer a better future, and the question he finally asks is, "can they?" For many Indian pupils the residential schools could not, hence the frequent federal lament that they just remained Indians. The residential school aimed to produce adults who would be suitable citizens (or as D.C. Scott expressed it, to aid them in their own search toward complete citizenship), but few availed themselves of enfranchisement as it involved revoking their Indianness, and eventually in 1956 their citizenship was simply recognized. As Daniel Paul says, "the Aboriginal peoples of Canada were graciously granted citizenship in their own country."<sup>17</sup>

The Shubenacadie residential school was more successful in its aim, as phrased by Father Ryan, to house the orphaned and delinquent, for it might be assumed that the school was no less pleasant than an orphanage would be. In fact, one elder interviewed in western Canada, an orphaned ex-pupil herself, noted a positive aspect of the residential schools was that orphans were kept there.<sup>18</sup> As the Indian agents saw Shubenacadie, it was probably a better choice as a haven for delinquents than was the St. Patrick's Home for Boys. It must be considered, too, that the aim of providing education for children who lived too far from available day schools was well met by the residential schools. However, the goals of the schools that are most regretted today are those which clearly suggested that the Indians were inferior to the Euro-Canadian: that they would separate the children from unsuitable home influences, they would mould the lives of the students, and they would advance their morals and intellect. These all speak strongly of the assumption that the Indian had much to learn and nothing to lose by an assimilative education.

E. Brian Titley described Scott as the "principal architect of Indian policy" between his appointment and his retirement in 1932. Scott, he contended, showed himself a white supremacist in his views that the Indians were not only culturally inferior, but biologically so, and his feelings that their advancement required the injection of white blood; he quoted Scott as saying the object of the government was to absorb the Indian race into the general population through intermarriage and education.<sup>19</sup> Celia Haig-Brown, in her study of a residential school in Kamloops, B.C., quotes Scott's 1920 goal as continuing to work on the Indian question until "not a single Indian" was left unabsorbed.<sup>20</sup> H.F. McGee, Jr. noted that Titley portrayed Scott as unable to "fathom why someone should want to be an Indian once

they were acquainted with the advantages of a superior Euro-Canadian alternative."<sup>21</sup>

Also according to Titley, education under Scott's administration was to be "an instrument of cultural annihilation," forcing the Indians into Anglo-Canadian identity.<sup>22</sup> Yet Scott in his 1918 report claimed his aim in Indian education was toward self-reliance and self-support, and his endorsement of assistance to graduates, such as was given to the colonists at File Hills, suggests that he recognized most school leavers would return to their reserves. In fact, in 1925 he asked teachers in residential schools to "correlate classroom exercises with vocational training and home interests," and he reiterated that graduates of these schools should become "self-supporting members of their respective communities,"<sup>23</sup> not of white communities, as had been the aim of the schools in the 1890s. The goal of residential schooling had apparently changed from preparing Indians for jobs in white towns and on white farms while disassociating them from their reserves, to preparing the graduates for "lives of general usefulness" after they inevitably returned home. This does not suggest forcing graduates into the world of Anglo-identity.

There seems, however, to be some differentiation between the aims of residential schools in Ontario and western Canada and those for Shubenacadie, the one school in eastern Canada, built while Scott served in Indian Affairs. In a 1929 letter to Member of Parliament J.L. Ilsley regarding the purpose of the newly-built Shubenacadie school, Scott distinguished between the "problem" of Indian education in northwest Ontario and the west, and the "problem" in eastern Canada. In the west, he wrote, residential schools were necessary as a supplement to the day school system and were enthusiastically run by churches, whose teachers and administrators were pleased to have the children "under Christian



influence and supervision for 24 hours of the day." As for the government, it "soon recognized the socio-economic advantage of the [church-run] residential school. Ordered habits, domestic arts for girls, farming, gardening, care of live stock, carpentry and other trades for boys were of much interest to the State," Scott wrote.<sup>24</sup> Haig-Brown argued that having Indians learn to farm was important to the church because a migrant lifestyle made mission work difficult, and crucial to the government because the adoption of a European lifestyle was essential to assimilation.<sup>25</sup>

In describing the "problem" in the east, Scott noted that by 1885, the Indian population there was no longer living "by the chase," so that day schools could be conducted on reserves "wherever it was possible." The implication was that day schools were more successful where Indian parents did not lead nomadic lives; in the west it had proven difficult or impossible to secure adequate school attendance of children whose parents were not settled. In the east, Scott contended, the day school was, and would continue to be, the more important means of Indian education. If eastern Indians were considered less nomadic, then, it should follow that home influences would be seen as less "deleterious;" and since day schools were much less costly for the government to maintain, they were the obvious choice for the east. The only reason for the establishment of the residential school at Shubenacadie was, as mentioned above, to accommodate the under-privileged. While Scott's intention in the matter of western residential schools was that graduates be fitted to return to useful lives on the reserves, he stated quite clearly that Shubenacadie graduates should become self-supporting and not return to their old environment.<sup>26</sup> This appears to be a peculiar return to turn-of-the-century ideals, and a strange switch from Scott's stated intentions regarding the aims of residential schools in the west. Since it is not likely that there was a reversal of departmental policy

between Scott's 1925 and 1926 annual reports and his 1929 letter to J.L. Ilsley, the implications are intriguing. Perhaps policy had not really changed, and although the Department desired that school leavers take their skills into white communities, it had not been successful in encouraging them to do so, and so had masked its failure beneath graduate assistance policies, such as that for File Hills, and a stated acceptance of the idea that graduates would return to their reserves. Perhaps the Department saw the "problems" of the western and eastern Indians as so disparate that it was felt there might be more success in the goal of assimilation in the east. Or, perhaps because the proposed pupils for the Shubenacadie school were orphaned or neglected, it seemed there would be less desire on the part of school leavers to return to reserves where they did not have homes, in which case, the Department's wish to absorb them into the general population could become a reality. And yet nagging questions persist: how was integration into the dominant society expected to come about through segregation from it? How was Scott's policy for intermarriage and education to be implemented through separate residential schooling? Quite naturally, marital assimilation between ethnic minorities and the dominant group is blocked when the two are socially and residentially separated.<sup>27</sup>

There is also the question of Titley's view of Indian education under Scott, his contention of "cultural annihilation," the training (or non-training) of a workforce, and the forcing of Indians into identity with the dominant society. Although it has been shown that Scott's annual reports did not necessarily reflect the latter idea, but were instead more supportive of a "useful" life on the reserve, it would be simplistic to suggest there were not hidden aims. In fact, his throw-back remark about Shubenacadie graduates hints that the old, nineteenth century goals of residential schooling still lurked in his vision of the way things might be. Unlike day schooling, the education offered in

residential schools was at least half vocational in orientation, which either suggests hope for improvement of reserve conditions or supports the idea that Indians were being trained for jobs in the hope they would wish to enter the white labour market. That they probably would not did not change the educational focus in the schools, even after decades of graduates had returned to be useful only on their reserves. Still, it would be difficult to dismiss the idea that Indian children were forced into Anglo-Canadian moulds, for this suited the spirit which saw Christian accord and anglicization as an unquestionable pursuit for newcomers to the country. While Indians were hardly newcomers, they were, like newcomers, non-citizens, and citizenship, as already mentioned, was the goal of the government for the Indians. It required not only a strong identity with the dominant Anglo-Canadians but also a renunciation of Indianness, and there is no indication in the annual reports of Scott or anyone else that there was anything in the Indian way of life that was worth retaining.

This leads to the question of cultural annihilation, an issue that frequently surfaces in studies of residential schools. It took place on entry to the residential schools where the children lost anything that was externally Indian and belonging to reserve life, such as language, clothing and customs. It suggests the erasing of a past life to be replaced by a new and preferable one, yet raises a question: were those who stripped the children of their culture aware they were doing so; that is, were they deliberately annihilating one culture to replace it with another, or did they feel they were filling a void? A conversation between a student and a Sister comes to mind in which the student suggested that one of the reasons former residential school pupils remembered the disciplinary measures of their teachers as particularly harsh was that they may have been raised in a different culture, where children were not physically punished because to do so would strip

them of their personal dignity. "And they call that a culture!" the Sister responded. This idea of a cultural void was mentioned by Diamond Jenness, who contended that the devaluation of native culture was a governmental policy attributable to a contempt for the Indian which was based on the belief that the Indian lacked any true cultural background.<sup>28</sup> If this is so, can it be said that the government was truly guilty of attempting cultural annihilation? Of course, putting the question of educational policies aside, there were other, specific governmental policies which aimed to eliminate Indian culture on the reserves, such as the banning of pow-wow dancing, sun dances, and potlatch practices. The government may not have recognized these as cultural manifestations either, for there was a strong Anglo-ethnocentrism at work, and they may have been seen merely as vestiges of barbarism.

According to Titley, Indian education was intended from the outset to destroy the children's links with their ancestral culture and to assimilate them into the dominant society, and residential schools were seen as the best means to accelerate the civilization process.<sup>29</sup> As already discussed, boys were to become "semi-skilled" in such occupations as farming, carpentry, and blacksmithing, and girls were to learn household skills, in addition to the regular academic programme. It could be argued that these trades and skills were being taught to improve life on the reserves (that is, to make Indian settlements more like white ones), but the initial idea was that boys would be apprenticed to white tradesmen and girls would become domestics in white homes. The idea of children growing into useful members of society did not originally mean reserve society; the stress in the early annual reports was that trades would help the Indian cope and compete successfully with his white "brother."<sup>30</sup> In 1887 Thomas White of Indian Affairs urged that graduates not take their skills (or "semi-skills") back

to the reserves. Of course, normal procedure was for all school leavers to be returned to their reserves under the custody of their Indian agents; any apprenticeships or domestic placements were usually arranged through these agents. Titley's idea that Indians were being educated to join an "unskilled" workforce is more difficult to deal with, unless he considered domestic work unskilled. Apparently a fair number of graduates from the Shubenacadie school became housekeepers; between 1934 and 1939, one New Brunswick agent placed thirty girls (who, as he put it, "belonged" to him)<sup>31</sup> as domestics in white homes. In the case of one particular homeless graduate, the school principal at Shubenacadie took on the role of finding her domestic work. The graduates were not always sufficiently grateful, however, and both the principal and the agent in question noted that frequently, despite their educational advantages, the girls just reverted to type.<sup>32</sup> And therein lay the problem. Some fifty years had passed since the first residential schools were established in Canada, and still the graduates were reverting to type, remaining Indians. The metamorphosis that Titley said the schools attempted to achieve did not materialize.

While this is not to say that they did not try, it might be considered that the entire idea of education as an instrument for instilling culture, preparing for a workforce, and molding into a Canadian identity is not necessarily perverse, for surely it has been, and remains, the goal of schooling for any Canadian child. Manual education and domestic science may not have the curricular importance they once had, but they are still there, along with the idea of educating the "whole child." Everyone does not choose a so-called vocational education, but the option is there, and even some students who choose university do so feeling it will give them an advantage in the work force. And schools have always been instruments of socialization. The problem with residential schools, it could be argued, is

not that it focussed on these non-academic aims, but that those aims were averse to any ideas of "education" that the Indians harboured. Traditional education meant socialization into everyday tribal life, and Haig-Brown uses a full chapter to describe it fully, and almost idealistically, for one Indian nation.<sup>33</sup> It consisted of learning by watching and copying, with mistakes gently corrected in such a manner as to give the impression that mistakes had not been made, and hours spent listening to stories. It presents the very vision of Indians that led White and other nineteenth century officials and writers to describe them as "children of the forest."<sup>34</sup> The problem was, it was not "education" in the Euro-Canadian sense of acquiring literacy and numeracy. And most Indian parents who sent their children to residential schools, willingly or not, probably believed that schooling was for the acquisition of this newly-important knowledge and did not realize that education also meant re-socialization.

Another matter which might be considered regarding Indian life before residential school is the matter of communication. Given that Indian nations obviously had long oral traditions and transmitted their ways of life and their family and tribal histories through centuries of story-telling, it seems strange to read in Basil Johnston's memories of residential school that although many parents of the students had themselves attended the school, none of them shared their experiences with their children.<sup>35</sup> Haig-Brown's collection of oral memories corroborates this; one student who was taken by his parents in a taxi to the school thought he might be going visiting relatives--when they took him into the school and "scooted out the front door" he was shocked. Another student who had siblings at the school said they never talked about it when they were home, and only a few children were given some preparation--told they were going to learn about reading and writing and God.<sup>36</sup> In Isabelle Knockwood's account of the Shubenacadie

residential school she recalls her parents taking her on a walk with her siblings one day; only when the school came into view did they learn where they were going.<sup>37</sup> It is no wonder that many children felt rejected and bewildered, and the lack of communication seems unusual. It does follow Haig-Brown's description of "education" given at home, where chores and crafts were explained but learned only by observation, yet it is curious that closely-tied families did not tell their children why they were going to live the rest of their childhoods in residential school. It may have made some difference in attitude and achievement; in fact, Haig-Brown contends that the few children whose parents did explain the situation became the better students.<sup>38</sup>

Diane Persson investigated the Blue Quills school in Alberta which was built in 1931, shortly after the Shubenacadie school, by which time, she says, both church and state agreed that Indian children should be civilized in isolation, first in the school, then back on the reserve.<sup>39</sup> However, as has already been argued, this appeared to be Scott's intention for schools in northern Ontario and western Canada, and not in the one school in the east, where the hope was stated to be that graduates would not return to their reserves. Persson also says the government's philosophy of Indian education was to teach practical skills and basic literacy<sup>40</sup> but does not refer to its intention of cultural change. What emerges of most interest in her work is her depiction of two language groups among the children at the school, purposefully segregating themselves from each other.<sup>41</sup> Cultural groups are proud of those characteristics that set them apart from others; if two groups sharing the trials of residential school remained at odds, how could there be hope that integration into an even more disparate cultural group, one depicted only by distinctly dressed religious representatives, would result?

Even when Indian educational policy turned from segregation in residential schools to integration in provincial schools, Indians in white schools were sometimes only a physical presence. As Chief Dan George asked, "Can we talk of integration until there is social integration?"<sup>42</sup> According to a leader of the Poorman Band in Saskatchewan, school integration was supposed to make peers of whites and Indians, a concept which failed because of insensitivity to cultural and value differences (perhaps a two-way failure). Eighteen years of integration provided the Poorman Band with only four high school graduates.

In Nova Scotia, Indian Brook parents have recently appealed to the Prime Minister to help create "new educational options" to give their children access to better education. They feel that a series of violent incidents in 1996 at the local integrated high school are symptomatic of a system that has failed to meet their children's needs:

Thirty years ago, in the spirit of better education...Indian Brook chose to integrate with Hants East Rural High School. Today, we find with much regret that our students do not get better education...Instead, they suffer more from discrimination daily at the hands of fellow students, some teachers and the administration.<sup>43</sup>

According to Chief Reg Maloney, the self-esteem of native students is being crushed by the "fearful environment" of the school, resulting in frequent suspensions and a high drop-out rate. Several of the students boycotted classes to attend a makeshift school in a church basement, where they were taught by teacher-aides, parents, and other community members.<sup>44</sup> There are two suggestions here, one substantiated by the proliferation of band-controlled schools across the country, that segregated rather than integrated schooling might be the answer to the Indian education problem, and a second that the students were suffering another type of enforced segregation. According to a Canadian Press article, First Nations maintain



that the reasons for the high aboriginal dropout rate include "racism in mixed schools and a curriculum that gives short shrift to their culture."<sup>45</sup> In February, 1997, the federal ministers of Health and Indian Affairs met with the Premier of Nova Scotia and chiefs from across the province to sign a five-year agreement giving control of education to the natives, although four of the thirteen reserves opted not to participate. Chief Clark of the Horton Band said, "I can't see it benefiting us very much. I've got some unanswered questions." She wonders what will happen if the reserves decide later to pull out of the deal: "What are you opting out to? Where do you go?"<sup>46</sup> Of course, it is not a simple matter to find satisfactory educational solutions to the situation that natives inherited from a residential school system that was in place for thirty-six years in the Maritimes and perhaps a century in other parts of Canada.

According to J.R. Miller, from 1830 when the Ojibwa chief Shingwauk once paddled to York to request a missionary and teacher for the children of his community, Indians have sought access to an education that they believed would enable them to cope with the newcomers to their land and to make a living in new ways. "Native people," he says, "participated in the creation of schools, whatever they might have thought of the way the institutions evolved."<sup>47</sup> For those who sought, or at least accepted, European education for their children, it was a survival strategy--perhaps one they hoped would be empowering; and, as Miller indicates, when a school was seen to promote assimilation rather than adaptation, the Indians rejected it. Following Confederation, the natives continued to request governmental support through lessons in farming and schooling for the children, even in one case assisting in the construction and operating expenses of a school, and in another contracting with a church to run a boarding school. While native leaders did not always want residential

schools, they did want schools.<sup>48</sup> The industrial school policy that was fashioned by the government in the 1880s, Miller says, "answered the needs and pandered to the prejudices of missionaries and bureaucrats" and created residential institutions that were "designed with Euro-Canadian racial assumptions and evangelical objectives."<sup>49</sup> He suggests that because of the Indian ethic of individual autonomy and non-interference, it did not occur to parents to insist that they wanted only instruction, and not assimilation.

Miller speaks of the stunted growth of the schools, perhaps suggesting that they did not change significantly through the years and did not lose their ultimate, assimilationist goal.<sup>50</sup> It has already been seen that the government's pedagogical objectives appeared to change from time to time, from fitting the children to compete for employment with whites, to preparing them for a more prosperous life on their reserves. Yet, the original half-day of classes, half-day of labour did not change, being seen to meet either objective--for in a way it was one goal, that of self-sufficiency.

Residential schools, Miller contends, performed poorly in most respects, leaving their pupils to complain of cultural oppression, overwork, inadequate care, and harsh discipline or even abuse. But the schools' greatest failing was in the quality of the academic and vocational training they supplied--preparing the children for neither a life alongside whites, nor a return to the reserve. In other words, residential schools failed as *schools*.<sup>51</sup> With half-day classes, the children were certain to be behind their white counterparts in provincial schools; with English sometimes as a second language, they were sure to be far behind. While this is certainly a failing of the residential school system itself, there is another side to the problem: considering the number of children who entered school late and

had no previous schooling, it was unlikely there would be many sixteen-year-olds discharged with an education to equal that of their white age peers.

Still, as Miller says, it is difficult to evaluate the impact the residential schools had on aboriginal life. First, while the schools were the same, they were different as well, and as they changed administrative hands, could be different yet again. And is it not a narrow view that lays blame for all a people's social ills on the school.<sup>52</sup> What can be said is that residential schools affected some individuals and many native communities in a seriously negative way, and that many students found it difficult to shake their "institutional mentality."<sup>53</sup> Miller suggests that residential schools so thoroughly institutionalized some Indians that they learned to function better inside one than outside, and cites a worker with female offenders as being "surprised at the number of Indian girls who would say how similar the prison was to school, only the food was better in prison."<sup>54</sup>

Whether or not social problems on reserves can be blamed on residential schooling, it did undeniably separate children from the influence and instruction of their extended family members and separate parents from their parental responsibilities. Mary Ann Lavalley contends that today's delinquent Indian parents were brainwashed in and out of residential school and on the reserve by efforts to "civilize" them, and by the "sugar-coated paternalism" of Indian Affairs that deprived them of human dignity, self-sufficiency and self-fulfillment.<sup>55</sup> Gladys Cook, a woman who says she was raped four times between the ages of nine and fifteen in a residential school, has found that her experiences have made it difficult to raise her children as she wished to:

I wanted my children to be individuals, to think for themselves, but I was always talking down to them--the way they had talked to me at school.<sup>56</sup>

Not only did parents forfeit responsibility for their children when they sent them, or had them removed, to residential school, but the children themselves lost the opportunity to learn how to be parents themselves. In a study on native child-rearing practices, N. Rosalyn Ing mentioned Joan Ryan's contention that through residential schooling Indians lost contact with their "adjacent generations."<sup>57</sup> On the social problems of Navajo women, she cited Ann Metcalf's work which indicated that boarding schools lowered self-esteem, detrimentally affected how ex-pupils saw themselves as women and mothers, and negatively influenced family interaction.<sup>58</sup> From Janet More's interviews with three elders, she related the following features of residential schooling which affected Indians traumatically throughout the rest of their lives: early separation from their parents and homes; separation of the sexes during developmental years; ineffective "parenting" in the institution; authoritarianism; and lack of emotional understanding and respect. Such schooling influenced their world view, their understanding of Euro-Canadian culture, their personal relations and ability to interact with others, and their own "parenting styles."<sup>59</sup>

At a conference held in 1991 by a tribal council in British Columbia, the view was expressed that alcoholism and other self-destructive behaviour was simply masking the pain of having lived through residential schooling. The former students said they felt the experience had affected their sexual relations, their ability as parents, their feelings about religion and non-Indians, and their use of alcohol. Those whose fathers had attended residential schools were said to be "stricter and less affectionate with their children, and more frequently beat their wives."<sup>60</sup> In a 200-page

report prepared in 1994 by two psychologists in Alberta, the schools have been blamed for wounding--mentally, physically and spiritually--the children they served. Personal accounts in this report from thirteen former pupils detail methods of punishments used in the schools which range from brutal to atrocious.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, in the 1960's, the schools were gradually closed or passed to native administration. According to Miller, the government-sponsored Hawthorn Report of 1966-67, which surveyed the economic, political and educational needs of Indians, criticised all the components of the existing "patchwork" Indian educational system, but most strongly rejected the residential schools and recommended their immediate cessation and the removal of the children to local, provincial schools.<sup>62</sup> The Caldwell Report of 1967 agreed that the old residential schools should be closed and become hostels to board students attending regular schools; however, there was native opposition, particularly on the prairies where it was suggested, and eventually agreed, that several of the schools be retained under native control.<sup>63</sup> One of these was at Lebret, Saskatchewan, which had begun as an industrial school in the 1890s. Interestingly, even under native control, the school still has problems with several boys running away each year. Why do they run? "Just spring fever," one of the Cree workers there suggests.<sup>64</sup>

In September, 1996, eight to nine hundred former pupils, members of the Association for the Survivors of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, hired a lawyer to assist with plans to sue the federal government and the Catholic church for allowing them to have suffered "physical, sexual and racial abuse at the hands of priests and nuns of the Halifax Archdiocese." Their lawsuit was launched in May, 1997. According to Nora Bernard, founder of the association, the children had their native language

"beaten out of them" and have since lost their faith in the Catholic church. "A lot of survivors hid behind alcohol and drugs," she says. "An awful lot of them committed suicide."<sup>65</sup> According to Phyllis Googoo, a school resident for ten years, "(m)ost of the people who came out of that school had real problems and are dead today from suicide and alcoholism."<sup>66</sup>

The report of a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, a five-year study of almost every facet of aboriginal life prepared by natives and non-natives, was released in November 1996. While native leader Ovide Mercredi said its 440 recommendations offered the best and even "last" chance to end the inequity facing Canada's aboriginals, Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin found it a useful educational tool but felt the expenditures recommended were too large. Regarding education, the commission claimed the residential school system was "just one example of the harm that has sprung from cultural arrogance." The report "acknowledge[d] and confirme[d] that there was racial, sexual and physical abuse," and recommended that the federal government establish a public inquiry into the origins and effect of residential school policies to determine the appropriate compensatory actions, such as apologies and funding for those affected by their education.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Halifax has commented on the class-action lawsuit filed by the Association for the Survivors of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. The suit alleges that students were abused, mistreated, and harassed racially and culturally by staff, and that the children were not allowed to speak their own language nor practise their own religion. John O'Donnell, diocese director has stated that

Even though we recognize that there are some people who seem to have had very negative experiences in the school system...and that is not to be ignored or pushed aside, we're very proud of the people who ministered on behalf of the

church in the Shubenacadie school system, and...we want to protect their memory.<sup>68</sup>

Saying it had been the church's responsibility to put into practice the government policies of assimilation, he continued:

I don't think there was the sensitivity back then that there is now of the innate dignity of the Mi'kmaq people and the fact they have a history and they have traditions and an identity that should have been recognized as being more valuable. <sup>69</sup>

O'Donnell interprets the lawsuit as "essentially putting the residential school system of the time on trial," and Vicar-General Rev. Martin Currie says the Catholic church has apologized to aboriginal people several times in the past few years "for any wrongdoing at residential schools." In 1991, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and Catholic church leaders presented an apology, and Archbishop Austin Burke apologized to a congregation at Indian Brook in 1992 and to one in Millbrook in 1993.<sup>70</sup>

Not just the Catholic church, but the Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches have offered apologies and healing programs for the victims, and paved the way for lawsuits. But what of the federal government? The most it has done is to express its regret for any "unintended consequences" of its residential school policies, and to contribute modestly to a rehabilitation fund. Although in a few cases the government has made several private settlements, paying victims about \$75,000 each, Ross Howard writes that "Ottawa's silence amounts to a denial and prolongs the victims' sense of shame and helplessness." Recently, Howard says, federal documents have been "discovered" in which it is indicated that Ottawa "considered the church employees as civil servants," which weakens the Department's long denial of direct obligation to the former pupils, and, incidentally, lends credence to the designation in this study of the school's religious personnel as government agents.<sup>71</sup>

Indian residential schools, Miller says, were educationally ineffectual because they reached a minimum of students; because most of those who attended stayed only a short time--certainly long enough for no more than a rudimentary education; and because the half-day system meant older children often were used to provide any necessary work around the building and sometimes were not sent to classes at all.<sup>72</sup> On the matter of similarities between Indian residential schools and other long-term care or boarding institutions in Canada and elsewhere, he notes that former pupils are little consoled to know that "harsh treatment, emotional deprivation, and inadequate food" were symptomatic of all homes for children.<sup>73</sup> And while he does not doubt the "genuine compassion" of many individual missionaries who took serious interest in the children in their care, he says the residential school system is remembered chiefly for the damage done by the "indifferent, the insensitive, the hostile, and the...sadistic."<sup>74</sup>

While Miller puts blame on school officials for inadequate care and for many of the "appalling accidents" that occurred in residential schools,<sup>75</sup> he notes that supervisory problems developed as a result of the overcrowded and inadequate facilities,<sup>76</sup> difficulties which originated with Indian Affairs. But if the government is to blame, "the people are responsible in a moral sense for what government does in their name," and Miller adds, "there is plenty of responsibility to go around."<sup>77</sup>



## CHAPTER TEN - NOTES AND REFERENCES

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN:

### A CASE FOR THE PATRON-BROKER-CLIENT MODEL

I am suggesting that a broker is a wolf in sheep's clothing. What is more, if he wishes to remain in the fold, he must be careful never to let his sheepskin drop.<sup>1</sup>

It was intended that this study be one of changing times and changing people, but it has become also one of changing ideas, which might be said to be the essence of every dissertation. When the original intention, the thesis, becomes modified on the way to its conclusion, perhaps the proposition has been proven worthy of investigation. The initial framework design for this study was to lead the government, its agents, and the Micmac people neatly into narrow stalls labelled patron, broker, and client, while in fact, they have not been so easy to corner. Questions about these roles, having no simple answer in the anthropological literature, likewise have no simple solution in the matter of Indian Affairs.

Of necessity, with the initial proposition in mind, this work began with the contention that the government, specifically the Department of Indian Affairs, was indeed a patron in the sense of supporter and protector of the Canadian Indian peoples. It was not their only patron, nor necessarily their most wealthy one, because there was the matter of the church to confuse the issue. Therefore, in discussing the data needed to determine the roles played by the various actors involved in the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, and particularly to clarify the issue enough to understand the middleman position, the assumption was made that the patron (church and state) dealt with its clients (pupils and parents) through its agents (reserve and school personnel). While this in no way simplified the large questions of role identity, such as replying to Robert Paine's "who

is patron?" argument, perhaps the problem was somewhat lightened: on one hand it may be an easy answer to say there were two patrons, and then to deal with them as separate entities with one fatherly hope for the children they both sought to educate; but on the other it may be that the matter became more complicated, as if it were impossible to settle on one answer so the solution became a combination--both of the above. However, since the state collaborated with the church when it asked the religious to assume control of its federal schools, and the church co-operated in carrying out government policies, there is a case for seeing them as partner-patrons. The question then became whether that partnership were equal, and whether as colleagues in a position to solve the "Indian problem," the partners held common educational ideas and aims.

Likewise with those in the middle, it was necessary to discern, not simply if they could be defined as brokers, but if there were any consensus in the way they saw their roles. It was necessary to question whether the agent on the reserve, pointing his finger at the children who were to be sent away to school, had any ideas in common with the Sisters who received them at the other end of the train line. Even inside the school there was a complication with middlemanship, for if the Sisters were the link between the children and the angels, the principals were the link between the children and the agents. That is, the principal, although a religious himself, assumed a temporal position in his direct dealings with the government and the reserve agents, while the Sisters filled a spiritual role, even as they offered the secular education defined by Indian Affairs.

As for the clients, defined here as both the children and their parents, it had to be decided whether only one or both of these were actually served by the patrons in the matter of education. The Micmac were virtually all Roman Catholic, so there should have been no argument against their

children receiving Biblical and ethical lessons alongside the three R's. But were the teachings served to the children acceptable in other respects, and what did the parents know or understand about the curriculum? Initially, at least in western Canada, the patron was not overly concerned with the parents, wishing to let them go their pagan and wandering ways as long as they agreed to relinquish their children to civilization. Later, and in the more settled east, were the parents more willing to let them go to school? There may have been some gratification that their children learned to compete in an English-speaking white world, or the parents may have had quite different educational expectations and aspirations for their children. Whether or not the parents were served by the removal of their children to the residential school, there was small choice in what was studied there: as is still the case with education, government departments decree what is to be learned, who will teach it, and in what manner. Perhaps, then, it was only the children who were served by the schools. Even if they were not the happy scholars they appeared in school photos,<sup>2</sup> there is the argument that compulsory education is everyone's right, so that even those years spent under the spell of despised teachers might be considered to have had their value.

Initially, without intending to suggest that the client role was itself insignificant, it was expected that the attitudes of the clients, both parents and child, would have only a small space in this study. Yet it has happened that they have been given--or did they somehow appropriate?--a large part of this study, arguing effectively that any story of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School cannot leave them on the periphery. Certainly a study of brokerage, the role played by the person in the middle between the patron and the client, could not be fairly or even adequately considered if one-third of the relationship were relegated to the sidelines of the study.



The drama suggested by the patron-broker-client trilogy begins in the residential school of the past, but the relationship continues in the present. While there is a histrionic sense of the participants as actors revealing their characters and motivations through the words and actions that are the very essence of drama, there is also the historic sense of the roles of patronage, brokerage, and clientage, which continue in current, changed forms to tell tales relevant to today's concerns. Today the patron, like a bank, provides funds for particular uses but assumes no authority to ensure that the money is used to satisfy the original petition. Now the broker might be seen as any outsider who assumes or is given the right to speak or act on behalf of an aboriginal person, or could as well be an inside representative negotiating with the government. However, today's client may still retain a financial reliance on the patron that would have dismayed Haytor Reed, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs one hundred years ago, who was anticipating a self-sufficient generation of Indians, financially independent of government. What he envisioned was "a rapidly decreasing expenditure until the same should forever cease."<sup>3</sup>

The word client may have once referred to a dependent under the protection and patronage of another, but in current, or market, parlance it suggests the idea of choice so that a client is one who patronizes a chosen service. This continues the ideas presented in chapter nine, in which it was seen that although the reserve clients were perceived to have few choices, they pushed those they had beyond their limits in a manner reminiscent of the Sister's description of the residential school as the house with elastic sides. The government as patron, the agent as mediator, were not chosen services, but the people assumed the freedom to approach brokers of choice when they did not view the proper lines of communication as the route to satisfaction.

It is seen, then, that none of the roles was static. The patron does not now patronize the native population in the same ways it once did, and the middleman did not completely disappear; besides those mentioned, there are still clerics and teachers. When considering the patron-broker-client roles as they pertained to those involved with the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, account has to be taken of change, for it might be argued that by 1967 little remained of the attitudes and educational aims upon which the school was built in 1929.

The chain of communication itself is also complicated, since there was apparently no simple procedure for petitions from the people, the agency, or the school, to "Government." Even the idea of a chain, with top and bottom linked by a series of mediators, is not easy to illustrate because there are too many possible links in the middle and because perceptions of top and bottom are misleading. If the patron is on top by virtue of relative status or authority, this does not mean the client necessarily looks upward with any sense of admiration. There was supplication, but not necessarily humility. In any situation a person is inclined to see himself, his people, and his cause as being on top. Consider, for example, the Oblate ladder of salvation, which J.P. Miller says was used by the religious of many Catholic institutions to depict the upward road to paradise, with the road to hell paved largely with Indians and the ladder itself covered mainly with whites.<sup>4</sup> The problem with a chain or ladder is the idea of two ends: top-bottom, right-wrong, self-other, and all these relationships may simply be matters of power and position.

To counter this, the patron-broker-client model might be depicted instead as a triangle, with the government at the apex, communication travelling from the two bases of mediator and Micmac. Although in one way this scheme still suggests a top command, it does allow a flow of information

to travel as it will, from the Micmac, through the mediator to patron, returning by the same route; or from the Micmac directly to the patron and back. In fact, it allows the triangle to be turned around so that the government is not always on top, for as has been suggested, in their own ways each of the three participants exerted a measure of power. The triangle, giving some stretch to the point, becomes a triumvirate.

Relevant here might be one of the themes introduced in Chapter 1; that is, J.A. Barnes' idea of network, a scheme he derived from M. Fortes' idea of web, and which he envisioned as several sets of points, representing people, joined by lines of communication. Perhaps this is the best image which can be drawn of the patron-broker-client model, for with the suggestion that any of the three could exert pressure and power, and the reality that the "broker" could be an Indian agent, the principal, the reserve chief, a lawyer, a magistrate, a Member of Parliament, or simply one's sister, the lines of communication must have crisscrossed in a confusion of concentric circles and collaterals. The idea of a web, too, suggests a stickiness, a subtly woven snare, in which any of the participants might be argued to have been caught. The position of patron, continuing beyond its original design as something that would gradually disappear as the Indian became "useful;" that of the Indian agent who found he either did not know how or simply could not "help;" and the limited-choice situation in which the client found himself placed: none of these was comfortable. However, considering these relationships as a web of communication recalls Paine's idea that any of the positions of patronage, brokerage, and clientage, are just roles, meaning they can be played, or perceived to be played, by any of the actors. Thus it is a more satisfactory scheme than the chain or the triangle, and perhaps the best one to define the situation at hand.

In Barnes' discussions of brokerage, he spoke of politicians as holding positions of intrigue and manoeuvre. Civil servants, who as middlemen artfully influenced and managed the messages they were supposed to convey between the patron and client, were more truly defined as brokers, in a position to make their own decisions in matters of government policy. One of the questions in this study is whether Indian agents were brokers or mere mediators, faithfully passing regulations from patron to client, and facilitating messages between them. Mediators, according to this definition, are without any independent power, and since it has already been argued that Indian agents did, at some times and in some situations, exert power, it must be conceded that they were at least occasionally brokers. Messages from the client, if not distorted, were almost always accompanied by personal opinion which was usually accepted by the patron as reliable. Because the Indian agent, being on site, negotiated personally with the Micmac, he was in a position to form a firm idea of each situation, and perhaps it was more often this assessment that he passed to the government, rather than an accurate repetition of the client's plea.

In contrast, he was not in proximity to Ottawa and had little face-to-face communication with Indian Affairs. Regulations and policy circulars were impersonal things from a distant administrator; there was no discussion or negotiation, nor any record in the files of an Indian agent disputing the rules he was to apply to the people in his care. The problem of brokerage, then, becomes a matter of whether it can be claimed that the agent manoeuvred government policy in any way. Judging from the approximately two thousand pupils who passed through the Shubenacadie residential school which was built specifically for orphaned or destitute children or those beyond the range of day schooling, it could be suggested that the agent scoured the reserve for more children than necessarily fit the

description. It would have been an easy measure to relieve himself of the responsibility of troublesome children on the reserve simply by having them sent on a rail to residential school. That the school was occasionally used in a reformatory manner by the agents substantiates this to some extent, although it would be unfair to suggest that this was common practice. That children were sometimes taken forcefully from parents who were determined to keep them suggests the parents believed they could properly care and provide for their children, so it was only in the judgement of the agent that the home was not adequate. Of course, the agent necessarily judged these homes by white standards, from the vantage of his own culture. It was part of the agent's job to assess the living conditions of the children, and there are cases cited in which parents who wanted to keep their children would not send them regularly to day school, or were themselves absent from home so frequently as to leave the children ill-nurtured and unsupervised. It becomes difficult in hindsight, and through correspondence files, to determine whether the agent abused the government regulations in the matter of the residential school by the numbers and types of children he chose for such education.

Of course, the accusations against Indian agents in areas other than the school, such as those revealed in the Christmas papers (see Chapter 9), suggest that there might have been some manoeuvre in the matter of stores. That some self-interest could be served by using stores for personal reasons is probably beyond doubt; even today there are reports of severe losses from the theft of government property by government employees. This kind of corruption in Indian Affairs, both in Canada and the U.S., may be indisputable. If not all Indian agents misused their positions for selfish gain, some probably abused the government's trust at least to the extent of petty theft.

Barnes also mentions the idea of government policy clashing with "community in action." It might seem at first glance that unemployed Indians, not taking the warranted interest in subsistence agriculture the agents may have thought they should, instead placidly weaving baskets and carving sticks and handles, do not present a picture of a community in action. Yet the persistence with which they not only kept their Indianness intact, but quietly protested the changes they found most objectionable, does suggest action. They used white man's weapon, too, writing their protests and petitions. Some activists may have made full time work of it, judging from the prolific pen of Ben Christmas. There was clash no doubt, especially with reference to the large issues of removing children from their homes, and removing everyone to a convenient location. (For whom was it convenient?)

Barnes says that among a community's values is personal information they do not share with outsiders, and that money, services, and friendship (or an agent's goodwill) may not be enough to extract from them anything which they choose to withhold. This suggests selective communication, which Paine calls brokerage. When information, passing either way, is processed by the agent, the patron loses some control over policy and the client; but in this case, if the client gives the agent either imperfect or incomplete information, it is the client-agent relationship which becomes strained. A lack of communication either way makes it most difficult for the agent to "help," but when the client does not appreciate the kind of help that is offered, there is reason to be uncommunicative. It is assumed that in the matter of trying to keep one's children from the residential school, information would flow freely from the client in defense of the home; but when the R.C.M.P. were on the reserve seeking truants, the value of personal privacy would be preserved using as few words as possible. Privacy, after all, is among any community's values, and there was

little enough of it on the reserve when the agent, backed by the mounted police, had access to anyone's home, the right to judge the family, and the government's backing to extract what information he wanted. As Murray Edelman said, when policies appear ominous to the governed, both sides are reinforced in seeing the other as the enemy. And if the agent is a "bridge," the idea of the client withholding information makes it certainly one-way. It has already been argued that the imperfect chain of command makes the one-way or even two-way bridge an insufficient image of the actual patron-broker-client relationship. Even the idea of a web of communication has holes where information is withheld.

Frederic Barth has argued that brokerage implies reciprocity and mutual satisfaction, but that in fact gains are not always equal and there are limits to the amount of inequality a people will permit. Since each side has different circumstances and needs, the ledgers become difficult to balance, and there is a further problem of how the agent profits. In this case, there is no proof of profit further than that already suggested; in the Maritimes where the economy was depressed even before the depression, the Indian agent's gain was a job and a salary. It was not an easy way to earn money, and was not an enviable position, as Rev. Johnston indicated. Robert Utley has claimed that the post held possibilities of fraud and corruption, and this could be manifested in the theft of stores or the use of knowledge for unethical personal gain, though there is no evidence of the latter in this study. The only conflict of interest that might be considered relevant is that manifest in the position of being a priest-agent, but this was no more conflicting work than that of being a Sister-teacher. The priest profited by being able to help people with their personal lives in a manner beyond his usual duties, and the Sister fulfilled her desire to serve in the foreign missions within easy miles of the Motherhouse. The school doctor clearly indicated that his

reason for doing "Indian work" was for the money, and in the case of the Indian agent perhaps there were further advantages such as promotion, out of Indian Affairs perhaps.

Conflicting interests are also inherent in Paine's attack on Barth's assumption that the broker's role requires him to instigate interaction between client and patron, increasing their integration: if brokerage involves self-interest, as Paine maintains, then the broker would want to work against integration in order to preserve his position. Surely, this is the ultimate career conflict. It has already been recognized in this study that the Indian agent as broker was working toward his own redundancy; that is, he was of use only until he made his clients useful. There is also no argument that the government wanted to eliminate the Indian "problem," and therefore the Indian agent, so it can be assumed that the agent realized the long-term impermanence of his job. If he hoped his service would be noticed and result in promotion, it hardly mattered that success as an agent would spell the end of the agency, for his idea was in any case to move upward and onward. But there is the question of whether any Indian agent, at any time, was so confident in the changes the government policies (and his own administration of them) were creating in the lives of the people on the reserves, that he saw the demise of his job as in any way imminent. While Paine argues that an Indian agent was not theoretically a broker because he was not sufficiently self-seeking to work toward integration, it might more realistically be suggested that integration was so far from being in sight that any fear the agent might have had of job loss, resulting from the end of the Indian "problem," was irrelevant. It may have been that from his local, short view of the reserve he was not able to share Ottawa's longer look at assimilative goals; perhaps while the government looked to a distant future of no Indian problem (and no Indians), the agent was too busy with the



everyday challenge of "helping" to contemplate the day when there would be no reserve (and no job). It could be assumed, however, that the Indian agent shared the government's hopeful vision of assimilation, even if he could see its unlikelihood.

Paine suggested that the middleman hindered goals of integration by negotiating for both sides, preventing the patron and client from the opportunity to learn about each other. However, it would seem that if the middleman passed information exactly or even closely to the way it was intended, then such knowledge could exist despite the absence from the relationship of personal familiarity. Besides, in the matter of Indian affairs the government had more than second-hand reports from inspectors and agents; superintendents of Indian Affairs had their own direct involvement with Indian people. Considering the personal observations of Duncan C. Scott, and the personal knowledge that produced his sensitive poetry, it might be assumed that the patron was in a position to learn much about the clients. This opportunity to know and understand the other was not as readily available to the Indian people, although as has been suggested they may have simply seen the agent, whom they probably knew well, as a personification of the government. Even so, the direct petitions by the Micmac to the patron, and their occasional choice of a presumed impartial mediator--both of which were attempts to override the Indian agent's authority--suggest that at least sometimes they realized the agent himself was not "government." These cases indicate the belief that the agent either did not adequately represent their own interests to the patron, or did not relay the patron's response accurately. It would seem that in those agencies from which alternate petitions were frequent, the government should have investigated the agent himself and the reasons the people lacked faith in him. Only once in this study has it been found that an agent's

ability was doubted by the school inspector, and while this indicates that the position was not without supervision, there is still no suggestion of serious inquiry into the suitability of agents whose integrity was doubted by the people themselves. This entire question of what the patron and client actually knew of each other harkens to earlier mention here of A.F.C. Wallace's idea that any social and cultural system is too complex for all of its members to understand, and J.R. Miller's remark that experience of a situation does not necessarily mean full knowledge of it.

Barth, in his analysis of a political enterprise which affected and changed the basic values and cultural identity of a population, claimed that entrepreneurial, or brokerage, activity produces cultural integration. It is not necessary to dispute whether this is precisely the result the government wanted, or to argue further that despite all efforts to the contrary, aboriginal culture in Canada is alive and well. The residential school system did not destroy ethnic identity. At the same time, the reserve system helped preserve it, for even though it hindered industry, it enhanced native culture and may even have encouraged Indian unity, a sharing of cultural traditions. The Micmac culture presented to the public today may not be precisely that which they enjoyed prior to colonization: how traditional are sweetgrass ceremonies, pow-wow dancers, and feathered drummers? Culture is not static, and while Canada's Indians may have had to make and remake themselves in order to survive, they have in one way or another retained their "Indianness." As Barth has argued, entrepreneurial activity, as a function of brokers, creates value dilemmas which force the clients to reevaluate and make decisions about their position. It was necessary for the Micmac to continually consider the effects of change, and perhaps to redefine themselves and their goals as each situation demanded. Some fought residential schooling and some refused to be enticed by the benefits

of centralization, always considering what these changes meant to their families, their traditions, and their survival. But in their protests, did they take the long view forward or simply consider immediate effects? Perhaps they were, like the Indian agent, so caught in the web of the present situation that taking care of today's problems was the only way to take care of tomorrow. If the best route to a culturally stable future was through constant reevaluation --and if necessary, redefinition--of what it meant to be Micmac or even to be Indian, then perhaps, in retrospect, some satisfaction has been rendered by these two particular impositions, the residential school and the centralized reserve.

In Barth's view, entrepreneurialism created value dilemmas, since transactions were based on faulty evaluation. Exchanging children for freedom from them was never a fair trade, and dilemmas with reference to the residential school centred on discovering the relative value of being in possession of one's own children. It has been suggested here that the Micmac parent was not in a fair bargaining position. However, this supposition has been countered throughout the study, for this particular value dilemma encouraged the parents to bargain, to petition for their children's return, and in some cases to feel the power of success. Government packages of civilization might have reduced choice, but did not totally eliminate it.

In his East Arctic work, Paine discussed the idea of brokers as local experts on native views; being on site, of course, is why they were hired by the government as negotiators. But Paine also called local brokers local patrons, because they lobbied for their own version of western culture. To complicate the matter further, local "patrons" could also be missionaries, Hudson's Bay Co. personnel, and the R.C.M.P.: not only did they promote their own interests and values, but they acted as each other's middlemen. In

this study, such middlemen have been termed mediators, although to some extent they obviously pursued their own interests--the R.C.M.P. in law and order, the school doctor in matters of health, priests in their God. Rather than defining them as local patrons, the idea that they each had a calling to follow and promote has instead bolstered the depiction of them as brokers: they were imperfect mediators because they lobbied for their own versions of government policy. While it is possible that they sought their civil service jobs because of a proclivity to welfare work ("Indian work," as Dr. MacInnis called it), it also could be that they saw the inherent proselytizing possibilities. Even unconsciously, given the mandate to civilize, a white agent would promote white values. But this does not change the answer to the question, who is patron. The government was patron, and through the Department of Indian Affairs was the supplier of the funds for Indian work and provider of the position of Indian agent.

There might be an argument for the idea of a mini- or local-patron, for example in the case of Alan Fry who worked beyond duty trying to help, but perhaps this was simple brokerage--analysis of government expectations which were manipulated only to suit them to the particular place and people at hand. Paine says the context in which one is deemed superior must be defined before deciding who is patron. As Fry worked alongside the people to improve their homes and situations perhaps he was on their level, and only above it in the matter of being asked for advice. If this meant he was "deemed superior," he may have been seen as a "local patron," and this is borne in the idea already presented of the agent as government itself. However, it has been illustrated throughout this study that at least some clients had little illusion of their Indian agents as superior. Resentment has been evident in the past and still exists in retrospect against the residential

school system, the principals and Sisters in the school, and the Indian agents as well.

Perhaps resentment is not unusual toward people who make other people's welfare their business and their living. The Indian agent assumed invasion of privacy as his right, as he went into homes and passed judgement, as he removed children from the family. It is not necessary to be the "other" to imagine how feelings of degradation can be caused by someone trying to "help." Using F.G. Bailey's thoughts that differences are nothing more than differences, and that every society finds it easy to judge, devalue and dismiss another society, it becomes possible to see the agent basing his assumptions about what was suitable and what was not on the realities of his own society, instead of the one he was investigating. Still, in today's plural society in which those in "helping" professions should be more sensitive to cultural differences, welfare workers face similar resentments; for example, in a community-run preschool in Regina the parents refused government funding because it was tied to allowing social workers into the school. It was said these workers were

...well known and much hated locally. If you've ever had hard times, or found yourself poor, you'll know the worst expression in the English language is 'social services.'<sup>5</sup>

In commenting on the client's dependence on the broker, Paine noted the requirement that clients "pay" using prestations of loyalty. Whether there was loyalty to the Indian agent, there was apparently some allegiance to the government. While investigation of the matter is beyond the scope of this study, it is evident that much loyalty was given to the government in war service. Paine said that value passes in two directions between the client and patron: in this case it might be said that the government gave lessons in citizenship, which the client returned as war service. While the "gifts" of the

patron put the client in his debt, Paine contended, counter prestations do not put the patron in the client's debt. This idea brings to mind the letter from Andy Paul to the government, accusing Indian Affairs of losing interest in the veteran after the war was over. Once there was no more "use" for the Indian, "no one cares." The problem with the idea of exchange is not just the implication of mutual satisfaction, but that each transaction has its own reasons and results and must be seen singly. The aim of assimilation was fulfilled with war service; to say "you're in the army now" is to say you are one of us. But returning to the reserve is returning to the status of other. It is not unlike the integration attempted in the unlikely, isolated residential school; after a "white" education, the children simply slipped again into their original environment and Indianness.

Of course, that is one of the larger questions that emerges from any study of Canadian Indian residential education: when cultural integration was the aim, why was the means segregation in remote schools? If there is an answer, perhaps it is in the changing Deputy Superintendents of Indian Affairs, who could not agree on whether school leavers should return to their reserves or be sent into white society. To be fair, their indecision partly reflected reality: while they sought to instil a work ethic and prepare the pupils for jobs off the reserves, an aim that would satisfy ideas of integration, assimilation, and amalgamation, in all their nuances of meaning, they found that most school leavers simply (and quite naturally) returned home.

To counter the ill effects of this return, the government sought to continue the school's vocational education on the reserves, in special programmes, like that at File Hills, for graduates who were chosen for the probability that they would be successful. But even this was a failure in the government's view. Those few school leavers who did choose to enter the larger society found they were not properly prepared to compete, for their

education was insufficient. As has been said, they found they did not fit either in the city or on the reserve. So the question becomes, when their education was strongly geared to farming and vocational aims and inclined toward new, white values, why were they not in fact prepared to become "useful members of society"? The answer indicates the impossibility of the task the Sisters had undertaken: their education was wanting because they had only half-day classes, and they spent too little time in the classroom because they were being trained in life skills. They received only rudimentary education and basic vocational training, so that most so-called graduates left the school with grade eight certificates or lower, some knowledge of housework or farming, and perhaps some ability in carpentry or pottery. This might have been sufficient in the 1800s when the residential school system was devised, but was not enough for most of the Shubenacadie graduates. And still another problem remains: how could the Sisters of Charity, marginal themselves from regular society, instruct children who were cloistered from both the culture they knew and the culture they were learning, in becoming useful to a society from which they were isolated? Dewdney's 1891 vision of taking possession of all Indian children, rearing them in industrial schools, and releasing them into profitable trade or farming was followed for three-quarters of a century, more on continuing hope than on proven result.

Although the government had no small stake in solving what it termed the Indian problem, the schools were supposed also to have served the clients' best interests (as schools are always perceived to do, no matter how often or how sharply the philosophy of education changes). Since in the matter of residential schooling the result was more marginalization than assimilation, what is said about the clients' best interests? Who was serving them, the patron, or the broker? Perhaps the patron was serving its own

interest in eliminating a problem, and perhaps the broker was serving the individual child or family by providing literacy and learning where there were no day schools, and institutional care where there was no stable home. While it could be said that the Indian agent was serving to perpetuate his own values, perhaps this is the kind of judgement that one society finds easy to make against another.

There is also the enigma of Duncan Campbell Scott to consider, as a representative patron in this study and reluctant civil servant. Anti-assimilationist anger has stamped hard upon his grave, and the epitaph "simply guilty" suggests that there is no argument to be allowed on his behalf. He did speak as a policy-maker about the value of residential education for Indian children, and specifically praised the potential usefulness of the Shubenacadie school when it opened. However, it should be remembered that this school, unlike its predecessors in the west, had a different intention. There was no talk of deleterious influences at home, of nomadic parents who would be free to roam if the children were accommodated elsewhere, or of inculcating a new religion that would separate children from their parents now and in the hereafter. Instead, the Micmac to be served by the school were already Roman Catholic and had been for centuries. Fewer parents than in the west were wanderers, and the children of "nomads" were not included in the initial assessment of who would populate the school. The only homes from which children would be taken to Shubenacadie were orphanages or foster homes, or those distant from existing schools. While these criteria altered and broadened somewhat through the years of the school's operation, perhaps it was less because of changes in the government's or Scott's intention for the school, and more because the Indian agents believed the need for residential schooling extended to other categories of children. Again, it has been shown that this



varied among agencies, so that some agents applied for the admission of many one-parent children and others made every effort to keep the children at home if their care was at all adequate. It must not be forgotten in this regard that some parents petitioned for the admission of their children, independent of any judgement of need by the agent. It was under Scott's administration--and under political pressure from the Maritimes, too--that the school was constructed for "underprivileged children." In a letter to the Halifax newspaper in 1929, Scott stated,

For some time it has been known at Ottawa that a school of this kind was needed in the Maritimes. The present Superintendent General of the Department, the Honourable Charles Stewart, [was] satisfied that the time had come when something should be done...<sup>6</sup>

Scott was not taking credit for the establishment of the school. Of course, as Stewart's deputy he had much responsibility, but in this letter he may have been explaining well-worn departmental rather than personal policy. For example, he mentioned that employing churches for the economic management of such schools was a "well-established policy," and repeated the old phrase that the Department desired graduates to "become self-supporting and...not return to their old environment and habits."<sup>7</sup>

What is peculiar about this is that by the time the Shubenacadie school was opened, it must have been realized by the government that for the majority of school leavers there was little choice other than the obvious one of returning to their reserves. Perhaps there was still some hope, however, about old habits being overcome. While it might be defensible to describe the rationale behind the Shubenacadie school as somewhat different from that which spurred the establishment of the western schools, it should be expected that the government would have become wiser in its expectations of result. That it still spoke of self-support and the abandonment

of the reserve and its way of life, seems not only a short-sighted vision of the future but a blind reckoning of the past.

Reference has already been made to the model-farming experiments which were conducted on the Prairies for promising graduates; these began because by the turn of the century it was realized that most of the school leavers were simply going to go home. What is curious is that by the time the Shubenacadie school was built, some thirty years had passed since the onset of these experiments, and by 1930 they were known to have failed. Why, then, did Scott think the Indian graduates in the Maritimes would not return to the reserves, or at least would not return to old habits? It was much less likely in Nova Scotia that the school would produce potential farmers than it was in Saskatchewan, and equally unrealistic that they would more successfully enter the larger society.

Many characters have been gathered into this consideration of brokerage, and the Indian agent has been given the largest role. The Sisters of Charity have been secondary, but in a study of education their position is perhaps even more crucial than that of the agents. On the reserve, the agent dealt largely with the parents whose children were considered candidates or were already attending the residential school, and they were involved much less closely with the children themselves. However, in the school, the "brokers" who were teachers and caretakers were constant overseers of the children and invigilators of their every action. While there is some opinion that the Sisters sought to eradicate all Indianness, and that they belittled or ignored the fact that the children had come from another culture, there is no indication of this in their Annals. On the contrary, there is frequent mention of the children's natural propensity for neatness and handwork, and the skits and songs the children were taught to perform for visitors gave homage to their Indian roots. Sometimes school

guests were given placecards of birch bark and little toy Indians as favours, all made by the children., and although this may suggest the Sisters viewed Indians in a stereotypical or old-fashioned way, it also shows that they allowed the children to acknowledge and showcase their Indianness. Throughout the journal there is evidence that the Sisters had a clear sense of the history and heritage of their charges, to some extent refuting accusations that the children were shorn of all Indianness immediately upon entry to the school.

The Annals have suggested the dedication of the Sisters to their work at the residential school, in the idea of the home mission as equal in challenge to the foreign one, and in the fear they openly displayed each year lest their obediences should take them away. The semi-permanence that was inherent in the idea of their jobs as callings might be contrasted with that of the day school teacher who was apparently too often unqualified and hoping to get a better position elsewhere. In a study on a community in Yucatan, Irwin Press commented that before the town produced its own teacher, school was taught by "state or federal teachers who regretted their assignments."<sup>8</sup> This may have been true of some Indian day school teachers as well, and was probably true also of some Indian agents, but it was not the case with the Sisters of Charity. Even when one Sister was transferred from Shubenacadie to another Indian residential school, it was recognized that the only regret was that of having to forfeit her strong allegiance to the Micmac children. Even were their tutelage "coercive," (and what kind of education at the time was not?) the Sisters' writings suggest they were fully and contentedly committed to serving the children.

While the Sisters, perhaps as well as they could, served the children's best interests, they also served the interests of their church, and in this way it might be said they were servants of the both the Micmac and the

Motherhouse, the children and God. This once again raises the question of who is patron. That the Sisters, in their service, were agents for the church-patron is obvious, but the idea that they "served" the children only confuses the issue, seeming to suggest that the Micmac were in some way patrons too. This would be true only if the Micmac people themselves had chosen to use the Sisters as agents and teachers, and in those cases in which the parents requested residential schooling for their children it might have some validity. However, since the lives and teachings of the Sisters were pervaded by their religion, and since they, and not the parents, defined the best interests of the children, perhaps it would be more certain to suggest that the Sisters served their church, but ministered to the children, and surely saw them only as clients. But however slippery, the very suggestion of the Indian people as patron implies that at least in some situations they were masters of their ultimate condition--and perhaps in retrospect this is not completely invalid.

The Sisters, on the other hand, may have captained their own souls but did not master their fate. The agency which determined their destinations each August was the Motherhouse, which in this context becomes the mediator between the Sisters and God. God, of course, as discussed by Paine, is perhaps the "final patron." But then there is G.M. Foster's idea of the broker as "holy power itself." In an irreverent way, it could be said that this describes the Mother Superior, the interpreter of God's word but also the person from whom all orders derived. There is Father Mackey to consider as well, another mediator for God who might certainly have been considered by the children under his charge as the holy power personified. Perhaps he was a local patron for the children, a representative of government and God so faithful that he was not a broker, not a middleman at all, not just *in loco parentis*, but in the place of the patron as well.

In this study it has been suggested that the role of the Sisters of Charity in the residential school was as brokers of salvation. The religious in the home missions attempted to save the souls of the Indians by introducing them to Christianity in order to render them worthy of heaven. The Micmac, as has been seen, were Roman Catholic long before the coming of the residential school, so presumably did not require this type of salvation. However, as has been suggested by the questionable notes the Sisters found circulating amongst the school girls, there was still some need for deliverance from sin. In a larger view of salvation, perhaps the whole residential school system was geared to this end in the sense of saving the children from the calamity of Indianness, of saving them from destruction, or at least from their deleterious homes.

The question might be whether the Sisters were mere mediators of salvation or true brokers. Dyck called the broker a "middleman plus,"<sup>9</sup> the plus, of course, being the addition of some manipulation of the patron's message. It is a question, then, not just of God's word, but of God's word as interpreted by the church, and then further processed by the Sisters. While their values were necessarily those of Catholicism, they were not necessarily those which the children--Catholic also--brought with them when they arrived at school, for in any given "good, Catholic home" it must be assumed that values are not identical in interpretation or action. However, in the residential home the Sisters would surely have purveyed consistent, Catholic values, "manipulated" to suit the situation. When it came to saving souls in the school, it was important to interpret the word of God in a way that could be understood by children and accepted by them as a personal value. In any religion there are levels of comprehension, and some mysteries that are revealed only to the privileged (such as the Mother Superior, her very name suggesting the holy knowledge she protected and bestowed). At a

lower level, appropriate to the ability of each child to assimilate it, the Sisters decided how to dispense the holy truth, the way to heaven.

There was in the aims of the government the hope that the teachings of the residential schools would return to the reserve with the young adult graduates. This had been seen in a tangible way in the agricultural experiments of the early 1900s, but more than that, there was the desire that the entire way of life learned in the school would be transposed to the home. Salvation, then, meant not only the hope of the hereafter, but the way to a better life. The early supposition that the Indian race was irrevocably declining, that idea which infused both the regretful poetry of Scott and his unhappy civil service, became instead the possibility that education could bring to the reserves the saving graces of health and wealth. Michael Coleman saw in the history of residential schools in the United States the use that was made of "student brokers," not just within the school but more importantly as mediators between the culture acquired by education and the folk culture at home. If the graduates could be inspired to make use of their learning by disseminating it, by becoming local teachers themselves, there truly would be salvation for the waning race.

It has been said that the terms used to name anything define the perspective from which we evaluate it. This study began with the idea of the broker as a bridge, and the question "one-way or two-way?" attempted to simplify a concept of mediation that is complicated almost beyond comprehension. Brokerage is only one aspect of a role, which must be considered in all its guises: using Dyck's image of a "wolf in sheep's clothing" might explain why the Sisters of Charity are seen as angels of mercy, yet coercive and callous, and why the Indian agents who wanted to help are still remembered by some as "devils." The designation of the Micmac as the client, at first considered a dependent term, instead allowed

or led them to define themselves as a people with choice, who could either make use of the services of an appointed agent or could patronize a professional of their own selection. Perhaps "who is patron" became the most important of the questions in this work, because it is clear that in the matter of Indian education, the Canadian government had God on its side. Here the point of perspective is crucial: if the Indian in the past had seen the patron as protector and supporter, he may have lost his entire Indianness; but believing that to be patronized meant to be treated in a condescending manner, he fought formidable foes. Most of the residential schools in Canada are closed, Shubenacadie among them, and those still in operation are administered by the "clients," who now use the services of the government to protect and support them.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN - NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Noel Dyck, "Strangers in our Midst: An Examination of Anthropological Thought about Brokerage," Canadian Ethnology Society. Papers from the Fourth Annual Congress, 1977, 246.
2. Bernice Logan, The Teaching Wigwams, Book 2, 1994. Self-published book of pictures from several Indian residential schools. Photos from the Shubenacadie school include children at play with skates and on toboggan, cutting out valentines, recorder group after winning honours in the 1965 music festival, preparation for concert in which children did an "Indian dance," and girls kneeling in prayer beside beds, each bed with a doll on it. (Several accounts suggest they were not allowed to keep dolls they received as gifts, but could only look at them hanging on a wall.)
3. Sessional Papers Annual Reports, Department of Indian Affairs, 1895, report of Haytor Reed.
4. J. R. Miller, Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), see illustration of "Lacombe's ladder," 192.
5. Lesley Krueger, Globe and Mail Education column, March 17, 1995, A20.
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7. Ibid.
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CHAPTER TWELVE:  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

You can look back, but to see where you're going, you have to look forward.<sup>1</sup>

Adrian Wolfleg, who spoke these words, is president of the University of Calgary's First Nations Student Association and a proud activist for native rights and respect. He focuses on the positive and does not allow anti-Indian attitudes of the past to intrude upon his goals. But some "survivors" of a century of attempted assimilation are still trying to heal themselves and to recover the Indianness and the selves they lost to the residential school system, and for them, looking back is a crucial prerequisite to looking forward. Those hundreds who passed through the Shubenacadie school might find familiar names or familiar stories in this thesis, and they might remember people or events differently from the way they have been presented here. The writing of this study has made clear that clarity of many residential school issues is elusive; the best it can offer is the truth that there are several perspectives and many ways of seeing. There has been an attempt to present the research "fairly," but one of the problems the work has produced is the matter of "what is fair?" and "by whose criteria?" This chapter will look back at the thesis to summarize its content, and to assess its aim, its value, and the validity of its argument. But having looked back, it pleads a look forward: this is where we have been, this is why we were there, now how best can education and re-education (that is, recovery of lost learnings) make amends and break the legacy of coercive tutelage?

This study of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School began as an investigation of the role played by the people responsible for Micmac education during the years of the school's operation, specifically the Indian agents who determined which families would provide the pupils, and the religious personnel in the school who solved its daily problems and directed the childrens' lives. These personnel were designated as "brokers," using Robert Paine's definition of agent-brokers as two-way transmitters of information who interpreted government policy for the aboriginals and in turn acted as local experts on native situations for the government. The idea of the Indian agents and the school religious as brokers placed them in the middle between a "patron" and a "client," and for this study both the federal government, as architect of the residential schools and their educational policies, and the church, as provider of personnel for the school and purveyor of federal policy, have been designated "patrons." The "clients," then, the people on the other side, were not only the pupils in the school but the parents left on the reserve.

It at first appeared that a study of the brokerage role would focus so heavily on the brokers that the patrons and the clients would simply form part of the stage set, and this may have partly proven so in the role of the patron. Federal educational and fiscal policies form part of every chapter--for most problems had to be posed to Ottawa and decisions awaited, even sometimes in urgent health matters--but do not form a chapter themselves. The clients as well are infused throughout the entire thesis, but were found to be so crucial to the work that the story of their resistance is perhaps the most compelling of all. The thesis, without illustration except for the frontispiece of Father Mackey, is full of images; perhaps two of the most vivid are the one mentioned from John Webster Grant's study of the Methodist minister preaching to oblivious Ojibwa, and the one suggested by the

"community in action" quietly and quite unobtrusively protesting against some of their agents and the residential school. As James Scott has indicated in "Weapons of the Weak," everyday forms of resistance are often the most significant and effective.<sup>2</sup> Through quiet tactics of evasion rather than outright confrontation with authority, the "weak" can make their political presence felt, and, Scott says, can "make an utter shambles of the policies dreamed up by their would be superiors in the capital."<sup>3</sup> So, although the original intention in this study was not to focus on the Micmac, they have quietly intruded, and if not made a shambles, at least made the point that as "clients" they had more choice and more power than was anticipated.

In reviewing the literature pertinent to the thesis, it was found to be fairly abundant. As ex-pupils are coming to terms with their residential school experience, there are more memoirs being published, the most significant to this work being Isabelle Knockwood's book on the Shubenacadie school. Last year saw the publication of J.P. Miller's landmark study of Indian residential schooling in Canada, and although an important source for background and recent history, and information on other schools, there is little new presented on the Shubenacadie institution. There are theses on the Micmac, on native education, and others on Indian agents, all useful to some extent, but none specifically on the agent's role in education or as a mediator. This is the first study to consider the Indian agent in relation to the Shubenacadie school, and also the first to reveal and consider the contents of the daybook kept by the Sisters of Charity who taught there.

Part One contained three chapters of background, the first outlining and discussing the anthropological arguments which have been used to form the framework around this study, the theoretical concepts surrounding brokerage which were traced from the 1950s to the late 1980s. They set the

stage for the questions to be asked throughout the work: who is patron? were the Indian agents, or the school personnel, brokers or simply middlemen? what is "fair" exchange? This chapter also introduced the ideas of "assimilationist reformers" and "assimilationist racism," both emanating from people calling themselves "friends" of the Indian. That they were not truly friends because they made or acted upon assumptions about what was good for the Indian is reminiscent of Alan Fry's problems as an Indian agent trying to "help." Cultural brokerage is a difficult position, entailing as F.G. Bailey said, disappointments, mistakes, frustrations, anxiety and conflict--an idea to be contrasted with that of the government, which felt the position simply required someone willing to do "Indian work" as a social service.

To give the thesis context and to address the second theme of the study, chapter two presented a look at the Shubenacadie school's history, considering its conception, construction, curriculum, admission policies, health problems, disciplinary practices, truancies, and closure. Limited in length, it touched these topics lightly but sufficiently to give a flavour of the government's contradictory policies, the school's institutional atmosphere, the teachers' religious emphases, and the native attitudes to school closure. Foreshadowing future chapters, it also offered a glimpse into parental resistance, alternative brokerage, and the Indian agent as mediator.

Because native education in Canada has always been viewed in isolation, the impression has been given that Indian residential schooling was the result of an isolated policy, meant specifically to sever the Indian from his very Indianness. Chapter three considers the validity of this view. Within the question of whether government aims were assimilationist is the argument that Canada aimed to assimilate all potential citizens into the fold of the majority. Both Indian schools and common English Canadian schools included manual training and domestic science in their curricula,

both stressed moral education, and the importance of farming which attached Indian residential schools to farm land was seen to a smaller extent in the gardens of all rural schools. Influences of Egerton Ryerson seemed to affect Indian and white schools, both of which he felt should be based upon the "common Christianity" of all Canadians, both of which should include a tolerable level of corporal punishment, and both of which were intended to produce "useful" members of society. It was, then, not only the native child who was seen to require training in usefulness as a citizen. The only differences Ryerson recommended specifically for Indian schools were first, that students would live together, and this provision was seen as necessary because of the relatively small and scattered settlements that made day schooling as difficult to provide as it was difficult to provide teachers; and secondly, that the schools be administered by the churches. While this was different from many provincial secular schools for the non-native, it was not different from the many "separate" schools in operation which were run by the Catholic church, and still are in some parts of Canada. The Sisters of Charity taught not only at the Shubenacadie residential school, but at many day schools in Halifax, as well.

This chapter also compared Indian residential schools with other industrial schools, noting these were also for children seen by the "child savers" as homeless, idle, or in need of moral rehabilitation. They were also rife with similar problems: insufficient funding, overcrowding, and truancy. As for religious training and the forcing of Christianity on western Indian children, Protestantism was also pressed on European immigrants to Canada--even Jewish ones--with the idea that there was one "Canadian culture" to which all Canadians should subscribe. In the matter of language, it was believed that any potential citizens should forsake and replace their native tongues and other cultural manifestations. While the native people

were not immigrants, they were seen by the government as being in the same category: people capable of developing into useful citizens and contributors to the country's social and fiscal fabric. It is significant that some immigrants reacted to acculturation by forming closed cultural groups, or "voluntary ghettos." Likewise the Indian reserve can now be seen as a chosen place apart, a segregated sanctuary, in which culture, language, and traditions can be practiced, encouraged, and retained. Without a strong sense of community and potent pride in their history, culture, and "otherness," Jewish immigrants might not have been able to cling to their Judaism; without the reserve system, First Nations might have found it more difficult to retain their integrity through years of the residential school system.

Part two of the thesis considered the religious personnel in the school, beginning with an introductory chapter intending to define and discuss the idea of "coercive" tutelage. According to Noel Dyck, those people who do "Indian work" in order to "help" are not sincerely altruistic but are acting on their own behalf, an argument that complements or queries the brokerage question: were Indian agents the social workers the government required? were they true mediators between the patron and client? did they skew messages between the Indians and Indian Affairs? was their so-called Christian humanitarianism recognized and approved by society or by the people it was planned to serve? As Dyck noted, the agents--on the reserve and in the school--expected to be judged by their motives rather than their results; that is, if they had "good" intentions, was that not justification enough for their policies? This chapter points to the problem of perception: why did so many tutelage agents have the effect of being coercive and callous, so opposed to their professed purpose? Or, why was Rev. Mackey held in high esteem by the church, and described as an excellent, exemplary priest, when he was remembered by some students as a cruel administrator whose

principalship they called a reign of terror? The conflict between the way we see ourselves and the way we are seen by others is suggestive of the very contradiction within all aspects of the assimilative policies which supported the residential schools. Segregated schools, far from both the native reserve and the white community, were intended to integrate the Indian. Those under the eye and foot of the Indian agent, so often urged to help themselves, were expected to learn independence while they were coerced and controlled.

The government needed its agents: those on the reserves because they were face-to-face with the clients and presumably understood and could represent their interests to an absentee patron; and those in the schools because of the economy of having the church contribute to costs and the teachers work for pocket money. Many of the reserve agents, particularly in Nova Scotia, were clerics as well and represented both the church and state; this chapter takes the matter into account and ponders the idea of divided or double patronage, split or enhanced middlemanship, and suggests the "broker" is a servant himself, the subject of two masters.

Chapter four also reconsiders the matter of "gifts" which is akin to the question of "help," for the government and its agents thought they were improving the lives and livelihoods of the Indians by their prestations of education (in all its guises). This brings the matter again to the question of whether good intentions were beneficial, and to the dilemma of whether "fair" exchange was indeed equitable. It has been suggested that during the early years of contact there is little evidence of anyone other than the missionary caring about the plight of the Indian: does this give justification to their "coercive tutelage"? The chapter is one of questions which seek answers as the thesis unfolds.

Chapter five, a descriptive litany enumerating the series of petitions sent to Indian Affairs from the Shubenacadie school's principals, was included with several intentions. First, it illustrates the severe parsimony and the contradictory goals of the government in the matter of residential schools. Initial construction was completed as cheaply as possible so the school was built of poor and faulty materials, not able to withstand the years of use envisioned. Professed aims of teaching agriculture and the manual arts suffered because the government did not want to finance outbuildings, equipment, or repairs. Insistence that only healthy children be admitted was policy only, for in practice children went to school with tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and various mental and physical disabilities with which the school and its personnel were not equipped to cope. The principals and the agents clearly did not understand the "rules," which appeared to change to suit the situation and the whims of the various officials in Indian Affairs.

Secondly, this chapter showed that the role of the school principal was as "agent" between both the physical state of the school and the physical well-being of the pupils. It was he who acted on behalf of the children in matters so severe that intervention was required: he contacted Indian agents and Indian Affairs every time a child required hospitalization, removal to a sanatorium, or a prolonged stay in the school's infirmary; and contacted the R.C.M.P. in addition, every time someone ran away. The principal mediated on behalf of the children in all matters pertaining to them, but he was equally charged with responsibility to see that the institution itself flourished. He was the person responsible for the condition of the school, the farm, and the equipment for both, not simply to inform Ottawa of the school's requirements, but to plead each case. While his role emerged as one of middlemanship, certainly as one of agency, it is not always clear that he played the part of "broker." Because he was *in loco parentis* he spoke on



behalf of the children, but, perhaps like any parent, he did not necessarily convey their needs as they themselves might have presented them. If doctors, reserve agents, and the government all supported the admission of a certain difficult pupil whose presence in the school the principal regretted, he contacted Ottawa to urge the child's dismissal: such a request might be construed as one manipulated in the favour of the principal and the school, suggesting brokerage. Similarly a request for replacement of a piece of dated equipment denied by Indian Affairs might suggest that the principal's representation of his "requirements" were actually made in order to favour himself or the school.

This chapter is further significant to the thesis because the study has two thrusts: it considers whether the role of school and reserve agents as mediators satisfies the anthropological understanding of brokerage, but it also presents a picture of the Shubenacadie school in its day-to-day realities, whether banal or sensational. The efficacy of the school and the efficiency of its personnel should not be assessed without a realization of what was involved in managing an institution that was at once a school, home, farm, and chapel. A revealing of the principal's complex duties is relevant to a full understanding of his role; a consideration of what life inside the institution was like for its "voluntary" residents, the staff, tells another side of the Shubenacadie story. The more that is known about the residential school experience, the more perspectives that can be unveiled, the clearer will be any interpretation of what happened and why.

Chapter six continued the theme of the previous chapter; that is, its intention was to picture life inside the Shubenacadie school from the viewpoint of the Sisters of Charity. As can be seen in Appendix B, they were in the school as supervisors; cooks; housekeepers; disciplinarians; sewing, singing, and pottery instructors; nurses; laundresses; and school teachers;

the latter in the minority as there were apparently only three or four blended classrooms. Little is known about the Sisters individually, and perhaps this indicates a submersion of self typical of the sisterhood. Many of their differences hidden beneath a habit, wearing the blinders of the headpiece, each appeared somewhat the same and had seemingly identical personal convictions of faith and aspirations of perfection. Of all the Sisters who passed through the Shubenacadie school, few remain, and none wish to speak of the experience. While this makes research into their motives and memories difficult, they have bequeathed their day book--the Annals that each mission was required to compile. This book is valuable not only because it offers the only way to recover the words of the Sisters, but because it gives a view of the school like no other--if it appears at times idyllic, it might be considered as the way the Sisters saw, or wanted to remember, it.

One difficulty with using the Annals to reveal the Sisters is that, in a manner already suggested, they subsumed their personal identities by writing anonymously. Nowhere is there an indication of whether the book was kept by the Sister Superior, a teacher, or just the one who would most enjoy the task. So without information on the early lives of the Sisters, without being able to identify them from their writings, and without the aid of communication, it is not possible to assess any of the Sisters individually. Consequently, for this chapter they have been considered as a whole; in the way they portrayed themselves as one in the Annals, so are they presented here.

Although it was intended that this chapter indicate the daily life of the school as seen from inside, adult eyes, it was considered important to interject, where appropriate, views of the same situation as seen by the children, particularly making use of Isabelle Knockwood's research. Where

an occasion depicted in one manner by Knockwood was recognized as described in another manner by the Sister, the discrepancy has been noted. This is not to question the view of the Sister nor that of the student, but simply to put the two perspectives in juxtaposition to illustrate the difference. While it might be the view of an adult versus that of a child, it might instead be a question again of "good intentions": is one's perception of her actions ever identical to another's interpretation of them?

Part three investigated the Indian agents in the same manner that part two considered the religious--the first chapter outlined the history of agencies and agents in the Maritimes, following confederation, in a general fashion to give background information about the situation of the Indian and the viability of the reserves. Again, there is the charge that Indian Affairs was not generous with Indian matters in the east; as well there is the problem that Ottawa's absentee bureaucrats believed they could turn a marginal environment into the viable farmland of Ontario or western reserves. Much effort was expended to make the Indians into farmers, and little effort was credited to the Micmac themselves in their efforts to overcome their poverty. One of the problems, particularly in Nova Scotia, was that the position of agent was part time so that each agent had another job beyond his "Indian work."

Chapter seven also enumerated the duties of the agents, and made use of the work of Alan Fry, a western agent in the early 1950s, because his account of the position is detailed and telling. Beginning with the zeal of any social reformer, he eventually left the job convinced he was unable to "help." Part of the problem was the wide extent of his duties, for many of which he felt completely unqualified: he lacked expertise, for example, in such matters as personal counselling, road building and forestry management. At least one agent in Nova Scotia felt similarly unprepared for his forestry

duties, and perhaps only those agents who were also doctors or clerics were completely comfortable as counsellors.

This chapter mentioned problems of the centralization scheme for Nova Scotia which had a false start in the 1930s and became a partial reality in the 1940s. While the government envisioned two large reserves as solving the problem of Indian migration and destitution, the Micmac themselves knew they had a choice and many of them chose not to participate in relocation. The problem then became an Indian agent problem, with only two agents in the province administering widely scattered settlements; as was noted, the Shubenacadie agent was responsible for 1,400 people in at least fourteen locations. It could be argued that centralization was of some benefit to those who chose to move to the new reserves, simply because they had an agent close at hand, and for the first time a full-time representative of government.

Several reports on conditions at the Maritime reserves were mentioned in this chapter, giving an indication of the geographic poverty of many of them and the resulting destitution of the people. One report in particular merits further mention, that of an unidentified inspector who in 1933 described the typical Indian of the Maritimes as a non-deserving, parasitical, "indigent, immoral, and arrogantly persistent beggar." He believed the "Indian relief problem" resulted from a too paternalistic governmental attitude toward the Indians, allowing them to sit idle, expecting to be fully cared for, while expending no efforts of their own. The economic depression, he declared, was a good excuse for them to do nothing and demand everything. Two of his solutions were to suggest the hiring of a full-time, forceful, inspector who would compel the Indians to help themselves and farm the land, and to order the killing of dogs. While he condemned the Indians for not looking for work, he recommended the firing of those who did

have jobs as local constables, because he believed they could not be efficient being related to some of the people they were policing. Although the Indians' houses were "miserable affairs," he also recommended the Department cease maintaining them and discontinue the construction of new housing to show the Indians the need for economy and to force them to "at least, do this much for themselves." His long report can be reduced to his attitude regarding the Indian, seen generally as the "non-deserving" poor who would do nothing for themselves until and unless pushed; his comparison of the native and local white echoed strong resentment that Indians were living freely at the expense of the "people." He reported what he saw on the surface rather than what he might have seen below it; his quick conclusions speak for the important role of the Indian agents, who although also white outsiders, at least knew the people they served and were seen sometimes to support them.

While his report was unvaryingly negative, it should be considered that when the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs personally visited the reserves in the Maritimes just weeks before, he assessed the Indians generally as having

...deteriorated in character and habits of industry to such an extent that rehabilitation is almost hopeless...shiftlessness seems to cling to them like a disease.<sup>4</sup>

This suggests that the extended tour by the unidentified inspector was undertaken to augment the earlier one, and as already said, he may have seen what he expected or wanted to see. What is unfortunate is that his recommendations, particularly about the dogs, the houses, and the native constables, hurt rather than helped, and his only idea for a solution after seeing the dire conditions in the Maritimes was for the appointment of another, more forceful field worker.

In chapter eight, the Indian agents in the Maritimes were seen through their own words and efforts in relation to the Shubenacadie residential school. Only a few agents had sufficient correspondence in the files to reveal a picture of their agencies, and some speculative analysis of their attitudes toward their charges has been attempted. Their actions have been considered as they accommodate the brokerage theme of the thesis, although it was not possible to fully assess their sympathy with, or condemnation of, the situation of the clients on the scant evidence available.

The correspondence of the Restigouche agent is particularly of interest because more of it is available than that of other agents, and because he represented clients in northern New Brunswick, far from Shubenacadie. He investigated each application for admission with an uncommon thoroughness, and felt it "fair" that children with parents should be allowed home for holidays. He did judge home conditions from his own perspective, but did not find them all too poor to recommend the return of children for the summer of 1937, although it seems curious that in 1940 he made a blanket statement that all homes were unsuitable. What is of particular interest is the Department's faith in the agent's decision, for there is no evidence that this condemnation of "all homes" was questioned or investigated by Ottawa. This particular agent was sufficiently satisfactory that he served for twenty years, from 1922 until his death.

Indian Affairs seemed almost careless with its agents in not instructing them thoroughly or even satisfactorily, for much correspondence from the agencies was wasted in trying to ascertain policy toward the residential school--rules for admission, medical examination, summer vacation, Christmas vacation, and even what to do with a stubborn parent who would not allow the children to be taken. The implication is that the agents, powerful as they may have been seen and have since been

depicted, did not understand their positions, and that Indian Affairs was a neglected part of the government. The poor pay and the extensive duties of the agent, the position being deemed only a part-time one in Nova Scotia, and the parsimony of the government in all things Indian support this supposition.

This chapter also brought attention to the problems of children who did not fit the ideal, medically-sound pupil both Indian Affairs and the principal wished to attend the residential school. The case of the girl who was deemed mentally retarded, who could not walk or talk, whose home conditions were "terrible," was considered by her doctor and her Indian agent as requiring institutionalization. It may be that there was no other "home" in which the child would fit, although it is not clear whether St. Joseph's orphanage had been considered--perhaps that she was not an orphan eliminated that choice, while the residential school offered a place in which she could readily be placed. However, she was not in the school long before the principal requested governmental permission to return her to her reserve. It may be recalled that in chapter two the admission of several deaf children was approved, and these children too proved difficult to teach and were considered unsuitable for the school by the principal. Perhaps there was no alternative means of education for these children, and once rejected by Shubenacadie they had no help with their learning difficulties. Certainly by the nineteen-fifties, many provincial schools accommodated such children in small "auxiliary" classes with their own teachers, but the residential schools apparently did not have the space or the expertise, and the authorities at Indian Affairs apparently did not address this crucial educational matter.

In chapter nine, the active resistance of the "parent-clients" became clear, for while in the previous chapter they were seen by some inspectors

as doing nothing to help themselves, this part of the thesis shows that they were well aware of their poverty, their situations, and their needs. They also knew that when their agents did not satisfy their questions and demands, they could write their own letters, hire their own lawyers, or engage the services of their own spokesman. Even being cautioned that personal appeals were irregular and would not help any cause, they did obtain satisfaction often enough to encourage their efforts. Sometimes, when Indians on one reserve made their own entreaties without the help of their agent, the suggestion is that they did not trust his ability to "help" or have confidence that he would represent their interests accurately; other times their opinions of their agent as ineffectual was made quite clear in their letters to Indian Affairs.

Although sometimes they were successful in these efforts, particularly when it came to matters concerning their children in the residential school, it did not follow that the government would take heed of their dissatisfaction with any particular agent. It is curious that there seems to be no response to the frequent appeals of Ben Christmas for the replacement of an agent the clients considered incompetent, because in the event of any complaint against the middleman, an appeal to the patron was the only recourse and deserved investigation. The problem, unfortunately, is that none of the letter files which were consulted was complete, and there is no way of knowing for sure that most of Ben Christmas's letters to Indian Affairs were ignored. That they made the agent feel insecure, however, is shown in J.A. MacLean's suggestion to the government that no notice be accorded letters against centralization because they all came from Christmas. This chapter suggests that the "clients" held a measure of power, recognized they did so, and made full use of it. If they did not rid themselves of an unappreciated agent, they did appear to block the centralization



scheme successfully. They also, of course, condemned government policies of assimilation and residential education and retained their autonomy over a hundred years of attempts to integrate them into the main populace, showing that quiet resistance and long patience are the attributes that truly constitute power.

Chapter ten discussed the legacy of the residential school system, considering the complicated question of responsibility for the condition of the First Nations people in Canada today. There is Sister Moore's suggestion that it is time for the white people to explain--and themselves understand--what went wrong with their efforts to educate the Indian. There are poet Rita Joe's words that her people do not hold grudges, and keep their pain in the back of their minds. There are others whose experiences at residential school have turned them from the Catholicism the Micmac had accepted for centuries. There is the conflict between the former pupils who remember their school days with some fondness and even appreciation, and those who condemn it completely, whose experiences were such that years later they struggle to accept and overcome what happened to them. There is the blame placed on D.C. Scott, so-called architect of Indian education, and the controversy inherent in any comparison of his policies and his poetry. There is the question of conflicting aims of education, from integrated citizenship and equality in the workplace to improving conditions at home by enhancing it with farms, flower gardens, curtained windows and white, middle-class morals and aspirations.

But in addition there is the evidence that the native people participated in the residential school system in different ways. Sometimes parents themselves requested their children be placed in school: in the case of Knockwood her parents delivered her and two siblings to the school and completed the application forms there (although she says the letter to

the government requesting her under-age admission was not in her father's own hand).<sup>5</sup> Many parents did not tell their children where they were going, why, or for how long, so they were shocked when abandoned at the school and confused while waiting for their parents to return. Even when the Shubenacadie school was about to close, the local parents were against the closure; many families used the school as a place to leave their children while they searched for seasonal employment, and when they returned home removed them before the school year was completed.

In the 1960s, following the closure of some residential schools and the passing of others to native control, an attempt was made at integrating students into regular provincial schools, with mixed reactions. Thirty years later, some parents continue to send their children to integrated schools even when there is a closer, band-controlled option. They argue that on-reserve, band-operated schools have at least one undesirable feature in common with the old residential schools: the children are segregated from, and do not learn to interact with, their white neighbours. On the other hand, there is the example of Indian Brook children in Nova Scotia who, after years of school integration, still feel marginalized and victimized: they experimented with their own makeshift, segregated school, perhaps suggesting that segregation is one viable answer to the question of effective Indian education.

One problem for the present is whether those who suffered in the residential schools, or even all those who attended, should be compensated financially. Apologies by the churches and regret expressed by current government personnel on behalf of those predecessors who devised and delivered residential education is not seen as sufficient by the Association for the Survivors of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. Yet there is the argument that residential schools in the west may

each have accommodated more children, as they were not, like the Shubenacadie school, earmarked specifically for orphans and the underprivileged. There is Miller's claim too, that the whole Canadian residential school system reached a small proportion of native children and that most pupils were in the school for only a short time. Newspaper reports suggest to the reader who knows little else about the schools that they were places of extraordinary abuse, without considering that similar disciplinary measures in any schools of the time were not defined as abusive. At least so far, in an atmosphere in which sexual abuse charges are coming from orphanages, reform schools, and even hockey arenas, no staff member of Shubenacadie has been similarly accused. Children in residential schools were not allowed to speak their own languages, yet for many of the Shubenacadie children English was not entirely foreign since the Micmac had a long history of contact; and the charge that Shubenacadie pupils were not allowed to practice their own religion is questionable when they were strongly Catholic. Perhaps there is no consolation to ex-pupils in knowing that white children--orphans, law offenders, or simply those from underprivileged or immigrant homes--experienced similar institutional treatment, for just because "wrong" is rampant it does not become "right;" yet surely this knowledge identifies part of the wrong as simply the myopia of a past time. Still, there is the lawsuit, and with it the question of whether money can adequately compensate abuse victims. This brings us to the matter of "fair" exchange: for the culture lost--and perhaps more importantly for all the childhoods spent as orphans, distant from family--there may be some justice felt by the ex-pupils in having the means that once could have saved their homes from being declared unfit. Used well, it could now fund centres for education and re-education.

Is there an answer to Moore's question of where the federally-designed educational system for Indians went wrong? The early industrial schools of the west were part of what might be called a scheme for making farmers of nomads, so they would fit into the communities of immigrants that suddenly surrounded them, but they were also an attempt to bring basic literacy and occupational skills to a people who had been catapulted into a modern and foreign way of life. It might have been the only way the bureaucrats knew of "helping," and a strong belief in their superiority of race, morals, and technology supported their efforts. Had they considered the opposition of the immigrants who fought religious conversion or who conducted their own language and culture schools, they might have seen how they could more efficiently "help" the Indians, but this would have required more sensitivity to cultural differences and human rights than the times allowed. Instead, their models were not the new Canadians but the Indian industrial schools of the United States, and perhaps even the British public (i.e., private) school system, itself rife with what today would be considered abuse. If generations of natives reared in abusive Indian residential schools turned themselves into child abusers because it was the only way they knew to raise children, can it be suggested that a generation of bureaucrats educated in tough boarding schools saw the way to create strong citizens was through a similar education?

To bring to the present the argument about what went wrong, it should be noted that ideas of child rearing (and child saving) are always in flux and in the front of social concerns. Social mores put certain children in industrial and orphan institutions; later "enlightened" ideas closed the so-called homes and placed needy children with private families, where, it should be mentioned, the possibility and incidence of abuse was not necessarily lessened. Today there are hints that renewed consideration is

being given to the benefits for some children of some institutions. In fact, several old Indian residential schools have never ceased being Indian residential schools; they simply operate under new (native) management. And while it cannot be said that the proliferation of day care centres for today's families quite compares with the involuntary placing of selected children in residential care, it is to be wondered whether a generation of babies and small children raised with a group of age peers by professionally trained early educators might eventually question the social atmosphere that took them from their homes and parents and placed them daily in places where they, too, may have been subject to abuse. Here, it could be suggested, we have voluntary institutions in which children keep their belongings in lockers and spend fully-regulated days, without bells perhaps, but with a time for everything, a regular schedule, an education in social behaviour that emanates from someone other than a parent, and a communal life with little space for individuality. The point is that what we do and advocate for the children of any generation comes from attitudes toward childhood, family welfare, and education that belong to the time, society, and environment that produce them. Ideas of parenting and teaching--raising the children of others--change as generations of parents and teachers change and envision ways to improve upon what went wrong.

Chapter eleven re-considered the second thrust of this thesis, presenting a discussion of the patron-broker-client model and its applicability to the agents and teachers responsible for the filling and running of the Shubenacadie school. Initial assessments of "who is patron" extended themselves to include not only the church and state but on occasion the middlemen, when their views of what constituted a fit home derived from their own assessments of civilization, or when their personal interpretation of Christianity prevailed, and when the clients saw them simply

as the government; stretched further, even the client sometimes wielded sufficient power to fit one definition of patron. As for brokerage, the Indian agents generally accommodated the definition well in accordance with the idea that they could often make their own decisions in policy matters; and it has been shown that the assessment of brokerage as fraught with frustration and error also fits the role played by the agents. Again, the clients sometimes intervened as their own middlemen, and when they tried to supersede the Indian agent by using an outside mediator of choice, they often simply gained yet another broker who did not represent them accurately. Perhaps it is just such experience that has rendered them so capable of representing themselves.

What has become clear is the reason the brokerage argument has occupied anthropologists for so long: not only is there fascination in the manipulation of others, but mediation, particularly when it involves welfare work, is a controversial issue. Missionaries and other "friends" and "helpers" may not intend to destroy anything of value, but there is the question of what is valuable. They may offer gifts and expect a fair exchange, but not know what is fair. They may leave Indian work, as did Alan Fry, simply because they discover there is no way--no way they can conceive--to help. The Sisters of Charity had a mission and a calling to save souls right here, but lawsuits such as that of the Shubenacadie "survivors" indicate a generation or even a century of very lost souls. If the worst expression in the English language is social services, what is suggested about welfare workers? Elizabeth Furniss speaks of "victims of benevolence" in a residential school and James Smart, almost a hundred years ago, spoke of the necessity for "benevolent aggression" to enforce native compliance should persuasion fail.

What, then, is benevolence? Those with the disposition to do good may be the ones to perpetrate the most harm, if only because of the opportunity brokerage allows to manipulate or simply to misunderstand. According to Guillemin, no category of "friend" to the Indian, whether missionary, reformer, or researcher, is morally tenable today,<sup>6</sup> leaving the question of how to define white responsibility now that the opportunity for benevolence has passed. The behaviour of Indians, she says, is not inadequate or pathological; they are owed a debt, even putting aside questions of residential schooling, because they have been marginalized for so long.<sup>7</sup> The suggestion is that in looking forward, the matter of education being only one concern, there seems no way for a "friend" to advocate what should be done.

Brokerage has been an appropriate means of assessing the residential school experience at Shubenacadie, by one who was not there and cannot *know*, because of the opportunity it allowed to consider the white role, the several white roles, that contributed to the atmosphere and environment of an educational experiment that went wrong. Drawing from three main sources--the correspondence from Indian Affairs, the Annals of the Sisters of Charity, and the Ben Christmas papers--permitted some insight, in turn, into the roles of the patron, broker, and client. The correspondence files from Ottawa were incomplete, some files perhaps missing, some removed to allow the remainder to be open to the public, but there was sufficient representation from the Department, the principal, and the Indian agents to suggest tendencies where there were no consistent rules, and attitudes where cases required opinion. The Annals, too, had blanks, sometimes a full year simply summarized, other times entries obviously copied and rewritten. Yet there were vivid descriptions to be compared with memories of the former pupils, and a sense throughout of

dedication, or mission. The Ben Christmas papers also had gaps, notably missing responses to many of the letters and appeals to Ottawa. But these documents, like the Annals, presented a feeling of privilege to the researcher, a sense that private papers were being offered for perusal with generosity and goodwill. Ideas springing from these sources, descriptions copied and events discussed, became a crucial part of this thesis and allowed the inclusion of perspectives that contributed to the work the "fairness" that was envisioned when it began. The Christmas papers, while not always significant to the residential school history being undertaken, were a surprising source of information about the Indian agents, seen in a new light by those they had been hired to help. And the Annals gave this study what could be its most valuable chapter, for nowhere else can be heard the quiet, benevolent voices of the Sisters of Charity.

As has already been mentioned, this thesis has examined change--the change of governmental aims for native education and its attitude from the advocacy to the closure of residential schools, a change in power from the patron to the oppressed, a change which saw the Sisters leave the schools and the Indian agents leave the reserves. But it might be argued that the larger changes were in the theme of the thesis itself, and in the understanding of the researcher. The thesis began as a personal argument against ideas of appropriation, ideas that residential school history belongs only to the former residents. It developed into a study of the "white" side of the Shubenacadie school, of those in the middle between the government and the Micmac, the who and why of the agents, the principals, and the teachers. But a consideration of "middlemanship" involves ideas of representation and mediation and cannot avoid the inclusion of those the middleman works between; hence, the use of the patron-broker-client model. The most significant change in the intent of the thesis was that as it



progressed the primacy of the clients became obvious, the suggestion that they were not the "third in the chain" that the patron-broker-client model might indicate, but people whose power and autonomy were never fully forfeited if at all; the suggestion that their role in any residential school history was not, cannot be, in any way peripheral. For this particular study, although the three-actor model was described most compellingly as a web of communication, still it was shown to work well and efficiently when depicted as an equilateral triangle. Not only does this allow the idea that all the actors can play (or be perceived to play) all the roles, but it suggests that if there is primacy it is not static.

Nor can a researcher remain static after delving into so many lives, situations, and stories, after at least trying to see the inside from the outside. Just a description of how the thesis changed indicates how the writer evolved, and even though the initial intent or inner feeling was to be fair to all roles and actors, it was not known to what extent impartiality would be possible. There has been throughout the work a hesitancy to judge, so that at the end it might be done more fairly, but one of the questions the thesis has struggled to answer is "what is fair?" Perhaps using the patron-broker-client model has brought a sense of perspective to this case history of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential school that may not have been otherwise discerned, and allowed a new understanding of the benevolence of the patron, the mediation of the broker, and the autonomy of the client.

The Shubenacadie Indian Residential School is entering a period of public prominence, awaiting the outcome of the lawsuit by former pupils. Any assessment of the residential school experience requires first, some understanding of the social and moral attitudes that prevailed at the time and influenced those who advocated the type of education that was suitable for Indian children; and secondly an appreciation of the similarity between the

Indian schools and other schools and institutions that were being established at the same time for other Canadians. An evaluation of the Shubenacadie experience, in particular, requires some knowledge of the difference between that school and those established earlier in the west: the Shubenacadie school accommodated already-Catholic children whose people had a long history of contact and familiarity with English, and concentrated on children who were orphans or otherwise considered underprivileged; those in the west intended to "gather" all the Indian children to be raised away from tradition, instructed in a new language, and introduced to a foreign religion.

Studies involving the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School are necessarily complicated because the years of its operation, 1930 to 1967, were a time of rapid societal change--an educational policy that was deemed benevolent and helpful at that time of the school's establishment is in today's terms considered patronizing and racist. It is complex, too, because the school is still part of living history, and while the memories of surviving students, staff, and Indian agents are vivid, they are also sometimes strongly at variance with each other. This study, then, has been less a school history than an endeavour to contribute to historical analysis by using a theoretical perspective to shed light on questions of control and influence. It is fitting, perhaps, that the model applied to this attempt at understanding "brokerage" as it applies to the history of native education has been finally depicted as a web, its intricate lines of communication involving the actors in various and complex roles of subordination and power.

## CHAPTER TWELVE - NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Adrian Wolfleg, cited in Alanna Mitchell "Natives find new meaning in Stampede," Globe and Mail, July 12, 1997, A6.
2. James C. Scott, "Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Struggle, Meaning and Deeds," in Teodor Shanin (ed.), Peasants and Peasant Societies (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 343.
3. Ibid., 344.
4. National Archives of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10 Vol. 3220, report of Harold W. McGill to the Superintendent General, June 16, 1933, following a ten-day tour of the Maritimes and Gaspé.
5. Isabelle Knockwood (with Gillian Thomas), Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia (Lockeport N.S.: Roseway Publishing, 1992), 24-26, 112.
6. Jeanne Guillemin, Urban Renegades: The Cultural Strategy of American Indians (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 296.
7. Ibid., 297-8.

## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### INDIAN AGENTS IN NOVA SCOTIA

18 Sep 1868  
13 Apr 1871

SY Fairbanks appointed agent for NS  
Divided into seven districts

1. Ann, Dig, Yar, Shel
2. Kings, Queens, Lun
- 3 Hfx, Hants, Col, Cum
4. Pictou
5. Ant, Guys
6. Rich, CB
7. Inv, Vic

John Harlow  
Rev. P.M. Holden  
Rev. P. Danaher  
Rev. Randall McDonald  
J.J. McKinnon  
Rev. J. McDougall  
Jos. B. McDonald

CB afterwards became Dist 8.

NS divided into 13 dists in 1878

**Annapolis County**, part of Division 1 in 1871:

	Date of appointment
Harlow, John	13 Apr 1871
Wells, George	14 Sep 1882
Lacy, John	14 Nov 1901
Hoyt, George	13 May 1912 resigned 1 Jan 1918
Harnish, Mrs. A.H.	acting .....1919 (unable to read)
Nicholl, Arthur A.	12 March 1919
Doyle, Patrick	15 Sep 1922
Nicholl, A.A.	08 Sep 1930

(office closed 18 March 1932)

Nicholl, A.A. reappointed	30 Jun 1932
Forcey, C.H.	20 May 1936
Harry, Edward C.	01 Jun 1936

(transferred to Shubenacadie, 02 Apr 1942, PC 33/2570)

**Antigonish and Guysborough, District No. 5 in 1871**

	Date of appointment
McKinnon, J.J.	13 Apr 1871
Chisholm, Rev. William	Mar 1875
Chisholm, Rev. J.J.	28 Mar 1884
Chisholm, John	04 Nov 1884
Chisholm, Rev. Joseph	11 Feb 1886
Chisholm, W.C.	10 Sep 1886
McDonald, J.R.	11 Nov 1896
Cameron, William C.	05 Jun 1912
Cameron, John	08 Dec 1913
Cameron, Dougald	06 May 1918 (acting)
Cameron, W.J.	13 Jul 1919

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Cameron W.J. reappointed 30 Jun 1932

(transferred to Shubenacadie 02 Apr 1942)

**Colchester (Part of District no. 3 in 1871)**

Danahar, Rev. P.	13 Apr 1871
McLean, Dr. (together with Hants)	23 May 1878
Muir, D.H.	18 Mar 1880
Smith, Thomas B.	21 May 1897
Smith, Robert	06 Apr 1906
Kennedy, R.H.	03 Dec 1920

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Kennedy, R.H. reappointed 30 Jun 1932  
 Kennedy, J.F. 01 Oct 1934  
 Fox, B.B. 02 Mar 1935 suspended 20 Apr 1939  
 McMullen, J.R. 20 Apr 1939 (acting)

(transferred to Shubenacadie 02 Apr 1942)

**Cumberland** part of District 3 in 1871

	Date of appointment
Danahar, Rev. P	13 Apr 1871
Clarke, J.T.	23 May 1878
Boggs, G.W.	26 Oct 1889
Rand, F.A.	26 Mar 1891 dismissed 13 Aug 1912
Johnson, J.A.	28 Sep 1912
Davidson, Elias	05 Sep 1919
Murray, William	15 Aug 1925
Lavers, Harry A.	01 Jul 1926
Cameron, Carl Hugh	18 Mar 1931

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Cameron, Carl Hugh reappointed	30 Jun 1932
McCarthy, Rev. Father	01 Aug 1936 resigned 01 Aug 1938
Gillespie, Leo F.	27 Oct 1938 died 22 Feb 1939

(transferred to Shubenacadie 02 Apr 1942)

**Eskasoni**, Previously part of CB agency

Cameron, Rev. A	04 Jun 1902
McNeill, A.J. MD	17 Jan 1908
MacKinnon, J.J.	11 Sep 1909
McDould (?), Rev. Angus R.	25 Jan 1911

(office closed 18 Mar 1933)

McDould, Rev. Angus R. reappointed	30 Jun 32 retired 1 Jan 1943
MacLean, J.A. appointed	27 Aug 42 (?) resigned 1 Apr 1945
McKinnon, J.B. acting	10 Apr 45
Regional Supervisor of NS & PEI	17 Mar 1949
McPherson, J.D. Acting Superintendent	11 Sep 1953
McPherson, J.D. Superintendent	07 Apr 1954
Transferred to Shubenacadie	03 Jan 1956
MacNeil, H.S. In Charge	23 Jan 1956
Boone, J.W. Superintendent	01 May 1956

**Cape Breton County** (previously District 8, divided into Eskasoni and Sydney by O.C. 04 Jun 1902, see lists before and after)

Date of appointment

McDougall, Rev. J.W.	13 Apr 1871
McIsaac, Rev. D.	20 Apr 1874
McGillivray, Rev. A.F.	22 Jul 1874
McKenzie, Rev. M.	23 Jul 1878
Cameron, Rev. A.	06 Oct 1888

Agency divided by O.C. 4 Jun 1902 into Sydney and Eskasoni.  
Eskasoni agency reestablished 04 Apr 1944 by O.C. PC 33/2570, comprising former agencies of Inverness, Pictou, Richmond, Antigonish, Cape Breton Cos.

Sydney (previously part of Cape Breton agency)

McAdam, Rev. D.	4 Jun 1902
McIntyre, Dr. D.K.	21 Jan 1902 dismissed 30 Aug 1912
Sparrow, C.J.	12 Sep 1912
Egan, D.J. (name squeezed into space, no date)	
Rice, Dr. W.H. Acting Agent	23 Jan 1918
Sparrow, C.J. returned	08 Feb 1918 dismissed 17 Aug 1921
Carter, Dr. Peter M.	07 Apr 1923
Muggah, Sydney E.	23 May 1928

(office closed 18 March 1932)

Muggah, Sydney E.	30 Jun 1932
MacKinnon, Joseph	24 Apr 1933 dismissed 01 Jan 1941
Carter, Dr. P.M.	01 Mar 1941 resigned 01 Oct 1942
MacLean, J.A.	01 Oct 1942

(transferred to Eskasoni 02 Apr 1942 by O.C. PC 33/2570)

**Digby County** part of District 1 in 1871

Harlow, John	13 Apr 1871
McDormand, F.	14 Sep 1882
Sullivan, Rev. J.J.	06 Apr 1897
Purdy, J.H.	01 Jan 1899
Harris, R.A.	13 May 1912
Chalmers, F.A.	27 May 1924
Harris, F.C.	1931

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Harris, F.C.	30 Jun 1932 (re-appointed)
Darres, Stewart E	14 Feb 1936

Transferred to Shubenacadie 02 Apr 1942



**Halifax County** part of District 3 in 1871

## Date of appointment

Danahar, Rev. P	13 Apr 1871
O'Connor, Rev. D.C.	23 May 1878
Desmond, Rev. A.P.	16 Mar 1885
O'Sullivan, Rev. D.	26 Nov 1891
McManus, Rev. C.	13 Apr 1898
Chisholm, D.	29 Mar 1906

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Henley, R.B.	30 Jun 1932 retired 28 Feb 1938
Cook, Const. A.M. (RCMP)	01 Mar 1938

(transferred to Shubenacadie 02 Apr 1942)

**Windsor Hants County** formerly under Hants County

Stephens, Joseph	17 Dec 1912
Stack, Lawrence W.W.	1919
Burchell, Frank	14 Jun 1920 resigned 12/1/21
Maxner, John Watson	09 Mar 1922
Miller, H.H.	01 Oct 1929
MacDonald, Wm.	21 Apr 1931

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

MacDonald, Wm.	30 Jun 1932
Millett, Percy	01 Jun 1936

(transferred to Shubenacadie 10 Apr 1942 O.C. PC33/2570)

**Hants County** part of District 3 in 1871

Danahar, Rev. P.	13 Apr 1871
McLean, Dr. (together with Colchester)	23 May 1878
Gass, Jas.	18 Mar 1880
Wallace, A.	06 Nov 1896
Lawlor, D.B.	01 Sep 1924

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

McDonald, Allison	30 Jun 1932
Wallace, Fred.	02 Mar 1936
Robb, John S.	01 Apr 1936

(transferred to Shubenacadie 10 Apr 1942 O.C. PC33/2570)

**Inverness County** part of District 7 in 1871

## Date of appointment

McDonald, J.B.	13 Apr 1871
Mclsaac, Rev. D.	23 May 1878
McPherson, Rev. D.	12 Apr 1902
McLennon, Rev. John (acting in absence of McPherson on military service) appointed by OC	17 Jan 1920
McNeil, Rev. Angus	12 Dec 1930

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

McPherson, Rev. J.A.	30 Jun 1932
McNeil, Rev. Angus	04 Aug 1932

(transferred to Eskasoni Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2570)

**Kings County** part of District 2 in 1871

Holden, P.M.	13 Apr 1871
Beckwith, J.E.	May 1878
Beckwith, C.E.	21 Jun 1888
Prince, W.S.	01 Apr 1921

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Wms. E. Melbourne	11 July 1932	resigned 31 Mar 1934
Bligh, W.O.	06 Apr 1934	resigned 01 Jul 1935
Porter, Fred.	30 Jun 1935	
Ratchford, Freeman	02 Mar 1936	(cancelled)
Chute, Earl	05 Mar 1936	
Spinney, Clarence	25 Mar 1936	dismissed 01 Jan 1942
Brown, Earl	01 Jan 1942	

(transferred to Shubenacadie Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2570)

**Pictou County** part of District 4 in 1871

McDonald, Randal	13 Apr 1871
McDonald, Rev. Rodk.	25 Oct 1881
McLeod, Rev. J.D.	03 Jan 1901
MacGillivray, Ronald C.	17 Mar 1928

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Johnson, Rev. A.A.	30 Jun 1932
Chaisson, Rev. E.	01 Oct 1938

(transferred to Eskasoni Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2570)

**Lunenburg County** formerly part of Queens and Lunenburg agency

## Date of appointment

Freeman, N.P.	15 Jun 1912
Freeman, Mrs. N.P.	16 Jun 1920
Cochran, Dr. W.N.	20 Nov 1920 dismissed 27 Oct 1922
Chisholm, J. Stanley M.D.	01 Jan 1923
Hewar, Dr. W.A.	14 Jul 1928
Cochran, Dr. W.N.	30 Sep 1930

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Cochran, Dr. W.N.	30 Jun 1932
Mackinnon, Dr. C.G.	01 Aug 1934
Skinner, Dr. B.W.	30 Mar 1936

(transferred to Shubenacadie Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2750)

**Queens County** part of District 2 in 1871

Holden, Rev. P.M.	13 Apr 1871
McCarthy, Rev. E.J. for Lunenburg } Butler, Rev. T.J. for Queens }	23 May 1878
Butler, Rev. T.J. for both counties	04 Jun 1883
Harlow, Chas.	20 Oct 1897 superannuated 01 Jan 1923
Brown, C.A.	18 Sep 1830

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Brown, C.A.	30 Jun 1932
Minard, L.H.	01 Aug 1936 retired ill health 01 Jul 1941
Minard, Mrs. Amy B.	01 Jul 1941

(transferred to Shubenacadie Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2570)

**Richmond County** part of District 6 in 1871

McDougall, Rev. J.	13 Apr 1871
McKenzie, Rev. M.	21 Nov 1889
Chisholm, Rev. J.C.	05 Dec 1891
Fraser, Rev. J.	08 Jul 1896
McMillan, Murdock D.	31 Dec 1908
McDonald, Ronald L.	03 Feb 1912 discharged 08 May 1922
Boudreau, Leo A.	14 Sep 1922

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Keats, Fr. Leo	30 Jun 1932
Currie, John A.	07 Feb 1933
Langley, John A.	18 Jun 1936

(transferred to Eskasoni Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2750)

**Shelburne County** part of District 1 in 1871

	Date of appointment
Harlow, John	13 Apr 1871
Wells, Geo.	14 Sep 1882
Ferguson, E.T.	26 Jun 1889
de Molitor, J.J.E.	21 Jun 1893
Irwin, R.G.	25 Feb 1903
Hipson, John	13 Dec 1905
Coutanche, Chas.	09 Sep 1916
Jackson, Frank	14 Jan 1925
Wessell, R.A.	01 Feb 1929

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Wms., Daniel	30 Jun 1932
Jackson, Frank	01 Apr 1936

(transferred to Shubenacadie Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2750)

**Victoria County** part of District 7 in 1871

McDonald, J.B.	13 Apr 1871
McGillivray, Rev. A.F.	23 May 1878
Grant, Rev. R.	25 Oct 1881
McNeil, Rev. R.	13 Apr 1893
Campbell, J.E.	01 Apr 1895
McDonald, A.J.	28 May, 1897
McLean, Alex. D.	15 Jun 1912
McIntosh, Rev. D.J.	09 Nov 1912
Campbell, J.E.	28 Jan 1914
Rankin, Rev. D.J.	20 May 1927
Campbell, Rev. S.	28 Apr 1928
Rankin, Rev. D.J.	30 Sep 1929

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

McDonald, Rev. Alex. J.	30 Jun 1932 resigned 30 Sep 1933
McKinnon, M.J.	29 Sep 1933
Rankin, Rev. D.J.	26 Oct 1933 retired 16 Dec 1942
McLean, J.A. of Eskasoni taking over	16 Dec 1942

(transferred to Eskasoni Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2750)

**Yarmouth County part of District 1 in 1871**

	Date of appointment
Harlow, John	13 Apr 1871
McDormand, R.	14 Sep 1882
Smith, G.R.	19 Jan 1888
Whalen, Wm. H.	30 Sep 1898
Babine, Chas. H.	27 Jan 1921

(office closed 18 Mar 1932)

Cann, Gordon L	30 Jun 1932
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(transferred to Shubenacadie Apr 02, 1942, PC 33/2750)

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Inspectorate NS NB PEI  
Comprises Antigonish and Guysborough, Pictou, Richmond, Inverness,  
Victoria, Eskasoni, Sydney (CB)

McNeil, Chas. J.	01 Oct 1929
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NS Superintendency (Superintendent's services to be available also for  
other work in the Maritime Provinces)

Boyd, A.J.	14 May 1907
Foster, Wm. Gore	18 Sep 1914 (leave for military service August 15 and killed in action somewhere in France November 1916)

Maxner, J.W.	01 Oct 1929
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(his jurisdiction covers Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby, Annapolis, Queens,  
Lunenburg, Kings, Hants, Halifax, Colchester, and Cumberland)

INDIAN AGENTS IN NEW BRUNSWICK**New Brunswick West**

	Date of appointment
Babin, P. (at Little Falls)	26 Apr 1870
Fisher, Wm. (Div. # 1)	13 Jan 1870
Craig, Moses (Div. # 2 Tobique)	19 Feb 1879
Farrell, Jas. (Div # 1)	25 Apr 1884
" (Div # 2)	05 Nov 1887

(divided into SW and NW by OC 29 May 1909)

**New Brunswick Southwest** (previously under NB West)

White, James	29 May 1909
Smith, N.J.	12 Feb 1912
Griffith, B.J.	25 Aug 1915
MacCutcheon, R. Lee	10 Aug 1935 died 21 Jul 1941
Whalen, E.J. (acting)	01 Oct 1941
"	Indian Agent Grade 4 04 Feb 1942

**New Brunswick Northwest** (changed to Tobique, 01 Nov 1949)  
(previously under NB West, comprising Edmunston and Tobique reserves)

Baxter, Geo.	29 May 1909
Waite, S.P.	12 Feb 1912
Woolter, N.J.	17 Dec 1915
Roberts, Chas. J.	03 Oct 1922 resigned 31 May 1928
McPhail, N.J.	30 June 1928
"	Superintendent 21 Apr 1948

**New Brunswick East** (changed to Miramachi 01 Nov 1949)

Sargeant, Moses	(no date)
Sargeant, Charles	02 Mar 1868
Carter, Wm. D.	02 Oct 1893
Irving, Robt. Arch. D.	14 Apr 1908
Hutchison, Geo. A. (temp.)	1915
Sheridan, Col. J.B.	25 Aug 1915 dismissed 09 Jun 1922
Hudson, Charles	19 Aug 1922
Hudson, T.J. (in charge)	03 Mar 1942
Hudson, Charles (resumed duties)	10 Apr 1942 died 12 Jun 1943
Hudson, T.J. (in charge)	12 Jun 1943
Fraser, A. Lee	15 Apr 1944 terminated 31 May 1947
Blakey, E.J.	02 Jun 1947
"	transferred to Regional Office 01 Mar 1954
Caissie, Vincent (clerk in charge)	01 Mar 1954
Blakey, E.J.	Superintendent 26 Apr 1954

INDIAN AGENTS IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

## Date of appointment

Stewart, T.	15 Jan 1874
Arsenault, J.O.	02 Jul 1878
McDonald, Rev. J.A. (Superintendent) }	25 Aug 1913 died 23 Feb 1936
Arsenault, J.O. (Assn't Superintendent) }	25 Aug 1913 died 04 Apr 1923
McDougall, N.A. (agent)	27 Apr 1936 retired 03 Jul 1942
Daly, James Ed.	01 Aug 1942
Daly, Leo Joseph (Supt. Lennox Island)	22 Nov 1947 retired 25 May 1949
McGuire, W.J. (in charge)	25 May 1949
Goudon, John (in charge)	11 Jun 1949
Kennedy, Geo Edwin (Acting Supt.)	12 Jul 1949
" (Superintendent)	14 Jan 1950 resigned
Herbert, J.B. (Acting Superintendent)	21 Jan 1953
Castilloux, J.C. (Act. Superintendent)	25 Jun 1953
Johnson, G.F. (in charge)	11 Aug 1953
Purser, F.W. (Superintendent)	28 Sep 1953
" (transferred to Cape Crocker 03 Jul 1956)	
MacNeil, H.S. (Superintendent)	10 Jul 1956

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SOURCE: RG10 Vol 11189-11191, 11397-11398

## APPENDIX B

### TEACHING SISTERS

#### IN THE SHUBENACADIE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

##### **January 1930 - August 1930**

Sr. Superior, St. Anita Vincent (grades 6 & 7)

Sr. Madeline Leo (grades 4 & 5)

Sr. Mary Louisita (grades 1, 2, & 3)

Sr. Mary Etienne

Sr. Jean Berchmans

Sr. Mary Brendan

Sr. M. Philomena

##### **August 1930**

Sr. Mary Henry joined staff, making 7 plus the Superior

##### **August 1931**

Sr. Mary Etienne left for St. Joseph's Convent, Halifax

Sr. Mary Beatrice joined staff

Sr. Mary Roberta joined staff

Sr. Agnes Denis joined staff (making 9 plus Superior)

##### **July 1932**

Sr. Agnes Denis sent to New York, replaced by Sr. Mary Rene

##### **August 1933**

Sr. Mary Armel replaced Sr. Madeline Leo

Sr. Joseph Beatrice replaced Sr. Mary Roberta

Sr. Margaret Patrice replaced Sr. Mary Philomena

##### **August 1934**

Sr. Claudia replaced Sister Mary Brendan

Sr. Agnes Genevieve replaced Sr. Margaret Patrice

Sr. Mary Edward replaced Sr. Mary Rene

Sr. Mary Leonard replaced Sr. Joseph Beatrice

##### **August 1935**

Sr. Anita Vincent left to stay at Motherhouse, replaced as Superior by

Sr. Mary Charles

Sr. Mary Louisita to Bermuda, replaced by Sr. Paul of the Cross

(only 2 "pioneers" left in school, Srs. Jean Berchmans and M. Henry)

##### **January 1936**

Sr. Mary Armel broke her knee, substitute Sr. Maria Adrian arrived and remained until June



**July 1936**

Sr. Mary Henry moved to school in Cranbrook, B.C.;  
 Sr. Agnes Genevieve moved to Halifax Infirmary;  
 Sr. Claudia returned to New York; replaced by  
 Sr. Francis Anthony  
 Sr. Cyprian  
 Sr. Philip  
 Sr. Mary Adrian, making ten plus the Superior

**January 1937**

Sr. Philip returned to St. Joseph's Convent (again 9 plus the Superior)

**August 1937**

Sr. Armel to the west (Cranbrook?), replaced with Sr. Clea (sewing class)

**December 1938**

Sr. Maria Adrian ill, to Infirmary, Sr. Mary Ada to substitute in class  
 Sr. Teresita to substitute as organist, remaining until July 1939

**July 1939**

Sr. Jean Berchmans left after ten years, replaced by Sr. Elizabeth Therese  
 Staff list also includes Sr. Mary Charles, Superior  
 Sr. Mary Edward  
 Sr. Francis Anthony  
 Sr. Mary Cyprian  
 Sr. Maria Beatrice  
 Sr. Mary Leonard  
 Sr. Maria Adrian  
 Sr. Mary Joan  
 Sr. Paul of the Cross  
 Sr. Mary Clea  
 Sr. Wm. Frances (11 plus the Superior)

**August 1940**

Sr. Frances Anthony left to return to St. Joseph's  
 Sr. Beatrice left for Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts  
 Sr. Mary Joan left for New York  
 New arrivals: Sr. Rose Genevieve, Sr. Margaret Patrice, Sr. John Gualbert

**April 1941**

Sr. Mary Clea sent as patient to Lourdes Sanatorium

**August 1941**

Sister Mary Charles left, replaced as Superior by Sr. Eleanor Marie  
 (Srs. Mary Cyprian, Margaret Patrice and Rose Genevieve absent from this  
 year's staff list)  
 New names on list: Srs. Julia William, Maria Rita, Mary Patricius

**August 1942**

Sr. Beatrice returned from Massachusetts

**August 1943**

Sr. Mary Edwards ill, in Infirmary, replaced by Sr. Joseph Adrian

**August 1944**

Sr. Elizabeth Therese replaced by Sr. Elizabeth James  
 Srs. Wm. Frances, M. Patricius, M. Cyprian left  
 Srs. Cecily and Elizabeth Ann arrived

**August 1945**

Sr. Elizabeth Ann replaced by Sr. M. Helene from Bermuda; but  
 Sr. Helene was recalled to Bermuda and replaced by Sr. M. Eugene

**August 1946**

Sr. Paul of the Cross transferred to Cranbrook as Superior  
 Sr. Beatrice replaced by Sr. Mary Justinian  
 Sr. Rita Carmel added to staff

**August 1947**

Sr. Rita Carmel replaced by Sr. Madeline Gertrude  
 Staff List: Sr. Mary Charles, Superior  
 Sr. M. Emilian  
 Sr. M. Eugene  
 Sr. M. Emelia  
 Sr. Julia William  
 Sr. Madeline Gertrude  
 Sr. Mary Leonard  
 Sr. M. Cecily  
 Sr. M. Justinian  
 Sr. Maria Adrian  
 Sr. Joseph Adrian  
 Sr. Charles Bonnomer

**August 1948**

Sr. Mary Leonard left, exchanged places with Sr. Francis Marian from Cranbrook

**September 1949**

Manual Training class was begun, Mr. Roderick Brown as teacher

**August 1950**

Sr. Julia William sent as patient to Lourdes Sanatorium  
 Sr. Mary Margaret to Quebec; From Quebec, Sr. Martha Mary  
 Sr. Helen Alphonsus to St. Margaret's, Dorchester, Massachusetts (she had been a domestic science teacher on the reserve and at the school); replaced by Sr. John Anthony  
 Sr. Maria Agnes arrived as teacher for the new Primary Department

**April 1951**

Sr. M. Jessica arrived to teach pottery

**August 1951**

Sr. Maria Adrian to Ladysmith, B.C., replaced by  
 Sr. Ursula from St. Paul's Convent, Herring Cove (gr 6-9 teacher)  
 Sr. Mary Clea transferred to St. Margaret's Convent, Massachusetts;  
 replaced by Sr. Maria Michael from St. Paul's, Dartmouth  
 (Sr. Cecily was grade 2-3 teacher; Sr. Superior taught grades 4-5)

**August 1952**

Sr. Paul of the Cross returned from Cranbrook as new Superior

Other staff members:

Sr. Maria Ursula  
 Sr. Mary Emilian  
 Sr. Mary Carmen  
 Sr. Maria Michael  
 Sr. Mary Cecily  
 Sr. Mary Justinian  
 Sr. Mary Daniel  
 Sr. Joseph Adrian  
 Sr. Mary Ernest  
 Sr. Charles Bonnomer  
 Sr. John Margaret

**August 1953**

Sr. Paul of the Cross transferred to Mt. St. Vincent Academy, replaced by  
 Sr. Maria Gervase, who had just finished a term at the Convent at Micmac.  
 Sr. Bernadette Marie replaced Sr. Maria Michael as sewing teacher.  
 Sr. Mary Raymond replaced Sr. Joseph Adrian as disciplinarian of the boys.  
 Sr. M. Carmen and C. Bonnomer not on staff list;  
 Sr. Elizabeth Therese returned; had been on staff list 1939-1944

**August 1954**

Sr. Bernadette Marie to Cranbrook, replaced by Sr. Catherine Mary  
 Sr. M. Carmen returned  
 Sr. Gertrude Vincent added to staff  
 Srs. John Margaret and Mary Emilian not on staff list

**August 1955**

Sister Mary Cecily sent to Medford  
 Sr. Mary Ernest to Amherst  
 Sr. Gertrude Vincent to Amherst as Commercial teacher  
 Sr. Justinian to orphanage; Sr. Aloyse Marie arrived from St. Joseph's  
 Staff list: Sr. Maria Gervase, Superior  
 Sr. Ursula  
 Sr. Carmen  
 Sr. Mary Daniel  
 Sr. M. Raymond  
 Sr. Catherine Mary  
 Sr. Gilberta  
 Sr. Charles Bonnomer  
 Sr. Marion Clare  
 Sr. Frances Damien  
 Sr. Joseph Celeste  
 Sr. Aloyse Marie

**1956**

Sr. Clarus arrived from Lourdes early January for two months, and from Holy Week to June 1, to replace Sr. Superior, Maria Gervase, who was ill. Sr. Gervase to St. Brigid's Home in Quebec, replaced as Superior by Sr. M. Cecily (returned from Medford). Other staff members:

Sr. Maria Ursula

Sr. M. Carmen

Sr. M. Daniel

Sr. M. Raymond

Sr. M. Gilberta

Sr. M. Clarus

Sr. Charles Bonnomer (cook?)

Sr. Marion Clare

Sr. Francis Damien

Sr. Joseph Celeste

Sr. Maria Loretta

Fr. Patrick J. Collins OMI arrived in August as Principal, replacing Msg Mackey, sent to Halifax Infirmary

Sr. Iraneus arrived in October to take over nurse's duties

**1957**

May 10 - death of Msg. Mackey

August - Sr. Joseph Mildred replaced Sr. M. Cecily as Superior

Sr. Marie de Paul replaced Sr. Charles Bonnomer

Two changes in teachers: Srs. Mary Euphemia and Gertrude Vincent to replace Srs. Maria Ursula and Frances Damien

Sr. John Anthony arrived as assistant to Sr. Mary Raymond

Sr. Mary Devota arrived as nurse

A new classroom was opened but was staffed by Mr. Hugh MacLean

Grades 5-8 girls went to home economics classes at Micmac;

boys were taught manual training by Mr. Brown.

**House List 1957-58**

Sr. Joseph Mildred (Superior)

Sr. Mary Carmen (laundry)

Sr. Marie de Paul (kitchen)

Sr. Mary Raymond (boys)

Sr. M. Euphemia (class)

Sr. M. Gilberta (girls)

Sr. John Anthony (boys)

Sr. Gertrude Vincent (class)

Sr. Joseph Celeste (class)

Sr. Maria Loretta (sewing)

Sr. M. Devota (nurse - but only for a few weeks)

**1958**

Sr. Superior, Joseph Mildred left after Easter for Boston, an operation, and a new mission in New York

Sr. Agnes Patricia appointed as Acting Superior

Brother arrived in October to take over all responsibilities on boys' side

Government now paying women (Indian preferably) to help with laundry, kitchen, and children's mending

**House List 1958-59**

Sr. M. Clarita (Superior)  
 Sr. Maria Ursula (nurse, etc.)  
 Sr. M. Carmen (laundry)  
 Sr. Marie de Paul (kitchen)  
 Sr. M. Raymond (sewing)  
 Sr. M. Euphemia (class) sent in Oct. to substitute in Port Hawkesbury  
 Sr. M. Gilberta (girls)  
 Sr. John Anthony (kitchen)  
 Sr. Gertrude Vincent (class)  
 Sr. Joseph Celeste (class)  
 During Sr. Euphemia's absence, place filled by Mrs. MacPhee, Indian, until  
 November when she moved, then by Mrs. MacDonald, former pupil

**August 1959**

Sr. M. Clarita (Superior)  
 Sr. Maria Ursula  
 Sr. M. Carmen  
 Sr. Marie de Paul  
 Sr. Mary Euphemia  
 Sr. M. Gilberta  
 Sr. Gertrude Vincent  
 Sr. Joseph Celeste  
 Sr. Christina Joseph  
 plus Indian women hired for kitchen and laundry  
 Reading consultant, Miss Rose Collins (?) joined school  
 Boys under care of Br. John MacDonald with occasional help from  
 Mrs. Peter Robinson, the seamstress

**House List 1960-61**

Director or Principal - Rev. P.J. Collins  
 Sr. M. Clarita (Superior) taught girls, grades 6, 7, 9  
 Sr. Maria Ursula - children's refectory and laundry  
 Sr. M. Carmen - sewing - suite- sacristy - dining room  
 Sr. M. Euphemia - taught grades 4-5, Sunday school, 25 children  
 Sr. M. Gilberta - mistress of girls - choir  
 Sr. Gertrude Vincent - taught grades 2-3  
 Sr. Angus Marie - housekeeper and sewing  
 Sr. Agnes Margaret - taught grades P-1, Sunday School, 25 children  
 Sr. Christina Joseph - assistant housekeeper

**House List 1961-62**

Sr. Mary Aloysia (Superior)  
 Sr. Mary Carmen  
 Sr. Agnes Louise  
 Sr. Hilarian  
 Sr. M. Gilberta  
 Sr. Regina Therese  
 Sr. Angus Marie  
 Sr. Agnes Margaret

(No list, or mention of changes for 1962-63)

#### **House List 1963-64**

Sr. M. Aloysia (Superior, grades 2-3)  
 Sr. Agnes Margaret - vicar, grades P-1, Sunday School  
 Sr. M. Hilarion - laundry, children's refectory  
 Sr. M. Gilberta - disciplinarian of girls  
 Sr. Regina Therese - bursar - senior girls' head teacher  
 Sr. Angus Marie - housekeeper  
 Sr. Helen Patrick - Assistant disciplinarian  
 Sr. Joseph Marian - Grades 4, 5, Sunday School

#### **House List 1964-65**

Sr. Genevieve Marie (Superior, grades 2-3)  
 Sr. Agnes Margaret - vicar, grades P-1, Sunday School  
 Sr. Charles Marie - sec., gr. 6-7 head teacher (niece of Sr. Mary Charles)  
 Sr. M. Hilarion - laundry, children's refectory, boys' infirmarian  
 Sr. M. Gilberta - supervisor of girls - choir  
 Sr. Helen Patrick - Assistant disciplinarian  
 Sr. Joseph Marian - local bursar, grades 4, 5, Sunday School  
 Sr. Pauline Therese - housekeeper

#### **August 1965**

"glad news" no staff changes for 1965-66

#### **March 1966**

Sr. Agnes Margaret told to resign her position, transferred to Terrence Bay

#### **1966 - 1967**

New principal - Fr. M.D. Kearney, O.M.I. (Fr. Collins to residential school at Kuper Island, B.C.)  
 Sr. M. Elvira from Micmac replaced Sr. Agnes Margaret  
 Patricia Humes added to staff as principal's secretary, organized Cubs.  
 November - Matilda Chaisson, assistant housekeeper, resigned  
 May - Sr. Helen Patrick left for orphanage  
 June "obediencies" -  
 Sr. Genevieve Marie - to Terrence Bay  
 Sr. Joseph Marion - to Terrence Bay  
 Sr. M. Hilarion - to St. Stephen's, Halifax  
 Sr. M. Elvira - to Micmac convent  
 Sr. Charles Marie - to Arvida, Quebec  
 Sr. M. Gilberta - to Academy of the Assumption, Wellesley, Massachusetts  
 Sr. Pauline Therese - to Halifax Infirmary

June 20th - departure of the children

June 24th - departure of the Sisters

## NOTE ON SOURCES

The major primary sources used in this thesis (the Indian Affairs School Files of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, and the Annals of the Sisters of Charity) are both limited because much information is missing. The Ben Christmas papers, useful in particular for the chapter on alternative mediation and for exposing the native view of the Indian agent, are incomplete as well, so that some items of correspondence lack replies, making it difficult to follow matters to completion.

The Indian Affairs files have many gaps, most notably after the 1940s. This means the material used to analyse the role of the principals of the school as "brokerage" relies most heavily on the 1930s and 1940s, thus highlighting the tenure of Fr. J. Mackey and not taking sufficient account of the changes in the school which came with other principals and with the changing educational attitudes of the 1960s. It should be noted, however, that some Indian Affairs material has been kept private deliberately, as indicated in the notation found on the microfilms used, explaining that it was necessary to exclude some material to enable the files to be made available to researchers (Cabinet Directive No. 46 of 7 June 1973).

The lack of information from Indian Affairs files on the school's later years has been partially amended by the use of the Annals of the Sisters of Charity, which trace in journal form the years of the school's operation. The Annals make clear the changing role of the teachers and the atmosphere in the school during the 1960s. The Annals unfortunately have other gaps. For some years there are almost daily, or weekly, entries; for others, a whole year has been summarized briefly. Although the Annals are important as the only source of "voice" for the Sisters, the entries are written anonymously, making it necessary to view the Sisters collectively. Also, the entries are not necessarily an exact depiction of the school as the recording Sister saw it, for it can be surmised that the Annals were not a private diary and that entries were probably open to other Sisters, including the Sister Superior in the school and the Mother Superior in the Motherhouse, and perhaps even to the school principal. The writers, therefore, may have left some views of the school unwritten. There is the added difficulty that the entire Annals before 1950 was apparently rewritten in that year (into a large hard-covered book), allowing the possibility of alteration. Entries after that year, however, are original and written in varying hands.

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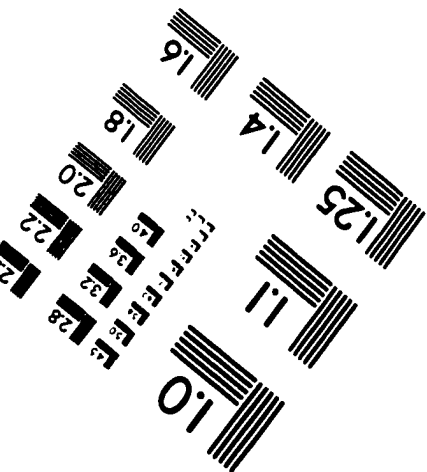
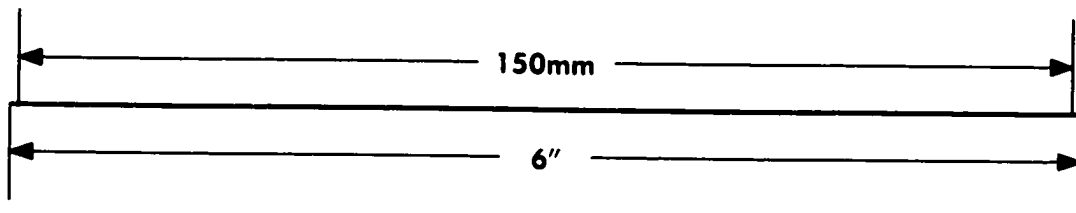
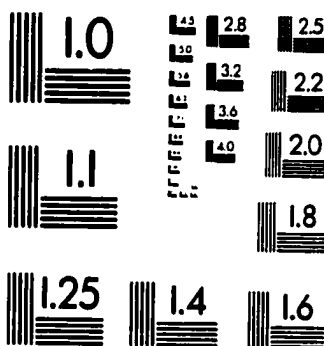
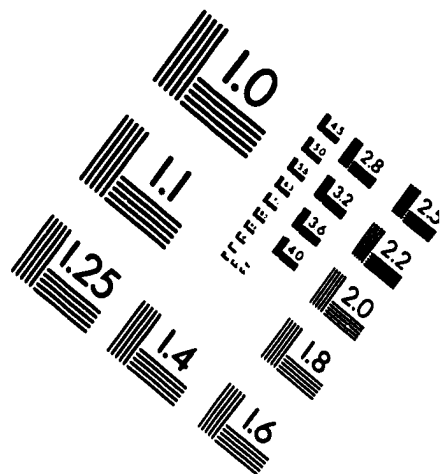
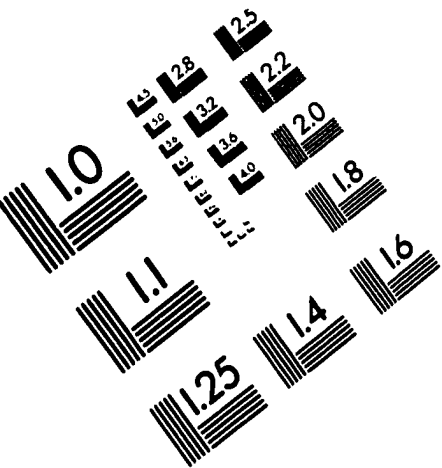
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