

A Social and Cultural Study of Split Lake,
Manitoba, with Special Emphasis on Education

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Presented to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Donald Serge Tessier

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DONALD SERGE TESSIER

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ABSTRACT

It is the intention of this thesis to examine a system of education which does not achieve the expectations of either its students, or the educators who are in direct contact with these students. The specific reference area for this study is the community of Split Lake, Manitoba. An examination of the historical and cultural influences of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Department of Indian Affairs, the Medical Services Branch and the Anglican Church are also included. The approach is generally chronological.

A discussion of the Swampy Cree's religious beliefs and social history before White contact is first presented. The emphasis of the narrative shifts to the impact and influence of the four major social institutions on the community. An examination of the reserve, as it exists today, is also included, to outline and assess the problems facing the educators in Split Lake. A study of the hopes and aspirations of the residents of Split Lake is also undertaken. Projection and analysis is made as to the role of education in resolving these problems.

There are many problems facing Split Lake, but it is claimed in this thesis that many can be resolved through an improved and more effective system of education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express thanks to Professor Neil McDonald, chairman of the committee. I would also like to acknowledge the other committee members, Dr. John Seymour, and particular thanks to Dr. Keith Wilson, whose advice and assistance in the preparation of this thesis was truly appreciated.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Topic

A Social and Cultural Study of Split Lake, Manitoba, with Special Emphasis on Education.

The Problem

Northern communities such as Split Lake are faced with difficulties arising from their isolated location, lack of natural resources, and from cultural backgrounds and attitudes held by and about their Indian inhabitants. In most northern communities, only limited types and amounts of secondary industry are viable, so meagre earnings are eked out of depletable resources. As a result of physical location, the necessities of life are more expensive than they would be in any other location. Despite these problems, the elders of Split Lake believe that their children can improve their well-being if they receive greater educational opportunity.¹ Providing greater equality of opportunity in the education field is, however, a very difficult task. It is particularly challenging in northern Indian settlements, where both the availability and the relevancy of education are being questioned. The desires of the Indians themselves regarding education have been clearly stated by the National Indian Brotherhood as follows:

Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people. We want education to give...a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education:

..... as a preparation for total living,

..... as a means of free choice of where to live and work,

..... as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and educational advancement.

We do not regard the educational process as an 'either-or' operation. We must have the freedom to choose among many options and alternatives.²

These educational objectives are very closely related to the desires of most educators, but such an education, unfortunately, has not been provided in Split Lake., or in northern Indian communities generally.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to analyze a system of education which does not achieve the expectations of either its students, parents or the teachers who are in direct contact with these students. The specific reference area for this study is the community of Split Lake.

This study will be a historical account of the influence of religious, political, commercial, and social factors on the educational development of the Split Lake reserve where, in the past 150 years, education has been controlled successively by the Indian adults, missionaries, and the Department of Indian Affairs.

Importance of the Study

Many university instructors and classroom teachers do not receive exposure to, and therefore are not always aware of, the situations and circumstances that face a northern educator. They are seldom aware of the cultural processes of the people who live in these communities. Hopefully, by reflecting on the problem identified in this study, the teacher of the northern sector will gain some insight into the conditions which

are about to confront him. Instructors who will never be exposed to such circumstances should be able to apply the insights gleaned from this study to their own classroom situations.

Another aim and value of this study is to analyze and assess the importance of the roles played by the Church, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the Medical Services Branch in the development of the Split Lake community, particularly as they relate directly and indirectly to education.

Procedure

Chapter I--an introduction to the thesis is provided in this chapter. Consideration is separately given to the outline of contents, purpose, importance, methodology, sources, limitations, and definitions of terms.

Chapter II--a review of related available literature is included.

Chapter III--an anthropological analysis and social history of the Woodlands Indians, primarily the Swampy Cree, and their settlement patterns, are provided. This profile will consider the necessary background against which the community's and the people's ancestry may be viewed from pre-European contact up to the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Chapter IV--an overview is provided of the political, economic, and social structures of Split Lake. This section includes a study of various institutions--the Anglican Church, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Department of Indian Affairs, the Medical Branch, and the school. An assessment is made of their importance to the development of Split Lake.

Chapter V--Split Lake today. The physical nature of the reserve is described, including a housing comparison. The Indian Act and the local government are treated in this chapter. Information obtained from inter-

views with natives is also presented.

Chapter VI--assessment of the problems facing the educational institution in Split Lake today.

Chapter VII--the major physical, economic, social and educational concerns facing the community of Split Lake are analyzed.

Chapter VIII--this final section of the thesis again points to the hopes and aspirations of the residents. Projection and analysis are made as to the role of education in resolving these problems.

Appendix A--Anglican Church Correspondence.

Appendix B--Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Correspondence.

Appendix C--Hudson's Bay Company Correspondence.

Appendix D--Summary of the Indian Position on Education, as presented by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood.

Appendix E--The Churchill River Diversion Project. A brief summary of a government newsletter is presented.

Appendix F--Five Year Plan for Education in Split Lake.

Appendix G--Source Newspaper Articles.

Appendix H--Teacher Interviews--Transcript.

Appendix I--Resident Interviews--Transcript.

Appendix J--Treaty #5 and Adhesions.

Methodology and Sources

The primary source material for this study was found in: the Manitoba Provincial Archives; the Public Archives of Canada; the Hudson's Bay Company Archives; those of the Anglican Church Diocese in Kenora; the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Thompson; the Medical Branch, Thompson; and the

Split Lake community members and institutions. Other primary material was gathered by personal interviews with hunters, fishermen, tradesmen, and teachers who live in the community.

Secondary sources have also been consulted. Subject books include those on the Swampy Cree, education of minorities, ethnicity, and northern education. Published studies and journal articles have also been consulted.

Limitations

This study is limited to a brief historical and cultural study of Split Lake. No attempt is made to provide a detailed analysis of all the contributions of the external forces on the community over approximately two hundred years.

Other limitations result mainly from the lack of primary and secondary resource material. In addition, interviews with elders of the Split Lake Band had to be conducted through an interpreter because they could converse fluently only in Cree whereas the author speaks only English. This indirect method of communication undoubtedly detracts to a degree from the accuracy of the information gathered in this survey.

Definition of Terms

Some specialized terms will be used in the study and it was therefore decided to define the main ones at this point.

Annuity--The term refers to a sum of money guaranteed payable annually over a set period of time, or for the life of the annuitant.³

Dry Reserve--A reserve is designated dry when the decision has been reached by the Chief and Council to keep it free of alcoholic intoxicants.

Enfranchise--This term denotes "...to set free (as from slavery, prison, or obligation); 2: to endow with a franchise: admit to the pri-

vileges of a freeman or citizen; 3: to admit (a town or city) to political privileges: give political rights to (a town or city)...."⁵

Enfranchisement--This term implies "...the releasing from slavery or custody; b: admission to the freedom of a corporation or body politic."⁶

Indian Act--The standard regulations and privileges governing the Indians of Canada are stipulated by the Government of Canada in the Indian Act.

Band--This term denotes "...a body of Indians, a: for whose use and benefit in common, lands, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, have been set apart before, on or after the 4th day of September 1951; b: for whose use and benefit in common, moneys are held by Her Majesty; or c: declared by the Governor in Council to be band for the purposes of this Act..."⁷

Rehabilitation Phase--A term coined by L. Mason to describe the efforts of the Europeans to assist the now culturally dependent Indians.⁸

Footnotes

¹See the transcripts of interviews, Appendix I.

²National Indian Brotherhood, Indian Control of Indian Education (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1972), p. 3.

³Paraphrased from Life Insurance Law and Terms, CLU Course Material, Life Underwriter's Association of Canada, 1976.

⁴Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, 1967.

⁵Ibid., p. 275.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Indian Act, R.S., c. 149, s. 1, p. 4249.

⁸Mason, Leonard, The Swampy Cree: A Study in Acculturation (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller, 1967), p. 8.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Anthropology

There are a number of studies available dealing with the anthropological background of the Swampy Cree. One valuable study consulted was Robert Surtees'. The Original People, which deals specifically with the arrival of Europeans in North America and the effect of them on the life-style of the Indians, both directly and indirectly. He identifies and discusses three main catalysts for change, namely, the introduction of horses, firearms, and the establishment of the fur trade.¹ This work was useful in the preparation of Chapter III.

Diamond Jenness, author of The Indians of Canada, overviews the various Indian tribes of Canada. This work is rather sketchy and dated, but an attempt was made to provide a degree of detail.²

Leonard Mason, author of The Swampy Cree: A Study in Acculturation, traces the social and cultural history of the Swampy Cree. His vivid descriptions of these unique people add life to his study. He traces their development from pre-European contact to the mid-twentieth century. This book contains the most accurate source material available and is invaluable to anyone conducting an investigation into the Swampy Cree Nations.³ Mason's work formed the model for the third chapter of this thesis.

Another work, by Palmer Patterson, The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500, outlines many of the cultural changes undergone by the Indians

since 1500. According to the author, politics have been a major factor in these cultural shifts. He traces attempts to assimilate the Indian into Euro-Canadian culture. The plight of the Indian people is compared to that of other aboriginal groups around the world. The author outlines the move of the Indian from a position of autonomy in 1500 to one of cultural and economic subservience today. It is an extremely well-documented account of the Indian's history in Canada.⁴

Arthur Ray provides a thorough, yet concise, account of the Cree and Assiniboiné Indians who lived in the area lying southwest of the Hudson Bay. He traces the migration of these Indians and their life-styles from 1660 to 1870. Numerous maps and diagrams are included, emphasizing points and demonstrating adaptations made by these natives. He elaborates on such points as tribal distribution, food sources, and the major trading areas. These maps greatly aid the reader's comprehension of this period in history. It is a very helpful and well-researched book.⁵

Jean Trudeau, in his dissertation, Culture Change Among the Swampy Cree Indians of Winisk, Ontario, provides an extremely detailed social and cultural study of a tribe of Swampy Cree who live near the southwest coast of Hudson Bay. Trudeau traces the changes in life-style from the Minimal Contact Phase, through the Sustained Contact Phase, to the Maximum Contact Phase. This well-written work should be used as a standard source in the study of cultural adaptations, and was found indispensable in the third chapter of this study.⁶

The writer found George Quimby's work a very valuable study. This collection of essays, entitled, Indian Culture and European Trade Goods, traces the history of the Indians of the Great Lakes region. The major

topic of the book is the influence which the French had upon the Indians of this area.⁷

History of Social Institutions

An important journal concerned with the history of the Hudson Bay Company is The Beaver. This monthly publication is considered the base resource for any study of the Hudson Bay Lowlands area. It is generally quite helpful, but must not be assumed to be totally accurate. In my research, I have found discrepancies and one or two errors; therefore, this source must be used judiciously.⁸

E. E. Rich, in The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857, traces the development of the fur trade in Canada from Cartier until 1857. Well-written, factual and well-organized, it traces, in chronological order, the growth of the fur trade from the mouth of the St. Lawrence north to the Hudson Bay, and west to the Rockies and the Pacific. The explorers and their various explorations are discussed in detail.⁹

Contemporary Issues

The Indian: Assimilation, Integration, or Separation? by R. Bowles, J. Hanley, B. Hodgins, and G. Rawlyk, is an anthology of articles, opinions, and government documents. The subject of this anthology is the life-style and social position of the Indian in Canada today.¹⁰

Another useful anthology is entitled Conflicts of Culture: Problems of Developmental Change Among the Cree, edited by Norman Chance. This anthology comprises seven separate papers. The Indian subjects are the Cree of northern Ontario and Quebec. The subject matter involves assimilation, education presently being received, and occupations presently held

by Indian populations in the White culture.¹¹

Harold Cardinal's book, The Unjust Society, The Tragedy of Canada's Indians, provides a unique approach to contemporary issues. Cardinal does not appear concerned with what the Indian could do about his lot. Instead, he laments that the Indian has been oppressed by government bureaucrats and the White Man in general. He feels a strong disregard for human rights has taken place in the past, is happening in the present, and will take place in the future. His primary concern, however, appears to be what has happened in the past. The book does not prove extremely helpful for anyone interested in obtaining factual information, but does provide one Indian's point of view.¹²

A somewhat dated but relevant doctoral dissertation written by H. Hoffmann in 1957, Assessment of Cultural Homogeneity Among the James Bay Cree, deals with the Cree Indians around James Bay. Hoffmann spent a summer gathering data at several settlements in the James Bay area, and in one of these communities he was able to make a detailed study of both the Cree and Eskimo cultures. The major value of his study is the cultural data he amassed on emotional reactions, as they relate to cultural behavior. Thematic Apperception Test plates (TAT), developed for use with American Indians, were used. His use of personal interviews is particularly effective.¹³

An interesting book by Robert Jamieson, A Review of Indian Education in North America, is a fairly recently published account of some of the successes and failures of various educational programs that have been implemented in the United States and Canada. These programs are analyzed at both the primary and secondary school levels.¹⁴

A most valuable publication, cited by the writer quite extensively throughout this thesis, is Wahbung. Written and published by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, it is a comprehensive statement on the mistreatment of the Manitoba Indians, presented from the viewpoint of this Indian organization. This work is well-researched and extremely easy to read. It covers topics which include treaties, the Indian Act, culture, housing, education, social development, and reserve government.¹⁵

Margaret Mead deals specifically with culture change caused by increasing contact with a dominant society in her book, Culture and Commitment. The author discusses three stages of development in the advancement of a culture: Pre-figurative, Post-Figurative, and Configurative. Although the concepts are interesting, they are rather terse and vague. It is extremely difficult to formulate a general description of the learning process based upon studies conducted on only a few aboriginal tribes. Because of these forced generalizations, this book was not found to be as useful as it might have been.¹⁶

A study undertaken by Underwood, McLennan and Associates Ltd., entitled Community Study of Split Lake Indian Reserve, was conducted in 1966. It provides a very general and somewhat superficial view of the reserve, and therefore was only of limited use for this study.¹⁷

Another source concerning contemporary issues is William Wuttunee's book, Ruffled Feathers (1971). Wuttunee is a Canadian lawyer, and this book presents his views on the integration of the Indian into Canadian society. He has been criticized by many Indian groups in Canada. He has also been banned from many Canadian reserves, including the one on which he was raised. Wuttunee puts forward some interesting insights into the problems facing the

Indian today. His viewpoint could best be summarized by stating that the Indian must assume more control over his own destiny. If this is to be accomplished, he must also assume greater responsibility for his leaders' actions.¹⁸

Henry Zentner's book, The Indian Identity Crisis, contains essays on contemporary Indian issues. One of the basic concepts common to all of the essays is the assimilation process, and how it is affecting today's Indian. Except for the introduction, this book is informative and easy reading.¹⁹

Miscellaneous

Glazer and Moynihan compiled an excellent, scholarly reference anthology of several essays entitled Ethnicity: Theory and Experience (1975). This book is one of the best research pieces available for the study of the mechanisms of cultural adaptation, progress and change in a multi-ethnic situation.²⁰

Footnotes

¹Surtees, Robert J., The Original People (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1971).

²Jenness, Diamond, The Indians of Canada (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955).

³Mason, Leonard, The Swampy Cree: A Study in Acculturation (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller, 1967).

⁴Patterson, Palmer E., The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500 (Toronto: Collier MacMillan Canada Limited, 1972).

⁵Ray, Arthur J., Indians of the Fur Trade: their role as trappers, hunters, and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

⁶Trudeau, Jean, Culture Change Among the Swampy Cree Indians of Winisk, Ontario (Ph.D. Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1966).

⁷Quimby, George Irving, Indian Culture and European Trade Goods (St. Paul: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

⁸The Beaver. Winnipeg: The Hudson Bay Company, 1920 - . Quarterly.

⁹Rich, E. E., The Fur Trade and The Northwest to 1857 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967).

¹⁰Bowles, R.; Hanley, J.; Hodgins, B.; Rawlyk, G., (eds.) The Indian: Assimilation, Integration, or Separation? (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada Limited, 1972).

¹¹Chance, Norman (ed.), Conflicts of Culture: Problems of Developmental Change Among the Cree (Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, 1968).

¹²Cardinal, Harold, The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians (Edmonton: M. C. Hurtig Limited, 1969).

¹³Hoffmann, Hans, Assessment of Cultural Homogeneity Among the James Bay Cree (New Haven: Yale University, 1957).

¹⁴Jamieson, Robert. A Review of Indian Education in North America.

¹⁵Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, Wahbung (Winnipeg: Manitoba Indian Brotherhood Inc., 1971).

¹⁶Mead, Margaret, Culture and Commitment (New York: Natural History Press: Doubleday and Company, 1970).

¹⁷Community Study of Split Lake Indian Reserve (Winnipeg: Underwood, McLennan and Associates, Ltd., 1966).

¹⁸Wuttunee, William I. C., Ruffled Feathers (Calgary: Bell Books, 1971).

¹⁹Zentner, Henry, The Indian Identity Crisis (Calgary: Strayer Publications Limited, 1973).

²⁰Glazer, N., and D. Moynihan (eds.), Ethnicity: Theory and Experience (London: Harvard University Press, 1975).

CHAPTER III
ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS
OF THE SWAMPY CREE

It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a brief cultural study of the Swampy Cree Indians. It is felt that this study will help provide insight into many of the present day problems which face these people and their attitudes towards them. The best model of the cultural development is developed by Leonard Mason and it has been used in this chapter.

There have been four major divisions in the cultural evolution of the present day residents of Split Lake. The first period, or pre-contact phase, was characterized by migration and subsistence. The fur trade with the Europeans was the catalyst for the next phase, that of intermittent contact. A great economic boom was experienced by both races during the period. The numbers of fur-bearing animals began, however, to decrease rapidly during the next phase, that of sustained contact. This period was comparable to a depression. The fourth has been the rehabilitation process (according to Mason) instigated by the White Man. This phase spawned the existence of such measures as the treaty and reserve system.

Pre-Contact

Religious Beliefs

The indigenous religion of the Swampy Cree can be divided into three main categories: theistic beliefs, shamanistic practices, and hunting observances. These beliefs and attitudes formed an integral part of

Swampy Cree life for centuries, if not millennia. Today, most Swampy Cree formally adhere to the Christian religion, but many of their present social and cultural attitudes stem from these almost forgotten first beliefs.

The theistic believers worshipped a supreme being, Man'to or Kice Man. He was considered master of all life and owner of all things. Surprisingly enough, however, research has shown that there were no elaborate rituals to praise him. He was a totally benevolent god; a trait not found in most religious deities. He would not harm the Indian, and therefore there was no need for such rituals. He was considered an excellent intermediary when prayer to lesser beings had been fruitless. This god has been equated with the sun by some authorities, but this theory has not been substantiated.

With kitchi manitu the zenith, the being in the nadir position was matci manitu. His evil brought all forms of ill fortune to the Cree. Elaborate sacrifices were made at different times of the year to appease him. These were closely related to the functions of daily or seasonal life.

The beliefs of the Swampy Cree were not restricted to these opposite extremes. One of the major malevolent gods was the much feared witiko, best described as "anthropomorphic spirits which fly through the night, breathing flame, in an eternal search of victims to satisfy a craving for human flesh."¹ The need for this god stems from the fact that cannibalism was not unheard of amongst the Cree during the long, cold winters. Those who succumbed to this practice were believed to take on witiko personalities, and would be killed on sight if it was believed they might regain their craving for human flesh.

The Cree version of the 'grim reaper' was pahkuk, the angel of

death. Another night-winged creature, he was warded against by small hand-fashioned effigy dolls which the Indians carried around with them. According to Mason, the Indians believed that they would be able to see the spirits of deceased Indians dancing in the night. It was also common practice to bury many of a man's possessions with him. Their belief also included a land of plenty if the man's life had been just, but, had he done evil, he was sentenced to a life of torment.

Another group of spirits had to be appeased and their benediction sought whenever the Indian was to undertake a journey. These were the manitu-wuk, who were primarily in charge of the elements of water (in all forms found on earth) and the air.

The Swampy Cree also enacted many ceremonies throughout the year. Mason states that no one has been able to tell if these ceremonies were truly celebrations, or if they did indeed have a very strong religious basis.²

Shamanistic rituals among the Swampy Cree were common. The most common purpose was preventative medicine. A curse could, however, be evoked. There was a degree of fear between the Shamans and the Indians themselves, which is understandable when one considers the power which the Shamans held over the natives.

Beliefs held by the Swampy Cree concerning hunting observances were based on the fact that animals were endowed with supernatural spirits. Those animals responsible for the Indians' existence, food, and clothing were the major subjects of many of the myths of the time. They spoke, according to the myths, quite frequently with their friends, the Cree. Further, these creatures did not appreciate being spoken about, and therefore, these stories could only be told during the winter months, late at night, when their

spirits were asleep and could not hear.³

Life-Style

The physical environment primarily dictated the way of life of the Swampy Cree, especially in pre-contact times. The area in which they lived was not suited to agriculture, and therefore the Cree had to rely on hunting, trapping, and gathering for a livelihood. They found it most effective to live in small groups dispersed over large areas. In the winter, these small tribal groups separated into family units in an attempt to ensure adequate game for all to hunt. Long, hard travel to inspect the traps and to trail the elusive game was the rule during this season. Most winter travel was by snowshoe, which they had devised for traversing the nearly impossible terrain.

...The early use by the Cree of dog-teams for pulling sleds is problematical...Eskimo dogs in the Arctic are hitched fanwise by single traces to a sled, while south of that area, throughout the northern Indian country, dogs are hitched in tandem. Wherever dog-teams are reported among northern Indians, commands to the team are usually in French, even to this day....[P]erhaps the French traders of the eighteenth century...introduced the tandem dog-teams to the Indians who previously had by themselves drawn their light sleds over the snow.⁴

Upon reaching a good hunting ground, a winter camp of caribou skin teepees was established near a source of water. At these winter camps, the mainstay of the Cree diet was flesh. Their habit of gorging themselves when food was plentiful during the winter, and then nearly starving when food was scarce, was well known. The extremely long winters and lack of agriculture prevented them from adding a significant amount of vegetable food to their diets.

Mason also explains how meat was primarily prepared in the fire by boiling. Receptacles made of birch bark, called nockins, were used to hold

the water and meat. The boiling process was hastened by the introduction of heated stones to these receptacles. The broth formed in this manner was the only beverage used by the Indians, and this greasy substance was referred to as sagamite. If the meat was tender, they occasionally roasted it, using a spit over the fire. This method was used primarily with such animals as dog, beaver, and bear.

In the spring, all tribe members assembled near a waterway to establish a summer camp. Such locations provided water for day to day life, transportation, and the mainstay of the summer diet, fish. Birch bark was used to build wigwams, and to construct the canoes which carried them over long distances. During spring and summer, the Swampy Cree used snares and barriers to trap single larger animals so that they then could be killed by use of arrows. The purpose of the barriers was to channel the animals to the area where the Indians lay in wait (Skinner, 1911). They were extremely skilled in this method of hunting. The major killing device used in this process was the arrow, whose point had been hardened in the fire. The spears that they used in hunting larger game often had points of stone or sharpened bone.

...But their weapons and implements were contrived of wood, bone and stone, because, like all other Canadian Indians, these pre-historic people were in the stone age until the white man introduced metal articles among them....⁵

Various methods were used to catch fish, depending on the time of the year. During the summer, the barricade system was used to trap the fish inside a small space where they could be speared. These spears were described as being:

...of a wooden foreshaft to which were fastened two barbed harpoon-like blades of bone at angles to each other, fastened to a long handle. The blades were driven into the fish and the backward

pointing barb prevented its escape. Such spears are still used, but the bone blades have been supplanted by iron....⁶

Two methods were used in winter. One ingenious system comprised two holes in the ice and a net. The other was more normal ice fishing, using lines on which they tied a small piece of bone. Thus they obtained fish to supplement their food supply.

Although known to the Cree, the practice of preserving meat by smoking or drying was not extensively used. The Indians appeared to lack the foresight to prepare for times of famine which were almost certain to follow.⁷ Because of this lack of planning, the Indians would, at times, be reduced to drinking a broth made from bark and moss. In certain extreme cases, they would even resort to cannibalism.⁸

Prior to the intrusion of the White Man, all the animal hides were put to good use. One of the major uses was clothing. The typical clothing, depending on the time of year, amounted to a breech cloth, thongs, moccasins, leggings and ornate belts.

...According to information gathered...leather and fur clothing was used extensively, by both sexes...the styles of clothing...were remarkably uniform...men's clothing in winter consisted of...shirt of beaver...with the fur turned in...leggings...made of beaver, fisher, or of the skin of the legs of the caribou....[H]ooded coats of caribou skin...were also worn in winter....These...were put on over the head, in contradistinction to the...women['s] which were put on coatwise and laced up in the front....During the summer, trousers took the place of leggings....⁹

The Cree used grease from animals in their hair. Red ochre was used to treat hair and to paint their faces with characteristic tribal lines.

Due to the nomadic nature of their life, eating was not done at any formal time, but whenever food was prepared. All forms of eating utensils, such as pots, were made of bone and wood. Spoons or forks were fashioned by the Indians, but were not used in day to day eating.

Other important aspects of Cree life-style in the pre-contact period are language, kinship groups, and child rearing practices.

The Cree language, unlike the languages of western Europe, does not have one dialect which is considered the standard. A few shared features of speech are the only common bond between the various Cree dialects. Swampy Cree, which forms the so-called *oo* dialect, is estimated to be used by 24,000 people at the present time.¹⁰

Before contact with the White race, the family was the only really functioning economic and political unit amongst the Swampy Cree.¹¹ Besides a few families banding together, there were no major hunting parties. The Band itself was knit together very loosely, mostly by a feeling of identification, and even the chiefs had no real power.

At the age of five, there was a public separation of the children by gender. Researchers have not drawn definite conclusions as to the purpose of this move, but at least one, Honigman, states that the separation did not last for very long.¹²

Special puberty rites were undertaken by both the males and females. They removed themselves from the rest of the tribe, and for a time would live either in separate tents, enclosures, or on a stage erected high off the ground. These were set up quite a distance from the rest of the settlement. Here the young men and women awaited a sign in their dreams which would dictate their animal guardian or helpful spirit for the rest of their lives. In the case of a hunter, it would be this animal that would tell him where to set his traps, and the best time to leave on his hunting expeditions. The young incumbent medicine men would utilize this spirit to be told of the secrets of the herbs and roots useful in aiding the others of the settlement.¹³

Another interesting facet of life-style and belief is that formal courtship did not exist. First marriages were parentally arranged. Gifts were brought by the girl's parents to the man chosen. There were no formal marriage ceremonies as such.

Divorce was very simple, in comparison to today's standards. All that was required was 'justified reason.' If such occurred, either spouse simply left the other. Polygamy was permitted among these people; however, this was not the general rule. Abortion on demand was available to the women of the tribe, but if a child was born out of wedlock, there appears to have been no stigma attached.

The Contact Phase

It is believed that the first European contact was made with members of the Swampy Cree by Hudson, along James Bay in 1611. A small barter session ensued, and the Indians were introduced to a few of the items which the European culture had to offer to make their lives easier.

Many years passed from this initial contact until the Cree were again confronted by the Europeans. The French had settled in eastern Canada and the fur trade activities of Radisson and Grosseillers caused the next contact. There were many political battles between the French and English, the goal being the control of the much sought after fur trade with the Indians. In the interim, the Indians traded with anyone who wanted to give them European goods for the furs that they had trapped.

Years later, the desire to trade prompted mass migrations of the Indians to the trading posts of the Europeans who had established forts well into the Cree country, with the major post being called York Factory.

The construction of posts on Hudson Bay after 1670 favoured a more northwesterly movement...especially after the 1680's when [the Swampy Cree]...began to take over the role of middle-men in a trade that was increasingly oriented toward York Factory--the most important post on the Bay. Assumption of this new role was facilitated in large part by the fact that their early historic occupation of the lower Nelson River basin placed them in a strategically advantageous position to control the trade of the largest and probably most densely populated river system that drained into Hudson Bay...nearly all of the major canoe routes leading to York Factory pass through central Manitoba and converge on Split Lake.¹⁴

The traders and the trading Indians would transact business together for several days. The Indians would then return to their more stationary encampments to prepare for another year of hunting and fishing. This scene would then be reinacted the following year.

The original items which the Europeans brought for trade were: ...guns, powder, shot, brass kettles, knives, and hatchets. The Indian quickly substituted these for his primitive equipment. As trade flourished, other items were introduced, such as cloth, glass beads, woollen blankets, clothing, red lead for paint, twine for fishnets, pewter ware, and tobacco. In return, thousands of beaver, marten, and fox pelts were carried to London by waiting ships for the annual fur auctions.¹⁵

The introduction of all of these materials could only have vast consequences on the way of life of the Swampy Cree. Guns, powder and shot had one of the most profound effects on the Indian culture. Almost immediately, the hunting process became much easier for the Indian. The guns were much more accurate than the spears and arrows that had previously been used in hunting.

Other effects soon arose out of contact with the Europeans. The Cree Indians became convinced of their invincibility vis a vis other, more isolated tribes, once they had guns. This meant they must have more guns, plus perpetual supplies of shot and powder. Consequently, the men had to spend more time trapping fur-bearing animals than previously, and the women had to devote more of their days to the preparation of the furs for trade. This had a two-fold effect in that the hunters did not have the time to trap

the caribou which had been their mainstay for clothing, and the women did not have the time to prepare this clothing even if the hides were available. The obvious result was that cloth had to be bought from the traders.¹⁶ This provided a chain reaction in that more furs would have to be hunted in order to buy this cloth.

Other facets of day to day life were also changed. Previously, hunting and fishing implements had been hand-fashioned, but now the Indians no longer had the time. They also found the cooking instruments of the White Man much more efficient than their former bone and wooden implements. The Indians' diet was also changed by the introduction of flour, tea, and the other staple items introduced by the Europeans. Liquor also became an item upon which the Indian relied heavily.

The geographic distribution of the Cree also underwent considerable change during the contact phase, as Ray describes in the following passage:

By 1763 the distribution of Indian tribes had changed radically.... After having initially been drawn eastward as trappers into the French-Ottawa trading system before 1670, the...Cree began moving rapidly in a northwesterly direction after 1670 as they became involved in the Hudson's Bay Company trade. Using the arms they obtained at the Bay, they quickly assumed the role of middlemen in the evolving trade network and expanded their trading areas with force. By 1720, the bulk of that expansion appears to have been completed and a somewhat more peaceful period began as inter-tribal trading patterns became well established....¹⁷

Sustained Contact

The intermittent and often indirect contact of the early White era eventually gave way to more sustained contact as trading posts and missions became established in the interior. Gradually, the Indians began to spend more and more time near the forts, and they even began attending religious services at the missions. Priests were turned to as advisors and they also provided some educational and medical services as they became more perma-

nently established.¹⁸

Store-bought provisions became more and more a part of the Indian's way of life. They settled in groups near the posts, and this fact contributed greatly to their cultural breakdown. With their improved hunting methods, the Swampy Cree were still able to supply most of the meat they required, but improvidence and a desire for an easier life soon made them dependent upon European foods such as bannock bread made with flour and tea. The Indians incorporated these into their diet, which originally had consisted of fresh meat, fowl and fish. The Indians also became dependent upon tobacco and liquor, although abuse of the latter prompted the Hudson's Bay Company to cease selling it to Indians after 1824. The Cree then turned to making homebrew, but this practice is now becoming obsolete. Furthermore, the Federal Government has completely banned the use and manufacture of liquor on many of the northern reserves.

Many other items of Indian culture changed as a result of European contact. Canvas and cloth replaced the skins formerly used on teepees, and log cabins became their permanent living quarters. The birch bark canoe was replaced by one made of materials purchased from the traders.

As the Indians became more and more dependent on European goods, they required more and more furs to pay for these goods. This, in turn, led to over-trapping and depletion of furs in many areas of Manitoba by the early 1800's.¹⁹ The Indians then faced the dilemma of being dependent on European goods without their former relatively easy means of obtaining them.

Present Life-Style

Some aspects of Cree life have been little changed since early times. Thus, they still depend, in part at least, on trapping, hunting, and fishing

for a livelihood. On the other hand, absorption of White culture and, particularly in recent years, a growing reliance on government direction and support, have destroyed much of their earlier vitality and independence. Indeed, many observers, both Indian and non-Indian, feel that unless something is done quickly the future of the Indian in Canada will be bleak to the point of despair.

Summary

The Swampy Cree have undergone great changes in their process of acculturation since the initial contact with the European culture. At first, the contacts were fleeting and extremely intermittent. It is only within the past seventy-five years that the contacts have been sustained. Their life-style has been profoundly and generally adversely changed because of this.

Footnotes

¹Mason, Leonard, The Swampy Cree: A Study in Acculturation (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller, 1967), p. 57.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 16.

⁵Careless, J. M. S., Canada: A Study of Challenge (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1963), p. 19.

⁶Skinner, Alanson, "Notes on the Western Cree and Northern Saulteaux," Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History 9, supplement (June 1911): 1.

⁷Mason, op. cit., p. 17.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Skinner, op. cit., pp. 14, 15, 17.

¹⁰Mason, op. cit., p. 57.

¹¹Trudeau, Jean, "The People of Hudson Bay" in Science, History and Hudson Bay, 3 vols. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller, 1968), 1: 134.

¹²Honigman, J. J., "Social Disintegration in Five Northern Canadian Communities," The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 2, supplement (May 1965): 40.

¹³Mason, op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁴Ray, Arthur, Indians in the Fur Trade: their role as trappers, hunters and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay 1660-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 13.

¹⁵Mason, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 18-19.

¹⁷Ray, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁸Mason, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 117.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARY ON SPLIT LAKE'S INSTITUTIONS

A brief examination of the main social and economic consequences of European contact upon the Swampy Cree has been provided in Chapter III. The purpose of this chapter is to examine these influences in more detail, with particular reference to the community of Split Lake itself.

The Hudson's Bay Company, the Anglican Church, and the Government of Canada, in that chronological order, has each been the dominant influence at some stage in the development of Split Lake. The presence of the Hudson's Bay Company has been felt for two hundred years, but it is only during the past seventy-five to one hundred years that all three have combined to dramatically change the community. These changes have been many and varied but almost all have, directly or indirectly, affected education in Split Lake, as will be discussed in later chapters.

The Hudson's Bay Company

The Hudson's Bay Company began trading with the Indians of what is now northern Manitoba in the late 1600's. The Company had a monopoly of trade in the area for over one hundred years and, largely because of this, they were content to establish posts on Hudson Bay and let the Indians travel to them. The Indians used two main routes to get their furs to York Factory, which was the main post of the region.¹ One route necessitated their travelling down Grass River, through Split Lake, onto the Nelson River, and then down the Nelson to York Factory. The other route

originated on the Churchill River, bypassed Burntwood Lake, went down Burntwood River to Split Lake, and thence continued along the Nelson River to York Factory.² Both main routes therefore included Split Lake, a fact which became of greater significance later when the Company began to establish inland posts.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, traders from Lower and Upper Canada (Quebec and Ontario) challenged the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company in the vicinity of Hudson Bay. Competition became particularly keen with the formation of the North-West Company in 1783. This company continued the earlier French-Canadian policy of establishing posts at strategic points to trade directly with the Indians. The Indians naturally preferred this to travelling many miles to Hudson's Bay Company posts and, consequently, supplies to the Hudson's Bay Company soon declined. The Company belatedly began to establish their own posts in the interior during the late 1700's, one of which was at Split Lake. As it was not in the midst of fur-rich territory, the post's existence depended upon its being on the Nelson River trade routes.³ Its fortunes therefore fluctuated as first the Nelson, then the competing Churchill route, was favoured by the Hudson's Bay Company. Indeed, the post was abandoned and revived several times between its first establishment in 1790⁴ and 1887, the date after which it became permanent.⁵ With its future secure after 1887, the post attracted a considerable number of Indians from as far afield as York Factory and Norway House. These Indians eventually congregated near the post to form the Swampy Cree community of Split Lake.

With permanent settlement, the influence of the Company on the Indians became more pronounced. By the turn of the century, the autonomy

of the Split Lake Band had been undermined, and at the same time furs, which still formed the main item by which the Indians obtained goods from the Hudson's Bay Company, had become scarce. It was at this critical point that the Anglican Church became involved with the Indian community at Split Lake.

The Anglican Church

The influence of the Anglican Church upon the Indians extended far beyond the religious sphere. The Indians were indeed christianized, but the missionaries also established the first formal system of education. Thus, the indoctrination process into the White Man's ways was initiated. The missionaries also acted as a liaison between the Indians and the Federal Government, whose influence was also beginning to be felt at Split Lake in the late 1800's.

The Reverend J. Lofthouse was the first missionary dispatched by the Anglican Church to the region now known as Split Lake. A major concern of Rev. Lofthouse and subsequent ministers was finances. Once the Department of Indian Affairs had taken charge of the schools in Split Lake, it was approached for financial assistance. In one of the requests for money, Rev. Fox, missionary (1906) stated that the Cree children were being instructed in their native Cree.

As the missionaries themselves were responsible for teaching the students, the continuity of the school program was very strong at this time. The missionaries' efforts tended to be to no avail, however, with the lack of a decent school building. Finally, after much correspondence and study, it was decided to allow the missionaries to use the former R.C.M.P. barracks as a school building.

A persistent problem facing the teachers in Split Lake was the children's need to leave school at the end of summer. This permitted them to follow their parents to the trapping grounds. Thus all the school work that the children were able to learn during the months would be forgotten by the time they returned to the reserve in the spring.

Reverend Walter developed a system to alleviate the serious loss of schooling while the children were away with their parents for the winter months. Mr. J. W. Waddy, Indian Agent, writes of the Rev. Walter:

...That when the parents are absent in the winter with the children, that he sends letters at every opportunity with little lessons for each family, so that when the children appear in school again they have not forgotten everything they have learned previously.⁶

In the fall of 1925, there were average attendances of forty-three in the summer months and about eighteen in the winter months. There was a growing desire on the part of the Anglican Church to acquire a full-time teacher to instruct the children on the reserve. This would allow some time for the missionary to attend to the spiritual needs of the people of the community.

Mr. A. G. Hamilton, Inspector of Indian Agencies for Manitoba, submitted an inspection report on July 19th, 1945. It outlined several significant problems related to education in Split Lake. Mr. Hamilton's report stated that the school needed repairs to both the inside and outside building structures. Student attendance numbered about twenty-four but, when the fall hunting season began, the student attendance dropped off from six to ten students. It was suggested by Mr. Cowley that classes be cancelled for the months April and May. He also suggested they commence instruction in July and August at the peak of student attendance. Mr. Hamilton noted that in regard to student progress:

...The exercise books showed very nice writing and neat work. The pupils, however, are so irregular in attendance that progress is slow and the children rarely pass grade two or three....⁷

He further stated the need for a boarding school in or near the reserve so as to ensure the education of all school age children (see Table 4.1).

The presence of the Anglican Church has been assessed until the beginnings of the 1960's. Formal education was finally being accepted among the natives, with varying degrees of success.

Federal Government

Medical Services

The Split Lake inhabitants were faced with other difficulties arising from their encounters with the White Man. Even with all his knowledge and ideals, the White Man was also the carrier of disease. The Indians never had the opportunity to build up resistance to many of the common European illnesses, and therefore, attention is now turned to the Medical Services Branch. A brief history demonstrating the somewhat sparse involvement of this organization in Split Lake is presented. The nursing station in Split Lake performs the functions as prescribed by the national mandate, and therefore, shall be discussed in these terms.

Indian health and welfare were not priorities of public administrators during the nineteenth century. Except for the efforts of a few missionaries, most officials were not concerned with the health and well being of the Indians. Economic success was the interest of the time. The other concern was to maintain peace and order among the inhabitants.

Before 1755, no organization had been established to look after the health of the Indians.⁸ The first traces of any governmental agency assigned to such services in connection with the Indian came in 1755. This office was

TABLE 4.1

ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 1955-56 ^a | | | | | | |
| Grades | (I) | (II) | (IV) | (V) | (VI) | Total |
| Enrolled | 22 | 13 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 54 |
| Present | 13 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 26 |
| 1956-57 ^b | | | | | | |
| Grades | (I) | (II) | (III) | (IV) | (V) | Total |
| Enrolled | 26 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 55 |
| Present | 23 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 46 |

a, ^bSource: various interdepartmental communications 1955-1957.

established by the Imperial British Government. On July 2, 1860, this responsibility was officially handed over "...to Crown Lands Department, Province of Canada, by the Imperial Government...."⁹

At the time of Confederation, the newly organized Government of Canada assigned the responsibility of the Indians' well being to the Office of the Secretary, of which Sir John A. MacDonald was the first Minister. In 1873, however, the Department of the Interior, a newly created government department, took over the duties of the Indian Affairs in Canada.

With the possible exception of Treaty #6, which provides for the availability of a 'medicine chest' in every Indian Agent's office, none of the treaties negotiated and signed in Canada make reference to Indian health. Consequently, were it not provided for by the Indian Act, Indians would have no legal right to free medical services from the Government of Canada. By the turn of the century, however, many Indians were treaty and were located on Federal Reserves where they came under the Indian Act, which did provide for free medical services. The Government was the only authority in a position to provide for the Indian's health care and was soon "forced into action."¹⁰

After the signing of Treaty #7, governmental attitudes toward the Indian in Canada began to undergo considerable change due to:

...Happenings south of the border in the United States, open warfare with the tribes, and more Indians coming under the surveillance of the Department of the Interior; it was judged advisable that a special department of Government be set up to give full time attention to Indian Affairs, and accordingly in 1880, the Department of Indian Affairs was established....¹¹

Sir John A. MacDonald was the first General Superintendent of this department. The department was maintained until December 1, 1936.

Like earlier administrative efforts, the newly organized Department

of Indian Affairs was not concerned with Indian health problems, nor did it provide for the availability of medical personnel for the various treaty Indian reservations. The Department of Indian Affairs, in 1903, began initial considerations of the health needs of the Canadian Indian people.¹² By 1934, the amount of money spent for health services on every Indian man, woman and child amounted to approximately \$9.60. In comparison, the amount spent on the White population was approximately \$31.00.¹³

In 1944, the present Department of National Health and Welfare came into being, with Dr. G. Brock Chisholm appointed as its first Deputy Minister. With the enactment of an Order-in-Council (P.C. 6495) on November 1, 1945, the responsibilities for Indian Health were officially transferred from the Department of Mines and Resources to the Department of National Health and Welfare. However, the Order-in-Council allowed for the transfer of health services only, and not matters pertaining to welfare, housing, land, education and environmental hygiene.¹⁴ These were still handled by the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources.

The administrators of Indian Affairs were referred to as Indian Agents. They visited the various reservations as representatives of the Federal Government and were the "designated Health Officers," "not the personnel of the Department of National Health and Welfare."¹⁵ Although this administrative split concerning the Indian people has caused some confusion to the public, this transfer "...was made to increase the efficiency of health services, as then organized under a minister whose prime responsibility was health...."¹⁶

The term 'Medical Services Branch' was coined with the creation of a new department under the mandate of the Indian and Northern Services

Department in 1962.¹⁷ The responsibilities of this department were:

1. Public Service Health;
2. Environmental Inspection Services was transferred from Public Health Engineering;
3. Civil Aviation Medicine;
4. Sick Mariners Service;
5. Quarantine Services; and
6. Immigration Medical Services.

Emergency Health Services, Indian Health Service and Northern Health Service were separated as to activities.¹⁸

In Manitoba and, indeed, Split Lake, the following activities form a significant portion of the Government Branch: Indian Health, Administration Services, Public Service Health, and Quarantine and Immigration Services.¹⁹

On each Indian reserve there are Field Units referred to as Nursing Stations, Clinics, Health Centres or Health Stations. They are under the direction of registered nurses, whose immediate supervisors are medical officers. Their responsibilities are the health and care of the Indians.²⁰

The Nursing Station serves as a home for the nursing personnel as well as the operation centre for nurses. Some of the public health programs carried out on the reserve have already been outlined. Their basic function is to handle the organizational and minor medical situations of the reserve.

Department of Indian Affairs

One facet of the Government's involvement has been presented, and now attention is turned to the other auspices from which the Government of Canada attempts to control and regulate the reserves under its jurisdiction.

Some historical detail is also provided of the Government's increasing influences on the community. One by one, the services formerly provided by others are becoming part of the national concern.

Until 1903, steps were not taken to secure the Split Lake Indians a treaty place among the already growing numbers of Indian Bands across Canada. J. Keewatin, Bishop, wrote to Mr. D. Laird, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, asking that "...some step be taken in the interests of the Indians...."²¹ Mr. Laird contacted the Chief Surveyor, S. Bray, to check into the matter.²²

According to Mr. S. Bray's findings, Split Lake was located within the territorial boundaries of Treaty #5.²³ The point of contention appears to have been the actual hunting territories of the Split Lake Indians. There was no doubt that Split Lake was within the territorial limits of Treaty #5 (see Map 4.1), but according to the Senior Indian Affairs Accountant in October 1905:

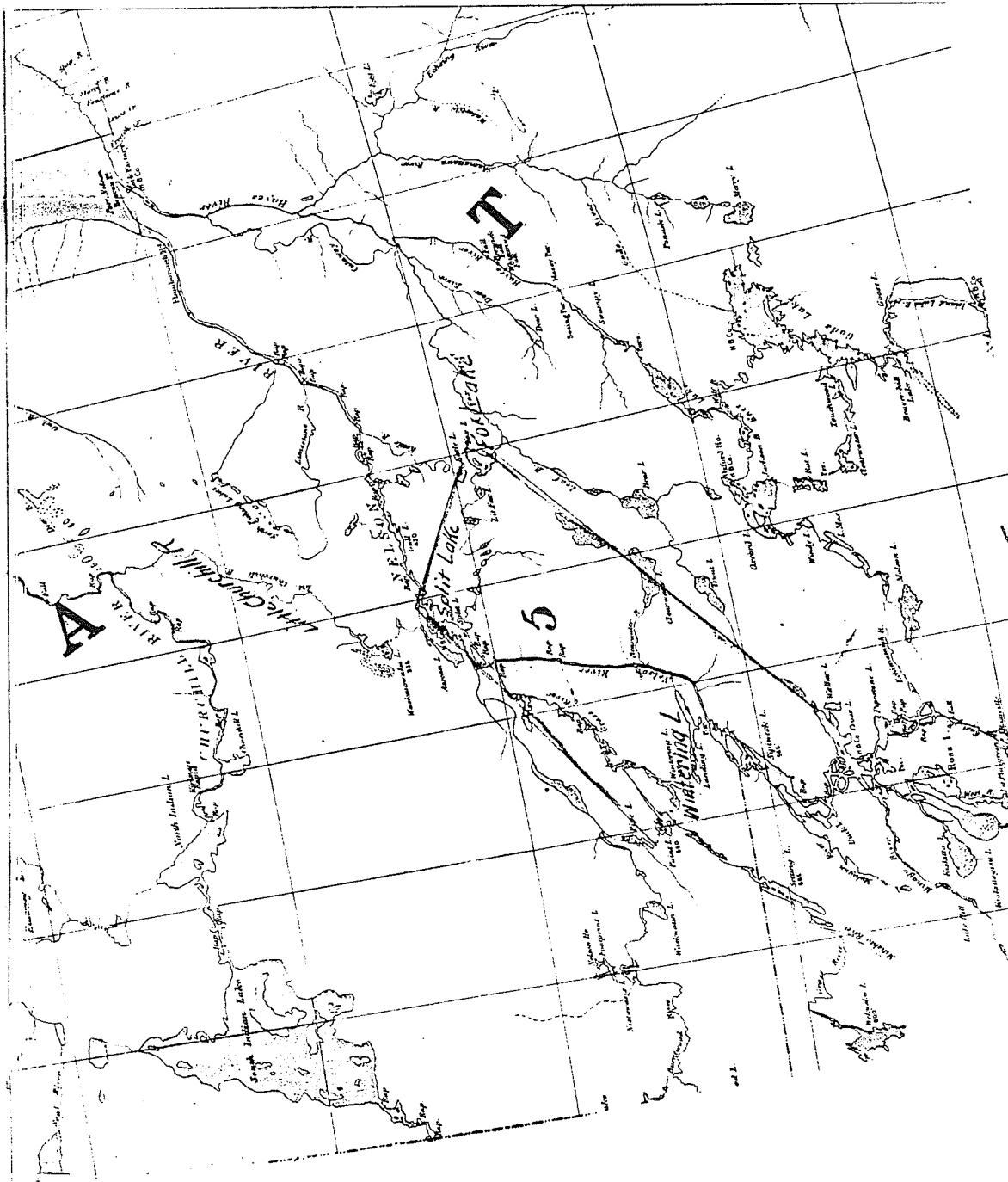
...If the hunting grounds of these Indians are within the limits of the Treaty they certainly should be taken into Treaty but this remains to be established....The memorandum deals with the subject as if the Indians were outside Treaty. We have no definite information on that point and everything hinges upon where their grounds are....²⁴

During the intervening months, Mr. D. Laird requested that Rev. Fox send information concerning the actual hunting grounds of the area's Indians. Fox replied March 7th, 1906, stating that:

...Roughly speaking their hunting grounds extend on the N. West to Waskewaga Lake then on to the junction of Little and Gt. C. Rivers, east to Limestone [and] Fox Rivers then in a line towards Wintering Lake....²⁵

By April 8th, 1907, Inspector John Summers had visited the community and had described the hunting territories of the Split Lake Indians (see Map 4.1)

MAP 4.1
SPLIT LAKE'S HUNTING TERRITORIES



...The population [of Split Lake] is about 250....Their hunting grounds may be described:

- (1) Draw a line from the point where the Little Churchill River junctions with the Larger Churchill south-westward to the Wintering Lake.
- (2) Draw a line from Wintering Lake northeastward to Fox Lake including all that Lake.
- (3) Draw a line from Fox Lake northward to the junction of the two Churchill Rivers the point of starting....²⁶

By October 17th, 1907, Inspector Summers had visited the Split Lake community. Summers reported that he had met with the important members of the community (Chief, Councillors, the Catechist and the Sergeant), and ascertained the approximate number of people residing in the community. He had also made an announcement concerning the Government's willingness to pay Treaty to the Indians by the following summer. According to Summers, this information was well received by the local people.²⁷

On June 26, 1908, the Split Lake Indians signed Treaty with the Government of Canada. Mr. John Summers was accompanied by Dr. Grant, Medical Officer at Norway House, R. J. Spence, a clerk, G. J. Wardner, and Henry McKay, Commissioner, at the signing of the Treaty in Split Lake.²⁸

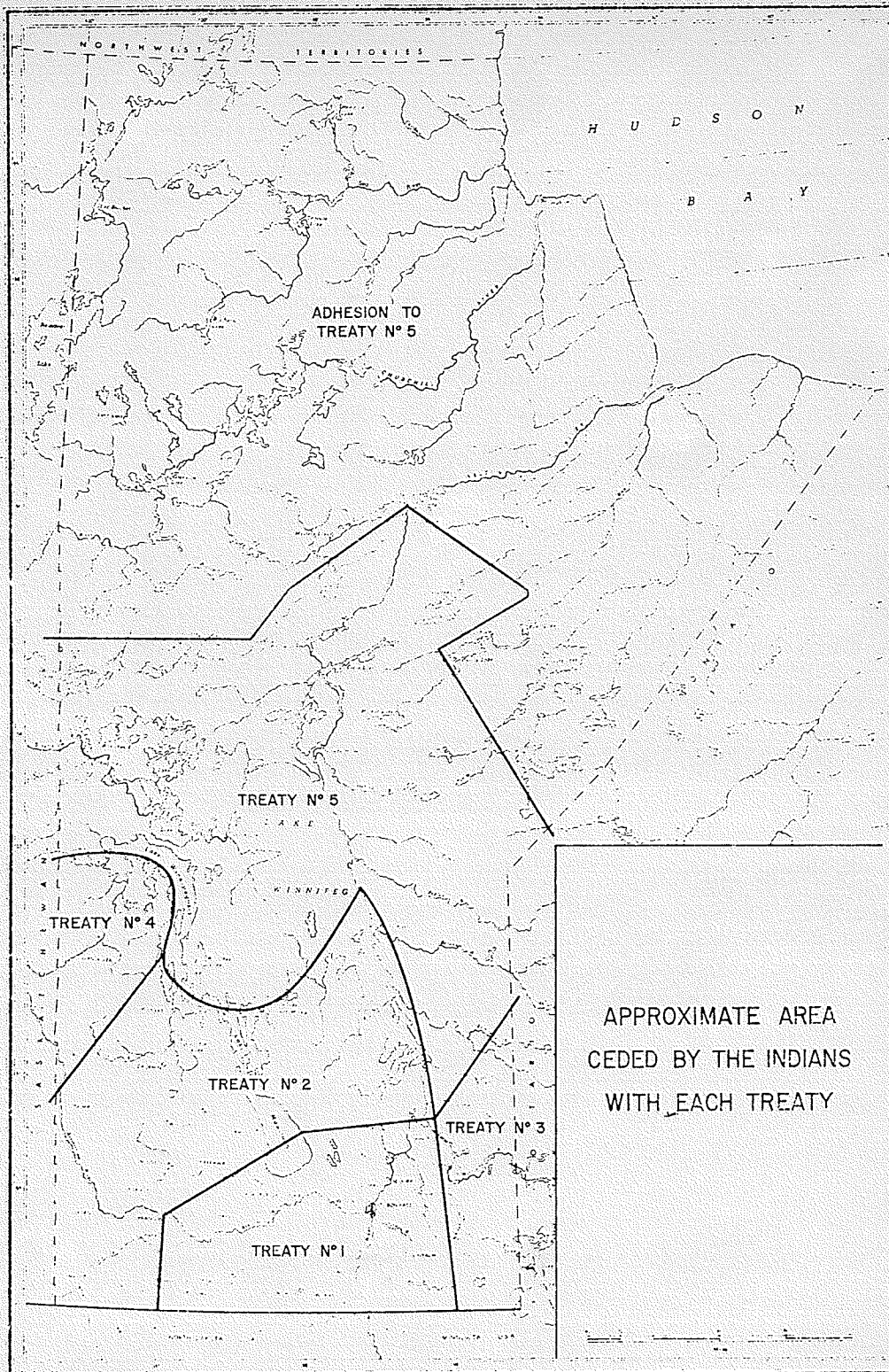
The Treaty that the Split Lake Indians signed with the Government of Canada stipulates that the said Indians:

...agreed that the said provisions shall not be retroactive, transfer, surrender and relinquish [to the Crown]...all our right, title and privileges [to the Land]...forever....²⁹

Altogether, the Indian Bands that signed Treaty #5, signed over "...approximately an area of one hundred and thirty-three thousand and four hundred (133,400) square miles...."³⁰ (see Map 4.2) to the Federal Government of Canada.³¹

In return for signing away their land, the Indians agreed to accept a five dollar annuity,³² due once a year for life, for every Indian man, woman, and child.

MAP 4.2



Source: Lagasse, H. Jean, A Study of the Population of Indian Ancestry Living in Manitoba, undertaken by the Social and Economic Research Office, Main Report, The Department of Agriculture and Immigration, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1959.

A significant clause of this treaty demonstrates the fact that:

...Half-breeds born in the territory covered by the proposed adhesion to Treaty #5 and resident therein on the date of the signing of the adhesion at Split Lake and whose rights to scrip have not been otherwise extinguished [are] to be entitled to scrip. A person who died the day before the date of the adhesion has no right. A child born the day after has no right....³³

Only the Indians who were alive on the day of Treaty signing are entitled to the annuity payment, and once there are no longer any of these original Indians, the annuity payments will cease.

The Government agreed to set aside a given portion of land for reservation purposes, and agreed to provide a grant for "...the purchase of ammunition and twine for nets...."³⁴

The reserve had finally been established, and all of the paper work taken care of in regards to making it official. Many institutions, governmental and private sector organizations had been involved in bringing Split Lake to this point in time. Attention shall now be turned to an analysis of the community as it appears today.



Footnotes

¹Ray, Arthur J., Indians of the Fur Trade: their role as trappers, hunters, and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 35.

²Stayner, M., "Preference of CR to YF for Northern Trade," December 1797, B42/Z/1, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, p. 48-48B-49.

³Hudson's Bay Company, "Minutes of Council, 1832-1850, Minutes of a Temporary Council held at Red River Settlement Northern Department of Rupert's Land," B/239/K/2, Resolution 73rd, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, p. 42.

⁴Joseph Cohen to William Cook, June 1790-91, B239/B/51, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, p. 3-3B.

⁵Winnipeg, Public Archives, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, D/30/12.

⁶Waddy, July 20, 1920..

⁷See letter dated November 27, 1929.

⁸Dept. of Health and Welfare, "A Report of the History of the Department of Health and Welfare" (1973). Many entries are paraphrased from this source. No pagination available.

⁹Ibid. All quotations are from this source.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

- ²¹Keewatin, October 2, 1903.
- ²²Laird, October 5, 1903.
- ²³Bray, October 13, 1903.
- ²⁴Indian Affairs (RG 10, Vol. 4009, File 249, 462-1), Public Archives of Canada.
- ²⁵Indian Affairs (RG 10, Vol. 8745, File 378/8-10-8-171), Split Lake Indian Reserve No. 171, 1958-61, Part 1), Public Archives of Canada.
- ²⁶Fox, March 7, 1906.
- ²⁷Indian Affairs (RG 10, Vol. 4009, File 249, 462-1), Black Series, Indian Affairs Records, Public Archives of Canada.
- ²⁸Indian Affairs (RG 10, Vol. 4009, File 249, 462-1), Public Archives of Canada.
- ²⁹Indian Affairs, Adhesions to Treaty Number 5, Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, p. 3.
- ³⁰Indian Affairs, Adhesions to Treaty Number 5, June 26, 1908.
- ³¹Full Treaty and Relevant Adhesions to Treaty Number 5, cited in Appendix D.
- ³²Annuity defined in Appendix A, Definition of Terms.
- ³³Indian Affairs, Adhesions to Treaty Number 5, June 26, 1908.

CHAPTER V

PRESENT-DAY CONDITIONS AT SPLIT LAKE

It is the purpose of this chapter to provide the background for the educational difficulties to be raised later in this thesis. Comparison of the physical housing at Split Lake with reserve housing in northern Manitoba and on individual reserves shows that Split Lake is severely disadvantaged in this respect. Study of the Indian Act, the financial statements and the residents' opinions demonstrate the thinking of the Federal Government and the residents themselves as to their life-styles. Particular attention is given to the many ways in which education at Split Lake has suffered from being removed from the control of the individual family to that of a culturally foreign government. In essence, this chapter provides an explanation for many of the particular difficulties that face the Indians of Split Lake today.

Housing

Housing conditions at Split Lake are compared with Fisher River because both have approximately the same population and number of family units, and both were formed at about the same time.¹ Fisher River is, however, located a considerable distance south of Split Lake.² The reserve is also compared to the northern reserve designation for the Province of Manitoba.

Table 5.1 shows that housing and related services at Split Lake are considerably poorer than those at Fisher River and on northern Manitoba

TABLE 5.1
HOUSING COMPARISON STUDY*

| | Split Lake | Fisher River | Northern Manitoba |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| General Conditions of Housing | | | |
| Good Condition | 53 | 78 | 64 |
| In Need of Repair | 20 | 3 | 15 |
| Requiring Replacement | 31 | 23 | 15 |
| No. of New Houses Needed to Meet Present Needs | 36 | 11 | -- |
| Size of Houses (one and two room houses) | 23 | 0.8 | -- |
| Houses with Electricity | 8 | 34 | -- |
| Sewage Treatment | | | |
| Sewage Disposal Outlets | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Septic Tank | 0 | 2 | -- |
| Indoor Toilet (Chemical) | 23 | 3 | -- |
| Indoor Bath | 0 | 23 | -- |
| Houses with Running Water | 0 | 18 | 47 |
| Houses with Telephones | 0 | 35 | 26 |

SOURCE: Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Manitoba Region Housing Survey, 1974.

*All values are expressed as a percentage.

reserves generally. Split Lake has considerably poorer housing, and a greater lack of suitable accommodation. Coupled with an inadequate housing situation, Split Lake has significantly fewer houses with fewer rooms than does Fisher River. This fact has accounted for the poor, deplorable and crowded conditions that exist on this reserve. In terms of houses with electricity, running water and access to telephones, Split Lake again ranks far below Fisher River and Manitoba. These differences are primarily due to the greater isolation of Split Lake, which leads to higher construction and maintenance costs and to a lack of concern by government agencies.

The Indian Act

A brief discussion of the Indian Act is included here so that the following topic, that of reserve government, will be more readily understood.

To be a legal Indian in the eyes of the Government, an individual has to be a registered Indian or be entitled to be registered. This definition does not include many people who are Indians by descent.

Every registered Indian is entitled to a piece of land for his use on a designated reserve. Title to these properties is in the name of the Queen, but the land has been provided for the use of the Indians. It is, however, within the Government's authority to set aside specific tracts of land or reserves for certain purposes, such as for schools or health service buildings.

Land on reserves is not, however, guaranteed solely for Indian use. An Act of Parliament, a government agency, or a corporation so empowered by the Government may take the land away without the consent of the owner. In all cases of expropriation, an arbitrator is to be appointed to make final

decision on compensation for such land take-overs.

Even though the land tenure seems so nebulous, provisions have been made for testamentary distribution of such properties. Should the Indian so entitled die intestate, then the normal intestancy laws for estate distribution would apply, as they would for any resident of Canada.

The Government has made certain guarantees of obligation to the Indian. An effort shall be made to maintain and preserve wildlife on all reservations. The Indian Act also guarantees that health services shall be provided for all Indians on reservations. Responsibility also falls on the Government to ensure general health and sanitation conditions on all reserves. The Government also promises to provide all necessary assistance to Band Councils wishing to borrow funds for housing.

Local Government on the reserve comprises a Chief and Council who are elected to office for terms of two years. The Chief and Council are responsible for the administration of all Government funds which are supplied to the reserve. They shall also provide such duties as the Government may allow. On no condition is this Council allowed to make any law or by-law which is contrary to the provisions of the Indian Act.

Once a Band has achieved certain size, as determined by the Governor-in-Council, he may give the Band Council full authority to act as would a municipal council. If this is done, the Council has the authority to levy taxes, and authorize other projects to raise funds for the use of the reserve. This right may, however, be arbitrarily withdrawn at any time by the Governor-in-Council.

Indians do enjoy certain concessions, especially in the area of taxation. There are no property taxes to be paid on reservation lands, nor is

there any tax required to be paid on personal property on a reserve. Also, estate settlements in respect to such property are tax exempt. There is, as well, protection against creditors for no one but an Indian may mortgage or cause to be mortgaged any land on a reservation.

The Indian Act is very clear in its treatment of Indians and intoxicants. It is a punishable offence to consume liquor on a designated dry reserve. The law also applies to Indians who are off a dry reservation. No Indian may consume, hold, or produce any intoxicant. Penalties are severe: fines and/or imprisonment. This law appears to be superceded in some respects if the liquor is purchased in a tavern, in some provinces. Regardless, the Indian will still be held in breach of law if he is found by a member of a law enforcement agency in an intoxicated state. Severe penalties also apply to the purveyor of the liquor.

The regulations concerning enfranchisement are also quite specific. To be enfranchised, an Indian must be twenty-one years of age, be capable of assuming the duties and functions of enfranchisement, and be capable of supporting his family.

Once enfranchisement is achieved, the Indian ceases to be Indian under the laws of the Indian Act. At this point, he would achieve the full rights of a Canadian citizen. By making such a formal request, the Indian relinquishes all of his former rights and privileges. Enfranchisement, once implemented, is almost irreversible; however, a Band Council may reverse this situation. Indian women are automatically enfranchised by the Government should they marry any other than a treaty Indian. Entire Indian Bands may be enfranchised at the request of the Band Council after the Government makes a feasibility study of such a move.

The Governor-in-Council may, if he so desires, provide education for the reserve, either in the form of Federal schools or schools under the direction of religious orders. If this is done, the Governor-in-Council may also regulate standards for this education. He may also grant any funds that would normally be payable for maintenance of a child in a residential school to the reserve school for the maintenance of that child at said reserve school.

It is normally deemed compulsory for an Indian child to attend school from the ages of seven to eighteen. The student shall, however, only be compelled to attend beyond the age of sixteen if the Minister deems it necessary. Certain dispensations from attendance may be received if the child is required for household duties, cannot be placed in the designated school due to overcrowding, or is receiving acceptable education elsewhere.

Band Expenditures

Thus the rights of an Indian are stated, and his obligations outlined. To see that these obligations are fulfilled and to oversee the day by day general management of the community are the main functions of the Split Lake Band Council. These duties include such tasks as formulating routine programs and activities for the Band, implementing budget works, and dispensing wages to Indians employed by the Government. Meetings between the Chief and Council are called regularly to discuss present and future community events. The Council is in charge of preparations for such events as Feast Day, Treaty Day celebrations, and sports days. They also discuss and plan for the yearly community cleanup. As the Council is responsible for general law enforcement on the reserve, they must also deal with disputes involving liquor, curfew violations and other such matters.

Council meetings are also held to make arrangements for weddings and funerals.

General work contracts for road repairs, house building, sanitation services and garbage disposal originate at the Band level. The allocation and distribution of community grants and welfare monies are also within the framework of the Band's responsibilities.

The Chief and Council are official spokesmen for the wishes and desires of the reserve. In all matters of education, politics and economics, the Council provides representation for these people.

An analysis of various expenditures made by the Council, and comparisons of the funds received is now discussed. Approximately seventy-six percent of all the monies received by Split Lake Council are for the social services, a large portion of which are for welfare payments, compared with just over fifty percent for Manitoba and Canada as a whole (see Table 5.2). In contrast, education funding accounts for only five percent of the total budget at Split Lake.

This high level of social service funding forcibly illustrates that Split Lake is not self-sufficient economically. Indeed, only fifteen percent of the adult Indian population is gainfully employed. The money made by this gainful employment would support only a subsistence level existence at best, and therefore, high levels of welfare support are required. Economic activities participated in by the Indians include trapping, fishing, and local service jobs provided by the MTS, HBC, the church, the nursing station (janitorial) and the Band Council. Only some 3.5 percent of the working age population is, however, employed in these ways. The commerce of Split Lake has been described as follows:

TABLE 5.2

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

| Category | Year | Budget Allocations for Split Lake | | % Distribution of Budget Allocations for: | |
|------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|------------|--|--------|
| | | \$ | % of Total | Manitoba | Canada |
| Social Services | 1976-77 | \$467,769 | 75.18% | 55.24% | 52.72% |
| | 1977-78 | 552,310 | 77.61 | 55.24 | 52.74 |
| Band Management | 1976-77 | 49,499 | 7.95 | 10.37 | 10.10 |
| | 1977-78 | 36,350 | 5.10 | 10.37 | 10.10 |
| Local Government | 1976-77 | 33,875 | 5.44 | * | * |
| | 1977-78 | 45,231 | 6.35 | * | * |
| Education | 1976-77 | 29,217 | 4.69 | * | * |
| | 1977-78 | 35,848 | 5.03 | * | * |
| Core Funding | 1976-77 | 41,850 | 6.72 | * | * |
| | 1977-78 | 41,850 | 5.88 | * | * |
| Total | | \$1,333,799 | 100% | | |

SOURCE: Financial and Management Advisory Services, Department of Indian Affairs.

*No data available.

...based on the local service sectors, trapping, and commercial fishing. The nearest operating mine is in the Thompson area... However, few, if any, Split Lake residents have migrated to Thompson. Forest resources are available...however, transportation costs are likely to be excessive.

Commercial fishing is based on whitefish production...Fish production can only be considered a marginal source of income. Commercial trapping...based on the beaver, lynx, mink, and the otter, is also a marginal source of income.³

The future does not look much brighter for the residents of the community. Predictably, as is the case in similar communities, this small potential employment sector results in:

...high levels of unemployment, underdevelopment and welfare... [therefore, these conditions] are likely to continue...Unless nearby resource developments occur, migration seems to be the only alternative for residents seeking viable employment. Lack of skills, language differences, local ties, and Reserve benefits are likely to stall migration.⁴

The School

Attempts have been made to increase the skills of the natives, particularly through the school system. Education in the community is governed and operated by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Split Lake has two school structures, the primary and the main school buildings. These buildings together house approximately three hundred and sixty-five students who are educated from kindergarten through grade nine. Those students wishing education beyond the ninth grade are sent to a number of schools outside the community. Most are sent to the residential school in Dauphin, but they may also continue their education in The Pas, Thompson, or Winnipeg.

According to recent figures available from Statistics Canada, there are four hundred and ten Indian university students in Manitoba.⁵ Split Lake has fifteen of these students. They are all teachers-in-training and are

presently involved in the B.U.N.T.E.P. and P.E.N.T. programs both on and off the reserve. These fifteen students represent approximately three point seven percent of all the Manitoban Indian students currently attending a university, which is a far higher proportion than might be expected from a community comprising only two percent of the total Indian population of the Province.

The success of Split Lake students has not, however, extended to the field of university scholarships. Indeed, there have been only two scholarships awarded to university students of Indian extraction in Manitoba during the past nineteen years, and neither has been obtained by a student from Split Lake.⁶ It is interesting to note that all other provinces scored much higher in this area than Manitoba.

Changes in Child Rearing Practices due to Education

The advent of the governmental schools on the reservations has been a catalyst for drastic social change on the reserves. One of the most significant changes has been the lessening of parental control over young members of the community. Parents no longer assume complete obedience from the youth, as traditionally was expected, so that young members of the tribe have become much more independent than their historical counterparts. This decline in parental authority, together with the fact that many young adults are better educated and more influenced by White culture than their parents, have produced wide gaps between old and young on the reserve and amongst the Cree generally.⁷ This is especially true of those Cree who have left the reserve to attend residential schools in the south.

The missionaries have also brought about vast alterations to the traditional mode of life. With the coming of the Wesleyan missionaries to

the Swampy Cree territories in 1840, the traditional polygamous ways of the Swampy Cree began to undergo a gradual decline. The introduction of Christianity meant that a man with more than one wife must consummate marriage with only one. This decree rendered former wives without any means of support. Traditionally, the wife deserted would be held in disgrace by the tribe, and the change from polygamy to monogamy was a very difficult decision for all concerned. Today, however, polygamous relations are extremely rare, for such unions are subject to scorn by mission Indians.

In early Cree society, promiscuity was also an accepted practice. There would be no scorn on the young people as long as there were no children born out of wedlock. Even if children were conceived in this manner, and this occurred very infrequently, they were soon readily accepted into the family. Once married, there appears to have been no problem for an Indian woman who was not faithful to her husband. In fact, the Cree Indian women considered it an honour to be selected for a wife loan.⁸ On the contrary, the man and woman who did not involve themselves in such a practice were held in disgrace by the rest of the tribe. The good hunter could afford to support three wives, and thus polygamous relationships developed. Normally, in such a situation, the first wife would assume the dominant position, although it would often be one of the younger wives who would be chosen to accompany the hunter when he was travelling.

In recent years, the frequency of unmarried girls becoming pregnant has increased on the Split Lake reserve. Although medicine men traditionally performed abortions for the unmarried women, the practice almost disappeared in the twentieth century because the father received an annual treaty gift for all of his children. The unwed mother syndrome is especially high in

girls between the ages of fifteen and seventeen. The elders of Split Lake have blamed this phenomenon on the freedom of the youth to roam around the reserve at night, and they have placed a curfew on the reserve in the hope of curtailing premarital sexual relations.

The White Man's outside forces of church and state have also been responsible for alterations in the traditional arrangements of marriage. The missionaries, especially, encouraged parents to let their children choose their own spouses. Now young adults are basically free to choose their own mates without parental persuasion or interference. The Band Council, however, will recommend to parents that certain of the youths should get married or stop seeing each other if the Council feels that the courtship is continuing too long. Parental consent for marriage is still sought after today.

The traditional marital arrangements are worthy of note at this point. They would usually occur after the puberty ceremonies (which shall be dealt with later) had been completed. By custom, the female had little choice in this matter. The male would make his choice, and inform the parents of the girl that he wished to marry. The young man had to prove that he was an excellent hunter so that he could provide for his new bride and her parents. This support of the parents continued until the end of the first year or the birth of the first child. The birth of a daughter was therefore a welcomed event because it provided security for the parents' old age.

Many of the ceremonies which we normally associate with birth were not practised by the Swampy Cree. For example, they did not give a name to a newborn child because of a high infant mortality rate. The Indians felt that it would be wise not to name the child, thereby not acknowledging its existence and identity, for fear of its not surviving. Child rearing and

supervision were traditionally the responsibility of the mother. As a son became older, he was allowed to venture out with his father to learn the hunting skills necessary for survival. He was thus taught to provide for his eventual family.

The most important events now amongst Swampy Cree are marriage, raising children, and supporting a family. The birth of a child usually takes place in a cabin with the aid of a mid-wife and her assistant. Although infant mortality, miscarriage, and stillbirth are relatively high, they could easily be reduced with further medical aid at the reserve level.

The Swampy Cree Indians once viewed adolescence with great superstition. This period of life meant considerable ceremony and personal constraint for the young people entering puberty. For a young man, this period meant the beginning of his role as hunter and provider. To the young girl, this phase in life meant sexual maturity, marriage, and her own family. The Cree, however, no longer attach importance to the rites of entering puberty, and thus another loosening has taken place in the once strong link between the young and their once respected leaders.

The beginning of menstruation meant personal confinement and isolation from the rest of the Band for a period of a few days to a month, depending on the Band. Normally, the girl would only be served water with a wooden bowl, or a woman could be assigned to bring food to her. Similarly, once a young Cree boy had attained the age of thirteen or fourteen, he began his period of fasting. During this fast, he waited to be visited in dreams by an animal spirit which would be his guardian.⁹ Much celebration and festivities were associated with this event. The father was in charge of arranging a large gathering to welcome his son into manhood.

An obvious conclusion from having observed the day to day life-styles of the Swampy Cree is that they have experienced considerable change in their culture since initial contact with the Europeans.

Recollections and Opinions

There has been only one element of permanence, the Swampy Cree Indians themselves. It is important to include some of their thoughts on their past, present and their future.

James Garson, aged sixty-six and born and raised in the community, recollects that: "...the winters were very cold...fish...caribou and other animals were used for food...."¹⁰ Sammy Kitchekeesik remembers when the church and the Hudson's Bay Store (the first permanent structures of the community) were made entirely of logs and heated mainly by wood stoves. But

...as for the people who were living here,...They had wigwams or tents...made of wood covered in mud and moss. These wigwams were similar to a teepee or a lean-to...[with] mud all along the outside and there was a hole right on top so that the smoke from the inside could escape, and they had evergreen boughs...on the floor, that's where they slept,... [and] ate and right in the centre of this wigwam was a fire....

The structures that Sammy is describing were quite effective for the summer months, but during Manitoba's harsh winter, another sort of accommodation had to be devised. For this reason "...they used log cabins covered with mud to insulate against the cold winter winds...." Finally, the Indians attempted the same sort of construction techniques that they observed the Europeans using. They cut the lumber in a sawmill, and used the wood for walls and flooring. Eventually these were replaced by prefabricated units which were built for them.

Housing is not the only area where there have been great changes.

Sammy notes that there are not as many trappers on the reserve as there once were. He explains that the people's livelihood has been altered considerably since the coming of the White Man:

...Today, people here are bunched up...in the community. A long time ago, families used to go out [trapping] every year. These people used to go 200 miles north...south, [and] east, to trap... But ever since the White Man came here...The [Split Lake] people have changed. Their livelihood has changed...we have taken much for granted...Today, we have all kinds of food and clothing right in the store. Life is easier today than it was in the past....

Peter Beardy's sentiments are similar. The White Man has brought his technology, and thus improved many situations for the citizens of Split Lake.

...The White Man brought materials for us to make nets...guns and fishing rods to make it easier for fishing. [But most important of all] the White Man has brought in the Skidoo for Split Lakers so we no longer use the dog sled to travel back and forth from the trapline....

Times have changed, he echoes:

Nowadays, we do not hunt as much. All we need to do is to go to the Hudson's Bay Store for our food. Today, we...do odd jobs around the community, jobs that we have been trained to do by working in the school...[However] in the old days, to be a good hunter meant that you could provide food for your family. A good hunter had lots of prestige. Nowadays, it's not that important.

There were, however, other drawbacks to the new way of life with which they were provided. As the importance of hunting and trapping declined, reliance on the Government increased, and today the young people of the community accept welfare and other forms of support as the norm.

Helen Spence complains:

...these teenagers are just sitting around doing nothing, just watching T.V., getting support from the government and not working for a living like we used to do.

It is interesting to note that an elder is making this comment about the

young people. From examination of the welfare rosters, it would appear that more than the teenagers enjoy watching television.

The majority of the interviewees had favourable opinions about the school. Many felt that the school had helped to aggregate the people. The community has been much more stable since the school, for now the families do not wander to trap for furs. John Harvey explains:

...The school helped to hold the community together. The parents were compelled to bring their kids to school, and thus, once their kids were in school, had to remain in the community to live. They could not wander from area to area or region to region as their ancestors had done.

One possible explanation for the positive view of the school could be that many of the older persons had little opportunity to attend school, mainly because of family duties on the trapline. They feel that their children are "...learning more today than they did in the old days..." Peter Beardy continues that he "...sees a big improvement in the young people's learning..." today in comparison to the type of education that he received as a child. Helen Spence recalls when she was a child. Her experience is similar to that of many of the community.

...I strongly feel that our kids who are going to school at the present time will eventually lose their traditional cultural way-of-life and they will also lose the Cree language, the language of their parents....

This is a land steeped in tradition. The residents have seen many of their beliefs and customs fall by the wayside, and thus are understandably concerned. For example, before the Hudson's Bay Company first located its store in Split Lake, the natives depended quite heavily on the land. John Harvey recalls his ancestors' reliance on nature. "...For clothing, they used hides of animals, like the beaver, muskrat or rabbit. Sammy recollects that he "...had to hunt, trap and fish for...his...food and

clothing, but nowadays, we have a store and we don't have to rely on hunting and fishing to live...."

An interesting anecdote was told by John. The Hudson's Bay Store frequently ran out of food and the selection was always guaranteed to be poor. It seems that the supplies were brought into Split Lake via Norway House.

...In the summer they used the York boat to get supplies and in the winter they used dog teams. Even when they used a lot of dogs, there was always a shortage of food. There wasn't anything in the stores like we use today, like butter and lard. All they had here for lard was TARO... [and] pork [and] baking soda... [and] flour... [when] available....

The Hudson's Bay Store is not considered a tremendous asset by all members of the community. According to Peter Beardy,

...when the local people bring furs to the Hudson's Bay Company to sell them, all the Bay is doing is taking money away from the people. What is happening is that they are putting pressure on the people, the Indian people.

His argument is that the money does not remain in the community to improve conditions. It does not have the chance to better the people of Split Lake. Also, Sammy Kitchkeesik notes:

...that the prices of items have gone up too high. The prices for products found in the Hudson's Bay store are going up....

Prices are high and few job opportunities exist on the reserve. The majority of the work force families are on welfare. The dear price of articles and food stuffs at the Bay is one of the many difficult problems that the Split Lake people must bear.

There have been other areas of improvement in the Split Lake situation. John Harvey recalls that the Indians used to have medicine men who would treat the sick. The medicine men disappeared with the coming of the White Man's medicine. They "...knew how to make medicine from

herbs and wild roots....They got their medicine from nature...." However, with the establishment of a nursing station in Split Lake, "...people have stopped using their Indian medicine...." Peter Beardy feels that:

...Since the nursing station opened...it has certainly improved a few things here. In the old times when somebody wanted medicine, the people had to go to the priest, but now...if a person gets sick,...[they] simply go down to the nursing station to get cured....

Thus, the priest became less and less involved in the medical and other matters. He was allowed to become more involved in religious matters.

If the people interviewed are a true representative group of Split Lake opinion, then the nursing station is very popular. The nursing station would appear to be performing its functions, for according to John Harvey:

...a great deal has been done to lessen the amount and kinds of sicknesses that the people of Split Lake have...dentists and doctors...now come in to treat and help the local people, to lessen the hardships...in this isolated community. We are very happy to have the nursing station here....

Another social institution which appears to meet with the approval of the community is the Anglican Church. The settlement is extremely devout. According to James Garson, even before an actual church building was constructed in the community, "...church was held in people's homes..." As time progressed, however, the community built a church structure. John Harvey comments:

...[S]ince the Anglican Church has been located in Split Lake, the people appear to be more religious. Every Sunday they would go to church...now we have a new church and everyone goes to church every Sunday....

It is interesting to note that even with the new building, the methods of heating the church have undergone little change. Except for the introduction of a few electrical heaters, the former heating system remains. Helen

Spence points out that:

Even today, they use wood for heating. But some electricity is used for heating in the church....[Traditionally] kerosene lamps were hung from the ceiling for light...men used to have to cut wood to heat the church....

Helen makes other interesting observations. While the church and the nursing station may be totally accepted by the Indian, not all of the White Man's ways are as acceptable. She points out some of the difficulties faced by the Indian in his attempt to live side by side with the White Man.

...They [the White Man] set laws....They make promises to the Indian people and don't abide by them. They come and bother us. The chief and council have the authority but they can't hold the White Man back....They have spoiled our livelihood. The people here tend to listen to them and abide by their terms.

Helen Spence and the others have strongly felt the impact of the White Man's influence in Split Lake over the past decades. These people desire to be more autonomous and self-governing. They do appreciate the White Man's aids, and realize how difficult life would be without them. Helen was asked what changes she felt would take place in Split Lake over the next fifteen years. Her comments follow:

...I am sure that there will be a lot of changes....Maybe there will be new stores and new types of foods. Maybe it'll be harder for the people here....Maybe the welfare will stop....It will be very hard for our people. Then what are we to do?

She is obviously concerned for the future generations of Split Lake people. She has questions for which there are no immediate answers. The future of the Indians in Split Lake is open to question. This is due, at least in part, to their lack of control over their own destiny.

Footnotes

¹The following figures show the comparability of the two reserves with respect to population:

| | <u>Fisher River</u> | <u>Split Lake</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Band Membership | 1,182 | 1,037 |
| On Reserve Population | 730 | 712 |
| Family Units | 116 | 120 |

²Fisher River is located 335 miles south of Split Lake.

³Underwood, McLelland and Associates, Community Study for Split Lake Indian Reserve, as cited in Department of Northern Affairs, Province of Manitoba, Community Profile, Volume T-10: Split Lake, Manitoba, ROB 1PO, p. D-1.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Employment and Related Services Division, Education Branch, Indian and Eskimo Affairs Program, February, 1977.

⁶Program Statistic Division, Indian and Eskimo Affairs Program, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, November 1976.

⁷Mason, L., The Swampy Cree: A Study in Acculturation (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller, 1967), p. 53.

⁸Ibid., p. 49.

⁹Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁰All quotations are from interviews previously conducted on the Split Lake Reserve between 1975 and 1977. Full transcriptions of these interviews are to be found in Appendix F.

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS OF THE SPLIT LAKE TEACHERS

Most Manitoba education graduates are trained in Winnipeg or Brandon. It is readily apparent that they have intentions of obtaining employment in the south. Their goal is the large urban areas, but some will concede to the southern rural centres.

Increasingly, however, such positions are not found to be readily available. Faced with this circumstance, many, unfortunately, leave the teaching profession. Others, generally against their will, accept positions in northern Manitoba. They tend to find themselves confronted with situations for which they are totally unprepared.

It is the purpose of this chapter to illuminate a few of the difficulties experienced by such teachers. Their experience is obviously valuable to any study of education in the north. Therefore, lengthy interviews were conducted with several southern-trained teachers at Split Lake School. It was the intention of these interviews to establish some general points concerning the practical problems experienced by the teachers of a northern remote community.

Some of the topics raised by the teachers were anticipated. Others showed insight that can only be gained by experience. Their concerns involved language and curriculum employed in the school. They also appeared frustrated due to problems of isolation, staff turnover, and the lack of community involvement. All were in agreement that the major problem of Split Lake's

educational system was that of student dropout.

The three teachers interviewed wished to remain anonymous, so the following pseudonyms will be used:

Interviewee No. 1 shall be called Rita.

Interviewee No. 2 shall be called Paul.

Interviewee No. 3 shall be called Kate.

Language

One source of astonishment for the new teachers is the language problem. At least in the case of the Split Lake Swampy Cree, the children are not exposed to the English language until the primary school level.

Kate, a primary teacher, explains:

...Most of the kids coming into grade one had very little English language skills. They were very good in Cree, so it was very hard for me to communicate with them initially....

Paul comments on this problem which haunts the students throughout their education:

...The fact that the children's first language was other than English was probably the biggest problem...the way I understood it, was that the teacher might ask the student a question in English, of course. The children would turn the question from English into Cree, consider it, answer it in Cree, and then transfer it back into English, and then give the oral answer. That was something that took me awhile to understand....

He is referring to secondary level students, but the problem is more acute at the primary school levels. Most of the school-age children spoke predominantly Cree at home and with their school-aged friends. Dealing with these children in the classroom was a particular problem.

Curriculum

Another problem cited by the interviewees dealt with the lack of

relevant curriculum. Concerning Primary to Junior High grade levels, Rita states that:

...the textbooks which we used were far too difficult for them and are designed primarily for kids in the southern schools....The things that you talk about in the textbooks they haven't come across, they haven't seen....Most of the children couldn't understand the things that I was talking about....When talking about buildings in Winnipeg, and escalators, they didn't know what escalators were. So it was rather difficult for me to explain to them....

Paul also had definite ideas about texts and curriculum:

...Practically all [these] textbooks...are designed for white, middle class children....Often the texts recommended for a grade were beyond their reading age....The textbooks unfortunately...were too difficult for kids to read and understand....

Isolation

Split Lake is an extremely isolated community. As a direct result, there is a prohibitive cost attached to the importation of instructional and visual aids. Thus, treatment of subject material in the classroom is limited to the ingenuity of the teacher involved. In recent years, significant efforts have been made on behalf of the Split Lake School in this area. However, the general effect of these efforts has been to create new problems. Kate states:

...The aids...are available, the 16 mm projector, the slide projector, these are very important for the school, and Split Lake School does have this type of equipment available, however, things that are not available are the cassettes or the films or the slides to put inside these types of equipment, so what's the point of having all this equipment if you've got nothing to put inside it to use it as an effective classroom aid?...

Kate goes on to explain the particular problem with acquiring films for use in the school:

...During the course of the year, we had ordered...many, many films that were to be used in the classroom, however, because of our isolated community these films, most of them did not come and most when they did come were often received late....

Staff Turnover

Another problem facing teachers at Split Lake is that of trying to understand and deal effectively with people of another culture. The teachers found themselves trying to "...throw off middle class values..." and yet attempting at the same time to prepare the children for life in a society dominated by such values. Paul expands:

...I had problems in the beginning, and I suppose all along at times... trying to understand some of the things that the kids would do. Some of the things that the kids would do seemed unusual. They irritated me. But I think as time went by, I learned a little more. I came to understand why they did some of them. They are cultural[ly] tied up in child rearing practices, and when they come to school, they meet for the first time the middle class values of the unknown teacher....

In a northern community as isolated as Split Lake, staff turnover has become a serious and recurring educational problem. As outlined by Paul:

...It does make a lot of difference....Every year school policy seems to change. There's no continuity from year to year. The program is new, it seems, every year and nothing seems to get done....

Although Split Lake has less of a staff turnover than most Indian reserves in Manitoba (over 70% of the staff returned for the 1976-77 school year), it does nonetheless interrupt the smooth flow of the education program.

Paul points out that staff turnovers often involve a change in the school administration:

...In the four years that I was there, we had five principals, and I know the year before I was there, there was a new principal, so you can safely say that in five years, there have been approximately six different principals. Now if you look upon the principal as the guiding hand, the educational leader of the school, then you can see that there has been no continuity at all. There has been little innovation provided by principals....

Paul observes that principals were often assigned for a year probation period and that during this trial period they were required to devote much of their time to duties outside the field of education. Thus, principals

at Split Lake are required to be both postmaster and maintenance supervisor of the school. As they are not trained in these areas, these responsibilities often took far too much time away from the more important educational matters. Paul also points out that at the start of a new school year, a new staff must begin to establish a working rapport. The new staff is bound to encounter communication problems among themselves, with the administration in Thompson, with the Chief and Council and, not least, with the new principal who is, unfortunately, often unable to devote enough time to his staff.

As outlined, a persistent problem is staff turnover. The Department of Indian Affairs has usually managed to acquire someone for a vacant teaching position in the community, but they appear to have paid little attention to the academic background, previous isolation experience, or cross-cultural teaching background of the persons hired. Paul states:

...that many teachers who have been there [Split Lake] don't really want to be there and don't have very much understanding of cultural differences....

Acquiring qualified professional teachers for teaching positions in Split Lake has proven to be a problem in northern Indian education. The reasons for a qualified teacher's reluctance to go north are many. Paul postulates:

...a lot of city teachers have or hold Indian people in very low esteem and wouldn't want to spend a full year of their time in a situation where they live face to face with Indian people. Also, of course, reserves are very isolated, very small where nothing is happening like in the city....

Lack of Community Involvement

Paul also feels that an essential element in the education of Indians is the involvement of the Band and parents in the day to day

running of the classroom. Without their involvement, commitment and participation in the school's affairs, the objectives of the school program are impossible to attain. This full and welcomed participation has not been reached in the school at Split Lake. Paul states that:

...the natives don't see the school as being theirs although we outsiders or white people say 'Yes, it's your school, sure it's your school' but I still don't think that they see it as their school. [It] is the White Man's school, and perhaps part of that feeling is over [sic] our fault because we don't think of ways to get the parents into the school more often....

As Paul points out, the parents visit the school only to pick up reports or to attend the Christmas Concert. He states that the parents

...can't encourage their children...to get the high grades...to get a good job. If you tried saying something like that to Indian children, it just doesn't work, and parents will say, well I had a bit of education myself but it hasn't improved my living situation, and [so] how is it going to improve that of my children?...

The problem does not lie so much with parental involvement in their child's education as in the people's not being involved in making decisions concerning their local school. Paul draws attention to this problem when he states "...still not enough decisions made concerning education in Split Lake are made by Split Lakers...." This particular problem has undergone considerable discussion in recent years. The Department of Indian Affairs is concerned and concrete actions are now in progress to rectify the problem. The problem is quite diverse, however, and solutions will take time to implement.

Student Dropout

Student dropout is probably the most important and the longest standing concern. Fortunately, improvement has been achieved in this area, but there is still a major discrepancy between the dropout rate on the reserves

and in urban centres. Most children do attend Split Lake School from grades one to nine. Those who continue beyond grade nine must, however, leave the reserve to continue their education in such cities as Thompson, Dauphin, Winnipeg, and Brandon. Most of them soon become dropouts. Paul comments:

...Dropping out is another problem which we have in Split Lake School, but to a much greater extent once the kids leave and go to Dauphin in their grade 10 years. There are not too many of them that manage to see out the year, but when one considers the huge changes that take place once the...student gets to a place like Dauphin, maybe it's not so hard to understand why they do want to come back home to people and things that are more familiar to them....

The problem of attendance is one for which there has been less improvement. Once mid-winter, early spring arrives, a fair number of the students leave with their parents for the trapline, and their formal education suffers.

In summary, the main educational problems in Split Lake, as seen by the teachers themselves, are (a) language and cultural differences between the teachers and students, (b) teaching staff who are poorly qualified and reluctant to adjust to conditions in northern Indian communities, (c) a high rate of teacher and administrative turnover resulting in little continuity from year to year, (d) lack of parental involvement and confidence in the school system, and (e) a high dropout rate after grade nine, which is caused in part by the fact that students going beyond this level must leave Split Lake.

CHAPTER VII

CONCERNS FACING THE COMMUNITY

Many problems face the community of Split Lake, and most of them affect education either directly or indirectly. These problems and their implications for education, where these can be discerned, are the topic of this chapter. The isolation of the community is considered first. Attention is then focused on the economy. The need for an all-weather road to nearby larger centres is then examined. Problems associated with teaching and administration of the school are extremely varied, and therefore are discussed separately for teachers, principals, and the Band Council. The relationship between students and their parents is examined in the final section.

Isolation

The Split Lake reserve is an isolated community, and this isolation is compounded by the terrain and climate of the surrounding area. It would appear that the most logical means of combating these physical limitations would be air service, but scheduled air travel does not exist for the community of Split Lake.

The community airstrip is totally unsatisfactory, and subject to unpredictable climatic conditions. When air service is impossible, the community is almost totally cut off from the outside world. On occasion, this condition has prevailed for as long as three weeks. When this happens, no reliable source of medical support services are available. In cases of emergency, the nurses can only make patients comfortable. All supplies of

food and merchandise are also unavailable to the community at such times. An example can be found in furnace parts. On at least one occasion, parts had worn out, during the winter, in the teacherages. Due to the transportation difficulties, the better part of a month had been endured without heat while waiting for new parts to arrive. Lack of reliable air transport also discourages or prevents teachers from using audio-visual aids which must be brought in from Thompson. Taken individually, these may appear to be minor irritations but as a whole they tend to promote amongst teachers the feeling that Split Lake is a backwater of little concern to educational authorities.

Economy

There is little economic base provided for the people of Split Lake. Traditionally, fishing, hunting, and trapping provided the sole economic activity for these peoples and there has been no significant change over the centuries. Some local jobs for Indians have been created with the appearance of the school (caretaking, teacher aides), the organized Band (councillors, chief, assistants), the Hudson's Bay Store (clerks), the Nursing Station (caretaking and housemaid) and the Church (caretaking). These few positions, however, have done little to lessen the need for employment in the community. Over eighty-five percent of the population receives welfare, and there is little opportunity to find meaningful, gainful employment. At one point during 1975, approximately eighty-nine percent of the eligible families were receiving welfare benefits.

The resources are still available to produce some level of income. The residents, however, find it more simple to rely on the government for support. On the whole, the Split Lake people do not have the technical and verbal skills to compete in the job market with the other citizens of Canada.

Many problems exist in the area of Band Fund management. The councillors are provided with absolutely no training in accounting or managing the funds which they are entrusted to disburse. The Band auditors' statements, as presented in the next chapter, outline many of the difficulties in misplaced funds, and hopefully, incorrect entries. Without the proper organizational training, the Council cannot be held responsible for the sometimes chaotic job duplications that occur. The Department of Indian Affairs has Band Financial Advisors. Their responsibilities are to train and instruct local Band members in Band money management. If past performance is to be any sort of a criterion, the training techniques are very suspect.

Costs for air travel to and from Split Lake are extremely high. For single passage, a typical fare would be a minimum of \$160.00 each way to Thompson. Anyone wishing to leave the community for Thompson must charter an aircraft, usually with a group of other individuals. The very nature of this expensive air travel limits transportation out of the community only to those who are able to afford the high costs. The younger population of the community is unable to experience any of the outside world due to the prohibitive expense.

Social Situation of the Encroaching White Society

Split Lake residents will be more directly exposed to the white society when the permanent all-weather road into Split Lake from Thompson is completed in mid 1978. Free movement will finally be afforded to and from the community, and it is to be expected that important changes, both beneficial and detrimental, will occur because of the new mobility. For example, Split Lake may cease to be a dry reserve, and this in turn, could

introduce an entirely new problem that of heavy drinking and alcoholism, into the many already facing the community and, not least, the teachers of Split Lake. On the other hand, teachers will not be so isolated and students will be introduced directly to a world which at present can only be conveyed to them second hand through textbooks, films, and by teachers verbally.

Teaching in Split Lake

An area of concern cited by many teachers that have instructed in Split Lake is curriculum. They state that the present curriculum, as outlined by the Provincial Curriculum Branch for Education, does not reflect cultural values and norms supported by the Indian residents of the community.

The official curriculum includes little or nothing about Indian culture and the little it does has little relevance to an isolated northern community like Split Lake. This omission adversely affects the natural tendency for a people to be interested and who take pride in their heritage. Studies concerning the Indians' heritage and especially their achievements must, therefore, be included in the curriculum. By rendering curriculum more relevant and understandable to the Indian student, the importance of the learning skills which must be taught in the classroom would not be lessened. Instead, the student would be better prepared for the day when he would be faced with the need to leave the community. He would have cultural roots and a strength of character which would enable him to adjust to Canadian society rather than, as is all too common now, merely succumbing passively to its worst aspects.

The existing curriculum is geared for students who are ultimately thinking of attending a university. There are no provisions for vocational courses such as wood, metal and drafting shops, home economics and handicrafts which would be far more beneficial to the majority of Indian students. Ironically, the need for and provision of such alternatives is now recognized and accepted in southern Manitoba where the matter is of less related urgency than in northern Indian communities.

Many educational problems stem from the fact that English is only the second language of students in Split Lake. This was cited by almost all of the teachers as their primary concern.¹ As discussed in Chapter VI, this difficulty is more acute in the lower grade levels, but it is also found in the upper levels.

Most written assignments are completed only at a minimum acceptance level by the grade nine students. This is partly the result of the problems students have expressing themselves in the English language. It also arises because of inadequate instruction due to language and cultural barriers at the primary levels. Many factors may contribute to this situation, including that of a breakdown in rapport between teachers and students because of different cultural origins and different primary languages.

Another area of concern in Split Lake is the lack of resource material. Split Lake school has an extremely poor library; indeed, there are, on average, less than three books for each student in the school. Moreover, most books are in a state beyond repair. The content of the books available is also poorly planned. It is either much too simple, or university level. Learning materials dealing with the slow learner and the exceptional child do not exist in the school. Teachers are left to their own

devices to provide assistance for these types of students. Teachers at Split Lake School, however, generally lack expertise in the field of special education, eg. during the school year 1975-76, there was not one teacher on staff at Split Lake School who had formal training in special education. Part of the problem is also that the teacher simply does not have the time to attend to the special needs of each student in the classroom. Very little guidance and direction was offered in this area from the district education office in Thompson.

The sporadic and unpredictable air service can result in frequent and continual delays in obtaining essential school materials and equipment. The delay and unavailability of films and reading materials ordered from outside sources has resulted in unnecessary hardships for both students and teachers.

Problems Facing the Principals

Lack of experience and poor budgeting practices on the part of principals have resulted in inadequate classroom supply orders. Monies assigned for janitorial and classroom supplies, library books, paper (xerox and duplicating) and learning aids must be appropriated. This responsibility lies with the principal and, to a large extent, has been a serious problem for many years in Split Lake. Each school in the district is allocated a certain sum of money for education. This figure is based on student enrollment. Each year, budgets are drawn up by the principal and the supplies are ordered for the coming year. Frequent staff and administration turnovers have created drastic problems in this area. Specifically, as there have been six principals in five years, no principal has, in recent years, had the chance to experience the appropriateness of his

own ordering. In short, each year a new principal is faced with adjusting to his predecessor's budget.

The administrative capabilities of the principals, prior to their entering the Split Lake School, are usually untried or uncertain. New principals who have never had any administrative experience are the general rule and usually they either do very well or very poorly in their first year. If they are ineffective, they are usually removed. If they are good, they are transferred to a location where it is felt that their talents could be better used. Split Lake School is, then, merely a testing ground and suffers accordingly.

Another problem in the community school is the practice of social promotion. Rather than attempting to hold back poorer students, the tendency is to move them on to higher levels. This only transfers responsibility from one teacher to another and does nothing to overcome the student's difficulties. Thus, students having problems with the use of English in the classroom have been promoted annually. The students and teachers alike ultimately face frustration at the grade ten level when students must leave the reserve if they wish to continue their education.

The B.U.N.T.E.P. program for teacher education is established in Split Lake. This program was instituted by Brandon University to train native people in teacher education. There is, however, absolutely no communication between the school and this important group. The only contact whatsoever is during the short periods of student teaching each year. The principal works and deals with teachers who have difficulty communicating with their students due to the language barrier. Yet, the talents of the native teachers-in-training are not utilized to alleviate the problem.

Finally, the principal is chosen by the Band is expected by them to perform many functions of a community leader such as Council Meetings and organizing special social events. These additional responsibilities usually prevent or compromise the implementation of any major innovations by even the most dedicated and energetic principal.

The Band

Although the Department of Indian Affairs aids in deciding whether a teacher is suitable for a position in Split Lake, the final decision rests with the Band. The Band appears to take this responsibility much too lightly. On at least one occasion, the representatives did not attend a pre-arranged interview with a teacher and, instead, went fishing. This poorly organized and unstructured selection process often allows the hiring of unprepared teachers.

Although the main school is one of the newest buildings constructed in Split Lake, its condition is rapidly deteriorating. For example, during the spring and summer, the hallways' roofs leak. There are numerous other problems created by the use of poor construction methods and cheap materials. Few steps, if any, have been taken to initiate the many needed repairs and alterations to the school building. At the present rate, by the time these repairs are finally attended to, other more serious flaws will appear.

The present primary school building also presents difficulties. It was constructed a few years ago as a temporary structure for use by students but is still in use and in dire need of repair. The building is on low land and is subject to frequent flooding and sinking during times of rain-fall, especially in the spring and fall. In addition, the building lacks any sort of a fire alarm device. Winter use is an extreme hardship as there

is inadequate electrical heating and wiring. Nothing has been done to produce a suitable alternative.

The question of providing high school facilities in Split Lake is critical. Such an opportunity must be made available to the students. After grade nine, students are forced to leave their parents, friends, and familiar surroundings if they want to continue their schooling. On the average, most of these students (apart from the more mature) fall into trouble with the law, fail the demands of their new school life, and/or are simply not equipped to fulfill their aspirations in such a surrounding. The result of this experience is that many students return to Split Lake halfway through the year. This is usually the result of boredom, of being in trouble with the law, or because they have dropped out. This perpetuates the myth that all Indians are lazy and no good.

Another problem deals with the poor communication link that exists between the school staff and administration, the Band, the Chief and Council and the parents. To establish and operate an effective educational program in Split Lake, there must be strong co-operation among all three groups. To date, such co-operation simply does not exist.

Conflicts with the school support staff sound like a relatively minor matter, yet it is one that has manifested itself quite strongly. Part of the support staff is employed by the school and part by the Band and Council. Therefore, the staff under the employ of the Council can only be ordered or reprimanded by the Council, who are never present. It is this delegation of responsibility which causes aggravation for the school administration.

At times, the children's education is used as leverage by the Band Council to gain a better bargaining position for settling differences

between the Council and the Federal Government. Several times during the course of 1974-76, the Council closed the school. Once this was done to draw attention to the need for repairs to the community's water system. This sounds, at first glance, minor, but it resulted in the school being closed for a month and a half. Although this tactic has proven successful for the Council, it should not be employed.

The Residents

By far the majority of the students have difficulty in written English, as well as in verbal expression. This can be observed very easily during gymnasium classes and playground activities. During such times, the students converse mainly in Cree. This was not only observed at the primary levels, but in the upper grades as well. If they were comfortable with the English language, they would use it at play.

Another serious problem facing the school is that the average parent does not put much value on formal education for his children. Part of this problem is due to the lack of relevancy of the curriculum. It is difficult to convince the children's parents that what is being taught in school will help the students in the future. The local and regional levels of school authority do not involve the parents in the day to day happenings of the school.

Regular attendance at the school is not as serious a problem as it used to be. However, at certain times of the year (late winter and early spring), some of the school children are still compelled to leave school by their parents. Even with the introduction of guns, metal traps, snowmobiles, and other advantages, parents still depend on their children at the trapline camps. This is a minor problem, however, compared with the

fear and anxiety which arise in families when a son or daughter wishes to go on to grade ten outside the community.

There are, then, many and varied problems associated with education in Split Lake. Possible solutions to these and other problems facing the Indians of Split Lake will be examined in the following chapter.

Footnotes

- ¹See reference to instructor interviews, Chapter VI and Appendix H.

CHAPTER VIII

SPLIT LAKE--ITS FUTURE

The Failures of Assimilation

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine some possible solutions to the various problems which face residents of Split Lake. These suggestions will include ideas presented by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood and personal recommendations by the author. The Indian Act and its effect on assimilation shall first be discussed. The local government is assessed next. Some comment is also made of the Council's fund management. Solutions which could promote a broader economic base have also been offered. The effects of the Hudson's Bay Company and other social structures and plausible remedies have also been presented. Finally, many of the educational difficulties are discussed.

Throughout this thesis, many references have been made to "Indians" and the "Indian" people. Various definitions have been given for these terms, but there is only one officially recognized by the Government of Canada and it is provided by the Indian Act.

The Government does not consider Indians full citizens and, indeed, if an Indian becomes enfranchised as a Canadian citizen he is no longer considered to be an Indian. The Government appears to consider Indians as being incapable of managing their own affairs. They have been granted many special rights and privileges but, in the process, have been stripped of many responsibilities enjoyed by normal citizens. The basic assumption of

Leaf blank to correct
numbering

The Government recognizes and acknowledges the treaties made between the Crown and the Indians. For this they are thankful, but wish that the Government would also recognize them as Canadians as well as Indians. Their citizenship was recognized with the signing of the treaties, but appears to have since been forgotten.

The MIB states that revision is necessary to the Indian Act, but only in certain areas. One such section involves an Indian woman's marrying a non-Indian. Under the present legislation, a woman who does so ceases to be an Indian. They feel that this is contrary to the basic assumptions of the various human rights legislations in effect for Canadians today. Their solution to this problem would be the removal of all enfranchisement clauses from the Indian Act. The

[s]tatus of Indians, Children and Women...should depend on birth. An Indian woman should remain an Indian for the rest of her life whether she marries an Indian or a non-Indian.³

The majority of their points are valid and well-taken. However, in one particular area, the MIB's recommendations far exceed reasonable demands. They consider the present section of the Act on taxation very limited in breadth. Their tax platform is that no property or income should be taxable in Indian bands in any way by any governing body. Any companies that are invited to the reserve should also have this exemption. Under such a situation, the Indian peoples would not be treated in the same way as Canadian citizens which, on the surface, is contrary to the MIB's aims.

The Indian Act must be revised to encompass the ever changing situation of Canadians and the Indian society. If the Indian people are to ever achieve a co-operative role with the dominant society, they must be given more responsibility. The Indian Act reflects a thought process of the mid-

nineteenth century, and is not suitable for today's conditions. The important fact is that the Indians do not realize that they are, at present, almost capable of a total take-over of responsibility. They do appear to desire, however, a gradual increase in control of their own affairs. They are also eager to receive training which would eventually lead to the assumption of this self control.

Local Government

There are areas where at least token authority has been given to the Indians. The Band Councils, which administer government funds and laws, are the most important Indian-controlled institutions. The results of this authority have not always been the most desirable, but progress has been made.

It must be reiterated at this point that the Chief and his Council are the only form of representation that the Band has. The Band Council meetings form a compromise between a session of Parliament, and a local town hall meeting. Official business is discussed between the Council members and the Chief, but any community member who wishes to can raise matters which are of concern to him.

The Manitoba Indian Brotherhood has many suggestions for improving the Band Council. They contend in Wahbung that the Government will not let the reserve councils have any say in decision making, and that they merely permit them to implement programs that have been developed by the Federal Government. The Brotherhood feels that it is the right of all organized groups, including Band Councils, to determine their own objectives. The MIB states that the Band government must have:

...the means by which the community can identify its own priorities, consistent with its diversity of needs must be at least equal to the

freedom to plan and the freedom to practice enjoyed by other forms of local government.⁴

The freedom to implement such programs can only be achieved if greater flexibility is allowed by the Department of Indian Affairs. Their main suggestion is that the Government should come to grips with the fact that the repression of the Indians must cease. The role of the Government must become that of a councillor, not an administrator. The Government must consider the Indians as they would any community of people. If the residents were not of Indian extraction, any village the size of most of the reserves would have its own form of municipal government. All the group requests is to be treated as Canadian citizens. According to the Brotherhood, the principal rule of thumb for the local councils in dealing with their allotted powers now is one of "if it doesn't say you can, then you can't."⁵ This attitude is one of undue passivity and is encouraged by the Government.

Another recommendation of this group is that the District Offices should be abolished. They wish to have open communication with the Federal Government, rather than continually dealing with middlemen. The concerns with the present system are obvious. The Government has the funds and deals with the District Office. The Band has the problems and deals with the District Office. The Government which supplies the funds does not deal with the people who have the problems and need the money. No matter how empathetic the District Office personnel attempts to be, they have neither the money nor the problems.

One of the most valuable points in the MIB's book is made during the discussion of the possibility of local governments gaining more responsibility. They realize that this added responsibility will make differences in their own roles in life.

A change of the magnitude envisioned will also require greater commitments on our part to seek for ourselves solutions to our problems with the help of government as opposed to expecting government to seek those solutions for our people.⁶

The Indians realize that they will have to start assuming responsibilities for which they are not trained or accustomed. They realize that they will make mistakes because of this inexperience, but feel that the best learning process is often one of facing the consequences of errors. The Brotherhood realizes the potential and the limitations of its association. It would appear to have a very clear perspective of the difficulties that would be encountered with such an assumption of responsibility. With the proper guidance, however, they feel that errors could be minimized.

This Indian association feels that it is primarily due to the lack of local control that the Indian is faced with the difficulties that confront him today. They claim that the reserves are far behind the rest of Canada in development mainly because of:

...lack of concern and...lack of confidence in the ability of a people to direct their own destiny and of the gross neglect of successive governments to adequately prepare us for a role of equal contribution and equal participation in the large society.⁷

The Brotherhood had made all of these recommendations to the Federal Government prior to the publishing of Wahbung, and the Government had decided to act upon these recommendations. The Government agreed that the District Office was not performing the functions for which it had been intended, and therefore began to phase out the District Office concept. These offices are, unfortunately, being replaced with Regional Offices. The Indian still is not being consulted, and now they will be dealing with a more bureaucratic authority. The Government apparently still refuses to take the Indians' objectives into consideration in its planning.

The Indians feel that they must define their own objectives. If

given this responsibility, they are also willing to accept the consequences for these decisions. This would help them develop the necessary system of priorities in preparation for governing themselves.

To separate us from participation in the regional decision making process could open the door to misunderstanding and misinformation and would deprive us of an opportunity to learn, from first hand experience, the ramifications involved in the assessment of local government proposals.

To avoid such a situation...it is recommended that there be established a system of boards and commissions that would provide for our real involvement in the...decision making process....⁸

No matter what recommendations are made, their success depends on one thing--the Indian people themselves. Paramount among any solutions concerning Split Lake are the guidance and leadership qualities that must be possessed by the future Chief and Councils. In the past, too few Band representatives have worked tirelessly for the betterment of the Indian in Canadian society. Material gain, rather than using their authority to bring good to their reserve, has often been the motivating force for many of the past councils. A great deal of harm and bitterness has been felt by both the Split Lake people and governmental agencies because of this.

Future councillors must be responsive to the needs of the community members. They must also receive training in the areas that could do the most benefit for the reserves. One such area would be in the administration of funds. As the new members join the Council, the Government should provide basic training in fund administration. Such training might prevent some of the glaring errors and discrepancies that are occurring regularly in the Band administered funds.

For example, during the 1975 Split Lake Band fund audit,⁹ it was discovered that there was \$20,734.82 missing from the welfare rosters, under

Social Services. The accounting firm has no idea of where this discrepancy occurred, and the Band disclaims any knowledge of these funds.

Another mystery surrounds disbursement of the Reserve Cleanup Fund.¹⁰ Cleanup Day is an annual event on the Split Lake reserve. It is a school holiday, and all of the teachers and students work on cleaning up the accumulated winter's trash. According to the Band books, \$9,920.00 was spent in salary for the cleanup. However, none of the participants involved in the campaign have any idea as to whom these funds were paid, as it certainly was not to them.

Selected quotations from the Band audit show that other problems are being encountered.

Included in receipt #63-- July 29, 1975, is an amount of \$1,632.00 from the Department of Indian Affairs. Of this amount, \$1,500.00 was for 'policing', yet it has been credited to band administration. Why?

...it is unlikely that the accounting classifications can be relied upon with any degree of confidence.

Cheque #1030 to the Department of Indian Affairs...\$6,000.00...was charged as a recreation expenditure. Why?

Included in the expenditures charges to 'Backhoe rentals' is an amount of \$6,605.50 paid to Mystery Lake Motors for a new truck. Why?....¹¹

It is quite possible that all of these situations could be simply bookkeeping errors, but simple training in proper procedures would eradicate any doubts.

Other evidence which makes it questionable whether the Band can properly administer and requisition funds is provided by the 1977-78 budget. For example, in requesting money from the Department of Indian Affairs, the Band made the comment that "on reserve travel costs are high."¹² As the community is one mile in length from the farthest points, this statement is difficult to understand.

The Indian Affairs Branch budget summary comments on the cutbacks of

requisitioned funds. The Department found that they were "unable to justify an expenditure of \$12,000.00 for water delivery for 11 homes."¹³ Such exchanges of requests for money and rejections of money do nothing for either the Department or the reserve. What is even more frightening, however, is that money is often granted for ludicrous requests and ventures. Without the proper training, the Band cannot be expected to be perfect. They have found that if they ask for money, chances are that they will get at least part of the funds requested. This has given rise to some ridiculous and unusual attempts at justification for the requested funding. One example is found in the 1977-78 requisitions. The Indian Affairs Branch pays the Band nearly ten thousand dollars for the cleanup every year. This year they requested fourteen thousand to hire garbagemen to handle the cleanup. Their justification was that by having garbagemen, the separate appropriation for cleanup could be deleted and, on this basis, the funding was approved. Unfortunately, no one remembered to delete the cleanup fund from the requisition, and it was also approved with a ten percent increase.¹⁴

An effort must be made on the part of both the governmental agencies and the Split Lake Band to plan, organize, and implement a Band Management Training program suitable for prospective councillors. The Department of Indian Affairs Branch should be responsible for this program. They should conduct workshop classes right on the reserve to provide for maximum on-the-job experience. The Split Lake Band must be fully competent in the area of money management and allocation before a co-ordinated effort can be applied to improve careless financial waste.

With this greater expertise in financial and basic management skills will come a greater control over job inefficiency and duplication. There

will be greater censure on haphazard spending. In addition, the people in charge of community affairs must be people with greater dedication and desire to improve the Indian's stature in Canadian society. They must assume more responsibility for their people's growth and development than has been provided for in the past.

One position, that of social councillor, recently has been created in the Band and should be extremely important to the improvement of the Split Lake community. The job description covers many important areas governing relations between the Band, the school, and the parents. The individual occupying this position must be responsible and mature, and capable of providing a real service in return for an annual salary of \$14,445.24. Far too often, however, jobs of this nature are awarded on the basis of kinship or other "socially tied" considerations, and not on the basis of appropriate qualifications.

The school committee is also extremely important. For years the Band Council has been receiving funds for this committee. Its function is of a liaison nature, and involves co-ordinating the objectives and aspirations of the reserve residents and the school. Unfortunately, as of June of 1977, no attempt has been formally made to form this committee.

Poor Economic Base

Before the residents of Split Lake can ever expect to improve their lot, they must break away from the bonds of governmental welfare support. This can only be accomplished by a greater utilization of manpower and expertise on the reserve. Thus, in the area of job availability, the Federal Government, in co-operation with the Split Lake Council, must make a concerted effort to develop a viable industrial base in the community. Local

construction, maintenance, and repair jobs must be assigned to local tradesmen. This would ensure the utilization of local talent. Fishing, trapping, and hunting co-operatives could be set up among the local residents. Initially, buying and marketing co-operatives could be formed to provide competition with the Hudson's Bay Company and, if these were successful, co-operation might be extended to include the actual production process.

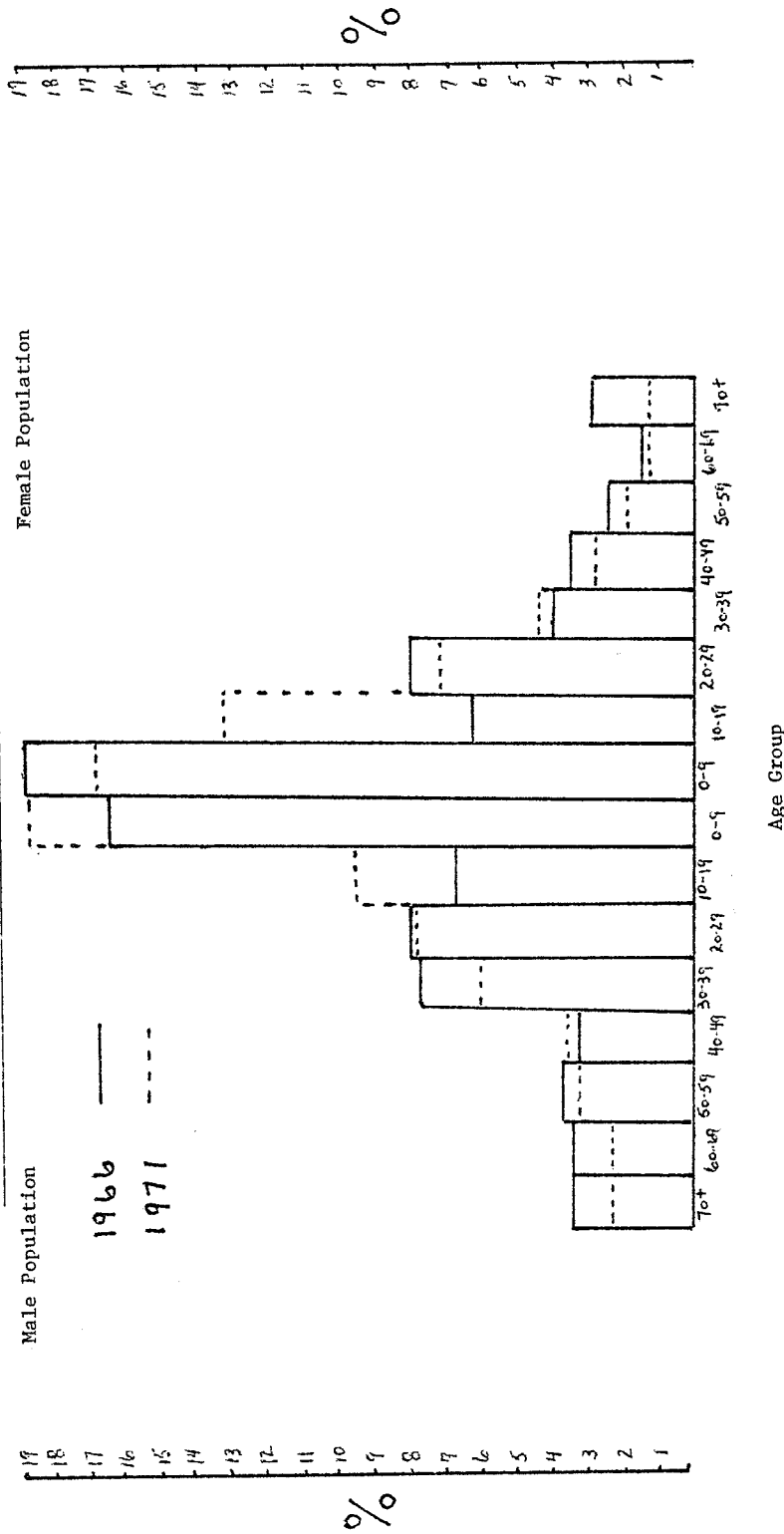
There are many considerations in relation to the industrial base. The available work force of the community is important in the assessment of what sort of industry is possible. According to the 1971 survey, there was a total population of 799 in the Split Lake community, of which approximately fifty percent were under the age of fourteen, and fifty-five percent were male (Table 8.1). Thus, proper training provided at this time could produce a male work force representing fifty percent of the total number of residents in a few short years.

Since 1966 the total population has increased by 108%. There were large increases in all age groups. The increases were a result of progressively larger population groups moving up the pyramid (see Tables 8.2 and 8.3).

The population characteristics of the community by age, sex, and marital classifications are presented in Table 8.4. The characteristics of population distribution typify any community that size. Perhaps even more important, however, is the family size distribution. Tables 8.5 and 8.6 show that large families are common. Forty-five percent of the population comes from families that have eight or more members.

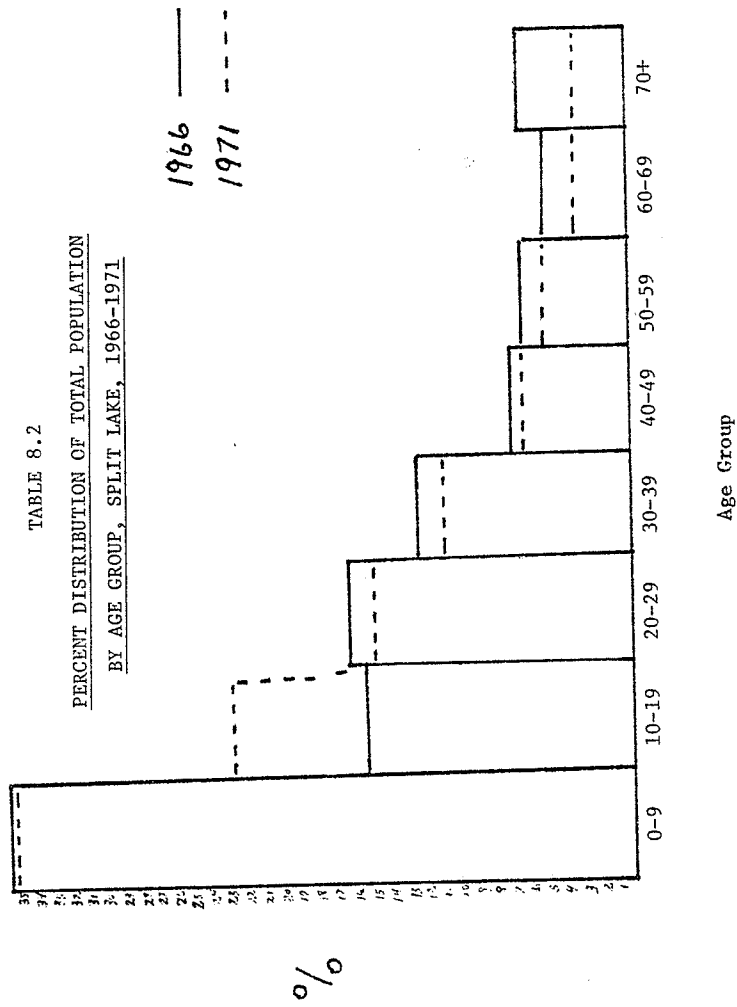
In looking for occupations in which local talent could be used, the housing situation lends natural direction. With such large families, and the deplorable state of the existing housing stock, a natural occupation for the residents would be improving these conditions. As shown by Table 8.7,

TABLE 8.1
PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, SPLIT LAKE, 1966-1971



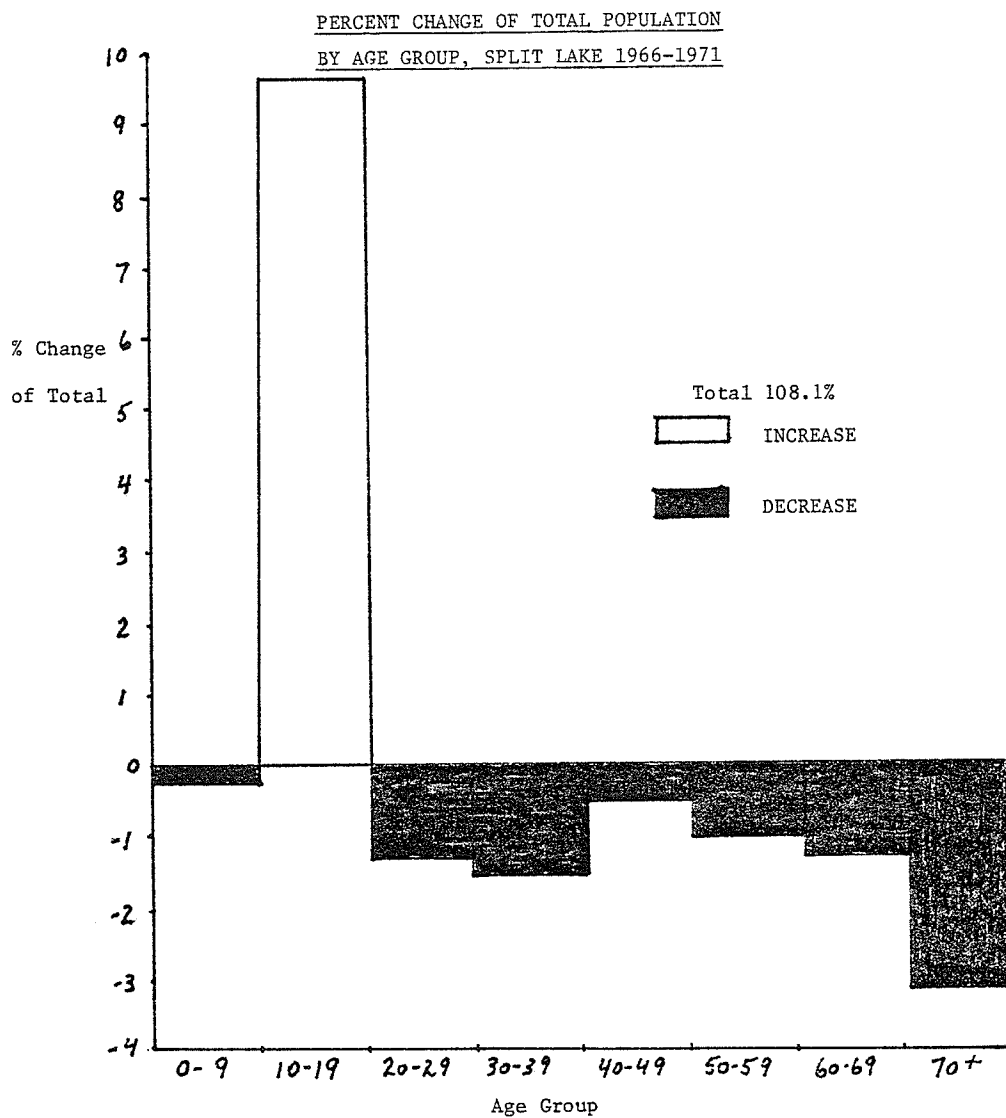
Source: 1971 - Manitoba Health Services Commission Records
1966 - 1966 D.B.S. Census of Population

TABLE 8.2
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL POPULATION
BY AGE GROUP, SPLIT LAKE, 1966-1971



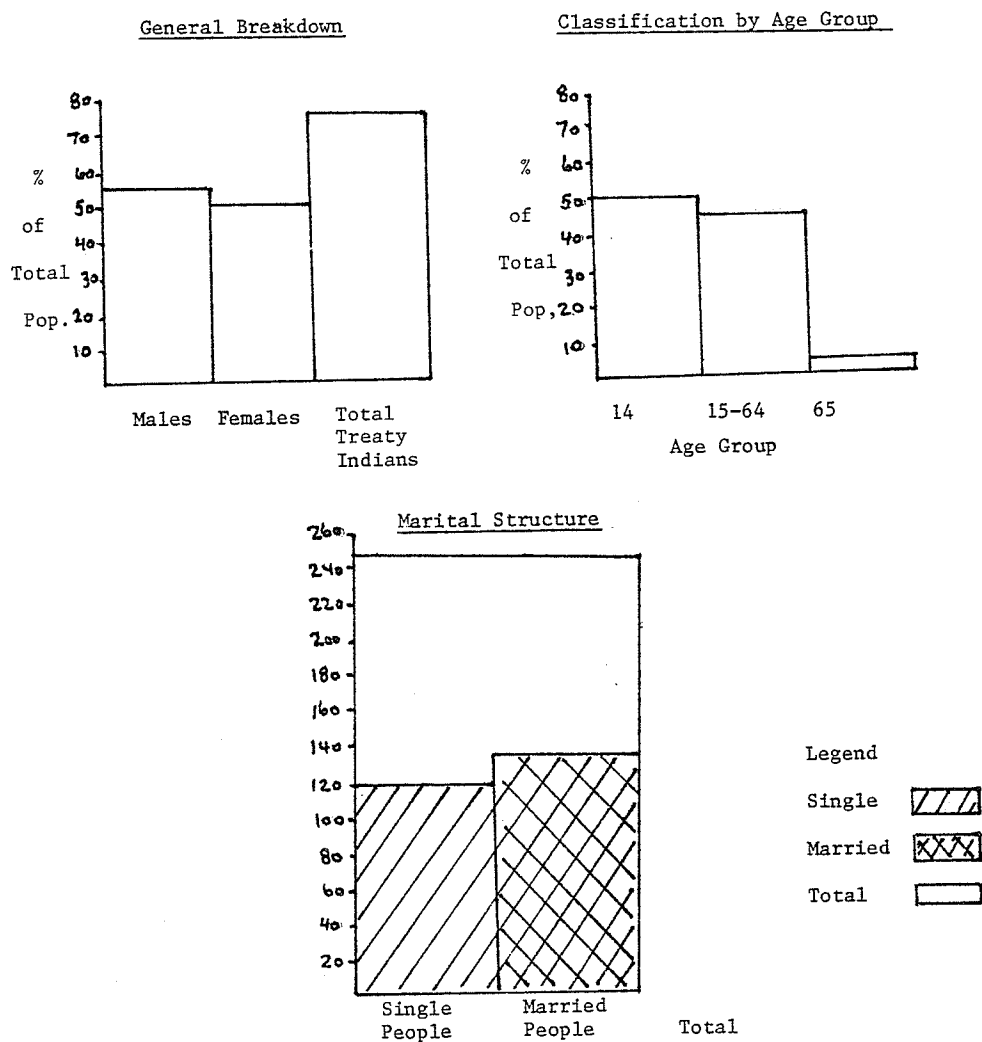
Source: 1971 - Manitoba Health Services Commission Records
1966 - 1966 D.B.S. Census of Population

TABLE 8.3



Source: 1971 - Manitoba Health Services Commission Records
1966 - 1966 D.B.S. Census of Population

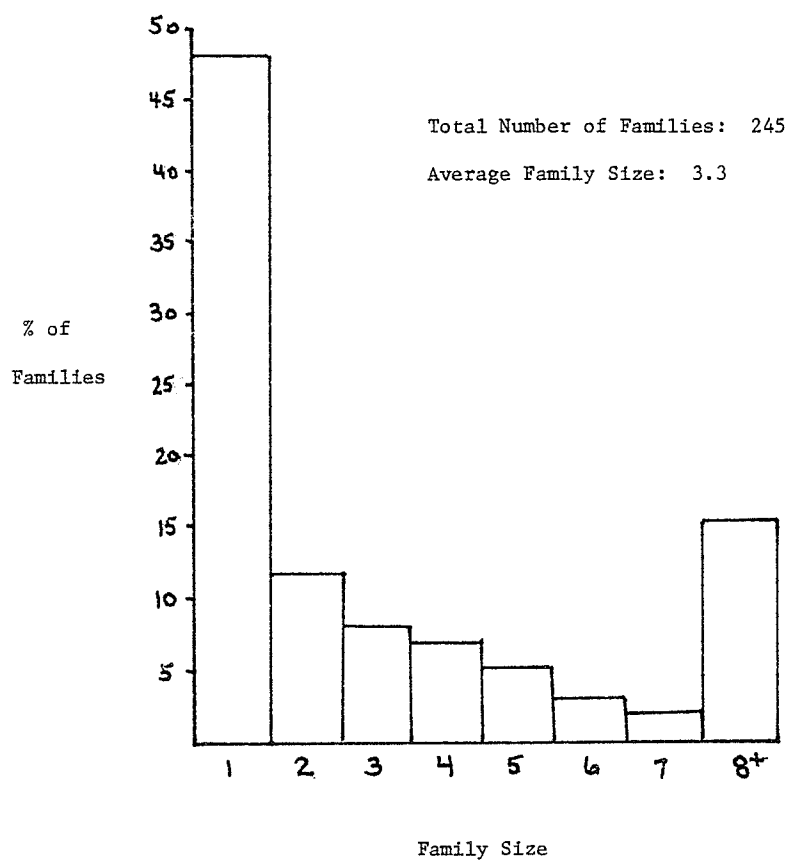
TABLE 8.4
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS 1971 - SPLIT LAKE



Source: Department of Northern Affairs, Province of Manitoba, Community Profiles, Vol. T-10: Split Lake, Manitoba.

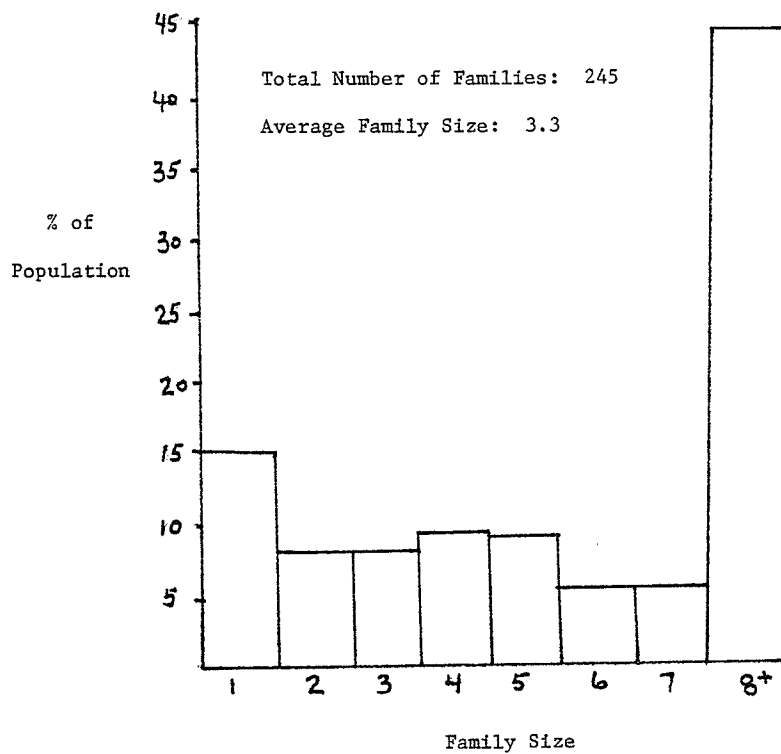
TABLE 8.5

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY FAMILY SIZE,
SPLIT LAKE, 1977



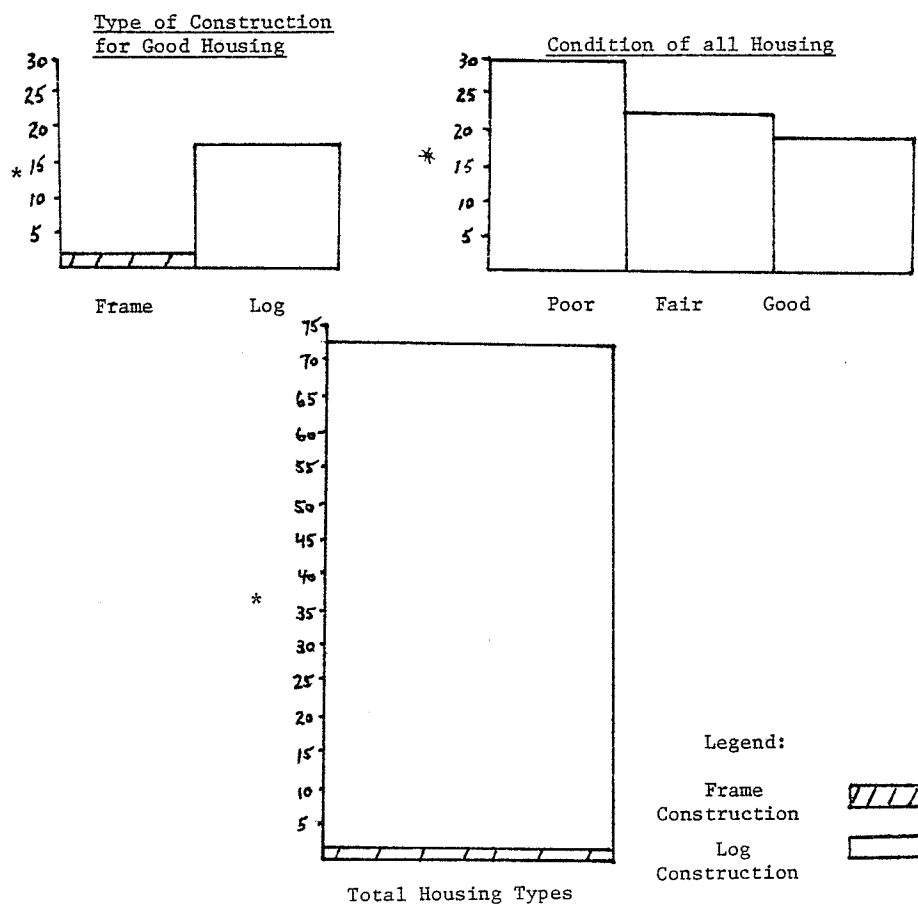
Source: Manitoba Health Services Commission Records

TABLE 8.6
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY FAMILY SIZE,
SPLIT LAKE, 1971



Source: Manitoba Health Services Commission

TABLE 8.7

SPLIT LAKE - HOUSING CONDITION

*Numbers along the vertical axis represent number of houses.

Source: Community Study For Split Lake Indian Reserve (1966),
Underwood McLellan and Associates.

over two-thirds of the existing housing is in poor or fair condition, the majority being poor. According to the study conducted by Underwood, McLellan and Associates, over one hundred and forty houses need to be constructed by 1976. Table 8.8 shows the housing requirements in detail.

Many of the housing problems could be solved if carpentry and construction training programs were established by the Department of Indian Affairs. These programs would encourage and aid local work incentive projects to further housing development on the reserve. These and other steps must be taken by governmental authorities to ensure that adequate housing is made available to the people of Split Lake.

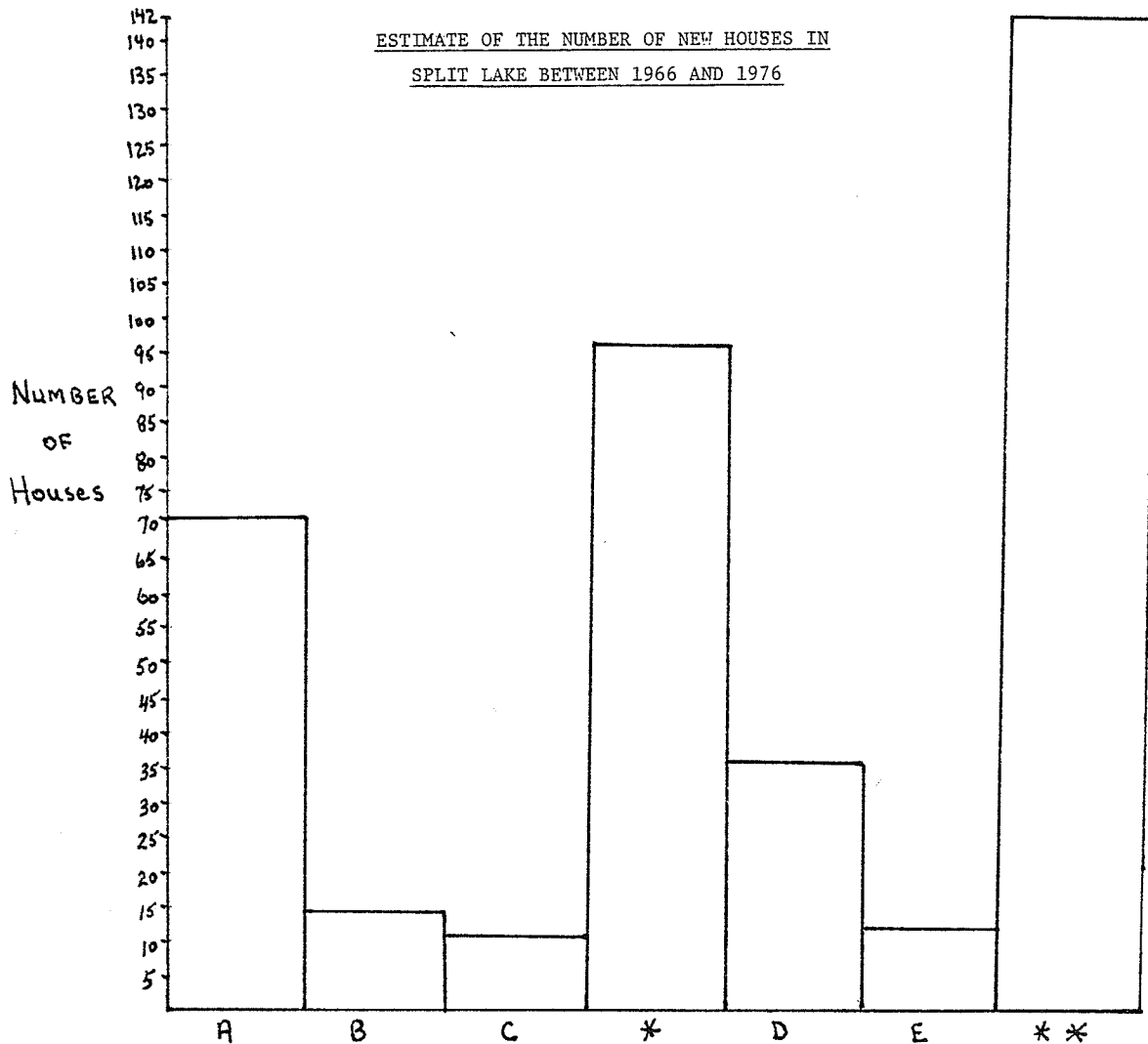
One major excuse always offered for the poor housing conditions found on most northern reserves is the lack of materials for construction. Surprisingly enough, this is not the situation in Split Lake. Tables 8.9 and 8.10 show the present use of the forested land encompassed by the reserve. Approximately forty-nine percent of the surrounding land produces merchantable wood. A great deal of this land is being used at a rate much below its potential. Gravel and sand deposits are also found on the reserve which are available for construction.

These resources are not the only ones which are not being exploited to their potential. Table 8.11 demonstrates how little is done in the fishing trade. In the summer of 1972, for example, six independent Split Lake fishermen earned a total of \$4,874.00 fishing only one-third of their legal limit.¹⁵ By establishing the previously suggested fishing co-operative, the fishermen's efforts could be co-ordinated to process, buy and sell their products. This could make their efforts both efficient and profitable.

The trapping industry could also provide a much more stable income

TABLE 8.8

ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF NEW HOUSES IN
SPLIT LAKE BETWEEN 1966 AND 1976



- A. Replacement of existing occupied houses
- B. Providing houses for the elimination of families sharing accommodation
- C. Providing houses for the elimination of single persons sharing accommodation with a family
- * Sub-total of present requirement
- D. Providing houses for the accommodation of new families
- E. Providing houses for estimated in-migration
- ** Estimated total housing needs

Source: Community Study for Split Lake Indian Reserve (1966),
Underwood McLellan and Associates.

TABLE 8.9

SPLIT LAKE AREA (MANAGEMENT UNIT #86)
FOREST RESOURCES 1970

| | Provincial Crown Land | Other |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Total forest land | 1,187,200 acres | 500 acres |
| Productive forest land | 704,800 acres | 500 acres |
| - Merchantable softwood | 98% | 100% |
| - Merchantable hardwood | 2% | - |
| - Total merchantable | 32% | 51% |
| - Young | 68% | 49% |
| Potential productive | 129,500 acres | - |
| Forested non-productive | 353,400 acres | - |
| Non-forested land | 22,300 acres | - |
| Water | 198,200 acres | - |
| TOTAL AREA | 1,407,700 acres | 500 acres |

SOURCE: Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management

TABLE 8.10

SPLIT LAKE AREA (MANAGEMENT UNIT #88)
FOREST RESOURCES 1970

| | Provincial Crown Land | Other |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Total forest land | 683,500 acres | 11,100 acres |
| Productive forest land | 86,300 acres | 5,600 acres |
| - Merchantable softwood | 80% | 100% |
| - Merchantable hardwood | 20% | - |
| - Total merchantable | 62% | 25% |
| - Young | 38% | 75% |
| Potential productive | - | - |
| Forested non-productive | 597,100 acres | 5,500 acres |
| Non-forested land | - | - |
| Water | 104,300 acres | - |
| TOTAL AREA | 787,800 acres | 11,100 acres |

SOURCE: Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management

TABLE 8.11

SPLIT LAKE COMMERCIAL FISHING¹

| A. Sellers | Species (lbs) | | | | | Limit ¹ | Number of Licenses |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|-------|------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Whitefish | Pickereel | Trout | Pike | Total | | |
| 1972 Summer | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| 1971/72 Winter | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1971 Summer | - | - | - | - | 23,260 | 20,000 | - |

No. of Split Lake community fishermen (Summer, 1972): 1

Values to all fishermen (Summer, 1972): \$250

B. Split Lake

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---|---|---|--------|---------|----|
| 1972 Summer | 32,604 | - | - | - | 32,604 | 100,000 | 12 |
|-------------|--------|---|---|---|--------|---------|----|

No. of Split Lake community fishermen (Summer, 1972): 6

Value to all fishermen (Summer, 1972): \$4,874

1. Includes only lake fished by Split Lake fishermen during the summer of 1972.
2. Total production includes production not under the limit.
3. Annual limit.

SOURCE: Fisheries Development, Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management.

through the use of the co-operative concept. Table 8.12 shows that the average value of furs during the years 1968-71 has undergone little change, but that overall income has dropped because of a drastic decline in the numbers trapped. According to Table 8.13, the number of trappers has increased by eighteen. One can therefore conclude that either the trappers are checking their traplines less frequently or that the number of fur bearing animals has been substantially reduced through over-trapping or as a result of natural cycles.

It is strongly recommended that the Government undertake a study to find out precisely the condition of the animals of the area. If their numbers have dangerously decreased, conservation training and programs should be established. As well as providing much needed information, such a study would provide incentive to the local trappers. Should the results reveal that previous conservation measures have not been successful, it will encourage the natives to feel that the Government cares about the animals and their livelihood. If the study should reveal that the animals are abundant, it will encourage the Indians to establish better, more maintained traplines. It would also tend to encourage other natives to resume or begin trapping. The furs could then be sold to either the Hudson's Bay Company or through a co-operative.

The Hudson's Bay Company

The establishment of co-operatives has been suggested for the industries of Split Lake primarily because the Hudson's Bay Company has monopolized trade in the community for nearly two hundred years. Co-operatives would introduce competition for the articles to be bought and sold, and the results of this healthy competition should be passed directly to the residents. This

TABLE 8.12
SPLIT LAKE REGISTERED TRAPLINE HARVEST (1968-1971)

| Species | 1968-1969 | | | 1969-1970 | | | 1970-1971 | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|
| | Number | Average Value | Total Value | Number | Average Value | Total Value | Number | Average Value | Total Value |
| Badger | - | \$15.00 | - | - | \$8.00 | - | - | \$8.10 | - |
| Bear | 1 | 26.50 | 26.50 | 2 | 33.00 | 66.00 | - | 35.00 | - |
| Beaver | 1,557 | 22.00 | 34,254.00 | 2,385 | 9.00 | 21,465.00 | 968 | 14.09 | 13,639.12 |
| Coyote | 2 | 15.25 | 30.50 | 3 | 13.00 | 39.00 | - | 12.15 | - |
| Ermine | 252 | 2.43 | 612.36 | 27 | .98 | 26.46 | 8 | .52 | 4.16 |
| Fisher | - | 20.50 | - | - | 23.00 | - | - | 31.20 | - |
| Blue Fox | - | 16.00 | - | 1 | 16.00 | 16.00 | - | 10.00 | - |
| Cross Fox | 5 | 16.50 | 16.50 | 12 | 18.00 | 216.00 | 15 | 21.90 | 328.50 |
| Red Fox | 10 | 14.50 | 145.00 | 18 | 10.00 | 180.00 | 25 | 12.40 | 310.00 |
| Silver Fox | - | 18.00 | - | 1 | 12.00 | 12.00 | 2 | 10.00 | 20.00 |
| White Fox | 8 | 16.00 | 128.00 | - | 16.00 | - | 1 | 15.00 | 15.00 |
| Lynx/Bobcat | 129 | 41.00 | 5,289.00 | 200 | 30.00 | 6,000.00 | 321 | 29.50 | 6,901.50 |
| Martin | - | 9.75 | - | 4 | 10.00 | 40.00 | - | 8.15 | - |
| Mink | 968 | 17.00 | 16,456.00 | 295 | 13.00 | 3,835.00 | 148 | 11.20 | 1,657.60 |
| Muskrat | 901 | 1.55 | 1,396.55 | 468 | 1.45 | 678.60 | 489 | 1.57 | 767.73 |
| Otter | 123 | 32.50 | 3,997.50 | 82 | 33.00 | 2,706.00 | 45 | 31.50 | 1,417.50 |
| Rabbit | 1 | .40 | .40 | 2 | .20 | .40 | - | .12 | - |
| Raccoon | - | 8.50 | - | - | 6.00 | - | - | 6.19 | - |
| Skunk | - | .75 | - | - | .75 | - | - | .25 | - |
| Squirrel | 286 | .40 | 114.40 | 98 | .25 | 24.50 | 17 | .25 | 4.25 |
| Timber Wolf | - | 27.00 | - | 2 | 38.00 | 76.00 | 3 | 23.00 | 69.00 |
| Wolverine | - | 52.50 | - | - | 57.00 | - | 1 | 70.40 | 70.40 |
| TOTALS | 4,225 | \$14.79 ¹ | 62,466.71 | 3,600 | \$ 9.83 ¹ | 35,380.96 | 2,043 | \$12.43 ¹ | 25,204.76 |

1 - Weighted Average

SOURCE - Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management

TABLE 8.13

SPLIT LAKE--NUMBER OF REGISTERED TRAPPERS AND AVERAGE
EARNINGS PER REGISTERED TRAPPER (1968-71)

| SEASON | NUMBER OF TRAPPERS | AVERAGE EARNINGS |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1968 - 1969 | - | - |
| 1969 - 1970 | 78 | \$453.60 |
| 1970 - 1971 | 96 | \$262.55 |

SOURCE - Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental
 Management.

is not to say that the Hudson's Bay Company is all bad, by any means. The store, being centrally located, is an all-important building. Presently, the people buy all their food, collect their mail, purchase gas and hardware, and sell their furs in this store. In many ways, it is their link to the outside world.

There has been a change since the Hudson's Bay store opened in Split Lake. He said that in the old days, all they had was this flour and salt pork and tea. They rarely had any canned foods at all, and now there is really a big selection in the type of foods that are available. He says that when the local people bring furs to the Hudson's Bay Company to sell them, all the Bay is doing is taking money away from the people. What is happening is that they are putting pressure on the people, the Indian people.¹⁶

Many of the residents are not happy with the extremely high costs of the products found in the Hudson's Bay store. There is also some ill feeling about the fact that the profits leave the reserve instead of forming a base for the local economy. The co-operative could rectify a great many of these problems.

Regardless of the difficulties, the Hudson's Bay store and its manager, Herb Hicks, provide excellent service and fulfill an important role in the settlement. Not only do they provide many of the essential services, but financially support several activities that occur throughout the year (e.g., on cleanup day, the store provides drinks, candy and cookies for the kids; the store also provides food for the community Christmas party).

It would appear, however, that the residents have reason to complain about the high cost of food and supplies. During Underwood, McLellan and Associates' survey (1972), it was discovered that food costs were approximately twenty-two percent higher than they were in the northern city of Thompson. The reason cited is the transportation costs into the community.

Air Transportation

As air service is presently the only viable, expedient means of travel to and from the Split Lake Reserve, immediate efforts must be taken to improve the community's airstrip facilities. Split Lake's situation has been neglected. York Landing, a community approximately 20 air miles to the southwest and one-third the size of Split Lake, has a regular mail service and an all weather air strip. Split Lake has none of the advantages found in this smaller community.

Government experts and Split Lake representatives should meet and formally decide on a permanent site for the airstrip. Once such a decision is reached, a modern, all weather airstrip must be constructed. As previously mentioned, the present facilities are far too dangerous to be allowed to continue in their present condition.

It is suggested that some sort of ceiling be set on the costs of air travel to community residents, at least until alternative and competing modes of travel become available to residents of Split Lake. With the completion of the all weather road into Split Lake, Thompson and, indeed, more distant centres, will become relatively easily accessible by car and truck. In addition, a ferry service could be established to provide water transportation to Ilford. The rail service to Ilford could then be used in summer as well as winter (by Bombardier) to transport supplies to the reserve.

With the establishment of these alternative transportation modes, greater accessibility to essential city services could be established. Some of the services suddenly available, which were not before feasible, would include hospital, alternative food sources, and more varied shopping centres. Similarly, the young population of the reserve would have access to a greater

job market and wider educational opportunities.

Health and Welfare

In terms of health and social welfare, the Indian has a standard of living far below the national average. The infant mortality rate is twice as high as the rate for the general population (MIB). Similarly, the mortality rate for young adults is approximately four times as high as that of the general populace of Manitoba. Furthermore, the Indian population has a morbidity rate from tuberculosis which is approximately ten times that of the rest of the population of Manitoba (MIB).

According to the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood's publication Wahbung, these statistics are directly attributable to the poverty conditions that exist among the Indians of Canada. Some concrete examples which they cite include the poor, dangerous and drastically overcrowded housing. Insufficient dental care has also been criticized by the Brotherhood. Their claims appear to be justified because, according to the 1968 annual report, only 4,443 of the 34,000 registered Indians in Manitoba have been examined by dental people.

Malnutrition also contributes to many of the health problems. This is primarily due to the cheap foods which are being eaten. Most of the Indians' protein supplement comes from their traditional activities of hunting and fishing. Also pointed out is the fact that the Indians do not have access to discount super markets on the reserve. Thereby, their accessibility to healthy food at reasonable prices is limited.

Through Wahbung, the MIB has made some useful recommendations. They draw attention to the fact that the Indian treaties were signed with the Federal Government and argue that, because of this, the Federal Government

should supply medical services to the Indian. This would remove responsibility for medical services from the Provincial Government and should lead to a greater degree of standardization than is currently provided. The MIB also point out that only nurses are normally in attendance on the reserves and they suggest that some form of hospitals be made available to the Indian settlements.

Again, the concept of the Indian desiring to help himself comes through in their suggestions. They request that Indian people receive training to become dental hygienists and technicians so that they would be better able to look after their own people. They also express the desire for community training in health care practices, dental and general hygiene, and sanitation.

It is further suggested that programs be developed for training nurses to work in northern posts. The MIB feel that trainees should be made aware of the personal hardships that can be experienced in such communities, and that they should also be aware of the special medical problems of Indians on these isolated reserves.

Furthermore, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood favours the establishment of a Board of Health. This board would consist of a:

1. regional medical director, and
2. elected representatives of the Indian people.

Their expressed purpose would be to meet with the isolated community representatives to

...operate orientation programs for the present health team; assessing total community needs...research and develop programs required and requested based on individual and collective community needs; and to survey current medical literature and be prepared to pass on this information to communities....¹⁷

Such a program would reduce the chaos which seems to characterize the present Health Services program to the natives.

Churchill River Diversion Program

Unfortunately, no matter what solutions are presented for the Swampy Cree, there will always be other obstacles that must be overcome. One such element which is beyond the residents' control is that to be created by the Churchill River Diversion Project and the Lake Winnipeg Regulation Project. In this chapter, only the repercussions of and steps that should be taken by the Split Lake community and government regarding these projects shall be discussed. More general and factual information concerning the two projects is, however, provided in Appendix E.

No one really knows the long term effects of the projects on the community of Split Lake. However, some of the immediate effects can be outlined. As a result of the increased flow of the Burntwood River into Split Lake, the level of the lake will be raised. According to the Government's newsletter, the increase will be approximately two feet. Normally the lake level is at its highest during the spring, and gradually declines throughout the year. The lowest level is achieved during the winter. With the Manitoba Hydro project in Full operation, this trend will be reversed.

Water flowing in from the Burntwood River will tend to be "less clear"¹⁸ than has been the case in the past, and this will "affect the spawning ground of the whitefish,"¹⁹ although the total effect cannot be adequately determined for at least "five or six years."²⁰ It is not, however, anticipated that the trapping industry will be seriously affected. Some of the local traplines will be flooded, but the Government appears to feel that this will be quite incidental for the residents of Split Lake.

The only other effects on trapping will be periodic flooding of some trapping grounds due to fluctuating water levels.

The Government has outlined a program of compensation for any and all people "who may suffer a loss of income or whose property or equipment is damaged as a result of the project."²¹ Unfortunately, no details are provided as to just what form this compensation will take, or the time period involved in claiming it.

The basic attitude of the Band toward these projects would appear to be one of "the Government will take care of us." On the basis of past experience, it is almost certain that this laissez faire attitude will not help their situation, and a much more vigorous approach is therefore recommended.

Education

Education is another matter which appears not to be receiving enough earnest attention. For example, on October 3, 1975, an article appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press outlining the fact that the Split Lake school had been closed for more than a month on orders from the Chief, John Wavey. The school had been closed because the Department of Indian Affairs failed to make needed repairs to the school roof, water and sewer systems. There was also a problem concerning a much postponed reconstruction job that was needed in a temporary six room classroom building. The Band was forced to close the school when negotiations broke down with the Department of Indian Affairs.

An article entitled "Schools Closed on Two Reserves," appearing on September 16, 1975 in the Winnipeg Tribune (see Appendix G) discusses the same topic. It makes the valid point that the education of students should not be sacrificed to "put pressure on the government," although the ploy has

often been used before in Split Lake and on other reserves to draw attention to grievances. The problems obviously did not present themselves overnight, and could have been solved without the need for closing the schools. Indian Affairs was derelict in not having the repairs attended to in August when a work crew was sent to the reserve. The Chief and Council did not make any efforts to arrange for schooling in any other location of the reserve and, in that regard, were also culpable.

When such a situation presents itself, the losers are the students. One possible explanation for the Council's willingness to sacrifice the children's education as a pawn could be the lack of involvement the Indian has in his children's education.

Steps must be taken to involve parents and the Band Council in the decision making process of education for the native people. The Department of Indian Affairs must lessen its control over Indian education and allow the community Band to assume progressively more responsibilities in the area of education. Greater parental involvement in classroom activities would definitely aid in the task of improving attitudes and desires on the part of the students and teachers alike.

Numerous Councils have asked permission to assume greater control over the educational system on their particular reserves. In a gesture of what would appear to be tokenism on the side of the Department, the Band Councils have been given the authority to assume control of the following areas:

1. **Public** transportation to and from the school;
2. Caretaking supplies;
3. The salaries of the caretakers; and

4. School repair and maintenance.²²

There is a possibility that other responsibilities will be transferred to the Councils, but this is entirely contingent upon the approval of senior authorities.

The Indian people want more control of their local education and in turn receive only minor appeasements. Wahbung presents some rather startling statistics which help to explain the Indians' concern.

Of those Indian children who entered school in 1951-52, only 1.9% reached Grade Twelve compared to 33.9% for all of Manitoba. Of those who entered school in 1957-58, 5.4% of the Indians reached Grade Twelve compared to 60.5% of other Manitobans. Based on past trends, a projection of those Indian children who started school in 1967-68 and should be in Grade Twelve in 1980 indicated that 10.8% will make it compared to 90.0% for Manitoba.²³

Using the Brotherhood's manner of extrapolation, 17% of the students of Indian extraction registering for school in the fall of 1978 would be expected to complete Grade Twelve in 1990, as compared to nearly one hundred percent of the Manitoba students registered.

The conclusions are obvious. The school system for Indians as presently established, is not working. If the Indian people are to achieve educational equality, higher success ratios must be achieved.

Today we witness the results of over twenty years of integration. It is obvious that though an increasing number are integrated each year, integration has failed to provide a successful education program. Many non-Indians believe that we have failed education but the truth of the matter is that education has failed us. It has failed us because it was imposed upon us, was not relevant to us, nor were we given the opportunity of being involved in designing it. Education has failed to recognize our cultural values and customs, our language, and our contributions to mankind. It has led to failure and the lowering of self-esteem.²⁴

The MIB requests that the Federal Government create school boards at the reserve level. They do not wish this to be some form of token committee, but that it have all the powers and authorities of other school

boards of the country.

The Indian Brotherhood also suggests that special classes be offered for adults and for upgrading of educational skills generally. Special emphasis, they feel, should be given to teaching of the English language and to vocational training. Such programs would be a part of their larger educational design, involving a life skills development program. The principle is that Indians should be trained to take their rightful place as full Canadian citizens.

The position of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood on education is summarized as:

To be effective, education must be nurtured in relevancy, commitment, motivation, and identifiable purpose. This process must be part of community activities and community progress.

We, the Indian people of Manitoba, believe in education:

As a preparation for total living, and in this context it extends far beyond the boundaries of what is conventionally considered schooling;

As a prime means of providing that which should be the right of every citizen: namely, the choice of where to live and work. The essential provision of those required skills that will allow this privilege of choice;

As a means by which we can be enabled to participate fully in our own social, economic, political, and educational advancement;

As a comprehensive program which must be designed to meet the needs of the total community by including offerings to people of all ages.

The present system of education is to be noted for its irrelevancy to the culture and environment in which people live; by its lack of involvement by both parents and students; by its inability to achieve its purpose without a concurrent estrangement of the student from his environment.²⁵

How can an educational program be developed that will fulfill at least most of these aspirations? One of the primary considerations must be the curriculum employed. As the Indian peoples of Canada are representative of a vast number of cultures and linguistic dialects, all curricula

must be flexible enough so that they may be adapted to the particular needs of each Band.

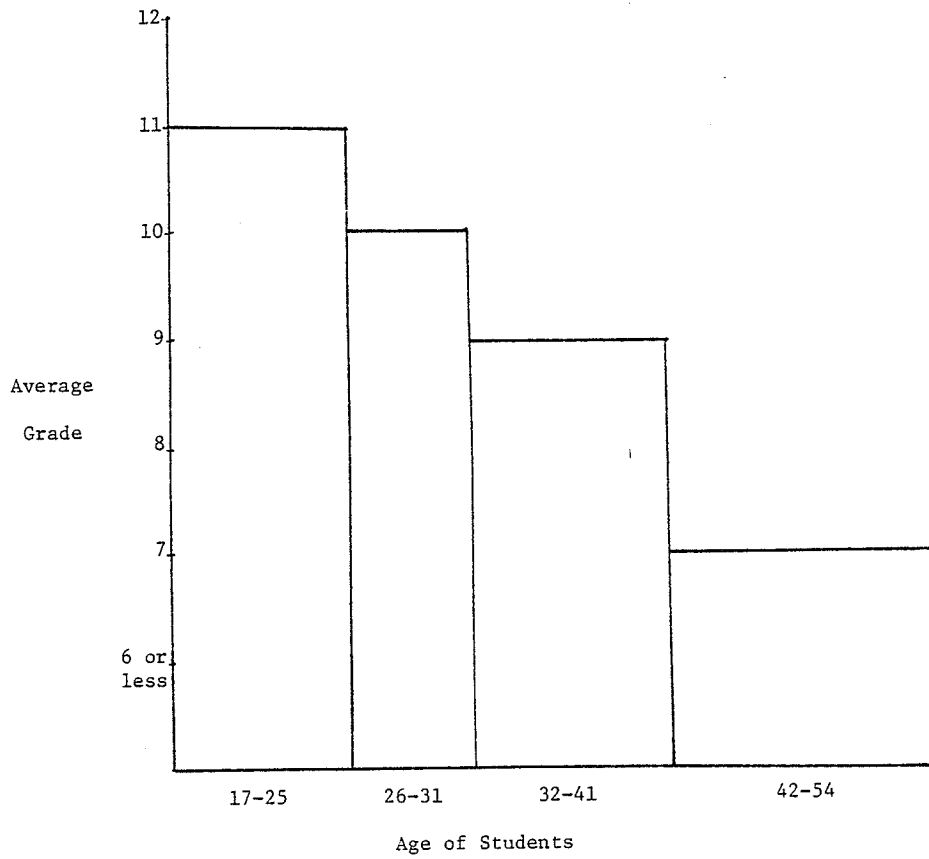
The teachers' backgrounds have also posed stumbling blocks to the educational process. A teacher with middle class norms and values approaching a class without such values is going to encounter communication barriers. It is primarily for this reason that the Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Project was developed. Through training Indian students to become teachers, many of the technical problems of instructing native peoples can be alleviated. There is no language barrier, cultural norms are understood, and a greater trust can be built between the class and the teacher when he is not considered as an outsider. The communication problems between the community and the school can be overcome much more readily by a native teacher.

It is the hope of the Brandon University program that the student teachers will provide guidance and leadership to other community members interested in self-advancement. The students in the classroom also see the "living proof" that an Indian can be successful in what was always considered the White Man's domain.

The BUNTEP program has provided opportunity to Indians who previously did not appear to have much of a chance of ever achieving high vocational or educational positions. The basic profiles of the BUNTEP students and their educational backgrounds are demonstrated by Tables 8.14 to 8.17 inclusive. These

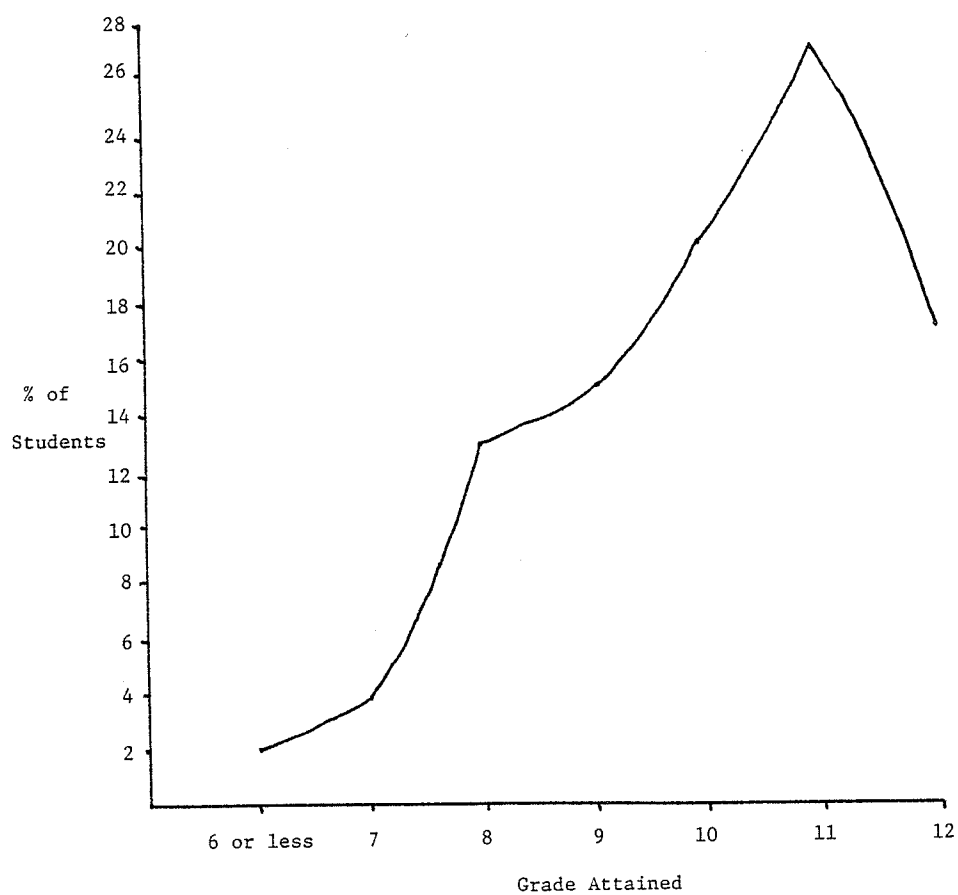
...show that the mythical "average" BUNTEP student is probably female, approximately 23 years old, with grade 10 education, responsible for two dependents, with an intermittent work history, and is a native who lives in a non urban community north of the fifty-third parallel. It is safe to say that prior to BUNTEP a person with the profile cited above had absolutely no real opportunity to gain formal post-secondary training.²⁶

TABLE 8.14

B.U.N.T.E.P. STUDENTS EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

SOURCE: This material is taken from Brandon University Native Teacher Education Project, p. 26.

TABLE 8.15

B.U.N.T.E.P. STUDENTS EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

SOURCE: This data is taken from Brandon University Native Teacher Education Project, p. 26.

TABLE 8.16
BUNTEP STUDENTS BY AGE AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND 1975 - 1976

| Age | Educational Background (Grade) | | | | | | | | | | | Row Total |
|--------------|--------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|----|----|----|-----------|
| | 6 or less | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | |
| 19 and under | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 6 | | | | 6 |
| | | | | 1.4% | 1.4% | | 5.4% | 8.1% | | | | 8.1% |
| 20-24 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 27 | | | | 27 |
| | | | 2.7% | 1.4% | 9.5% | 14.9% | 8.1% | 36.5% | | | | 36.5% |
| 25-30 | 0.0 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 23 | | | | 23 |
| | | 2.7% | 5.4% | 6.8% | 5.4% | 9.5% | 1.4% | 31.1% | | | | 31.1% |
| 31-34 | 0.0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 11 | | | | 11 |
| | | 1.4% | 2.7% | 4.1% | 4.1% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 14.9% | | | | 14.9% |
| 35-40 | 1 | 0.0 | 1 | 1 | 0.0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | | | | 5 |
| | 1.4% | | 1.4% | 1.4% | | 1.4% | 1.4% | 6.8% | | | | 6.8% |
| 42-54 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | | | 2 |
| | 1.4% | | 1.4% | | | | | 2.7% | | | | 2.7% |
| Column | 2 | 3 | 10 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 13 | 74 | | | | 74 |
| Total | 2.7% | 4.1% | 13.5% | 14.9% | 20.3% | 27.0% | 17.6% | 100.0% | | | | 100.0% |

* P. 26, BUNTEP Project.

TABLE 8.17
AVERAGE EDUCATION OF B.U.N.T.E.P. STUDENTS
BY AGE GROUP, 1974

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| 19 and under | grade 11 |
| 20-24 | grade 11 |
| 25-30 | grade 10 |
| 31-34 | grade 9 |
| 35-40 | grade 9 |
| 41-54 | grade 7 |

Unfortunately, the BUNTEP program, no matter how effective it might be, is still in its embryo stage. As a result, it will take years before native teachers will be in the majority in northern schools. One of the major educational problems is therefore that a white teacher, upon reaching a reserve school, has difficulty in communicating with the students. For the Indian child, English is, and for some time will be, a second language. Steps must therefore be taken by those responsible to ensure that teachers deal with these problems, especially at the primary level.

Because students enter school with little knowledge of English, initial instruction should be provided in the native tongue. The use of English should then be phased in. Students should be expected to take a Cree syllabics course at this level to ensure that they will not forget the Cree language.

Attempts have been made to develop English training courses for native students.

Research begun three years into the teaching of English in Indian schools has resulted in the development of the Basic Oral English Language Course for School Beginners which was introduced in September, 1962. During the year, a specialist has been working with teachers in the Manitoba schools. The new course has had a measurable effect on the school achievement of Indian children, particularly in areas where the teachers have received guidance in its application. The most significant indication from this research is the improved performance and more rapid progress of the students.²⁷

Unfortunately, this program is not being used at present, and, there is no formal program for teaching English as a second language at this time. This is at least true for the community of Split Lake.

If the teachers are having difficulty communicating with and understanding the students, then they must have all of the community support that they can attract. At the primary level, and indeed, at all grade levels, it

is essential that the home-school co-ordinator fulfill his great responsibility. This co-ordinator role itself must be seriously analyzed and altered to accommodate the increasing need for parental involvement in their children's education.

It is suggested that the home-school co-ordinator's position be broken down into two specific areas:

1. Primary Grade Levels (1-5); and
2. Junior High Grade Levels (6-9).

By clearly defining the divisions of the co-ordinator's job, his time can be much more effectively used. Within the defined parameters, this individual can encourage the parents to become involved in the school program. In this manner, he would also be able to keep the parents informed of any difficulty experienced by the teachers and students.

The role of the co-ordinator is vital in maintaining open lines of communication between parents and teachers. The channels of communication must also be maintained and strengthened between the Thompson office and the reserve. This can most effectively be accomplished by the child care officers and the children's welfare representatives taking a more active role in their client's educational concerns. Through this more involved role, they could be much more effective communication links between the Council and the Government than is presently the case.

Communication is not simply a difficulty which expresses itself between the Thompson office, the school, and the parents. There are many communication difficulties within the school.

The teachers in a reserve school find themselves in a unique position regarding job security. Normally, a teacher's job security can only be threatened if his work does not please the local school board or the principal.

Such is not the case in a reserve school, where the teacher is not only responsible to the Board of Education in Thompson and the principal, but is also totally accountable to the Band Council.

Frequently, this authority and power of the Council is not properly used. Before a teacher is hired to teach in a reservation school, he must be interviewed by the Council. This interview should provide the Band Council an opportunity to evaluate whether or not the applicant teacher will successfully contribute to the Band's objectives and priorities of education.

To demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the present interview system, a personal experience shall be recounted. To fulfill my appointment to the Department of Indian Affairs, I was sent for my interview with the Council of Split Lake reserve in the summer of 1975. I was accompanied on this trip by the Classroom Consultant for the Thompson Education District. I was given the basic tour of the school, teacherages, and the community, but the Chief and all of the Council were out of the reserve fishing when I arrived. We later managed to awaken the one Councillor who had remained in the community that afternoon.

The Indians request participation in the education process, and then do not appear to take what authority they have very seriously. This situation must be rectified by training, and involvement in the decision making

The Band does, however, exercise powers of censorship on the school. For example, as the Band objects to any discussion of the evolution process, it is not discussed within the Split Lake school curriculum. Students must, however, be given exposure to concepts and theories such as this. Without them, they cannot develop their abilities to assess and analyze. If such instruction is not given, then the students are not being afforded the type of education which is every Canadian's right.

Sometimes the Band's disapproval is not registered simply in the form of a complaint. There are at least stories about teachers being "roughed up by the local policing agency" due to the Council's and the teacher's ideas being in opposition.

All of the problems facing educators in Split Lake do not involve culture, language and racial differences or communication breakdown. One major problem involves the poor construction techniques and generally inadequate conditions of the school buildings which have resulted in a tremendous cost to the Canadian taxpayer. Most of these costs would not have been incurred if the buildings had been constructed properly in the first place. Many of the buildings are also extremely dangerous. It is therefore recommended that the same standards of building practices be made to apply to buildings constructed in the North as apply to buildings constructed in the South. These safety and construction standards must be overseen by inspectors as regularly and as cautiously as legally permissible.

Many of the required repairs interfere with the children's education. When this or safety considerations are at stake, these repairs must be attended to immediately. The concept of leaving these situations unattended until they pose hardship for community members and faculty must be stopped. An example of delay in needed repairs involves the primary school building at Split Lake. In the 1965 construction data report, it was described as "a fire trap."²⁸ It was constructed as a temporary structure for students years ago. The building lies on low-lying ground and is subject to frequent flooding and sinking. Furthermore, the building lacks any sort of fire alarm device and has inadequate electrical heating for winter use. Little has been done to make a suitable alternative for the foreseeable future. This unsafe and generally poor learning environment must be replaced immediately.

Attempts are regularly made by the Department of Indian Affairs Education Branch to improve the educational facilities in Split Lake, which they are currently attempting to do through the 5 Year Education Plan.²⁹ Section A of the plan, the proposal to landscape the land surrounding the school and teacherages, has been postponed intermittently for over two years. The project was to be completed by October 30, 1977. Landscaping was about to begin in the summer of 1976 but, when the project foreman attempted to level the playground, the tractor got stuck in a bog and was left there until the following year. Similarly, grass seed also purchased for immediate use during that summer has remained in a non weather-proof warehouse since that time. This project has still not been completed.

Section B of the plan outlines a proposed extension of the school facilities to include grade twelve and home economics and shop facilities. Construction of the extension was to "begin in 1978," however, recent financial cut-backs have postponed construction until 1979-80.

Under section C, the Band requests that repairs to the main school roof be attended to with a target completion date of August 1977. During any rain activity, the roof leaks drastically, as it has for some years. Obviously, this situation has been extremely aggravating for the school administration. To date, however, no successful repairs have taken place.

In section D, the Band expresses a desire to assume gradual control over the educational program in the foreseeable future. Immediate steps are being taken to allow the Band complete control over the educational services program. Such a move may not be advisable, however. To alleviate the conflict that has already manifested itself, it is suggested that the school regain full control over the support staff. In such a manner, regular working hours and staff schedules could be administered the most expediently. If

the Band is allowed full control, such problems as tardiness will be even more difficult to control.

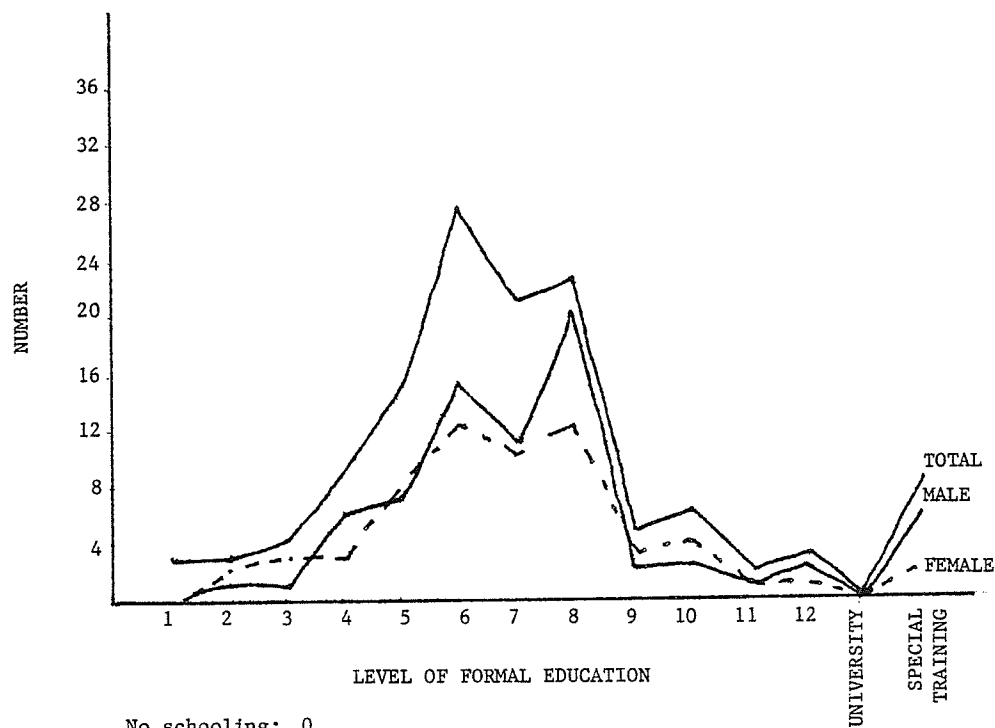
The fourth section of the 5 Year Education Plan deals with the establishment of a program to train Indian members for the School Committee. The purpose of this program would be to eventually allow the school committee to take on the role of a local school board. These training sessions are to be made available within the next two years, and, if successful, could be a valuable contribution to the aim of promoting local control over education in Split Lake. It appears doubtful, however, that the training program will receive the backing required to allow a school committee to become reality, at least in the near future.

The next main section of the plan deals with the Band's desire to own a school bus which would be used for student transportation. The Band Council is currently allocated \$5,200.00 per year for student transportation, and these funds are spent on salary for the school van driver. It is questionable whether this money is being efficiently used, as there is only one and one-quarter miles of road in the community and the trip is made twice per day, on the average, mainly to transport the driver's and his neighbours' children. Any additional expenditures should, therefore, be carefully scrutinized before disbursement.

Split Lake's educational situation is much too serious to allow such five year programs to be as ineffective as the current one. According to Table 8.18, the level of education (1969) of a cross-section of Split Lake residents is far below the Canadian norm. The majority of males surveyed had attained an educational level of grade eight, while the majority of females have a grade six to eight education.

Table 8.19 indicates that the age group having the highest level of

TABLE 8.18
SPLIT LAKE RESERVE--1969 LEVEL OF EDUCATION
FOR THOSE NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL IN 1969



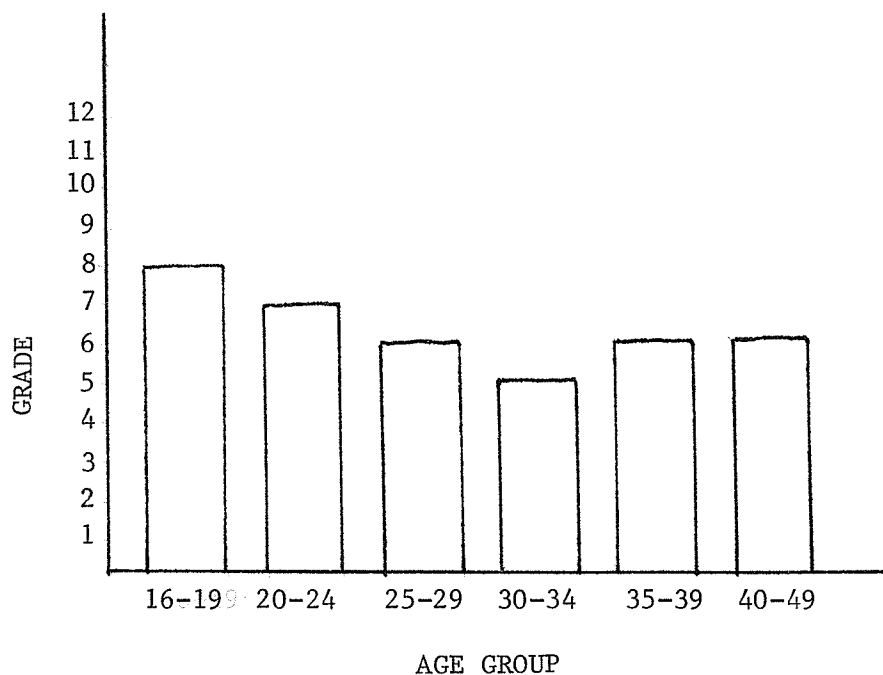
No schooling: 0

Unknown: 139

Number surveyed: 269

TABLE 8.19

SPLIT LAKE RESERVE--AVERAGE LEVELS OF FORMAL
EDUCATION BY AGE GROUP FOR THOSE
NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL, BUT HAVING
SOME FORMAL EDUCATION, IN 1969



SOURCE: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

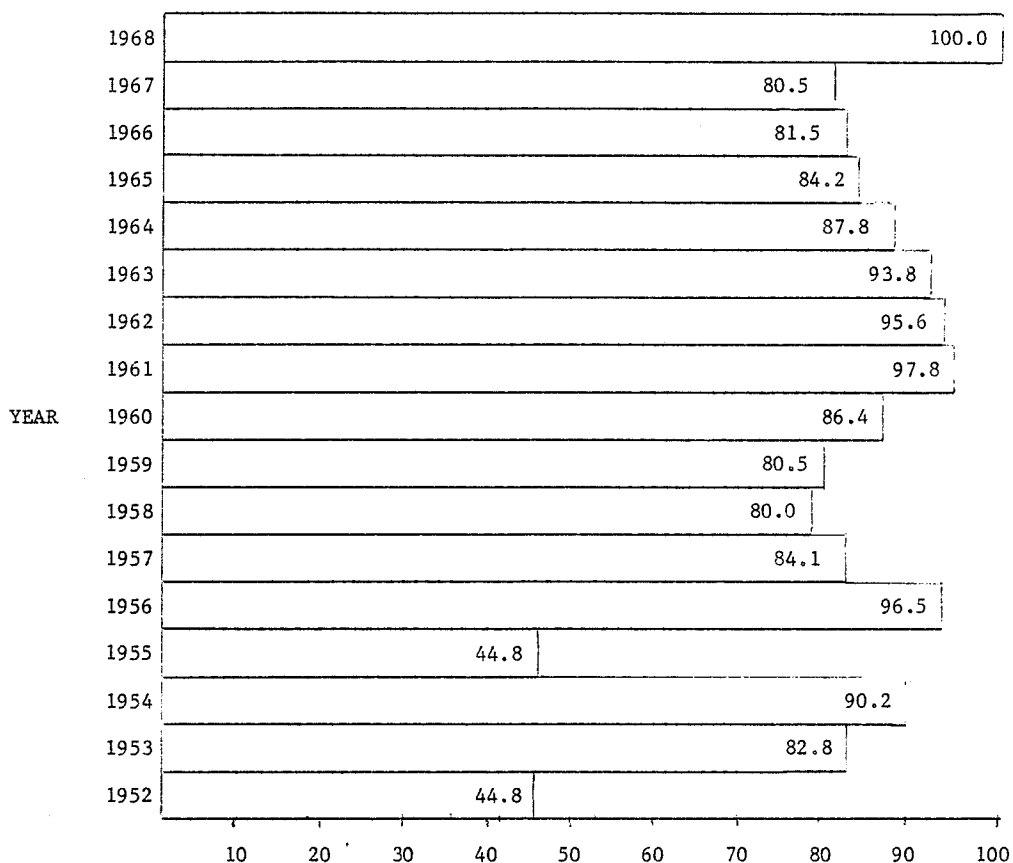
education (1969) are sixteen to nineteen years old. The trend would appear to be that the younger the age group under consideration, the better the chance that higher education will be obtained. This trend can only be expected to mushroom once the residents realize that education is the key to cultural survival.

In order to provide that type of education, changes must be made to the existing curricula. Such a revision would not mean a lessening in the importance of learning skills, but rather would promote the positive aspects of the Indian cultural system today within a broader based curriculum. This would eventually mean that when a student left the local community, he would do so with the skills and cultural identity necessary to contribute and adapt to the broader Canadian society.

There are many reasons for the current curriculum's irrelevancy for the Indian of today. One is that the course content is often incomprehensible or unsuitable for native students. For example, primary readers make many references to dogs as family house pets. The average Cree child at Split Lake and other isolated northern reserves would only have seen dogs trained as retrievers, sled dogs, or village scavengers. With such course content, it is not really surprising that many of the students are quite willing to leave school to work the traplines with their parents.

Sixty percent of the absenteeism found in the Split Lake school is associated with trapline work. The worst period of the year is during the months of March, April and May. Tables 8.20 and 8.21 demonstrate how radically the attendance figures have improved over the years. For the limited problem present now in the community, the best probable solution would be to consider changing the summer break period to the spring months when, due to economic pressure, it is most difficult to make the children attend school.

TABLE 8.20
STUDENT ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR THE
YEARS 1952-1968, SPLIT LAKE

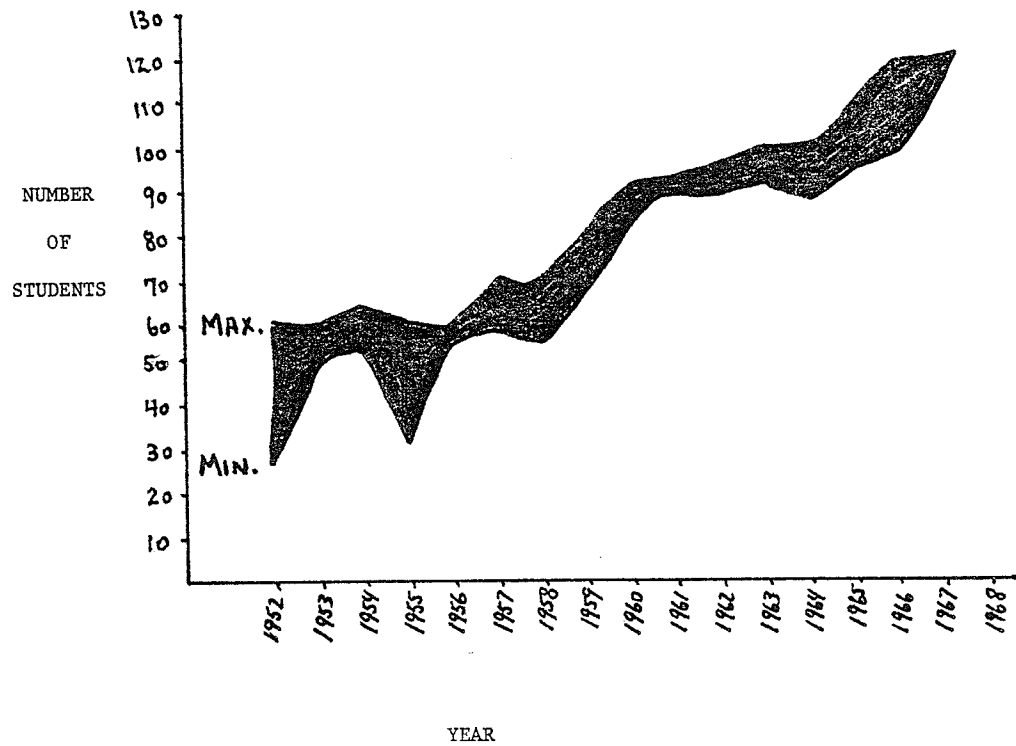


Percentage Attendance for Period 1952 - 1968

These figures were obtained from the Dept. of Indian Affairs principal monthly reports.

TABLE 8.21

MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM STUDENT
ATTENDANCE 1952-1968



These figures were obtained from the Dept. of Indian Affairs principal monthly reports.

An advisor from the Indian Band, the cultural enrichment officer, would be the most useful person in attempting to alter standard curricula. The Split Lake Band has been receiving a grant of \$1,258.00 for this person, but to date, no one has been appointed to the position.

The greatest effort to create the proper educational environment, however, must come from the instructors themselves. They must be innovative and creative in their approach to instruction in the classroom. Teachers must become more aware of and use a greater variety of approaches to materials presented in the native classroom. These approaches should also reflect differences in ability levels among individual students.

Such teaching techniques come under the heading of Special Education. Every northern school must have at least one resource teacher who specializes in this area. Ideally, every teacher would have received formal training in these concepts.

The resource teacher's responsibilities would be to provide special attention to the slow learner and the exceptional child. Other duties of this teacher would involve providing assistance for the regular classroom teachers in the area of material presentation.

The rationale behind the suggestion of creating such a position is quite simple. Teaching material dealing with the slow learner and the exceptional child are totally nonexistent in the school, so teachers are left to their own resources to help these types of students. It is also necessary that immediate steps be taken to replenish the existing library books and learning materials. A fixed percentage of the annual school budget must be regularly allocated to purchasing these items. This should ensure that better and more resource material is available to both student and teacher alike. Such a procedure would also ensure a continual build-up of

much needed books for future students of the school.

Audio-visual materials also pose a difficult situation in the resource center. Transportation times and unforeseen delays involved have rendered it nearly impossible to order such materials for use in the school. The Indian Affairs Branch should establish some sort of an audio-visual service to be run out of the Thompson office. From there, all individual school orders could be co-ordinated, thus providing much more efficient service to the northern community.

Efficiency is the key to success within a school system. Administrators must be the catalyst and sustaining element of the required harmony within the school. The easiest way to provide for this is by hiring adequately qualified personnel for administrative positions.

The administrators must be fully versed in all aspects of administrative management. This could be instrumental in removing a great deal of the friction that exists between the staff, students, the community, and the Federal Department. In this area, the Thompson Education Office must provide far greater guidance and direction than has been shown in the past.

All personnel should be hired for a minimum contractual period of two years. Wages and isolation post allowance must be maintained at a competitive level to attract professionally minded individuals. All of these recommendations would help smooth out some of the rough spots to be found in the system.

The greatest problem facing the community, in terms of education, is finding a way to keep the students in the school system for as long a time as possible. One of the major reasons for the high dropout rate among the students of Split Lake is the lack of high school facilities within easy access of the reserve. The residents have been asking for a high school for

well over sixty-two years, and still, nothing has been done. This school must be provided as soon as possible for the community. Vocational training should be included in its programs in order to prepare the potential work force. A much greater effort must be directed towards career orientation.

To accomplish this feat, the staff should organize a Career Day program. In conjunction with the Band Council and the Thompson Office, such a program would provide job awareness among the students. The Career Day concept is utilized quite successfully in the southern schools, and should become a permanent fixture of the Split Lake School. Each teacher would research and discuss one career potential, probably one that is of interest to them. Having such amenities would undoubtedly resolve many problems associated with students having to leave the reservation to continue their education.

Many of these students find themselves in difficulty due to the unfortunate circumstance of social promotions. This practice must be stopped. It is a well proven fact that no child has ever benefitted from this system.

In summary, to help prevent the Indian student from dropping out, a total reassessment of the educational programs available must be made. In rendering the education meaningful to the native student, the parents must be involved in the educational system. The cultural heritage of the Cree should be preserved, to every possible extent. For this reason, and to improve communication in the primary grades, the Cree language should be used at this level.

Local native teachers should be employed wherever and whenever possible. All of these factors help to create cultural pride, and to render education meaningful; therefore, this element must be reinforced.

Education does not only belong to the young. Adult training programs must be established which will help to meet the objective of the native people, as vocalized by the MIB.

Split Lake community, as it exists today, has been shaped to a large extent by governmental plans and philosophies, all of which have been attempts to assimilate the native peoples. The time has come to realize that not all of these have been successful. Only one method has appeared to have been left untried. This involves allowing the native people to have a say in the formation of their own destiny. Many of the community members' hopes and aspirations revolve around the youth of today. They realize, as did Diogenes in writing "The Cynic" that "The foundation of every state is the education of its youth."

Footnotes

¹Rogers, Edward S., "The Fur Trade, the Government and the Central Canadian Indian," Arctic Anthropology, Volume 2, #2, p. 39.

²Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, Wahbung, Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1971, p. 33.

³Ibid., p. 36.

⁴Ibid., p. 160

⁵Ibid., p. 161.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 162.

⁸Ibid., pp. 162-163.

⁹From the audit statement opening with trial balance April 2, 1975. This was completed by S. W. Reid & Co. Chartered Accountants, 334 Ross Avenue, The Pas, Manitoba.

¹⁰As referred to in Band Budget, 1975.

¹¹From the audit statement, Ibid.

¹²As referred to in Band Budget, 1975.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Underwood, McLennan and Associates, Ibid.

¹⁶From an interview with Peter Beardy.

¹⁷Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁸A statement from the Office of the Premier, January 31, 1975.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²A newsletter from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to the Chiefs, School Committee Chairmen, Band Managers, February 16, 1972.

²³Wahbung, ibid., p. 104.

²⁴Ibid., p. 109.

²⁵Ibid., p. 116.

²⁶Robertson, D. A., Loughton, A. J. B.U.N.T.E.P.: The Profile of a Teacher Education Project, Brandon, Brandon University, Faculty of Education, 1976.

²⁷Department of Citizenship and Immigration--Report of Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1963. Roger Duhamel, F.R.S.C., Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, Ottawa, 1963.

²⁸Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Indian Affairs Branch Education Division, Construction Data Report, 13-5-65.

²⁹See Appendix.

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APPENDIX A

ANGLICAN CHURCH CORRESPONDENCE

Letter

Split Lake

March 5, 1896

Thanks be to God who has brought us so far in safety. I left home on the 12th of February with an Indian guide, and my boy as dog driver: my guide knew nothing whatever of the country thro' which we had to travel, so we could only strike away South in the hope of finding our way; we had provisions for twelve days and this with our five dogs made our load very heavy, and travelling very slow, the first week but we had fearful weather, constant North West gales, we spent a day and a half in camp, and two days we travelled in one of the worst storms I have known, we never saw half a mile ahead the whole two days, and at times could not see a dozen yards, yet our guide kept on due South, four days out we got into the woods and here the snow was very deep (fully three feet) and at each step we sank above the knees, on our 8th day we came across an Indian camp and hoped to get some food for our dogs, but they had gone away and we could get nothing; on our 13th day we came to another camp but these also had left; and there were many signs that they were badly off; our dogs were quite without food and we had very little, and were four or five days from this place; nothing could be done, but press on and this we did, tho' very slowly, two days from here we met three Indians from whom we got a little food for ourselves, but our poor dogs had to go on as best they could, we reached this post on our 18th day and were truly thankful to be where our wants could be supplied. There are nearly 400 Indians at or near this place and they are mostly from York Factory: the Wesleyans have offered to send them a teacher but they refused saying they wished to have one from their own Church and have promised to build a school house during the coming summer so I have promised to send Joseph Kitchikesik here in August to begin the Mission Bishop Newnhaur informed me that he wished to form a new Diocese out of this Northern part of Moosonee, and if this can be done, as I hope it may, this place would make a very good centre for our work as both Y.F. and Churchill can easily be reached from here, but I do trust some one may be sent to us who will push on the Northern work, and not spend all his energies on Cree work alone.

I am staying here for a week in order to recruit our dogs and start for Y.F. which will take us about 10 days. I shall stay there over Easter and hope to reach home about the 20th of April. I am thankful to say that my strength is keeping up and I am feeling better than when I left home.

With kind regards

Believe me

Faithfully yours

J. Lofthouse¹

1. Split Lake 1896 [letter from Joseph Lofthouse MG7B2] Books and letters of The Church Missionary Society, London, Public Archives of Canada.

Rev. Mr. Fox.

March 7/1906

Appendix (1)

"...I have to state that the Split Lake Indians number about 250 and get their living by hunting and fishing during the Winter and working in the H.B. Coy's freighting boats during the summer.

Roughly speaking their Hunting grounds extend to the North West to Washheowago Lake then on to the junction of little & Gt. C. River's east to Limestone & Fox River then in a line towards Wintering Lake.

Having heard that the Department gave to Nelson River to provide a school and a grant towards paying a teacher a keep to make application for the same few over to be extended to Split Lake in case the Indians do not get treaty this year.

I would undertake to teach the school and there is a building which with a small outlay could easily be used as a temporary school house. We would also need a grant of books, plates, pens, pencils, ink and lesson charts."

(1) Public Archives of Canada, Indian Affairs, RG 10, Volume 6247, File 543-1, part (1), The Pas-Split Lake Day School, The Pas District, 1906-1949.

A letter dated March 16th, 1916 from Split Lake, C. G. Fox to J. R. Bunn, Esq., Winnipeg:

Dear Sir:

The Indians, in council assembled, have asked me to approach the Department through you and beg that something may be done for them from an educational point of view.

In discussing the matter, they pointed out the splendid building erected at Norway House, Cross Lake, and The Pas, I have at their request asked the Department several times for a boarding school, but have been informed that there were no funds for this purpose.

Might I suggest an improved day school and earnestly beg the Department to consider this. It could be an uplifting and very encouraging institution for the Indians, while not breaking up the home life and unfitting the children for life as Indians. We have 185 children of school age, about 100 boys and 85 girls. I can assure you Mr. Bunn the 95% of those would attend an improved day school in the summer, and if the Department saw their way to keep the school open during the winter, 50% could easily be induced to attend during the winter, as the men would leave their families on the Reserve while they went hunting. Then one good warm meal would mean so much to the young Indians who often have to go for days without a good meal.

I have tried a day school but it was not a success. Then I have always impressed the parents with the fact that they must teach their children to read and write in their own language, this has been done to a certain extent, and most of our Indians can read and write in their own language.

Education must be a preparation for success in life, and an improved school would be this, under the conditions at Split Lake. The H.B. Ry, will be within 25 miles of Split Lake next summer so that material for school could easily be taken over land in winter and suitable building erected.

Before the railway came, it would have been a very great expense to the Department, and I can understand the Department hesitating before incurring the expense.

However the reserve is now surveyed and a school site allocated. Then there is a large plot of land given to the church part of which might be used for school site and farming operations so that the site would present no difficulty whatever...

Yours sincerely
(Sgd.) C. G. Fox
on behalf of the Band

In a letter dated 15th February, 1917 from R. Fletcher, Esq., Deputy Minister of Education, Winnipeg, to L. D. McLean, Esq., Asst. Deputy and Secretary.

Sir:

Referring to your favour of the 7th instant, I beg to say that from the information I have received I believe the children at Split Lake, for whose education this Department is responsible number not more than twenty-five percent of the children that will be provided for by a school established jointly under your Department and ours.

As stated in my last letter I am informed that the Dominion Government has at that point a building suitable for a school and is therefore in a position to provide the accommodation without more delay. We should bear twenty-five percent of the expenses of operation, but we would be prepared to assume one-third of the cost of operation...

We shall be glad to make all necessary arrangements in connection with the school at Split Lake and to attend to the operation of it.

Yours truly,

R. Fletcher

Deputy Minister.

A letter dated December 12, 1918 from Split Lake Mission, W. H. J.
Walter to the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

Sir:

...The number of names in the register is 51. These are boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 16.

Girls 30

Boys 21

School was held from 9 to 12 for five days a week. I have to do all my chores, wood cutting, cooking, breadmaking and housework, in addition to other missionary work.

The school was opened 12 times and then the most of the children left for the hunting grounds with their parents, and we thought it wise to heat the Church for the sake of about 20 children. The accompanying two photos were taken after some had left.

One or two of the older girls could repeat the alphabet and one could read a word or two in English when I started. Before they left they could nearly all repeat the alphabet, some of them knew their twice times table and most could do the simplest addition and subtraction. All this was of course in English. But I have no teaching plan except 8 reading cards, large size and a few books on arithmetic far too advanced for them. Mr. Macdonald the Indian Agent at The Pas is acquainted with the conditions here, and I have been in communication with him. I am willing to teach 15 hours a week until you can get a teacher. Personally I think that this is sufficient for the Indians here at present. One fact is patent, they must learn English, with the line only 30 miles away. If you can't do anything then I must teach them these cards forwards and backwards, but I am determined that these children shall learn to speak English and so be able to meet the new conditions here, caused by the railway passing through.

Yours respectfully

W. H. J. Walter

A letter dated September 4th, 1919 from J. W. Waddy, Esq., Indian Agent, The Pas, Manitoba, to the Assistant Deputy Secretary, Ottawa; stating:

Sir:

I have the honor to endorse herewith a report of work done by Mr. Walter on the Split Lake Reserve during the past summer...

Mr. Walter is in the town here at present and reports that all the children are away on the annual hunt, and will remain away until next summer. The missionary is a hustler, and does his best, but as I reported previously he has the misfortune to lose his entire flock of children just as they are beginning to learn something. He is going to have the R.N.W.M.P. building put in shape as directed by the Department, and perhaps will soon be able to have a school run on regular lines. The report enclosed shows the number of children willing to go to school.

I would be obliged if the Department can see their way to allow a grant to Mr. Walter for his work this summer.

J. Waddy, Esq.

A letter dated July 20th, 1920 from J. W. Waddy, Indian Agent, to J. D. McLean, about Split Lake Day School.

Sir:

...I inspected this school in company with Mr. Inspector Jackson in the Annuity payment day and found the new building and equipment in pretty fair shape. The school children themselves were getting on very well, in fact I do not understand how they have learned so much in such a short space of time. The teacher explains that when the parents are absent in the winter with the children, that he sends letters at every opportunity with little lessons to each family, so that when the children appear in school again they have not forgotten everything they learned previously. The school will run for probably three or four months more before the parents leave for the hunting grounds again.

J. W. Waddy

Indian Agent.

On November 27th, 1929, A. F. MacKenzie, Asst. Deputy and Secretary (Acting) wrote to W. G. Tweddell, Esq., Indian Agent at The Pas, that

Sir:

His Lordship the Bishop of Keewatin has nominated Mr. Harrison as teacher of the Split Lake Indian Day School. The Department is approving of his appointment and it is understood that Mr. Harrison has already taken charge of the school. The salary allowed him will be at the rate of \$85 a teaching month.

Mr. Harrison is stated to be twenty-seven years of age, holds a second class professional certificate and has had ten years' teaching experience....

APPENDIX B

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND
NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CORRESPONDENCE

Split Lake, Sept. 7, 1903

My Lord:

I beg leave to call your attention to the state of affairs in this part of your diocese, which, unless remedied and that immediately, will doubtless place your Missionary and his flock in a very serious position before many years have elapsed.

About 20 years ago fishing operations 'on large scales were begun on the south of Lake Winnipeg and have been rapidly pushed forward until a point 50 miles below Cross Lake was reached last winter.

Of course the fish coy's have a right to apply their trade as far as Cross Lake, because up to that point the Indians receive treaty, their again. The government licenses issued by Mr. H. McKay of Grand Rapids entitle the holders to fish the water of Cross Lake.

At present Messrs. Ewing and Fryer, Fish Merchants, Selkirk, have a store about 30 miles below Cross Lake at what is known as the Red Rock Rapids, and their, employees fish north of this about 20 miles.

Furthermore these merchants are preparing to run a tug from Red Rock Rapids down to Split Lake as the waters south are practically depleted, few sturgeon being caught, I consider this illegal....

Signed,

Rev. C. G. Fox,
Split Lake.

SOURCE: Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 4009, File 249, 462-1)
Micro Reel C-10, 171 P.A.C.

Then in Oct. 2, 1903, J. Keewatin, Bishop, wrote a letter to D. Laird Esq., Commissioner of Indians Affairs, asking that "...some step be taken in the interests of the Indians" in regard to Rev. Fox's complaint.

SOURCE: Indian Affairs (RG 10, Vol. 4009, File 249, 462-17)
Micro Reel C-10, 171, Public Archives of Canada.

D. Laird then wrote a letter to S. Bray, Chief Surveyor, to clear the matter up. The letter reads as follows:

Winnipeg, 5th Oct. 1903.

Sir:

I beg to enclose here with a copy of a letter dated the 2nd instant from the Bishop of Keewatin covering one from the Rev. C. G. Fox, Missionary at Split Lake, with reference to fishing operations being carried on in waters below Cross Lake, and the fear expressed that if this is allowed to continue the Indians of the Split Lake District will be deprived of their principal source of subsistence.

There is considerable force in Mr. Fox's representations and I would suggest that the matter be taken up with the Department of Fisheries, and of the fishing companies have no right to operate below Cross Lake that they be stopped at once. If, however, this cannot be done, and if it is found that the Indians referred to live within the limits of Treaty No. 5 the Department may have to pay them eunnuty money and assist them generally in accordance with the terms of the above Treaty. It appears from the tracing of the boundaries of Treaty No. 5, forwarded to me with your letter of the 13th time that at last a portion of Split Lake lies within the above boundaries.

The Secretary,

D.I.A.N.D.

Ottawa.

Your obedient servant

D. Laird,

Indian Commissioner.

SOURCE: Indian Affairs, (RG 10, Volume 4009, File 249, 462-1) P.A.C.

On October, 1903 The Chief Surveyor writes

Dept. of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, 13th, Oct. 1903.

The Deputy Supt. General:

Referring to the letter here under of the 5th, inst. from Hon. Mr. Laird, I beg to state that...The tracing to which he refers will probably have been made from maps showing the limits of Treaty No. 5 which were compiled from the description in the Treaty itself, which on account of the district being comparatively unknown would be liable to be indefinite.

I have lately secured a copy of a map entitled "Map of part of the Northwest Territory" inclosing the Province of Manitoba exhibiting the several tracts of country ceded by the Indians of Treaties No. 1 2 3 4 5 6 to accompany report of the Honourable D. Mills Minister of the Interior, January, 1877.

This would appear to be authoritative without question. On it Split Lake is shown unmistakably to be altogether within the limits of Treaty No. 5. It would, therefore, appear that apart from any consideration of rights the Indians of Split Lake may have in connection with the fisheries mentioned by Rev. C. G. Fox they would appear to be entitled to participate in the annunties provided for under the terms of the said Treaty No. 5.

S. Broy

Chief Surveyor.

SOURCE: Indians Affairs (RG 10, Volume 4009,
File 249, 462-1) P.A.C.

The investigation continued into several years.

In a memorandum dated Ottawa, 5th, October, 1905, to the Deputy
Superintendent General:

Referring to the attached memorandum regarding the Indians of Split Lake...If the hunting grounds of these Indians are within the limits of the Treaty they certainly should be taken into Treaty but this remains to be established....The memorandum deals with the subject as if the Indians were outside Treaty. We have no definite information on that point and everything hinges upon where their hunting grounds are.

Accountant

SOURCE: Indian Affairs (RG 10, Volume 4009,
File 249, 462-1) P.A.C.

In a letter from Chas. G. Fox, from Split Lake, it reads as follows:

P.S. We have had Indian school teaching the children in their own language since December and we have had an average of 20 and I am quite sure we would have this average all the year. In summer we would have absent 60 on the roll (S.D.) C.G.F.

Split Lake
c/o H.B. Company
W. Selkirk,
Ref. No. 63/G 7th March 1906.

The Hon. D. Laird,
Indian Commissioner,
Winnipeg.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your favor requesting information re Split Lake, Nelson River and Churchill Indians, I beg to state that the Split Lake Indians number about 250 and get their living by hunting and fishing during the winter and working in the H.B. Company's freighting boats during the summer. Roughly speaking their hunting grounds extend on the N. West to Waskewaga Lake then on to the junction of Little and Gt. C. Rivers, east to Limestone & Fox Rivers then in a line towards Wintering Lake....

The end of August would be a good time to meet the Split Lake Indians who make Split Lake their camping place during the summer...

I might say that the Split Lake Band are expecting Treaty this summer on account of the two years being up; as their delegate whom you saw in the Wpg. office said on his return that they would get Treaty in two years....

Having heard that the Department gave help to Nelson River to provide a school and a part towards paying a teacher I beg to make application for the same favour to be extended to Split Lake in case the Indians do not get Treaty this year. I would undertake to teach the school and there is a building which with a small amount could easily be used as a temporary school house. We would also need a grant of books, slates, pens, pencils, ink and lessoncharts.

We would also be very thankful for a small grant of medicines as they are greatly needed at this place. I would see that they are carefully used and properly dispensed as I have been getting medicines from funds of the Mission but am hoping that the Department might also, assist, the supply I get from home is never enough to supply the needs of the people. What we need most is Cod Liver Oil, cough mixtures, genuine liniment, iodine, pingatives and strengthening plasters.

Hoping you are quite well and trusting you will favorable
consider my requests on behalf of our Indians.

Yours sincerely,

(S.D.) Chas. G. Fox, Anglican Missionary

SOURCE: Indians Affairs (RG 10, Volume 4009,
File 249, 462-1) P.A.C.

In a letter from the Office of the Indian Commissioner for the Northwest Provinces and Territories, Winnipeg, 26th March, 1907.

Sir:

I beg to enclose a copy of a letter from Rev. Charles G. Fox, of Split Lake on Nelson River, giving various information about the Indians of the district. Split Lake is bordering partly on the North Eastern limits of Treaty No. 5. As a matter of fact part of their hunting grounds are within Treaty lines. The Reverend gentleman, who writes the letter, was here some years ago, and talking about possible changes which might ensue from the opening up of that part of the country for Hudson Bay Railway or other purposes....

Nevertheless, a matter is brought up which might be attended to without delay, viz., the giving of a grant towards the maintenance of a school at Split Lake. The sum of \$200.00 as in the case of other schools at Split Lake. Of the district, would be sufficient for the purpose at present, and if it is too late to place the amount in the supplementary Estimates, I presume we could draw on the grants of other schools outside of Treaty limits of which we never hear absent.

If the Department takes a favorable view of this suggestion, which I hope it will, I would like to be informed soon, in order that supplies such as school books, other school material...may be ordered in time to be shipped by the earliest opportunity.

Your obedient servant

D. Laird,

Indian Commissioner.

SOURCE: Indian Affairs (RG 10, Volume 4009, File 249, 462-1) P.A.C.

In a letter dated April 8th, 1907, from Inspector of Indian Agencies, Lake Winnipeg and Rat Portage Inspectorate Stonewall, Manitoba, to The Secretary Dept. of Indian Affairs.

John Summers Inspec. Ind. Agency outlines the limits and extent of the Split Lake Indians hunting grounds.

...The population [Split Lake] is about 250....Their hunting grounds may be described:----

- (1) Draw a line from the point where the Little Churchill River junctions with the Larger Churchill south-westward to the Wintering Lake.
- (2) Draw a line from Wintering Lake Northeastern ward to Fox Lake including all that Lake.
- (3) Draw a line from Fox Lake norward to the Junction of the two Churchill Rivers the point of starting.

In this way you have covered the hunting grounds of the Split Lake people practically but care must be taken to individe the was-ka-ow-wah-gew Lake which is their most important locality.

These people get their living by fur hunting and by working in the Hudson Bay Boats. They are not a well to do people yet they gather a good deal of fur.

I think an adhesion to Treaty No. 5 would be a very desirable arrangement owing to the location of the head-quarters of our Norway House Agency and stipulations might be made that no grants should be given....

Sir

Your Obedient Servant

John Summers Inspec. Ind. Ag.

SOURCE: Indian Affairs (RG 10, Volume 4009, File 249, 462-1)

letter #307160

In a letter dated October 17th, 1907 from John Summers, Inspector of Indian Agencies to the Hon. David Laird, Indian Commissioner, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Sir:

In accordance with instructions received from Ottawa and also consent of the Assistant Indian Commissioner in your absence I left Winnipeg on the 27th of July for Split Lake Keewatin to prepare the way for the payment of Treaty there next summer....

I sailed from Selkirk on the 29th at one A.M. reached Warrens Landing on the 31st took canoe from Norway House August 3rd. reached Nelson House August 13th and arrived at Split Lake on the 19th returning reached Norway House on the 28th Selkirk on the 2nd. of September and Stonewall the same day....

Split Lake

At Split Lake I met all the people men women and children. I had free Conventions with the Chief and the two Councillors and with the Catechist of the Church of England and the Seargent of the Royal North West Mounted Police.

I took the census and found that the natives numbered 287 in actual count or making allowance for material increase say 300 in all for next summer. A list was made showing how many were men how many were women and how many were boys or girls. This will be a guide to whoever makes the payments and a copy of this list (1) will refurnish to the Department on request.

The announcement that the Government would pay Treaty to this Band next summer was received with great satisfaction and they expressed their willingness to adhere to the terms of Treaty No. 5 so as to be an equal footing with their friends of Norway House and Cross Lake.

(1) then called on council and discussed matters connected with the payments in the following order.

(1) Time of Payments

The Chief said that from the 15th to the 25th of June was really the only time when they could be all together. It was explained that all summer long they were freighting for the Hudson's Bay Company for the other Tenders doing business with them and only their woman would be in the vicinity of Split Lake and those would be here and there where ever fish could be obtained. In June they gather from their hunt and about the first of July they began the boating season. Some time after the 15th of June and before the first of July should be appointed for Treaty Day.

(2) Reserve

The Council stated that the Reserve had been selected and would include the Hudson's Bay Headquarters, the Church of England Mission and the land adjacent from the Nelson River West and North. The size of this Reserve would be left to the discretion of the Department. It was particularly requested however that the survey be made at an early date. The Band is willing to recognize the following claims to be included in the reserve.

The Church of England Mission

The Hudson's Bay Company

The Royal North West Mounted Police

Kyer Brother Trudeau

(3) Treaty Gifts

The Chief emphasized the fact that they were Hunters above all things and asked that traps, nets, and ammunition be furnished instead of agricultural implements which would be of no value to them. He suggested and emphasized the request that in view of the land that no ploughes, harrows, or other heavy implements are desired of this paragraph.

It was further requested that some young cattle should be furnished from time to time.

The last wish expressed was for a supply of Flour pork and tea for the destitute to be used in the winter months when suffering and want are rife....

My findings therefore must be summerized as follows:

| | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|---|
| Split Lake | 300 people | | |
| Cross Lake | 117 " | NON TREATY | |
| Norway House | 200 " | " | " |
| Fisher River | 50 " | " | " |
| Total | 667 | | |

It is now in order for me to make some suggestions growing out of my trip and my interviews.

(5) With the Indians and my knowledge of the ground to be covered and the methods of travel to be adopted, and I do this with dire regard to economy and efficiency.

(1) The people of Split Lake claim that the Government made no offer to admit them, into Treaty when negotiations were first made with the Norway House and Cross Lake Bands.

It is further affirmed that they expressed their entire agreement with the population submitted to them at that time. The Department however failed to carry the agreement into effect.

In view of this it was arrangement by the Council that back pay was due to them and they respectfully asked that this might be forthcoming.

This argument I confuted as far as possible because I felt sure that such a proposition would not be entertained for a moment. It might not be in kind form for the Department to allow for the first year a bonus of say 3.00 per head just to show the good will of the Government. It can hardly be said that we have no precedent for such a course.

(2) Owing to the distance to Split Lake and the difficulty of travel I think it will be impossible for the agent at Norway House to take the new work and have his reports in insufficient time to meet the wishes of the Department.

It is also a matter of fact that the present Norway House Agency is unwilling and the work in perforce more or less imperfectly done owing to the distance of the Agent from a great portion of his work.

It seems but proper for me to suggest therefore that some readjustment of the Agency be made with a view to the more effectual handling of the Agency. To this end I think that another Agency is necessary and I respectfully suggest the following arrangement:

Norway House Agency

Poplar River

Grand Rapids Saskatchewan

Norway House

Cross Lake

Split Lake

Lake Winnipeg Agency

Black River

Hollow Water River

Blood Vein River

Fisher River

Jack Head River

Little Grand Rapids

Pegangekurn

The natural center of this new Agency would be at or near Dogs Head.

Should such a suggestion be for any reason unacceptable to the Department then my alternative recommendation would be that a special appointment be made of the Inspector or either offices to pay at Split Lake owing to the great distance for it is practically 400 miles from Warren Landing will take about 20 days.

(3) The suggested means of conveyance for the Split Lake trip is a York boat. There are many portages and so other method will in my judgement be of equal values. The Hudson Bay Company will supply boat and crew or a boat could be built for about 250.00 and a crew engaged at Norway House.

(4) The cost of a trip to Split Lake will be about as follows:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Boat hire 3.00 per day for 20 days | 60.00 |
| Wages of two men for 20 days at 2.00 | 400.00 |
| Provisions for party 13 at 5.00 for 20 days | <u>100.00</u> |
| | 560.00 |

As it was impossible for me to have the report ready in time to have this extra work incorporated in the estimate I now respectfully ask that an amount be placed in the supplementary estimates to provide for extra expense involved as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Bonus for 300 at Split Lake at 3.00 | 900.00 |
| Communities for 667 annutants at 5.00 | 3335.00 |
| 1 Chief at Split Lake | 20.00 |
| 2 Councillors at Split Lake at 10.00 | 20.00 |
| Treaty Gifts at Split Lake | 400.00 |
| Extra Treaty Gifts at Norway | 275.00 |
| House and Cross Lake | |
| School at Split Lake | 300.00 |
| Stationary and Medicine Split Lake | 150.00 |
| Cost of Treaty Trip to Split Lake | 560.00 |
| cont. Surveying Reserve Split Lake | <u>1000.00</u> |
| Total | 6960.00 |

(6) It will also be necessary for me to ask authority to elect one Chief and two Councillors at Split Lake.

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant

John Summers.

Inspector of Indian Agencies.

SOURCE: Indian Affairs (RG 10, Volume 4009, File 249, 462-1)
C-10, 171 Micro Reel Frame 315722

In a letter from John Summers dated August 30th, 1908 (after the signing of the Treaty with the Split Lake Indians) to the Honorable, The Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, Canada--he writes about his grant successful trip with no difficulties. The letter in part.

...It was found that the people of Split Lake were living in eager expectation of our arrival. A Royal salute of many guns was fired in our honor and replied to with a right good will and we landed amid much cheering and received a most cordial welcome.

Negotiations were carried on on the 26th of June and business was conducted with dignity and despatch. The white men of the locality had prepared our way most effectively. I cannot help making honorable mention of Sergeant G. D. Butler of the R.N.W.M.P., Alexander Flett of the Hon. H. B. Co., and the Rev. Mr. Fox, Missionary of the Church of England. The advice given to the Indians by these men made our work very easy.

The only point of importance raised was the question of Bonus and at the request of the Chief this was placed at (\$) Five dollars per head.

SOURCE: Indian Affairs (RG 10, Volume 4009, File 249, 462-1)

APPENDIX C

HUDSON BAY COMPANY CORRESPONDENCE

Letter

Norway House

July 5th, 1886

Joseph Wrigley, Esquire
Trade Commissioner
Hudson's Bay Company

Dear Sir:

...I am sorry to say that the decrease in the Beaver Trade is even more than I anticipated when I wrote you on the subject in March. The Posts in this vicinity that have sent in their Returns already show a decline of nearly 100%...The Split Lake Sections used to be our best field for such furs as Beavers, marten, and otters, but last autumn, after equipping [sic] Indians, Servants and boat and dispatching them from here, they did not reach the place, as the Indians thought it too far away and the means of living to [sic] precarious. They mostly all settled at Cross Portage for the winter, that is, about 60 miles north of our Post at Cross Lake...

I remain, dear Sir,
Your most obedt. Servt.

Ewen Macdonald.

SOURCE: H.B.C. Archives, Post 1870, Section D, Volume II
D.20/40 June July 1886 Commissioner's Office Inward Correspondence

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Inspecting Officer | J. McDougall |
| Date of Inspection | July 14, 1889 |

Report

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| District | Norway House |
| Post | Split Lake |
| Person in Charge | William Aitkeu (Clerk) |

Page 233-238

A - Buildings

Split Lake Post consists of two rough log Shanties roofed with bark.

(1) One building 18 x 23 is divided into two rooms - one occupied as a dwelling house by the clerk in charge, and the other used as trading room and general store.

(2) The other building is 16 x 14 occupied by the servants.

The post is situated on the north shore in the narrows near the Outlet of the lake and close to the mouth of Asseau River.

B - Stock

When the post was visited the clerk in charge was absent on the trip to Norway House with the Returns. A servant had been left to look after the property.

The goods were packed up with exception of a small supply, left with the man for trade, and the stock could not therefore be examined.

D [sic] Accounts

The post Books had been locked up and no information about accounts could be obtained....

G - General

The post is built beside the one belonging to Carscadeau and Peck. It is about 250 miles from Norway Ho : by way of Cross Lake and Nelson River, a route very expensive to boat on owing to the number of large rapids.

The Indians who trade here belong to York and hunt in the Lake country drained by the Lime Stone River which is about 100 miles down the Nelson beyond the post, but owing to several great falls that occur below Gull Lake the traders could go no further and selected the present site for their station. From this point the Indian camps are visited at short intervals throughout the winter which entails a journey of 7 or 8 days march on the round trip.

The cost lauded price of goods at York and Norway House is about the same and it would therefore be more advantageous to have an Outpost from York established on the Lime Stone River which would be reached by a boat voyage of about 125 miles on a good river free from Portages. The post would be close to the hunting grounds of the Indians, and near the lakes where fish are plentiful and some of the Indians have houses and should it be necessary to visit the camps of the hunters it would probably not be more than a days journey. A large establishment of men and dogs has to be kept up at Split Lake to watch the traders which would not be necessary at Lime Stone River. See Report on York under G.3.

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Inspecting Officer | J. McDougall |
| Date of Inspection | January 1890 |

Report

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| District | York |
| Post | York |
| Person in Charge | Murdoch Matheson (Chief Trader) |

Pages 316-317

G - General

3. As long as there is competition the Outpost of Shamatoa had better be kept up. The establishment of an Outpost on the Lime Stone River about 125 miles up the Nelson River from York is recommended. This would enable the Split Lake Outpost of Norway House District to be abandoned as that Outpost has been kept up on account of the Opposition attracting the York Indians towards Norway House District. The establishment of this post would enable competition to be met more successfully and the furs to be obtained more cheaply. With a post at this point more of the York Indians could probably be induced to hunt here; as has already been said, furs are reported to be plentiful and as fish and game are generally abundant the Indians would live well and the post could be economically kept up.

SOURCE: H.B.C. Archives, Post 1870, Section D, Volume II
D/25/6 1889 Inspection Reports

Split Lake post was established in the year 1886, and is situated at the north end of Split lake, which is part of the Nelson river. The post was first established to meet the requirements of a number of Cross lake and Norway House Indians who hunted in the vicinity. In the year 1888, however, a number of York Factory Indians came inland and settled in the surrounding country, the present band being their descendants.

The native population numbers some three hundred people. they are of the Swampy Cree tribe, Cree being the language spoken.

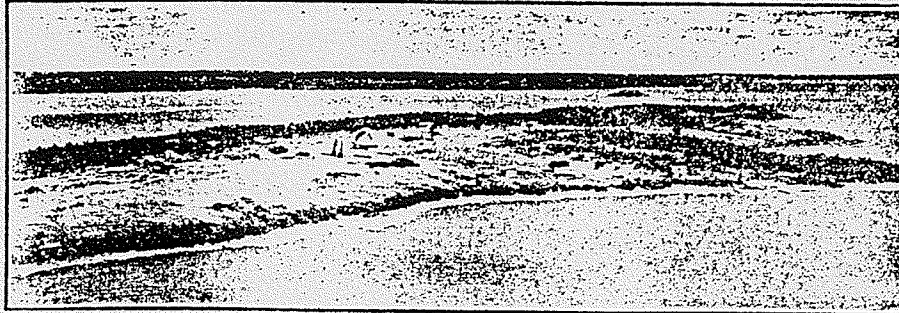
Previous to the construction of the Hudson Bay railway, supplies were brought from Norway House down the Nelson river to the post by York boat. This route was abandoned in 1916 and the supplies are taken in via The Pas to Landing river (Mile 279, Hudson Bay railway) and thence by canoe to the post a distance of twenty-six miles.

Since the Hudson Bay railway has been built, quite a number of the Split lake natives have settled along the line from Mile 214 to Kettle Rapids, Mile 330, making necessary the establishment last fall of a new post, called Gillam, at Mile 327.

The Anglican mission is situated about six hundred yards east of the post. There is no resident minister at the present time, the services being held by William Kitchekeesick, an Indian catechist.

All kinds of garden vegetables are grown at Split Lake with success. Summer frosts are practically unknown and the germination of vegetables, owing to the long hours of sunshine, is exceedingly rapid.

William Aitken was the first manager of this post, succeeded amongst others by the following: Alexander Flett, late Leslie Laing, A. C. Clark, and the present manager, A. W. Anderson.

*Split Lake Post From the Air**H B C Posts, Keewatin District**No. 8—Splitlake Post*

By S. J. C. CUMMING, District Manager

SPLIT Lake post was established in the year 1886, and is situated at the north end of Split lake, which is part of the Nelson river. The post was first established to meet the requirements of a number of Cross lake and Norway House Indians who hunted in the vicinity. In the year 1888, however, a number of York Factory Indians came inland and settled in the surrounding country, the present band being their descendants.

The native population numbers some three hundred people. They are of the Swampy Cree tribe, Cree being the language spoken.

Previous to the construction of the Hudson Bay railway, supplies were brought from Norway House down the Nelson river to the post by York boat. This route was abandoned in 1916 and the supplies are taken in via The Pas to Landing river (Mile 279, Hudson Bay railway) and thence by canoe to the post a distance of twenty-six miles.

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APPENDIX D

SUMMARY OF THE INDIAN POSITION ON EDUCATION, AS
PRESENTED BY THE MANITOBA INDIAN BROTHERHOOD

SUMMARY OF THE INDIAN
POSITION ON EDUCATION

Indian parents must have FULL RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTROL OF EDUCATION. The Federal Government must adjust its policy and practices to make possible the full participation and partnership of Indian people in all decisions and activities connected with the education of Indian children. This requires determined and enlightened action on the part of the Federal Government and immediate reform, especially in the following areas of concern: responsibility, programs, teachers, facilities.

RESPONSIBILITY

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Local Control | Until now, decisions on the education of Indian children have been made by anyone and everyone, except Indian parents. This must stop. Band Councils should be given total or partial authority for education on reserves, depending on local circumstances, and always with provisions for eventual complete autonomy, analogous to that of a provincial school board vis-a-vis a provincial Department of Education. |
| School Board Representation | It is imperative that Indian children have representation on provincial school boards. Indian associations and the Federal Government must pressure the Provinces to make laws which will effectively provide that Indian people have responsible representation and full participation on school boards. |
| Transfer of Jurisdiction | Transfer of educational jurisdiction from the Federal Government to provincial or territorial governments, without consultation and approval by Indian people is unacceptable. There must be an end to these two party agreements between the federal and provincial governments. Future negotiations with provincial Education Departments for educational services must include representatives of the Indian people acting as the first party. The Federal Government has the responsibility of funding education of all types and at all levels for all Indian people. |
| Indian Control | Those educators who have had authority in all that pertained to Indian education have, over the years, tried various ways of providing education for Indian people. The answer to providing a successful educational experience has not been found. There is one alternative which has not been tried before: in the future, let Indian people control Indian education. |

PROGRAMS

- Kinds A wide range of programs is needed in the Indian community. The local Education Authority must take the initiative in identifying the needs for adult education, vocational training, remedial classes, kindergarten, alcohol and drug education, etc., etc. The local Education Authority must also have the authority to implement these programs, either on a temporary or long-term basis.
- Language and Culture Indian children must have the opportunity to learn their language, history and culture in the classroom. Curricula will have to be revised in federal and provincial schools to recognize the contributions which the Indian people have made to Canadian history and life.
- Cultural Education Centres Cultural Education Centres are desperately needed. Considering the vital role that these Centres could play in cultural, social, and economic development, it is imperative that all decisions concerning their evolution, i.e., goals, structure, location, operation, etc., be the sole prerogative of the Indian people. The Minister is urged to recognize the rights of the Indian people in this matter. He must insure:
- (a) that the Indian people will have representatives on any committees which will decide policy and control funds for the Cultural Education Centres;
 - (b) that enough funds are made available for capital expenditure and program operation.

TEACHERS

- Native Teachers and Counsellors The Federal Government must take the initiative in providing opportunities in every part of the country for Indian people to train as teachers. The need for native teachers is critical. Indian parents are equally concerned about the training of counsellors who work so closely with the young people.
- Non-Indian Teachers and Counsellors Federal and provincial authorities are urged to use the strongest measures necessary to improve the qualifications of teachers and counsellors of Indian children. This will include required courses in Indian history and culture.
- Language As far as possible, primary teachers in federal or provincial schools should have some knowledge of the maternal language of the children they teach.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Qualification | It should be the accepted practice that only the best qualified teachers are hired for Indian schools, and always in consultation with the local Education Authority. |
| Para-Professionals | More Indian teacher-aides and more Indian counsellor-aides are urgently needed throughout the school systems where Indian children are taught. The importance of this work requires that the candidates receive proper training and be allowed to operate at their fullest potential. |

FACILITIES

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Kinds | Education facilities must be provided which adequately meet the needs of the local population. These will vary from place to place. For this reason, there cannot be an "either-or" policy, which would limit the choices which Indian parents are able to make. In certain localities, several types of educational facilities may be needed: e.g., residence, day school, integrated school. These must be made available according to the wishes of the parents. |
| Substandard | Substandard school facilities must be replaced and new buildings and equipment provided in order to bring reserve schools up to standard. Financing of such buildings and development programs must be dealt with realistically by the Federal Government. |

INTEGRATION

Responsibility for integration belongs to the people involved. It cannot be legislated or promoted without the full consent and participation of the Indians and non-Indians concerned.

CONCLUSION

There is difficulty and danger in taking a position on Indian education because of the great diversity of problems encountered across the country. The National Indian Brotherhood is confident that it expresses the will of the people it represents when it adopts a policy based on two fundamental principles of education in a democratic country, i.e.:

- parental responsibility, and
- local control.

If this policy is recognized and implemented by officials responsible for Indian education, then eventually the Indian people themselves will work out the existing problems and develop an appropriate education program for their children.

Source: M.I.B. paper summarizing Indian position on Education, as presented in Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, Wahbung, Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1971.

APPENDIX E

THE CHURCHILL RIVER DIVERSION PROJECT

APPENDIX

According to a newsletter written to the residents of Split Lake (from the office of the former Premier, Ed Schreyer, dated January 31, 1975), the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba in 1966 consummated a covenant concerning

...the development of the Nelson River for hydro electric energy purposes. Also in 1970 and 1971, the Manitoba Government initiated work on Lake Winnipeg Regulation and the Churchill River Diversion respectively. During that time, two million dollars was set aside to organize a special Federal-Provincial Study Group...composed of representatives of Manitoba Hydro, the Federal Government, and the Government of Manitoba...

to study the proposed hydro electric project. It is interesting to note that at this stage of the planning and study, no Indians whose land will be affected were involved.

The newsletter further states that the hydro development project "...will have some negative effects on your community..." but at the same time states that because of previous hydro-electric developments on the Nelson River, many benefits have been derived by the people of Split Lake (i.e., colour T.V., general availability of the power to run electric appliances). Furthermore, the letter states that the Government will do everything possible to compensate and provide "...at least comparable options available..." for the people so affected.

The reaction to this newsletter from the MIB can best be summed up by the resume they provided for it.

The purpose of this letter and brochure, as I see it, was to put forward a view that the Hydro scheme was not as bad as it seems. The aspects which they considered positive were

emphasized. In general, the information bulletin provides very selected and biased information.¹

The government has pointed out that electrical facilities have provided a number of benefits for the people of Split Lake. By this, the Government appears to be stating that it provides the Split Lake people with certain privileges that other full Canadian citizens do not have. Such, however, is not the case. These so called benefits are simply common rights enjoyed by every Canadian citizen. Why should this situation be any different for the Treaty Indians of Canada?

Historical Framework

As of 1975, Manitoba Hydro has been regulating Lake Winnipeg water flow into the Nelson River. Towards the latter part of 1975, Manitoba Hydro has been diverting water from the Churchill River into the Nelson River. This has been done in connection with the Churchill River diversion scheme.

Since the Burntwood River and the Nelson River both flow into Split Lake, it will lie directly in the path of the Churchill River Diversion Project and the Lake Winnipeg Regulation Project. Both the diverted waters of the Churchill River and the maintained regulatory control over Lake Winnipeg will undoubtedly have a tremendous effect on the lives of the people of this small community. Although no one actually knows to what extent these damages will manifest themselves--its effect will be catastrophic on a people's culture and way of life.

¹Resumé of the letter from the office of the Premier, January 31, 1975, and information brochure for the residents. Author: Ralph Abrahamson, Research, MIB.

Why are these projects being built?

According to Provincial Government spokesmen, these projects are being built to meet the ever increasing demand for cleaner and cheaper sources of energy. The newsletter reads:

...The Nelson River is the single greatest natural source of electric power that the Province of Manitoba has, and the electric power that is available from the Nelson River and diverted Churchill River waters is cheaper and cleaner than power which could be obtained from coal, oil or other sources of energy...

According to Manitoba Hydro's plan, a series of dams will be built along the Nelson River at strategic locations "...between Lake Winnipeg and the sea..." Their findings indicate that the Nelson River experiences a gradual drop of 700 feet throughout its journey from Lake Winnipeg to its outlet at Hudson Bay. By regulating Lake Winnipeg's water flow, a greater volume of flow can be maintained at critical periods throughout the year when electrical power demand is at its highest (winter months). Similarly, dams could either be built on the Churchill River or have its waters diverted into the Nelson River, maximizing and utilizing dams already built on the Nelson. According to Manitoba Hydro experts, the latter appears to have been the favorite in terms of economics. Obviously, the latter decision plays more on human hardship and personal loss. These do not appear to be priorities in this governmental enterprise.

How Will the Churchill River Diversion Work?

Div

According to the newsletter, the Churchill River waters will be dammed just north of its entry into South Indian Lake. This site is called "Missi Falls Control Structure." This structure will regulate

water flow into the South Indian Lake area. It is here that a water storage reservoir will be created, increasing the size of South Indian Lake. The surrounding lands will be flooded.* At the end of this Lake, a diversion channel is to be built to regulate water flow from the South Indian Lake area, down into Rat River to another control and generating site (Notigi) and finally into the Burntwood River system. Here it will finally meet with the waters of the Nelson River, at the site of Split Lake.

What Stage is the Churchill River
Diversion Project at Now?

The South Diversion channel (at the southern point before waters flow into the Rat River) has been constructed and is closed. Similarly, the Missi Falls Control Structure was completed in the fall of 1975 and has been functioning since that time. The Churchill River flow has been reduced. The water level in South Indian Lake has already risen and expected water diversion was to initially take place "...by the end of 1975..."

*It has been estimated that South Indian Lake will be raised "...10 feet higher than the average level of the Lake and about 5 feet above the highest high-water mark found at South Indian Lake..." (847 feet above sea level).

APPENDIX F

FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR EDUCATION IN SPLIT LAKE

Thompson District Service Centre
P. O. Box 1240
Thompson, Manitoba
R8N 1P1

December 30, 1976

578/25-1-053 (E)
25-18-053

Mr. K. Wastesicoot, Chief
Split Lake, Manitoba

Dear Sir:

Re: Five Year Education Plan for Split Lake

At our meeting on Wednesday, December 29, 1976, the following items were presented as proposals for the development of a five year programme for education in Split Lake.

a. The Band wishes the landscaping of the school and residence areas to be completed by October 30, 1977.

Note: The Band has pointed out that fill must be used to fill in low areas around the school as well as the large area of the playground. A certain amount of fill is readily available from the topsoil graded to one side in the construction of the airstrip as well as the topsoil left in a mound near the six classroom complex.

b. The Band wishes to have an extension built to the main school building in order to have grades nursery through twelve offered. It is desirable that construction begin in 1978.

Note: The construction of a wing to the main building is designed to do away with the six classroom complex as well as to include grades ten, eleven and twelve. The addition should also include home economics and shop facilities as these would be utilized by the adults of the community for evening classes.

c. The Band wishes the roof of the main school building redone as it still leaks. This work should be completed during July and August of 1977.

Note: The Band has suggested that an on-the-job supervisor (a resident of Split Lake) is needed to ensure quality work.

d. The Band wishes to assume local control of the total education programme in the near future. At this time, the Band wishes to take over education services programme at a time.

Note: As a step in this direction, a Band Council Resolution has been submitted requesting that the vacant janitor position be administered by the Band effective April 1, 1977. At this time, the Band is interested in seeing what other communities have experienced in relation to assuming local control of education.

e. The Band wishes the School Committee to receive training in order to function as a local school board.

Note: A series of training sessions should be made available within the next year or two. A beginning training session could be held within the first six months of 1977.

f. With the expansion of the community, daily transportation will become a necessity in the near future.

g. The Band wishes the Department to purchase a vehicle for the school.

Should there be any errors or omissions; or should the Band have other areas of concern that should be included in this proposal, corrections and additions will be made by telephone as discussed at the meeting. In any event, a confirming telephone call will be appreciated once you have studied the above proposals.

Yours truly,

J. H. Bagacki
Dist. Supt. Education.

APPENDIX G

SOURCE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Meeting told more Indian teachers needed

By Patrick McKinley
Tribune Education Reporter

Northern Indian children are still being turned off by an education system dominated by whites from southern Canada, speakers said at a recent conference on teacher training in Winnipeg.

The days are now gone when Indian children were strapped for speaking in their native language, and projects in several native communities are now training Indians to teach by giving them classroom experience.

But white teachers are sometimes reluctant to cooperate in the training programs, out of fear the Indians will later take over their jobs, several speakers said.

They said Indian children — to whom English is often a foreign language — are still being alienated in schools where teachers speak only English and where the subject matter contains little the children can relate to.

Matthew Garrick, an Indian who is training as a teacher in the remote Manitoba community of Cross Lake, said children in isolated areas soon learn to think of themselves as "dumb Indians" when their courses deal with "apartment blocks, red lights and green lights and boxcars."

He said Indian teachers can understand the cultural shock that hits Indian children when they enter school, because they have experienced it themselves.

Mr. Garrick said that as a child he looked forward to going to school until he got there.

On his first day in school he broke a pencil lead. He spoke only Cree. His teacher spoke only English. He had never seen a pencil sharpener in his life.

Mr. Garrick said his first impulse was to run.

Such experiences will continue to alienate native children from the education system unless Indians gain more local control over their schools, he said.

"At Cross Lake I haven't seen one (Indian) person yet who has gone to university and education has been going on for more than 100 years."

Lou Morano, co-ordinator of a teacher training program at Island Lake, said developing native control of education, and co-operation between whites and natives, is hampered by the behavior of some Indians.

"People who have been colonized ... have developed a number of ways of coping with this," he said.

"One is the 'Uncle Tomahawk' approach — you manipulate the white man by shuffling and jiving or by cringing and shaking."

"Another is the Mau-Mau method," he said. Such natives adopt the attitude that "if you criticize me you must be a racist."

He said white teachers must be encouraged to co-

operate with the members of Indian communities. Many teachers are doing just that, but others are resisting change.

Mr. Garrick said Indians do not want to shove white teachers out of the education system, but want to work with whites to make the education of Indian children more relevant to them — and one way of doing this is to have more Indian teachers.

"I wouldn't like a school district to hire a native person merely because he was a native person," said Rita Sandy, student in a University of British Columbia program to train native teachers.

She said native teachers should come out of training programs with good qualifications and should be hired on merit.

The UBC program was set up because "there were many native people concerned about the direction of the present education system and about huge dropout rates at all grade levels."

Thelma Cook, co-ordinator of the UBC program, said "native people were not identifying themselves in hordes to the university for teacher training but at the same time there was a real groundswell movement throughout British Columbia to increase the number of native teachers."

Schools in Split Lake...have not yet opened....In Split Lake, the problem is a leaking roof. Chief John Wavey and his band council have kept 330 students out of the school...to put pressure on the government to repair the building.

Work crews in August did not solve the problem. But repairs are now under way to the school, built only last year, Jim McIntyre, district manager for the Indian Affairs Department said Monday.

It appears the problem was caused by rain drifting between the eaves and roof during storms.

Special hoods are being made in Winnipeg and installed at the school to stop the leaking.

A sewer and water line which also caused complaints is being repaired now, Mr. McIntyre said.

Chief Wavey, in a telephone interview from the reserve, said the students will stay out of school until repairs are finished, sometime in October....

SOURCE: Article in the Winnipeg Tribune, September 16, 1975, entitled "Schools closed on two reserves," no by-line.

APPENDIX H

TEACHER INTERVIEWS--TRANSCRIPT

Interviewee #1

Q. What brought you to Split Lake?

A. We taught for two years on an Indian reserve. We did enjoy teaching Indian children, so we thought we would go back to the North and teach again. We wanted to teach on a reserve that had little violence....

Q. So you chose Split Lake for that reason?

A. ...Not really--there wasn't that much choice for us. This Superintendent said 'we have two places for you--Nelson House and Split Lake' so he flew us to Split Lake and then was going to take us to Nelson House. I don't know what happened in the meantime. He said, well, the Nelson House positions have been filled and he said that Split Lake was the only one left.

Q. What are some of the educational problems facing Split Lake School as you see it as a classroom teacher?

A. Gee, I don't know, there are so many. Well, first of all, English is a foreign language. To them, it's a second language....

Q. How would that be a problem? Maybe you can elaborate.

A. I don't know--from my own experience, I found that they had very limited vocabulary, and the textbooks which we used were far too difficult for them. The textbooks which are used are designed primarily for kids in the southern schools...

Q. White middle class?

A. Yes, that's right. Well, I don't know, the curriculum just didn't suit them. It wasn't a proper one for these kids to teach them....

Q. So you mentioned English was a second language to them...

A. Right, they had problems with the vocabulary and understanding the curriculum?

A. Yes, they had a limited vocabulary, but then not much experience. The things that you talk about in the textbooks they haven't come across, they haven't seen. Like from my own experience, I like to see things, I like to try a lot of things that were abstract. Most of the time, the students just sat and listened

to us, like, well, I was teaching Social Studies to them. You're sitting in Split Lake, but you're talking about Manitoba and Winnipeg. For Grade 5, that's what their Social Studies curriculum was. Most of the children couldn't understand the things that I was talking about. For example, a farmer, right? They've never been on a farm. They've never seen all the machinery that they use on a farm, so some of them have never seen a cow, or a pig, and they didn't know what I was talking about. And all these different crops and grains, some of the kids didn't know what wheat looked like, or barley. When talking about buildings in Winnipeg, and escalators, they didn't know what escalators were. So it was rather difficult for me to explain to them, and was difficult for them to understand also the things that I was talking about.

Q. Because they had no conception of what the terms were?

A. Let alone what that actually was in real life.

Q. Were there any other problems that faced you as a new teacher going up to Split Lake, and through your so many years of experience at Split Lake?

A. Really, there were so many. Things like punctuality. You try to tell them to be here on time. That's why so many people say that time didn't mean a lot to them. They didn't plan ahead of time, so I don't know if school meant very much to them. It's just because their parents said, 'well, you get up and go to school' whereas myself, when I go to university, I tell myself that I am taking this course and must go and attend this lecture. If I miss, then I am going to miss a lot of notes. But I don't know how these kids felt. But I don't get the impression that somebody was after them, driving them, telling them to go to school, whereas when I went to school, I felt like that it was kind of a responsibility, that I must go to school.

Q. Well, for one thing, you've paid for the course and you must get your money's worth.

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Was staff turnover a problem in Split Lake?

A. Yes. I would say that many of the principals would come and go from year to year. We got very frustrated many times seeing a new principal coming one year and starting all over again....

Q. Right from day one again?

A. Right. And you know all of these things, and you get kind of frustrated, and you like to see different things happening...

You want to see your principal as a leader helping you, coming up with all these different ideas, rather than you telling him, well you do this, and do that. About Bob, we enjoyed because one thing about him was, he knew what he was doing and he did make quite a few changes.

Q. Which makes a difference, eh?

A. Yes, it does make a difference. He was much better than the other principals.

Q. Were the school facilities adequate enough for your needs?

A. I would say that they were pretty generous. There were a lot of things available, I would say. In some ways, we had quite a lot, in other ways, not so much. First when I arrived at Split Lake, there wasn't enough supplies and facilities. Later on, they began to build up the audio-visual equipment. It depends on the teachers, it depends on how well you use the supplies. A lot of stuff got wasted. The year Bob came, he made sure that the supplies were allotted accordingly. We had to make a formal request to what we wanted in supplies, therefore, he kept a tight control over it. During other years, the door was left open and anybody could use any supplies any time, and it dwindled very quickly. Many times we had to go without.

Q. As you see it, how can these problems that you have outlined be resolved?

A. I would say that they should have an experienced principal who is able to stay more than one year, and teachers who could stay a little bit longer...

Q. How about curriculum and English as a second language? How might that be resolved?

A. I think that parents should be more interested, more involved in their students' educational affairs. Like on parents' day, some of them did come, but if my child was going to school, I would want to know quite a lot about his progress in school, in the classroom, and how he is getting along with other kids, rather than just sitting there and letting the teacher tell me how he or she is doing. I think that parents should show more interest in school. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong. Perhaps there should be more teachers from the community. They would probably understand much better than us.

Q. How could you resolve the curriculum problem? You've mentioned something about a revised or enriched curriculum for Social Studies. Can you tell me something about that?

- A. Sure. In Social Studies, I did a unit on Split Lake and then we did a small unit on another community, The Pas.
- Q. Were the kids interested in that?
- A. Yes they were.
- Q. Do you see that by enriching the curriculum, by making it more relevant to the students, resolves the problem of curriculum?
- A. Yes, it does resolve part of the problem. In science, it was a little more difficult. The students got more out of science by doing practical things in the classroom. Students learned more things by actually going through the experience themselves. That's what is lacking in Split Lake. There is not too much things for students to do. For example, we were teaching about the metric system, and there are not too many things to tell kids about the metric system. We found it rather difficult to switch on to a different system of measurement. For example, using a scale, the students had little knowledge of scaling.
- Q. Did you use the out of doors very often to apply some of your classroom theory?
- A. Uh, you mean to bring the kids out of doors, outdoor education? No, not too often. I should have tried. Again, I thought I would give them a little more responsibility when I was teaching them when talking about all these different things and diet. I wanted these kids to remember when they bought a box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, it usually tells you what vitamins are contained within the package. Not too many kids were interested in that. There was only one; I remember one boy who brought a little piece of cardboard from the box into the classroom to show me the different vitamins found in corn flakes. I was rather disappointed to find that the students were not that interested.
- Q. What is the largest improvement that you would like to see implemented in the Split Lake School?
- A. Well, first of all, I think it would be nice to find out from the community what changes they would like.
- Q. You mean go to the local community members themselves to find out what changes they would like to see implemented in the Split Lake School?
- A. Yes, that's right. It's their children we are educating. They should have a say in what is being taught in the school. They should think about the benefit of education for their own children. Therefore, they should have an input into the structure of the educational program in Split Lake School.

- Q. If you were a parent, and your child were attending Split Lake School, what would you like to see implemented to improve the standard of education in Split Lake School?
- A. Well, I think it's the turnover of staff year after year. It does make a lot of difference. Every year, school policy seems to change. There's no continuity from year to year. The program is new, it seems, every year and nothing seems to get done.
- Q. What can you say is your most lasting impression of Split Lake?
- A. We enjoyed the community very much and we enjoyed the kids very much. We really think very highly of the reserve. We found the people extremely friendly and very helpful. Well, we had our ups and downs, but generally speaking, we enjoyed Split Lake very much.
- Q. What sort of problems did you encounter having a small newly born baby in Split Lake?
- A. Well, when Shirley was born, we used to worry about the cold, the winter. When I returned back to Split Lake from the hospital, I was worried that we would arrive at the airport and nobody would be there. We would have to wait in the cold, freezing snow, waiting for someone to come with the truck.
- Q. So the baby wasn't born in Split Lake?
- A. No, the baby was born in Winnipeg.
- Q. Did you worry about leaving Split Lake when your baby was due?
- A. Yes, there was a problem, because the doctor thought I might be having the child on January 5th, so I thought, well I'll finish the term. Later on, I found out that I was three weeks early so I had to leave Split Lake in a great rush. The nurses wouldn't even let me stay for a day. They said that we didn't want to take that risk, and I was rather panicky and a little bit worried. I had to sit all day at the nursing station waiting for the plane. I didn't know whether it would come on time. Planes are very unpredictable in Split Lake. It was a real experience.
- Q. When you brought the baby back, did you have any problem with fresh food? Perhaps you can relate an experience.
- A. The safest thing the doctor suggested was to nurse him. The doctor stated that there may not be formulae found in Split Lake, so it's always best to breast feed. We were concerned with the baby's health. We didn't want him to get sick. That used to worry us a lot. If the baby ever got sick, we wouldn't know when we could

get out of Split Lake. Flying in and out of Split Lake is very unpredictable. The weather is very unpredictable. In real emergencies, the plane would come to pick you up, but you had to pay cash and it was very expensive to travel from Split Lake to Thompson and return.

Q. Were there any problems having a newborn baby at home while your husband was working in the school?

A. Yes, there was. In Split Lake, fresh fruit and vegetables came once a week, and if you're right at the store when it came in, you were fortunate enough to get the fresh produce. However, if you came in late, an hour or two late, in most cases all the fresh fruit and vegetables would be gone. I found it rather difficult to go to the store, because when Peter finished at the school, it was usually fairly late and by that time of course, all the fresh vegetables would be gone. I used to go over to our neighbour's and ask them if they could pick up some fresh vegetables for us. Our social life was fairly limited. We stayed home most of the time. We couldn't take the baby out all the time. It was usually too cold. We had to bundle him up.

Q. What is the most unusual thing that has happened to you in Split Lake?

A. Well, in Split Lake, we had an early Thanksgiving. That's what we called it--a feast where the whole community gathers together in the community hall and everyone contributes to making of the food and presenting a whole feast to the whole community. The men eat first, and when you're new in the community, when we first arrived in Split Lake, there was a big feast and of course they allowed the new teachers to be introduced at this feast. At the Thanksgiving Feast, all the new people in the community, the teachers, get an opportunity to meet all the community members. It's a very exciting time. That made us feel that we were accepted. This feast occurs once a year. Everyone gets together, they eat together, they talk together, and we discuss things about one another. It's a very interesting occasion.

Q. It's like a community party, is it not, where everyone gets an opportunity to meet the new community members?

A. Yes, that's right.

Interviewee #2

Q. What brought you to Split Lake?

A. Well, I taught in the North before and partly enjoyed the experience and partly didn't enjoy it because of what I thought was too much drinking. After the first experience, we went home to New Zealand, and then we decided that we would like to come back to Canada, so we got in touch with the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, asked if we could get a job teaching in the North once again, and he made no promises because we were not Canadian citizens, but said that we would be considered if we did come back. So we did come to see him and he did mention that it was rather late in the season and that there wasn't too many positions open. Split Lake was one vacancy that was open. So we went in for an interview in Split Lake with the Chiefs in Council and they seemed to feel that we would be suitable for the job.

Q. What were some of the problems that you faced as a classroom teacher?

A. At times, motivation seemed to be a problem. Getting kids really interested. I guess for me, trying to throw off middle class values was a problem. In fact, I think it's impossible to throw off middle class values, but if you don't do it, you have to try to see culture relatively. I had problems in the beginning, and I suppose all along at times, and trying to understand some of the things that the kids would do. Some of the things that the kids would do seemed unusual. They irritated me. But I think as time went by, I learned a little more. I came to understand why they did some of these things and many of them are cultural, tied up in child rearing practices, and when they come to school, they meet for the first time the middle class values of the urban teacher who is new to a reserve culture. The fact that the children's first language was other than English was probably the biggest problem.

Q. So most of the students were Cree Indians in your classroom?

A. Yes. Throughout the years, practically every single student was a Cree Indian in my classroom.

Q. And when these students went home, did they speak English or Cree?

A. Cree was spoken at home.

Q. Can you elaborate on the problem of English as a second language in the classroom?

- A. Well, the way I understood it, was that the teacher might ask the student a question in English, of course. The child would turn the question from English into Cree, consider it, answer it in Cree, and then transfer it back into English, and then give the oral answer. That was something that took me awhile to understand. Sometimes I know I thought the child didn't want to answer or was unable to answer. I know one adult friend who was also Cree speaking who spoke English very well said that he still himself did the same kind of mental process went on in his mind.
- Q. How did this sort of thing affect students' performance in the classroom, knowing that he had to go through this mental process in his mind?
- A. It's not just the mental process involved. It's also tied in with the language art skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking. Practically all textbooks are the same as the ones recommended by the Department of Education for use in provincial schools, which of course are designed for the white middle class children in mind. Often, the texts recommended for a grade were beyond their reading age. For example, one of the books that was written primarily for grade six Social Studies, which was called Fair Domain, was too difficult for it to be used in a way that I presume a teacher down south would use it. Practically nobody in my class could read it at all. A lot of the textbooks unfortunately were like that. They were too difficult for kids to read and understand.
- Q. Were there any other classroom problems that you experienced?
- A. Not that I can think of right now.
- Q. Let's go on a step further then, and talk about some of the problems that faced the school. What were some of the educational problems?
- A. I think that probably the main one would be the staff that Split Lake School managed to get for itself. The Band, along with the Chief, are supposed to have the right to interview prospective teachers for positions at the school. Sometimes they take advantage of this and sometimes they are unable to take advantage of this, and I think that in the past, fortunately there have been quite a few people who come to Split Lake who really don't want to be there at all, and if they really don't want to be there, I just don't think it's worth having them there. I do know, though, that some people have said that in the past, that they didn't have anything else going at the time, or they wanted to fill in the year before they did something else, or they thought that they might be able to save up a lot of money. Now, maybe those things aren't really so terrible, but when a teacher comes along with an attitude like that and then finds that he doesn't like the place, either and

hates the kids and bad-mouths them after school and in the evening continually, then I don't think that teacher should stay, but I have seen in the past where people like that have stayed the full year when perhaps I think it would have been better had they left at Christmas time. They really weren't enjoying themselves and I don't think that they could have been doing their kids a good deal of good.

- Q. You have mentioned the role of the Band in selecting prospective teachers in the community. You see that as obviously an effective tool in finally getting together a solid staff for the Split Lake School. Would you sharpen that role of the Band or would you say screening at the Thompson level for prospective teachers going into the various isolated Indian reserves?
- A. I think this happens anyway. Thompson does screen applicants, and the only ones they do send into Split Lake for the Band Council are those that they personally feel can do the job best, but sometimes this has happened, Indian Affairs has been really desperate to fill a position and they have just grabbed whoever they can and maybe that person is really good and maybe he's not, and they shoot that person into Split Lake to fill that position, so I'm suggesting that perhaps Indian Affairs has not even managed to get hold of a worthwhile teacher, and because the position is to be filled quickly, and so the person is sent into the community not to be interviewed but to fill that position immediately. I think that interviewing prospective teachers for isolated Indian reserve positions is a very important process in recruiting teachers.
- Q. Just to get off track for a minute, I think it's important that I get your feelings on this, why is it that very few teachers, qualified teachers, want to go North to teach on an Indian reserve?
- A. I think it's because a lot of city teachers have or hold Indian people in very low esteem and wouldn't want to spend a full year of their time in a situation where they live face to face with Indian people. Also, or course, reserves are very isolated, very small where nothing much is happening as compared to what is happening in the city for those who like to get out and about and enjoy themselves.
- Q. Let me reiterate one of my original questions, and that was, what are some of the problems facing Split Lake School?
- A. Well, apart from the fact that many teachers who have been there don't really want to be there and don't have very much empathy for natives and don't have very much understanding of cultural differences, there is also the problem of the high staff turnover, and unfortunately, particularly among principals. In the four years

that I was there, we had five principals, and I know the year before I was there, there was a new principal, so you can safely say that in five years, there has been approximately six different principals. Now if you look upon the principal as the guiding hand, the educational leader of the school, then you can see that there has been no continuity at all. There has been little innovation provided by principals. Perhaps this is impossible, but I like to think that it's not impossible and that it is something which could be attempted. I think if the Language Arts program was put into operation by one principal and he went for greener pastures the following year and he was unable to see it through to fruition, and the principal who succeeded him gave me the feeling that he wasn't particularly enthused about the whole program, perhaps I misjudged him, I don't know, but that's the feeling I got. I felt that it was rather a The principal who planned the program wasn't able to stay on to see how it went, to help staff iron out the problems and to give encouragement to those who thought it wasn't working so well.

- Q. So the continuity from year to year seems to be somehow lacking?
- A. Yes, and not only that, but I think that they tend to get somewhat bogged down with things that I don't think are so important. Say, things like fire drills. Well, fire drills are important, sure, but if the only thing you're doing is running regular fire drills or worrying about equipment for teachers, or fixing bits and pieces....
- Q. You mean, things that are extraneous to the education program?
- A. Yes. Yes, I think that at times this does happen. Perhaps the principal might be more interested in sorting out the personal mail of the staff members than he is in perhaps devoting his time to thinking of something that might help improve things for the students in the school. In actual fact, if it weren't for the students, we wouldn't be there at all. Perhaps I've been a little harsh, but these things have happened in the past. Principals have had their wives go down to the store or themselves gone down to the store and brought mail back, spent a great deal of time sorting out the mail and very little time visiting the classrooms to see what is actually happening in the school. I think another problem is that in Split Lake, the natives don't see the school as being theirs, although we outsiders or white people say "Yes, it's your school, sure it's your school" but I still don't think that they see it as their school, but the white man's school, and perhaps part of that feeling is our fault because we don't think of ways to get the parents into the school more often. Sure, the gym gets used regularly, but when you look at the older parents

who don't use the gym facilities, how often do we get them into the school? I haven't got any brilliant suggestions right now, but about the only time they came was to pick up the report cards or to the Christmas concert. I think there must have been some way that we could have got them more involved and more interested, but possibly they can't see a great deal of relevance happening in the school. They can't encourage their children such as city parents might encourage their children by buttoning their children to get the high grades like, you've got to do this and you've got to do that, get a good chance to get a good job. If you tried saying something like that to Indian children, it just doesn't work, and parents will say, well, I had a bit of education myself but it hasn't improved my living situation, and how is it going to improve that of my children? I do think that they think about the relevance of education in their school when they see, perhaps, a grade 12 student graduating and coming back and staying on the reserve and not working, not ever going to find anything on the reserve to do, and so that student may go to Leaf Rapids or Gillam and work as a general labourer. It seems a pity to me, and the reason the parents and particularly the younger parents find that education is not so relevant is because of the curriculum that we do use, as we mentioned before, curriculum that was intended for the urban student. I think that another problem is that there is still not enough decisions made concerning education in Split Lake made by Split Lakers, and still most of the decisions to me -- you would probably be in a better position to answer this than me, having been at an administrative position -- but I still get the feeling that the Thompson Office makes most decisions and policies concerning education over what's going to happen and what's not going to happen. For example, can we get an extra classroom, or an extra teacher. Can we get a Home Ec. teacher. Can we get an Industrial Arts teacher. These questions have been asked quite a few times since I've been here.

Q. Have answers come forth?

A. Well, not really. No, they're vague answers. When I was first there, in Split Lake, they did mention that the junior school, grades one to four, was going to be changed to kind of an old folks' home and to be turned over to the band, and the school, the big building, was to be extended and added on to, and the local people were looking forward to that, and when Bob came back as Superintendent last year and I think somebody asked him about that, he still couldn't answer as to why these changes had not come about as yet. To say the least, the local people were very dissatisfied and disappointed. I think though that once the BUNTEP students begin to graduate and get themselves positions in the school, things will be much better from a Split Lake point of view. There are those who say, particularly urban teachers, might say

that well, those BUNTEP students could not to be as good as me, but while they may not have the same qualifications as some of the urban teachers, they'll have empathy with the kids. They'll know the kids already. I think that the BUNTEP students will get along much better than we ever did. There won't be the many small frustrations which seem to build up into one big frustration for us sometimes. Little things, like kids wearing caps in school. Kids wearing jackets in school. Kids writing on the walls and desks. I really don't think things like this and being two minutes late is going to upset the BUNTEP students quite as much as that would upset some of us. So I look forward to that--I think it's going to be a good day when the BUNTEP students finally take over classroom instruction in Split Lake. And eventually they'll gradually take over control of their own education in Split Lake, and I think it's a good thing, and after a few years things will be running smoothly, and perhaps then they'll be in a more relevant curriculum. With people like Dan and Edwin, they can get things running smoothly and organized. That way they'll have more power than they had in the past to get things done the way they want them done. Dropping out is another problem which we have in Split Lake school, but to a much greater extent once the kids leave and go to Dauphin in their grade 10 year. There are not too many of them that manage to see out the year, but when one considers the huge changes that take place once the child or student gets to a place like Dauphin, maybe it's not so hard to understand why they do want to come back home to people and things that are more familiar to them. Perhaps they find that the expectations in the Dauphin school are even more middle class than were those that we expected of them in the Split Lake school, but we had some understanding of the students. But perhaps the teachers in Dauphin have very little, because they are also teaching primarily white students. An educator called Stanley Chonofsky once used the term "pushed out" instead of "dropped out," and I think when our students come home from Dauphin, it's a pretty pertinent point.

- Q. You've outlined several problems facing you as a classroom teacher and problems facing the school in general, and perhaps now you can suggest some solutions to these problems that you've outlined today.
- A. If we consider the problem of curriculum, which is largely irrelevant, perhaps that problem could be solved simply by designing a more relevant curriculum that has meaning to native students. Possibly such a curriculum could be set up in the future by graduates of the BUNTEP program in association with a local committee on education, something like that.
- Q. Would that curriculum prepare students for entry into the dominant society?

- A. Well, that would depend on what the local community wanted. There is a feeling, I know, to have the school extended to grade 12, and there is also a feeling that the students should definitely go out to get a broader type of education, to get used to interacting with the middle class society, so that would be up to Split Lakers, I guess. The problem with English as a second language could possibly be solved by having prospective teachers take courses in teaching English as a second language, or curriculum development for Indian or Metis children. These would be ideal courses for the reserve teacher. These are both courses that I know the University of Manitoba offers. Perhaps there are others and perhaps there should be others. If teachers take advantage of these courses, they would make a better job of teaching English as a second language on the reserve. I think a lot of teachers do try to teach English as a second language but then also, there are a lot of teachers who teach English to the young children just as they would to city students, and even there are teachers who would like to teach English as a second language but just don't have the special skills and the know-how. I think that I would count myself in that group, too. I think that many of the educational problems that we do see are going to disappear when the BUNTEP students do graduate. I think that's THE solution.
- Q. Okay, getting local people in the classrooms to teach their own kind.
- A. Yes, that's correct. If you see yourself as being in a temporary situation as a teacher in Split Lake, then perhaps you won't get so upset about some of the things that are happening on the reserve. I think that prospective teachers to the reserve situation should certainly have the chance to have some kind of interaction with or exposure to the students or the kinds of students they're going to teach. Having students taught by their own kind is THE solution, but until this is achieved, I think that teachers should certainly have a chance to perhaps do what you've done. Didn't you go to a reserve before you became a certified teacher to get an idea of what it might be like?
- D.T. Yes, as a matter of fact during my certification year, I did have the opportunity to go to a northern Cree community to finish off my certification year, and that did provide a tremendous amount of insight into not only the Cree children and parents and community, but also their way of life, and it gave me an insight into the type of reservation life, what it was like, and whether I'd like to ultimately teach in a northern Cree community. Reflecting back on those four to five weeks in the Island Lake area, I did enjoy myself immensely, and it was a most valuable experience. I only wish that such an experience should be mandatory for all certification teachers.

- A. If prospective teachers did have the same opportunity that you had, then they would be able to find out for themselves to some extent whether they would like the idea of staying for a longer period of time on a reserve, and with this knowledge, perhaps it would be easier for these teachers to make the decision. If they didn't like the experience, perhaps then they wouldn't go to a reserve. If they did like the experience, perhaps they would make up their minds to go, and you're going to get into a situation where somebody who has never had any exposure to native people suddenly finds himself in a reserve situation, and after three or four weeks, decides that he can't take it, then he either quits and leaves everybody on the lurch, or perhaps he continues until the end of the year, hating every moment of it, and consequently giving these kids a pretty hard time.
- Q. What is the largest improvement that you would like to see implemented in the Split Lake school?
- A. I think the biggest improvement that could happen would be for the native BUNTEP graduates themselves to take over the school over a period of time, and administrate it as they see fit.
- Q. What can you say is your most lasting impression of Split Lake?
- A. I think that my most lasting impression would be of the people and the way they get along together. One has to merely go to a community-type gathering to get the feeling of togetherness of that community. If it's a concert, or a talent show, or a feast, whatever it is, there is a distinct feeling about such events, unlike our society. Everybody is included, from kids who are still crawling, practically, to grandparents. Everybody is there--everyone's having fun...everyone's talking, everyone's laughing. It's a real experience, I think.
- Q. So all generations would be involved in this social gathering?
- A. Yes. Whereas with our social gatherings, I think we often tend to leave out certain age levels. Perhaps the attitude that grandma and grandpa, well they're in the old folks' home anyway, and well, who should we get to look after the kids? also crops up, but with the Indian folk, it was not that evident at all. Everyone of all ages was involved. There seemed to be practically everyone involved.
- Q. Would you outline a hardship that you've experienced while living in Split Lake?
- A. Yes. As soon as we arrived for the first time in Split Lake, we realized that the water supply was not always going to be reliable, and I recall one time in the winter when it failed completely and we thought, well, it's going to come back on soon, so we thought

we would wait and wait for it to come back on. But it didn't come back on again, and it didn't come back on soon, and it didn't come back on the next day, and for us, being used to running water, we did find this something of a hardship. In fact, some of the teachers on staff got a little panicky and wondered where on earth they are going to get their water from. Well, of course, there was a lake full of it just outside the back door. It was the middle of winter but the native people got their water from the lake. The water lines were not running that efficiently, like they were last winter, during this particular winter, so we just started doing what the native people did. I borrowed somebody's little toboggan and I had a Skidoo, and I got a plastic garbage pail, cleaned it out, took down a little dipper and got down on my hands and knees and started filling up the plastic garbage pail. Then my hands got wet, and they got cold, and my woollen mitts got frozen and I wasn't used to that, and I found it rather tedious. But after awhile, I guess I got used to it, and the water didn't stay off for too long after that. I think it only stayed off for a few days. If I remember correctly, I believe it only stayed off for three or four days. But some people were quite upset and panicky, and thinking my gosh, what is going to happen. I'm sure the native people were chuckling quietly to themselves. On another occasion we were informed in advance that there was going to be a power cut, and so we were able to prepare for this. It was in November or December, and it was pretty cold already up there, and so on the day, we turned up all the thermostats, got the house really hot, so that when the power went off, the house would remain warm for some time. As it cooled down, we just threw on more clothes, and then when it got too cold, we decided to go and visit somebody who had a propane stove. We had also stored some water, because when the power goes off, of course, the water pump doesn't work and the water soon runs out. So we took our water and our coffee mugs and our coffee and our sugar and we headed off to see Bob, the principal. We found them sitting in their kitchen, huddled around their propane stove. We stayed there for awhile, and so not to stay too long, we decided to go and see another couple with a propane stove, and we found them sitting in their front room, giggling, laughing a lot, and sitting around in the dark with candles lit.

- Q. As you see it, what are some of the problems that face the community of Split Lake?
- A. I think that some of the problems that are going to have to be faced up to very soon involve the decrease in isolation. There is a barge operating from a point fairly close to Thompson which connects to Split Lake. There is a road from Thompson, about which when I spoke to one of the workmen on the road last winter, said may be completed by this Christmas, and then Split Lake is

not going to be so isolated as it was. In the past, Split Lake has been a dry reserve and the chief and band council together with the constables have done their utmost to keep it a dry reserve, in fact, have penalized at times people who do not keep to the law. But with a road coming in, and people of course being human, they are going to want to bring liquor from Thompson and I really do think that liquor will probably have very adverse effects on the quality of life in Split Lake, and that's something that many Split Lakers are going to have to think pretty carefully about, and very soon, so that perhaps they can think of some possible solutions to what could be one huge problem. To my mind, Split Lake is probably the happiest, or at least, one of the happiest reserves in Manitoba, and one of the main reasons why it is like this is because the drinking is strictly controlled. Other reserves that I have heard about from people who have lived there and I know of a reserve that I have lived on myself, have had really bad problems with liquor.

Interviewee #3

Q. What brought you to Split Lake?

A. I just wanted to go north, to see what it was like, and to teach native people.

Q. You have spent a year and so many months in Split Lake teaching. What are some of the problems facing Split Lake School as you see it?

A. Lack of communication between the school itself and the Thompson district office. Lack of communication between the school itself, between the teachers and the administration, between teachers and other teachers, and also a lack of audio visual aids has presented many difficulties for the teachers in Split Lake. Or aids of any sort, for example, library books, and so on and so forth. There is also an inadequate supply of physical education equipment in Split Lake School. Along with that, there is insufficient space in the school to provide for this equipment. There is a tremendous problem with a lack of communication between the school teachers and the band office. They are not really aware of what you're trying to do in the classroom, or how you're going about doing it, and you're not really aware of what their function is, and it's really not explained to you by anyone. You are just told that you are not aware. It seems that no one bothers to explain this role and function to you as a teacher.

Q. Has student attendance been a problem in your classroom?

A. Only on occasion in my class. They were quite regular attenders except when they went on the trapline, or I had one or two children that just didn't come. The parents had been approached once or twice about sending their child to school, but it wasn't made clear to them the real disadvantage or disservice they were doing their child by keeping them at home. There were many cases when a child was placed in a grade where he was simply too old, too much older than his peers, and so he or she was a discipline problem when he did come to school because he wasn't socialized to the school setting as such.

Q. That child was probably far behind in the school work as well, is that not correct?

A. Yes, that is correct. He just could not cope, which made that student much more of a social deviant in those terms.

Q. Explain to me, if you will, the problems that have faced you as a teacher of grade one, and perhaps primary teachers alike, that students coming into grade one were faced with a language problem. Did you experience any language problems in Split Lake School at that particular level?

- A. Most of the kids coming into grade one had very little language skills, English language skills. They were very good in Cree, so it was very hard for me to communicate with them initially, because they did not have this English at all. It developed slowly, but it was still nonetheless very limited vocabulary. The students did not speak English at home at all. The only time that they ever spoke English was in school, to me, or to another white person. They naturally spoke Cree to each other during any sort of activity or most activities in the classroom.
- Q. Would this Cree-English problem situation affect a student's classroom performance?
- A. Well, in the primary level, it's mostly speaking oral facility and if you don't have it in an English language, you are not going to be able to perform up to the standards that were set by the grade level. So, yes, you are going to have a very definite problem. You might know the stuff, but you just cannot communicate it the accepted English fashion.
- Q. Do you know of any young students who have dropped out of school because of this exact problem?
- A. I would say that most of the kids that did go out to school, say in Dauphin, came back because that was one of their major problems in school, and I also know of situations where a student was not promoted because they did not have this English facility, and they refused to come back to school in that same grade because they were not with their friends, and the peer pressure was simply too great for them. The problem that I am outlining for you now has simply been a long standing problem in Split Lake School, and certainly must be looked at seriously for a viable alternative. I know from just grade one that several of the kids did not want to come to school for the first month or two because of this very reason that we're outlining here.
- Q. You have outlined several problems that you feel to be very important in the educational program at Split Lake School. How do you think these problems can be resolved?
- A. Well, about the English-Cree problem, is in the primary grades, is for the teachers to have a working knowledge of Cree so that they can explain the different skills they want the children to learn in Cree, if they can't understand the English, and just have a gradual change to the English, you know, where you introduce something in Cree and you give the English counterpart, just as you would in any normal situation where you have English as a second language. Another alternative would be to phase in English over a period of several years in the primary levels, depending of course on the typical school setting or the reserve

setting. Another solution would be to possibly bring in several local Cree people, teacher aides if you might, to help in this particular classroom problem. When the student teachers from the Brandon University Native Teacher Education Program did come into the classroom, the teachers did find these student teachers to be of a tremendous value because they did have this Cree experience in language facility. They would explain to the kids in Cree and on occasion, I have had to bring in someone, some native person, and ask them, would you explain this situation in Cree, because kids, no matter what I try, just didn't understand what I was trying to get across.

- Q. What are your thoughts on such programs as the P.E.N.T. program or the B.U.N.T.E.P. program, these programs set up to teach native people to become teachers?
- A. Well, I think they're a good idea because having them on the reserve or having them half on the reserve and half in a university setting, because they're more familiar with the reserve setting, so they would perform a lot better because they wouldn't be under the stress of the city, and because they do lack these language skills even in an older person, they would have to gear to their own capabilities rather than a white person's capabilities in a city with all the educational facilities available.
- Q. How would you resolve the lack of audio-visual equipment available at Split Lake School?
- A. The aids that are available, the 16 mm projector, the slide projector, these are very important for the operation of a particular school, and Split Lake School does have this type of equipment available, however, things that are not available are the cassettes or the films or the slides to put inside these types of equipment, so what's the point of having all this equipment if you've got nothing to put inside it to use it as an effective classroom aid? During the course of the year, we had ordered several, many, many films that were to be used in the classroom, however, because of our isolated community, these films, most of them did not come and most when they did come were often received late, so this necessarily interfered with our education program at the school. As for the students who are compelled to go on the trapline and miss a great deal of school, I cannot see how this sort of situation can be resolved. You can give them work to do while they are on the trapline, but it invariably gets lost, misplaced.
- Q. What is the largest improvement that you would like to see implemented in the Split Lake School?
- A. I would like there to be a de-emphasis on the superiority of English, and the only way that you can cope in the society is

having a knowledge, a good knowledge, of English and that you have to go out to school and continue in the English program. There should be more of an emphasis on trades and vocations, things that the local people can do, things that do not require a lot of English skills.

D.T. So you're talking about the vocational training as such?

Personally, I have run across many students who exhibit a superior capability at fixing things, and many students who are fully capable of doing some very good things with their hands, building things, etc.

A. Yes, definitely, that is so. I have found that their scope was so fantastic with things that they were familiar with, like setting a trap. They had no problem with that. But explaining how to set a trap, because it was in English, they had difficulty with. They were very interested in mechanics and/or electricity or anything like that, and they figured out their own solutions with their hands rather than speaking about it. Personally, I would like to see a vocational facility set up in Split Lake to accommodate these particular types of talents that these students have, simply to give the students another choice other than the academics, and particularly for the girls, for marriage. From what I've seen in the whole year, the only thing that a female could do was to be a teacher or a nurse or a hairdresser, but there are many other alternatives. The girls were simply not aware that they could go out and do these many different types of job training opportunities. In any program, even with the guidance counsellor that did come into Split Lake, he was very stereotypic in his sex role presentation of what was available at a vocational school for females. It was all very male oriented.

Q. What can you say is your most lasting impression of Split Lake?

A. There is just a feeling of closeness with a lot of people that I got to know, because there were few external trappings that there are in the city, for example, like a lot of shows or pubs, you got to know the people more as people. I don't know, you just experience a more of a sense of friendliness with a lot of the people. There was a closeness within the community, so that by the end of my term, I could see that there was a lot of the local people who did remain on the reserve rather than go to the city and make some money. I can see why there are very few students who do want to leave the reserve for future prospects in the city. There is more inclination to remain on the reserve close to friends and parents, etc. On the reserve, there is more an acceptance of them for their own self worth that you certainly don't find in the city.

- D.T. You're talking about the closeness among these people. The community is small, it's isolated, you're really onto yourself there. Does this compel you as a teacher to work very closely with the parents? I am not speaking totally in an educational objective but also in a social sphere as well?
- A. Yes, that's very true. There is if you want it, there is that type of closeness that you can really develop, but it takes a long time, depending on the type of person you are, because they are a very quiet people, and for myself, I am also a quiet, reserved person, but I could see it developing that by the end of June, you could go and visit all these people and feel that you were welcome even though you didn't speak their language.
- Q. What compelled you to leave Split Lake?
- A. Well, for one thing, I wanted to finish my university training and I had been taking correspondence courses but didn't find them adequate, and also I found it very frustrating to work with the administration of the school. This is probably one of my main reasons for leaving, because of that frustration, and of course, being a single person in an isolated community as Split Lake is, it is very lonely at times. The people your own age, most of them are married, the local young people are married with their own children, and so your social activities are very restricted.
- Q. Would you ever return to the north to teach?
- A. Yes, having been in the city for two months, I am finding that the city is just as lonely, if not more. It is somewhat easier to meet people in Split Lake than in the city. There is a very good possibility that I would return north to teach in the future, either next year or the following year.

APPENDIX I

RESIDENT INTERVIEWS--TRANSCRIPT

Matthew Morris

Q. How long have you lived in Split Lake?

A. He said that he was born here and he doesn't know exactly how old he is, but he is an old man, as you can see.

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. He said that he can remember going to school.

Q. What are some of the very first things that he remembers about the community. Were there very many people living in this area?

A. He said that this used to be a lot of bush in this area, and there were only wigwams or teepees or tents around here.

Q. Matthew, do you think that Split Lake has changed since those early days, and if so, in what ways has it changed?

A. He said that there has been a big change. As you see right now, there is a lot of houses. He was saying that there was not very many back then, just wigwams, that's all, and teepees way back then. He says that there are many people here now as compared to the early days.

Q. What did people do for a living in Split Lake in those early days?

A. He said that long ago, they used to trap, you know, fish, and he said that there was no such thing as tea. They used to drink, you know, the fish. They used to make fish soup. They'd just drink that instead of tea way back then in those early days. He says that they used to trap rabbits and anything.

Q. How have those occupations changed from those very early days?

A. Right now, as you see it, people go to the store and buy stuff. That's all you do right now.

Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the Hudson's Bay store opened for the first time?

A. He said that when there was a store, people would go out to their hunting grounds where they trap and hunt. I guess The Bay used to take food over there and trade, I guess. There was no such thing as trap lines for certain people. You'd just go out there and that's your land and you trap, but they come back and they get stuff from the store and they trade.

Q. Can you remember when the Hudson's Bay store opened for the first time in Split Lake?

A. He said that he doesn't barely remember that. He said that he was just a little kid then and that it was probably open already.

D.T. Is that right?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the church first came to Split Lake?

A. He said that there has been quite a change, you know. Right now you go to church, go into the church, but before there used to be a wigwam or something and people would gather there, or they would go to other people's homes or tents and pray and repent their sins. There has been a big change. They go to church now, they just go to one church. Before, they used to go to different areas, different places.

Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the school opened for the first time?

A. He said that before, he said that there was a change in the way that they were taught, not like right now. There's more stuff taught in the schools right now but back then, he said that there was just a,b,c,d,e, stuff like that, and the very basic skills. He says that the kids are learning more today than they did in the old days. He says that kids today, I think, learn more than they learned in the past. He said that he never went to school all the time because he had to support his mom, because he was the only one living, so he didn't go to school every day. He said that he had to go to the trapline to get food.

Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the nursing station opened in Split Lake?

A. He said that a long time ago, they used to depend on each other, eh? They used to cure each other, and people would lie there and try to cure each other, to help each other, and right now, people just run to the nursing station to get cured. He said that in the past, it was a hardship, but nowadays everyone goes to the nursing station to get cured. He says that before the nursing station came, people had to look after themselves.

Q. As far back as you can recall, has Split Lake always been a dry reserve?

A. He said that that's true. There was no such thing as alcohol or liquor or whatever you call it, not like right now. There's drinking right now in places, but he said sometimes people would drink .

Jacob Spence

Q. How long have you lived in Split Lake?

A. Since 1959.

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. Well, one thing that I could recall was that I came in here as a chief in 1959 and I was living in Ilford at that time. I worked at the store, but somehow someone got my name on the nomination that fall in 1959, and that's how I came over here in Split Lake. Someone put my name over the nomination. I didn't even know my name was in for the chief position. I was very surprised when the Indian agent of Ilford approached me some time in November. I got in as chief.

D.T. How long did you remain chief?

A. Well, I just filled the term of two years.

Q. Has Split Lake changed very much since 1959?

A. Well, I would say it has changed very considerably since 1959. There was hardly any welfare at that time. There was just the beginning of welfare, and everyone used to go out, all the trappers, to go out in the fall of the year and inspect the traplines and also you didn't rely too much on the government, you know, to live.

Q. What did people do for a living in Split Lake in 1959?

A. Well, I couldn't say. At that time, in the summers, the only employment the people had here was wood. They had some bay wood and the wood for themselves. Well, I couldn't remember now, I can't remember whether the government paid for welfare recipients at that time, for their wood or for their fuel, but I believe that I would remember clearly that The Bay was the main employer for the wood as far as the wood is concerned. Well, the people exist mostly on the hunting, Fish were the staple foods then at that time, and also the work that was open there at the Kelsey Dam. Here at that time, many locals worked there.

Q. Would you say that the community has changed since the Hudson's Bay store has been located here?

A. Well, it didn't change. It's just a matter of a fellow living from day to day existence, but as a whole, nothing has changed the community.

- Q. What type of influence did the Anglican church have on the community of Split Lake?
- A. Well, the elders of the community used to have the upper hand of all things that were going on as far as religion was concerned. In them years, you know, the people in that generation didn't mind listening to these elders speaking for one to two hours at that time, but not like today. A fellow could hardly stand around and listen to anything.
- Q. Has Split Lake School had an influence on the community?
- A. Well, in them years, you know, it was just beginning to gather a little bit of influence then. Today, the school is very important.
- Q. How big was the community back in 1959?
- A. You couldn't hardly say, you know. There were more, but it just started to pick up then. The community just started to grow back in 1959. But as far as the attendance in the school was concerned, in them years I don't think it was like at this present time. I would say that the school and the Hudson's Bay Company helped to bring the people together and to help them to settle down in Split Lake. I could say for sure that the school and the Hudson's Bay store have helped bring the people together besides the government, the Department of Indian Affairs.
- Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the nursing station opened for the first time in Split Lake?
- A. I was the health worker here for awhile, for ten years, and I see a lot of change happening. I was a health worker for ten years. The nursing station affected the community through teaching. The concept of community health worker was then teaching. I would go to the classrooms or even down in the basement to teach. I used to teach in the basement of the nursing station. I used to travel around to different communities to teach. I taught community health.
- Q. Have they completely done away with that role now?
- A. Well, I don't know. They say that we have a community health worker here right now, but I don't know what he is doing. Maybe he is just collecting samples of water monthly, I don't know, but I haven't heard if he's done any teaching or not.
- D.T. It seems to me that that would be a valuable role for him to play in the community.

A. Yes, it would.

Q. Has Split Lake always been a dry reserve?

A. Well, it has been dry because the Indian Act, Section 94, doesn't allow any drinking or even outside the community, the Indian isn't allowed to go in or to drink even in pubs. This came out in 1957.

James Garson

Q. How long have you lived in Split Lake?

A. He says that he has been living here for 65 years since he was born.

Q. What are your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. He says that they used to live long ago was that the only way that they would survive was to fish, trapping and hunting. It was very hard for them. The winters were very cold back then. Fish and caribou and animals were used for food back then.

Q. How has Split Lake changed from those very early years?

A. He says that long ago there was no welfare. You didn't get any help from the government except for supplies for the houses, like nails and boards, absolutely no help from the government back then, not like today when everything is paid for.

Q. What did people do for a living back then and how is it different from today?

A. He says that there is quite a difference than living the way they used to live. It was very hard. Back then, there was no matches. They used to use a flint to start fires. There has been quite a change.

Q. Has he noticed any change in the community since the Hudson's Bay opened for the first time?

A. He said that the first Hudson's Bay when he came here he started to trade furs for food. Before the Hudson's Bay came, they used to use furs as clothing, but now that the Hudson's Bay Company was located in Split Lake, they use the furs to trade for ready made clothing. He says that he used to trade his furs for coats and pants and shirts at the Hudson's Bay post.

Q. As far as you can remember, when did the Hudson's Bay Company open for the first time in Split Lake?

A. He says that he doesn't recall the year. It was a very long time ago, before he was born.

Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the Anglican church opened in Split Lake?

A. He says that he doesn't really know when the church first came to Split Lake. He said that before there was a church building,

church was held in people's homes. People would gather in people's homes to go to church before there was a church building. That was a long time ago. Nowadays, people have lots of money to give to the church every Sunday, but back then, there was very little money to give for the church.

- Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the school opened for the first time?
- A. He said that he couldn't say much about the school except to say that the school is very important to the kids. The kids, he says, learn more today than they did in the past.
- Q. What changes in the community have you seen as a result of the nursing station being located in Split Lake?
- A. He says that since the coming of the nursing station, many people have been cured. He says that before the nursing station came, many local people had to cure their own diseases. Many people died because they could not be cured. He says that the nurses help to cure all kinds of disease.
- Q. Has Split Lake always been a dry reserve?
- A. He says that he cannot remember, but he thinks that it has always been a dry reserve.

John Harvey

- Q. How long have you lived in Split Lake?
- A. John Harvey says that he has been living here since 1901.
- Q. What are some of your earliest memories of Split Lake?
- A. John says that the first thing he remembers was that the first chief of Split Lake was John Kitchekeesik. He came from York Factory to look for a place for a new settlement area. He figures that Split Lake contained no more than 100 people back then.
- Q. Do you think that Split Lake has changed since those early days, and if so, in which ways has it changed?
- A. He says that there has been quite a change in Split Lake since then. In those early days, there were no houses at all here. The shacks or huts were made of sticks and moss, like a wigwam. As years go by, the Department of Indian Affairs brings in building material and log houses begin to be built.
- Q. What did people do for a living back in the old days?
- A. He says that back in those early days, there was only hunting and fishing, using hooks. There were no nets at that time. During the winter time, many of the people in this area went to their various hunting grounds to trap and hunt for the winter. They would catch fish and store it for the winter. The meat was made into a small powder to keep it for the winter. He says that things are different now than they were before. There is a store here that you can get groceries. Nowadays, we don't use dogs to pull our sleds, but we use Skidoos now. Back in the old days, the only thing we had was dogs and manpower to carry our supplies to the hunting grounds. Nowadays there is a school here and a nursing station and a church. Back in the old days, there was none of this.
- Q. Have you noticed any change in the community since the Hudson's Bay store opened for the first time?
- A. He said that before the store opened, before there was a store in Split Lake, there was only hunting and fishing available to the people, and that fresh food had to be brought in from as far away as Norway House. When the store was built, however, fresh food was very easy to get. However, there wasn't such a great variety of foods to choose from on the counters and so food often ran out very quickly. He stated that before the store came to Split Lake, the only clothing that was available to the Split Lakers was the furs and clothing materials that the local people could make themselves, but since the store is now in Split Lake, the clothing is ready-made and available for them to buy. He said that clothing

was one made from the fur bearing animals like the beaver, moose, lynx, etc.

Q. What effect has the Anglican church had on the community members of Split Lake?

A. He said that when Joseph Kitchkeesik first brought the Anglican religion to Split Lake from York Factory, the people before that had a religion. They worshipped their Indian god. But since the Anglican church has been located in Split Lake, the people appear to be more religious. Every Sunday they would go to church. In those old days, there was no church building. Many of the local people would go to other people's homes for church services, but now we have a new church and everyone goes to church every Sunday.

Q. What changes have been brought about as a result of the school being located in Split Lake?

A. He said that the people were forced to remain together in the community. The school helped to hold the community together. The parents were compelled to bring their kids to school, and thus, once their kids were in school, had to remain in the community to live. They could not wander around from area to area or region to region as their ancestors had done. In other words, the people were forced, because of the fact that their kids were going to school, to remain in the community for longer periods of time, thereby holding the community together strongly for longer periods of time.

Q. What changes have come about in the community since the nursing station was located in Split Lake?

A. He said that before the nursing station was located in Split Lake, the people had to make their own Indian medicine. They had to deal with many, many sicknesses in the community by themselves with very little outside help, but since Split Lake has had a nursing station, a great deal has been done to lessen the amount and kinds of sicknesses that the people of Split Lake have. He says that dentists and doctors and eye doctors now come in to treat and help the local people, to lessen the hardships that they experience in this isolated community. We are very happy to have the nursing station here, for these people have done a lot for Split Lakers.

Peter Beardey

Q. How long have you lived in Split Lake?

A. According to him, he has lived here for 71 years.

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. He remembers riding in one of the barges that they made here in Split Lake and these wigwams that they used to live in, they were made of nothing and sticks and animal furs and skins to cover, to act as a roof. This place was covered with forests and bush, not like today. Split Lake was covered with bush and tall timbers at that time. He says that Split Lake has really improved since those early days. He says that the white man has come and has showed us the white ways of living and since they have been teaching our children these things, the Indians have learned a lot. The Indians in the old days had no nets to catch fish. The white man brought materials for us to make nets from. The white man brought guns and fishing rods to make it easier for fishing. The white man has brought in the Skidoo for Split Lakers so we no longer use the dog sled to travel back and forth from the trapline.

Q. What did the early Split Lakers do for a living, and how is it different from today?

A. He says that there is a great difference between what people did in those early days and what people do now. In the early days, all they did was to hunt all day for the big game and for the small game. Nowadays, we do not hunt as much. All we need to do is to go to the Hudson's Bay store for our food. Today, we just do odd jobs around the community, jobs that we have been trained to do by the white man, like building our own homes and working in the school. He says that in those early days, hunting and fishing and trapping were very important to the people. In the old days, to be a good hunter meant that you could provide food for your family. A good hunter had lots of prestige. Nowadays, it's not that important.

Q. Has there been a change in the community since the Hudson's Bay store opened for the first time?

A. There has been a change since the Hudson's Bay store opened in Split Lake. He said that in the old days, all they had was this flour and salt pork and tea. They rarely had any canned foods at all, and now there is really a big selection in the type of foods that are available. He says that when the local people bring furs to the Hudson's Bay Company to sell them, all the Bay is doing is taking money away from the people. What is happening is that they are putting pressure on the people, the Indian people.

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of the Anglican church?

A. What he could remember was that the community had some priests or lay readers who would take services in some of the local homes. Since there has been a new church building in Split Lake, people really participate in these gatherings, church gatherings. They were so interested that they'd come from ten miles around to come to church services. To me, there is a big difference between the old and the new Split Lake.

Q. What differences have you seen in the community of Split Lake since the school has opened for the first time?

A. What he sees is that the school is a place where people are to learn. In the old days, we never had a school. We had a minister or a priest or a missionary who would provide our education, and now, with the school, he sees a big improvement in the young people learning.

Q. What differences have you noticed in the community of Split Lake since the nursing station has opened?

A. Since the nursing station opened, he says, it has certainly improved a few things here. In the old times when somebody wanted medicine, the people had to go to the priest, but now that there is a nursing station here, if a person gets sick, we simply go down to the nursing station to get cured or sometimes we have to stay at the nursing station for a period of time to rest and get well.

Q. Has Split Lake always been a dry reserve?

A. Split Lake hasn't always been a dry reserve. In the old times, I guess you would call it, there was a lot of this home brew business going around. He said that he participated in the partyings and the people who would make the home brew would be all over the place, and when there is a dance coming up, he would know the people to go to.

Sammy Kitchkeesik

Q. How long have you lived in Split Lake?

A. He is saying that when he was a boy, way back then, people used to come from York Factory. They used to roam around along the Nelson River. He doesn't know how long he's lived here. He really didn't tell me how long he has been living here. He is trying to make a point that Split Lake back then was nothing, there was no such thing as Split Lake. There was hardly any people. He said there was no such thing as Split Lake back then. People just roamed around, hunting, fishing.

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. He said that he remembers that people used to kill fish and hunt caribou and people used to go back and forth to Split Lake, trying to make a living. That's what he said.

Q. How has Split Lake changed from those early days to the present?

A. He says that there are a lot of changes and right now there is a store, but back then there was no store. They just had to hunt and make a living. It was very hard. He said that he had to walk to go hunting, but nowadays it's not bad. Back then, you had to make your own living, but right now, you are given rations and all that, getting support from Indian Affairs. He thinks that it was a very hard life back then, much harder than it is today. You had to work hard to make a living. He says that right now, these teenagers or whatever you call them, back in his days a lot of these teenagers would have made a living trapping and fishing and hunting. They would have had to work very hard to make a living, but today, these teenagers are just sitting around doing nothing, just watching T.V., getting support from the government and not working for a living like we used to do.

Q. What changes have come about in Split Lake since the opening of the Hudson's Bay store?

A. Yes, he is talking about the Hudson's Bay, and he is talking about the York boat. During the summer, some men used to go to work for the Hudson's Bay during the summer, and in the winter time, they would go out and trap, and he said that the Bay used to sell their items or their food cheap. Nowadays, food in the store is very expensive. He was trying to say that long ago, you could buy more stuff compared to what you could buy today.

Q. Does he remember when the Hudson's Bay store opened for the first time in Split Lake?

- A. He says it was probably before he was born.
- Q. What are your earliest memories of the Anglican church in Split Lake?
- A. He is trying to say that back then, you didn't make offerings, but right now you make offerings of money to help them build the church, a new church. He says that the church has been here about the same time as the Hudson's Bay store, and he said that before there used to be only one minister, one missionary, with a white gown. He said that people used to pray, even before the church got into Split Lake. People were religious back then.
- Q. What changes have come about since the school opened for the first time in Split Lake?
- A. He said that before there was school, people used to go out to their hunting grounds but when there was school in Split Lake, he said that people tend to settle down more. He said that the school helped keep the people together, that's what school has done.
- Q. What changes have come about in Split Lake since the opening of the nursing station?
- A. He said that there has been a big change since the nursing station came to Split Lake because before there used to be a lot of sickness. He says that right now, people are happy and there is hardly anyone being sick nowadays on the reserve.
- Q. Has Split Lake always been a dry reserve?
- A. Yes, to his knowledge, Split Lake has always been a dry reserve.

John Harvey

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. My earliest memories of Split Lake was the way the people lived long ago. I seen my grandfather one time that he didn't have any matches. He wanted to make a fire. He used a stone with some metal to make sparks. He smashed decayed wood into pieces, into a powder. After he did this, he rubbed that metal with the rock and produced sparks and the sparks fell on the pile of decayed pieces of wood. This is how the fire started. He kept blowing at the pile until it started to glow in flames, and that's when he started to put grass on top. This is how he made a fire. As for women, when they washed their kid, he used the same powder to dry off the child that she's washing. My parents probably used it on me. This is what the old people used to use. As for clothing, they used to make jackets out of rabbit fur. To wear on their feet, they used hides from caribou or moose, but they didn't use guns to kill these caribou or moose. They used a bow and arrow for shooting these animals. They used a sharp bone for an arrowhead, and this is what they used to throw out the animal. This is how they killed them. They also used this for other game like beaver and waterfowl like ducks, and this is all they used for hunting.

Q. In the early days, before there was a school, how did the children get an education?

A. They were going to school at the church. The minister was the teacher. His name was Mr. Fox. This is what I can recall. Eventually, there was a small school here and that's where they went to school.

Q. Were there many children going to this small school?

A. Yes, there was many. Just the children that went to school got an education. Young women and young men went to school where the minister was teaching at the church. There was also another minister here called Mr. Walters. He used to be a teacher himself. An example is Joe Flett. Men and women his age went to school there. Most of these people that went to school there are not alive anymore, even old women. Many of you younger people speak now. The older people never learned to speak the way you do. They could understand but they weren't able to read. This is how it was. They didn't go to school long, just for a short while.

Q. Have you noticed any changes in the community since the school opened in Split Lake?

A. The Indian way of life changed immediately. They couldn't go out with their families like they used to. This is the only change that I know that has affected the community.

Q. Did you go to school?

A. No, I did not go to school. I never went to school, not even for a day. The main effect that school had on the community of Split Lake was that it caused the people to stop roaming around.

Q. In the early days before the Hudson's Bay store came to Split Lake how did the people get their food and clothing?

A. Before the store was here, people had things that they could use, but they did not have all the things that they could use. The people here lived off the land. For clothing, they used hides of animals, like the beaver, muskrat or rabbit. They made jackets out of these. The first time I seen the store in Split Lake, there was one right at the point where the Hudson's Bay Company is right now, where that gravel is. It looked like a trapper's cabin. The store was made out of bark, mud and moss. This is what they used so the building wouldn't leak when it rained. This is what the Hudson's Bay store looked like long ago.

Q. Did they have a lot of food available in the store back then?

A. No, there was always a shortage of food, and the only time they got supplies was in the winter when the lakes were frozen.

Q. Where did the food supplies come from?

A. Norway House. In the summer they used the York boat to get supplies and in the winter they used dog teams. Even they used a lot of dogs there was always a shortage of food. There wasn't anything in the stores like we use today, like butter and lard. All they had here for lard was what they called taro. It's a hard lard. There was also pork. There was no baking powder, there was only baking soda. This is what they used to make bannock with. They would make bannock if there was flour available, but that was pretty rare. That's how I saw it.

Q. In the early days before there was a church, how did the people worship?

A. They had a small house right where Charlie Arthurson's house is right now. There were two buildings, but they were together. That's where people went to church and the preacher was Joseph Kitchkeesik. This is where the people used to go to church before the church was completed. The church was completed in 1897, but these old people, they came from Port Nelson.

Q. In the early days before there was a nursing station, who took care of the sick?

- A. The Indian. There used to be medicine men here to look after the sick. They knew how to make medicine from herbs and wild roots. All those trees that you see, that's where the medicine man got his medicine from, and also the roots from the ground of plants and trees. They got their medicine from nature. They used grass, tied it up and boiled it.
- Q. What about the people who were really sick. How did they treat them?
- A. They used the same medicine. They were able to cure each other. As for open wounds, they used the roots of grass to disinfect the wounds. I seen a guy who chopped his finger off. He soaked it in hot water. The water was red to disinfect the wound. The medicine man used leaves, flat leaves, and scraped off a substance off the leaves and applied it to the wound. This would help to heal the wound and protect it from infection.
- Q. What differences have you noticed in the community of Split Lake since the nursing station opened here?
- A. Ever since the nursing station was built, people have stopped using their Indian medicine. There were some diseases that the white man's medicine could not cure. This is the same with the Indian medicine man. He could cure some diseases but there are others he could not. For example, pneumonia. The Indian was able to cure this. I seen an old man one time who couldn't walk and he cured himself. This man made a housing or a hut and he covered it all up. He had rocks in there and he heated up these rocks real hot and he threw water on these rocks, and he sweat the disease out. This hut was like a sweat-house. This is how I seen one person cure himself.
- Q. What changes have taken place in Split Lake since you were a boy?
- A. The people have followed the pattern of the white society. The people here today do not follow the traditional way of life, of the Indian long ago. The students are taught the white man's way of life. These are the changes I have seen.
- Q. How did the people earn a living long ago?
- A. They were trapping. There was no jobs in those days, just trapping. This is how they earned a living. Some used to work with the York boats, hauling supplies, before the arrival of the Canadian National Railway. The Hudson's Bay Company hired some people to cut wood for them. The Hudson's Bay Company would sometimes employ some local people so that they could haul and put supplies together like a sleigh. The only real way of earning a living was by trapping, and when you finished trapping, you would wait till the next year

and start trapping again. Very few people had nets, fish nets. Most people used fish hooks for ice fishing. They used to catch jackfish and pickerel and trout and also maria. On treaty days, people would receive nets.

Q. On treaty day, did you receive money?

A. Yes. The first time I seen treaty day, everybody got \$20.00. This was the only time, and in the years after that first treaty day, everybody got \$5.00. Some other gifts that we received were shells, twine and axe heads, and now today, everybody has to buy everything from the store. They don't give away gifts on treaty days anymore. The people who received welfare today didn't receive welfare long ago. The only assistance that they received long ago was the treaty money. They never received any welfare assistance. The only way the people would bring up their children was to hunt and eating whatever they killed.

Alex Whuskey

- Q. What are your earliest memories of Split Lake?
- A. My earliest memories of Split Lake was that this area used to be all bush. There were few houses and life was hard. I don't recall that much myself because I was too young to remember, but I'll say what I can recall. I want to talk right now, but I won't talk too much. In my early days of life, the community wasn't that good. That's all I have to say about this.
- Q. In the early days before there was a school, how did the children get an education?
- A. I went to school, too. There used to be an R.C.M.P. building here. That's where I went to school, and also I went to school at the church. They had school at the church. The missionaries there taught school. I didn't learn very much, but I went to school anyway. Most of the people who went to school back then are dead. They are no longer here.
- Q. In the early days before the new Hudson's Bay store located in Split Lake, where did the people get their food and clothing?
- A. The Hudson's Bay Company had a cabin near the shore. They used to haul their supplies by York boat. People used to leave their women at home, and they used to go out and paddle around, fishing. There wasn't that much food and clothing supplies here at that time. They used to just live off the land. There was no tea at that time. They used to drink plants from the bush, and they drank stews that they made, and the people who worked on the York boats when they came back, they used to go out hunting. They used to kill rabbits and wild game. The people way back then depended a lot on nature to provide for food and clothing. In the old days before my time, the old people used to eat squirrel. They used to use squirrel. Even myself, I used to eat squirrel. When I was a boy, I used to eat whiskey-jack. There was lots of whiskey-jack back then, and our mothers used to make us moccasins made of animal skins, and also mitts.
- Q. Before they built the new church in Split Lake, how did people worship?
- A. They had a hut or a wigwam, like a beaver hut, where church was held. That's where the people worshipped. The religion that we worshipped was the same way back then as it is today. The wigwam where we attended church was located now where the nursing station is. That's where we went to church long time ago. I didn't see this wigwam myself, but I was told this by my great-grandfather. It was very hard for the old generation. They only used bow and arrow for hunting. In those very early days, we didn't have a school or a church building.

- Q. Before there was a nursing station in Split Lake, who looked after the sick people?
- A. The Indian people themselves. They used to get medicine from the bush. Some diseases were bad, but still the Indian was able to cure that person. These people who cured must have been very skilfull, or had knowledge to cure. Even if a person shot himself, the medicine men were able to cure that person. Even women who were sick, they were still cured by these Indian medicines.
- Q. What changes have you noticed in the community since the nursing station was built in Split Lake?
- A. The changes that I see since there was a nursing station in Split Lake is that the medicine that they use now is not quite as effective as the medicine the old Indian medicine men used to use. The medicine that they use now makes the person weaker, while the medicine they used to use long ago made the person feel stronger and healthy, because the medicines came from nature. They were natural medicines.
- Q. Generally speaking, what changes have taken place in Split Lake since you were a boy?
- A. One change that I know is that babies never used Pampers. They used to use moss for diapers. Pampers are being manufactured and women are using these, and I think that's why the women are getting lazy, because they don't have to wash clothes anymore. I used to see women hanging up their diapers, and I used to see a lot of diapers hanging on the clotheslines. But now, today, when a mother wants to change her baby, she runs to the store and buys Pampers. This is one change that I have seen, and these Pampers cost money.
- Q. How did the people earn a living when you were a young man?
- A. They were trapping and hunting and fishing and living off the land. We depended on nature for food and shelter, and they used dog teams and there were sleds made for them. You never used Skidoos. Nowadays, people don't work. Some people are on welfare.

Helen Spence

Q. What are some of your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. I used to get around men. I don't recall too much myself when I was small. We played like any other child there is today, but we were very much dependent on our parents, our father and mother. We were not treated as the children are treated today. What I am referring to is the way the children help themselves when they want to eat. In my childhood, we were given little to eat, a little bannock and a little sugar. We didn't help ourselves to food. Our parents gave us the food that we were to eat, not like the children today. They help themselves. Whatever they eat. In our days, we ate a little. We were served our food. We didn't help ourselves. This is how we were brought up when I was a kid. Not until I was married could I help myself. The food I had, we were dependent on ourselves, my husband and myself. Then we started to have children. We treated the old people nice although we didn't stay with old people. These old people had a place of their own where they were kept, and they were kept well. They had a little house of their own and they lived there. Children didn't go to school in those days until later on in their years. All my children went to school in their later years. As for myself, I never went to school. I only had a little school attendance in my life. Sometimes they had a little school in a mission house. The place is not standing now. There used to be a place where people used to go to school. A lot of the people my age used to go to school there, but they are not alive anymore. The only one that is living right now is Mary Nipitabo. In my day, school or education was not considered until the later years, until I started having children.

Q. Changes have taken place in Split Lake since you were a girl.

A. A lot of changes have taken place in my days. There are houses, lot of houses, and there are planes, and there are cars, and trucks. Back in my days, there was none of these. I even heard my parents tell me that there were none of these things in their days, too. They even told me that I would be seeing changes that would be taking place when I grew up. Things would be run by motors and engines and all kinds of airplanes. Some people predicted that there would be a train running through this community, but I don't see none here, so they predicted wrong. Back in those days, there was no marriages until recently. Now there are marriages. People have to get married now in the church. Today there are new houses, not like the old days when we had shacks and wigwams. The chiefs way back then used to go out, just like the chiefs today. The old chiefs used to go out and try to get a school built here, and they also tried to get a nursing station built here, and now today you can see that there is a nursing station and a school here, and so you can see that the old chief

and council used to work hard to get these new buildings here in Split Lake. The old chiefs looked ahead in the future for the children of Split Lake today.

Q. What effect did the schooling have on the community of Split Lake?

A. There is too much play. I don't like it very much. I don't like it very much because they're always playing, not enough school work. They should have a place where they can play instead of playing at the school. How can a kid learn in school if they are always playing? When I was a small girl, I never had the opportunity to go to school, but nowadays there is an opportunity to have a good education and it is very important for the kids nowadays, they must get a job and learn new skills so that they can work in the community. Another thing, children don't learn about their house chores at home or what their parents teach them. They are too occupied with the activities taking place at school.

Q. What effect did the Hudson's Bay Company have on the community of Split Lake?

A. It was good, because now there is a place where we can buy our food and clothing and things that we need. In the past, I have seen stores, the Hudson's Bay store, being improved. There was a store where the nursing station is right now, but now it doesn't exist. It is this reason that the store where it is now was built, and I have seen managers, different managers, so it's had a great effect on our community.

Q. What effects did the Anglican church have on the community members of Split Lake?

A. The church you see today is a recent one. Before, we had a church that was built when we have a sawmill here, and a lot of times before the church was built, a lot of our Roman Catholic missionaries came here and tried to build a church here, but they were never allowed to stay here. They were always told to leave. Only the Anglican mission was accepted, and back in those days, the church used wood for heating. Even today, they use wood for heating. But mostly electricity is used for heating in the church. Kerosene lamps were hung from the ceiling for light, and now you see electric bulbs. Back then, men used to have to cut wood to heat the church, and I bet now very few people use wood for heating as often as they did in the past. Today they use electricity. Just like myself. I am using Hydro power ever since I got a new home. No more wood is needed for me to burn.

Q. What kind of jobs did people have when you were a girl ?

- A. Trapping was the main source of economy back in those days. Families used to go out for a month at a time, and now today, only a few of these do this. And there were men working on the York boats, transporting freight from Norway House to here. I remember when I was a kid, we used to gather along the shoreline and watch the freight come in. There were stools and stovepipes. I don't see any of these things here no more, not even the York boats.
- Q. What are some of the disadvantages of the white man coming to the community of Split Lake?
- A. I don't like it. They set laws or promises. They make promises to the Indian people and don't abide by them. They come and bother us. The chief and council have the authority but they can't hold the white man back. They don't have that much power against the white man. We shouldn't let them come in without our permission. We never let any white man come in here and say anything until the chief and council say so, in my days. But now they do it differently. They have spoiled our livelihood. The people here tend to listen to them and abide by their terms.
- Q. What changes do you think will take place in Split Lake over the next 10 to 15 years?
- A. I can't tell you because I don't know. I am sure that there will be a lot of changes. I probably won't see them. The young people here will see this happen. Maybe there will be new stores and new types of foods. Maybe it'll be harder for the people here to live in the future. Maybe the welfare will stop that we are now receiving. It will be very hard for our people. Then what are we going to do?

Sammy Kitchেকেসিক

Q. What are your earliest memories of Split Lake?

A. I remember when the church was being built in the community of Split Lake. It was made of logs and there was a Hudson's Bay Company here, too, but not the same one that is standing here today. It was made out of logs also. There was also an old mission house here, made out of logs also. It used to be very cold in the winter time. They used wood for heat to keep things warm here, but it was still very cold in winter time. During the winter time, the church, the Hudson's Bay and the mission house all used wood as fuel to heat the buildings. As for the people who were living here, they didn't have houses before. They had wigwams or tents. These wigwams or tents were made of wood covered in mud and moss. These wigwams were similar to a teepee or a lean-to. This is the type of shelters that they used in the summer time, but in the winter they used log cabins covered with mud to insulate against the cold winter winds. These wigwams had mud all along the outside and there was a hole right on top so that the smoke from the inside could escape, and they had evergreen boughs or branches on the floor, that's where they slept, and that's where they ate also, and right in the centre of this wigwam was a fire. That's how they kept warm. The hole up on top of the roof was to let the smoke go out. The roof of the wigwam was covered with moss and mud. Layered on top of the moss would be the mud. Stones, too, were on top of the moss. So once the mud dried, it would harden like cement and that would provide a good, solid roof. This is what their homes looked like back in the old days. Later on in the years, they started building better homes made of timber that was cut at a sawmill that they had in Split Lake, way back long ago. They used this sawmill for making lumber. Then when they made new houses, they used this lumber for their houses. The lumber was also used for the flooring and the walls of the house. As the years went by, homes have become better, better built, but today, they don't have a sawmill here anymore and they don't make lumber. Now today there are homes. People who want homes don't make their own homes now. The homes are made for them. There are houses made for them now, like the houses we see here today. There have been many changes in Split Lake since parents received new houses. They don't have to make their houses anymore. Their houses are being made for them. In the old days, people had to make their own houses. Today, there is not as many trappers in Split Lake going out to trap as there was in the early days.

Q. What changes have taken place in Split Lake since you were a boy?

A. As I was saying before, there are not as many trappers today as there was in the early days. The people's livelihood here has changed a lot. Today, people here are bunched up right here, right

in the community. A long time ago, families used to go out every year. These people used to go 200 miles north of here. They would go north, south, east, to trap. It was a very difficult livelihood to trap back in those early days. But ever since the white man came here, things have started to change. The people today have changed. Their livelihood has changed. Ever since the white man arrived, we have taken much for granted, whereas in the old days they used to go out and trap. Today, we have all kinds of food and clothing right in the store. Life is easier today than it was in the past.

Q. What effect did schooling have on the community members of Split Lake?

A. I think it's good to have children, our children, going to school. It is good for them to learn what is being taught in school, but a long time ago, children didn't go to school at all. The reason they didn't go to school was that they were always going out to trap with their families. I strongly feel that our kids who are going to school at the present time will eventually lose their traditional cultural way of life and they will also lose the Cree language, the language of their parents. The reason that I say this is that I seldom hear any children talk in their own language. That's why I am saying this.

Q. What effect did the Hudson's Bay store have on the community of Split Lake?

A. One thing that I have noticed recently is that the prices of items have gone up too high. The prices for products found in the Hudson's Bay store are going up. In the old days we didn't have a store in Split Lake. We had to hunt, trap and fish for our food and clothing, but nowadays, we have a store and we don't have to rely on hunting and fishing to live today.

Q. What effect did the Anglican church have on the community of Split Lake?

A. I have heard of other communities closing their church down because of lack of attendance, and they didn't have a preacher. There used to be a small church here, long time ago. In the present, there has been more people here now and so the church here today is going to be expanded, is going to be made bigger, so that everyone in Split Lake can go to church.

Q. What kind of jobs did the people have when you were a boy?

A. To me, the main job was trapping. There was nothing to hold anyone back from trapping. People trapped all the time. In Split Lake,

people also worked on the church, digging graves and keeping the graveyard clean. Back in the old days, people had to cut their own wood. They had to get wood for the church so that this wood would last all winter, but today this has changed. They are now using electric power, even in the homes and church.

- Q. What are some of the disadvantages of the white man coming to the reserve?
- A. When I see a white man coming to Split Lake, I don't know who he's working for. I don't have any idea. Maybe he's working for the government. Probably the chief is the only one that is aware who the white man is and why he came. He could be a government representative or from somewhere else.
- Q. What are some of the advantages of the white man coming to the Split Lake reserve?
- A. When the white man comes to Split Lake and if he is a representative from the government and if he listens to the griefs of the Indian people of Split Lake, then if he goes back and he does what the people want him to do, this is what I like.
- Q. What new changes will take place in Split Lake over the next 10 to 15 years?
- A. If the Indian listens to what the white man says and has taught him, I think that this will be good for the Indian people in the future. At the present time, all you see is people living in houses and there is no means of any gardening or things being grown outside. If he had a garden, he could live off that garden and if he built fences around that garden or field to prevent intruders from entering his garden or field and also make roads, this would be good for the individuals who do this.

MY MEMORIES AND VIEWS

BY: SAMMY KITCHEKEESIK

INTERVIEWED BY: LARRY

Larry: I ask Sammy, my uncle, about some memories he could come up with, about his past, his grandfather's past, etc. etc. Also, about what he thinks about the present and to try to look into the future. Tell about your grandfather again.

Sammy: William Kitchekeesik was my grandfather, my dad's dad. And then when I was born, I did not see my dad, who was Hector Kitchekeesik. From then my grandfather took care of me, while I was a little child. He used to work in the church here, in Split Lake. He was the first chief here in Split Lake, William Kitchekeesik.

Larry: Long ago?

Sammy: Long ago. He was the first chief, here in Split Lake.

Larry: Don't you know when was he chief?

Sammy: Oh! About 1901, I think, that's when he started to be chief.

Larry: Long?

Sammy: Yes, long, since Indian Affairs started to pay [treaty money] about 1908. I think, that's when it was the first treaty day.

Larry: 1908?

Sammy: 1908, I think that's when it was the first treaty day.

Larry: Your grandfather, what did you hear from him, what were his jobs?

Sammy: Sometimes, he would go with whitemen, up to the north. Over to York Factory [when the whitemen came here]. He would go to Churchill too, William Kitch. He was the boss of the boats, the ones that would go to Norway House, the York boats. He was the boss of the boats.

Larry: Was that his only job? What about his way of trapping?

Sammy: That was the same for his way of trapping, when they used to make a trap out of logs for killing the game. That is how they trapped martin, and they made a trap for beavers, and mink. The trap they used killed mink, it was called "double log trap."

Larry: Do you know how the traps looked like?

Sammy: [laughing] No, I do not know how it looked like, and I did not use it while I used to trap. It was not in use at the time I used to trap. That is how they used to kill their game, and it was pretty hard life for the ones that used to live in those times. They did not use the [steel] traps.

Larry: What about fishing?

Sammy: They used to use fishing rods.

Larry: What did they use, for they did not have fishing tackles?

Sammy: They used to make hooks [showing me, he bends the air]...out of metal. They had a hard life, those ones that used to live at those times. They did not have any houses, for they only used birch bark and made a house out of these covering the outside, and plastering the outsides with mud, just like a beaver's house [laughing]. That's all they had to use. And then when they used to go to Norway House, that is when they started to have tents, canvasses for the ones that used to live in wigwams. That is how they started to use their stuff, like axes, guns, too, they just had to stuff (load by hand) them.

Larry: Where did they get them from?

Sammy: They got them from the Company [H.B.C.].

Larry: Did the whitemen bring them?

Sammy: Yes, they were the single barreled, the ones that had to be stuffed.

Larry: What about before the whitemen brought guns, what did the Indians use to kill animals?

Sammy: They used to use the bow, some of them.

Larry: Bows?

Sammy: Yes, bows some of them used.

Larry: Bows, is that all?

Sammy: Yes, that's all they used to use bows only.

Larry: Were they good?

Sammy: Yes, they were good [conversation goes on about the bow and arrow]. It was then at the time when the Indians were up here, in Split Lake. The Indians used to kill caribou, fish.

Larry: What was here at the time to use?

Sammy: Back then when I was mentioning about the bows, before there was guns, the Company sold supplies. Before they came and stayed here [company], there were things here to use, from Norway House.

Larry: What about when the Indians used to travel, did they walk or what?

Sammy: They just pulled things.

Larry: During the winter?

Sammy: Yes, during the winter.

Larry: What about during the summer?

Sammy: They used to make birch bark canoes.

Larry: Birch bark, those kinds?

Sammy: Yes, those were the kinds they made.

Larry: Were the canoes good?

Sammy: Yes, they were good, birch bark canoes they used. Then there started to be white boats, [wooden ones].

Larry: These kind we see around here?

Sammy: No, not those ones, the kind that are around here, they were wooden ones, white boats. They were not covered with canvas. That's how they looked at the first, here. Wooden boats.

Larry: What did they use to make them?

Sammy: They got them from Norway House, buying them.

Larry: Are those the ones, they call Yorkboats?

Sammy: No, they were the wooden boats.

Larry: Were they big?

Sammy: Yes, about the size of the boats here. Then there suitable boats, just like the ones here. The Bay used to sell them.

Larry: Now can you tell me about your mom, what was her, or the women's kind of jobs?

Sammy: They used to travel around, that's all. That was the time they used to roam around. Your dad's mom, that's my mom too.

Larry: What was my granny's name? [he misunderstood me].

Sammy: Your dad's grandfather was John Kirkness and grandmother was Ann Kirkness. My mother, that was your dad's mother too.

Larry: Was your mother named Alice?

Sammy: Yes, that was your grandmother, Alice.

Larry: How many people used to roam around as groups? Were there lots? Did you people go all over the place?

Sammy: They used to go this way [pointing] Opowhow, that's where they used to go and stay. And towards this way Fox Lake, and Moose Nose Lake, all over the place. And over that way [Puckajawhaganes].

Larry: He was trying to explain other places, but I did not know where they were so I skipped some [cutting off the explanation]. Did your grandfather or other Indians used to go hungry or did they always have something to eat?

Sammy: That is what they used to tell, and sometimes that is what happened. There used to be a story, the first people of Split Lake, used to tell about. During the summer these people that stayed some place in the north. Just like there were two people, a woman with his son. A young man! All summer they stayed up north, all the time they had to keep the fire going. All they used was a fish trap, to get their daily food. [Mis-his-gun] a place to trap fish. All summer they dried fish, and kept the fire going. I think they used for matches was the [stone that was on fire] flint. And when it was getting to be winter there were only still two of them together. As it was getting to be winter, they made a fur coat or a covering, from the rabbits they killed.

Larry: Is that what they wore?

Sammy: Yes, they wore those as winter was approaching, they wandered around looking for some other Indians. At the first time they had a rest, the son left his mother, in hope to find some other Indians. He wandered and I guess, he did find some other Indians. As he was approaching them, they were scared of him, because of the fur he had on [rabbit fur].

Larry: Why were they scared of him, because of the white fur?

Sammy: Yes, because of the white fur.

Larry: What did they think of him?

Sammy: They thought he was another kind of person. People used to be scared of each other before, the religion came in. They were scared of him, but as he came closer, they did get scared no more. He went back later to look for his mom, and that's how the story goes on, what people did in those past.

Larry: What, the other people, how did they dress?

Sammy: Sometimes I used to see kids wearing a material that looked something like a potatoes sack. They made pants out of this, they did not wear these kind of pants.

Larry: What about moose hide?

Sammy: No.

Larry: What about now getting in religion, did people, before churches came in or white religion, did people believe in God? People of long ago?

Sammy: Yes, they believed, just like today some believed, and some don't. Just like some old men like my grandfather and John Kitchekeesik, these were the kind of men who worked on religion. That was about the time they came from York Factory. They came to settle here. People came from Norway House, the ones that settled here. They settled across the lake here, and then there was a store there. The Indians from Norway House.

Larry: Whose store, H.B.C.?

Sammy: No, a whiteman's store. After the people settled down here in Split Lake, that is when H.B.C. set up his store.

Larry: What about now, these stories about wee-sa-ka-ja, where did these stories come from?

Sammy: These stories were probably passed from generation to generation, from long ago.

Larry: What did they use these stories for?

Sammy: They used them for us, to make people happy. Just like there was a person that used to live in the past, who used to be funny or comical.

Larry: In your own thinking, do you think there was such a person?

Sammy: On, I don't think I'll be able to know if there was such a person. Just like it is similar to the Bible about when there was a flood. Just like the legend of We-sa-ka-ja is just a little off, when he made a raft. This is when the flood started when the whirlwind killed Wee-sa-ka-ja's dog. The whirlwind tried to drown Wee-sa-ka-ja. That is when he made a raft. That is how he survived and waited for the land to dry up. He used to talk to anybody [animals, people, land]. He told the muskrat to dive to see how deep it was. The muskrat never came back, and drowned. From there he knew it was still deep. And again later on, he told the muskrat to dive, and this time he did not take long to come to the surface. From there he knew it was starting to dry up. That sounds the same as in the Bible, about the flood.

Larry: Do you believe that the Indians always believed in God?

Sammy: Yes, that's true. And also what happened to Wee-sa-ka-ja, also happened to the Indians, like going hungry. But he knew how to catch something to eat. He knew. Just like the time he carried muskeg or soil on his back. Then the animals and birds calling him were curious about what he was carrying on his back. He said "these are my songs." From there he knew to put on a scheme, so he told the animals and birds, they will have a dance. First he had to make a wigwam. There he could sing to them and have a dance. Everyone started to file, a loon, geese, young geese, and then Wee-sa-ka-ja started to sing. They're all dancing, while he is singing. And then he started to tell them what to do, so he told them to close their eyes. From there he started to twist their necks, killing them. Very sneakily, he kills most of all geese. He sounds very good, while the animals and birds are dancing with their eyes closed. I don't think anybody ever dances with their eyes closed [referring to people]. Still twisting necks, and then a young goose is getting very suspicious, just like he knew he wanted to know something. So he opens his eyes a little and sure enough he sees how many geese wee-sa-ka-ja already killed. And then yelling out the young goose saying, "wee-sa-ka-ja is killing us!" And then at that point of time, all the animals and birds headed for the opening of the wigwam, rushing out. Wee-sa-ka-ja is kicking them and then the last one to run out was the loon, and he got kicked hard as he was running out. That is why the loon looks like a cripple, not being able to land right on the ground. He can't walk around with his feet. And everybody was gone, Wee-sa-ka-ja picked up the geese, then. From there the legend goes, that Wee-sa-ka-ja thinks he will have a real good meal. After he made a big fire on the sand to heat it up, so he will cook his geese. Lots, so thinking he will sleep first, he tells his ass to watch out for him. To look out for Indians. He thought his geese will cook while he was sleeping. And then while Wee-sa-ka-ja was sleeping, Indians came around the bend on the river. Right away they waved at Wee-sa-ka-ja's ass to keep quiet, they waved at it twice. Then approaching, the Indians saw the geese's feet sticking out of the sand, where they were cooking. Then they started to pull the geese's feet off, sticking the feet out of the sand. They took the geese. This way Wee-sa-ka-ja will see the feet sticking out, thinking the geese is still there. The ass didn't tell on the Indians. Then Wee-sa-ka-ja wakes up, startled thinking he overcooked the geese. He pulls out only feet of the geese, finding no geese. He is very furious, for his ass didn't tell him about the Indians. That's what happened to him.

Larry: Was he mad?

Sammy: Yes, very. That is what the Indians used to be, sometimes couldn't kill anything.

Larry: Could you tell where you were born, and how you lived?

Sammy: I barely remember, when the first treaty day was.

Larry: Where were you born?

Sammy: Here in Split Lake.

Larry: When?

Sammy: Oh! I think about 1901, I think, I do not know for sure.

Larry: During the winter?

Sammy: I was born in the spring. I was born in April 17, as my mother told me. I wasn't baptized here, my mother told me. She said that I was baptized someplace, around Cross Lake, as we travelled by a wooden boat. There we met a minister, who was going to Split Lake, and there I got baptized. That's what happened to me.

Larry: Try to remember as a child, what were your ways in playing or games you used to play?

Sammy: First thing I started very early was to go around with a dog team on sleigh.

Larry: While a kid?

Sammy: During my childhood. It was then about 1914, there used to be surveyors around. I used to use a dog team. I think I was about 13 years old. We used to skate around, too. It was then, too, that there were cops around, too. They came from Norway House, and they lived near the nursing station, in a house [cop's house]. From there we learned how to skate, and we were pretty good. I was with Moochy [Moody], and cops taught us. I used to like skating, and I was just about as good as the skaters you see on Hockey Night. [He repeats] I loved skating.

Larry: Did you play soccer?

Sammy: That too, but people were not too good at that game, that game from Norway House. He thought they tried to teach them. It was not too long, baseball, and this the Indians could play. Us children, we used to play as children play today. Baseball was not played then, yet.

Larry: What about your mom, what did she try to teach you? While still growing.

Sammy: Not much, for as still a baby, she did not look after me. My grandfather kept me, and the way anybody grew with his family, that is how he brought me up. Just sometimes, I stayed with my mom. My grandfather taught me how to bring me up to grow up to work as in ministry, the same kind of work he had. My mom, your dad's mom, they used to roam around all the time. I used to go and see them once in awhile.

Larry: What about as you started to be a young man, what did you do?

Sammy: It wasn't then yet that I was able to go on the wooden boats. That was not in use almost. It was then too, that they took our names, during the time of the First World War. I was not married yet. They took our names, to go out.

Larry: How old were you?

Sammy: I think it was around 1917. It was then that we were almost going out the war was over.

Larry: Could you tell about your kind of work as you grew older?

Sammy: I was married 1924. It was 1930, my wife left me [died].

Larry: What was her name?

Sammy: Catherine. My father-in-law was Sammy Kirkness. [conversation still goes on]. I had three children, twodaughters and a son. They all lived, but they are all dead. The boy died first, my daughter died in the hospital, the baby died here in Split Lake.

Larry: What happened to them, your wife too?

Sammy: Just like she got cold while she had a baby. It was during summer she got cold and during the fall she died. That's what happened.

Larry: When was the time there was a great sickness here, was it the time of what happened to you?

Sammy: It was before about 1924, when people died.

Larry: Where did it come from?

Sammy: They said it came from, when there was a war that sickness.

Larry: Lots died?

Sammy: During the winter, it started about March, till around April 10. Over this way towards Waskawaka, and here in Split Lake, they started to get sick. It started to spread all over. About 50 died here I think.

Larry: Was it tough? What did they do?

Sammy: Yes, it was tough. They used some medicine. For awhile at first they were not sick and then they started to die, very quickly. Then it spread, that is when they started to die.

Larry: Sometimes I hear that people had a tough time trying to bury their people. Is that true?

Sammy: Yes, that was tough for it was winter. That sickness was tough, around 1924. Lots of Indians died. From today how many years was that?

Larry: Fifty-three. From 1924, could you tell of what your works were?

Sammy: Me, I had odd jobs. I used to work with surveyors, using dog team.

Larry: Where did you survey?

Sammy: Towards Gillam, before there was a town there, I went with the surveyors. We used dog team. Then the rail road came in and then towards the north.

Larry: What did they survey?

Sammy: The railroad track, where they tried to beat each other, where it will run. We came back from Mistoosikumigo, around Mile 343. I used to haul wood here in Split Lake, using dog team, sometimes with only two dogs. Hauling wood for ourselves. Real men of these days had jobs like trapping, to try to make a living and learning how to survive.

Larry: Was it easier for men to do jobs, as you people started to have things to use?

Sammy: Men were anxious to work, even though they knew that the jobs were hard. But they knew it was hard so they worked hard to try to make a living. Life was hard, but men were not put down, they tried. And stood up to those jobs. Some used to walk 20 miles, some 100 miles, and some even 200 miles. They weren't willing to be put off by these distances, for that was the only way of making a living. There were hardly any jobs, those times, around 1913. As it was approaching summer, when the railroad tracks were starting to be available, sometimes men used to go work for two months, on the rail. Sometimes they would work on the boats. They'd haul supplies from Split Lake to Oputna, then to the tracks. I worked there too.

Larry: Was it fun?

Sammy: It was hard for we had to carry stuff on our backs [portage]. I worked someplace near Gillam, hauling supplies during one summer.

Larry: Who did you work for?

Sammy: Luke Clemming or Lemming.

Larry: Who was he working for?

Sammy: He worked for the C.N.R. hauling stuff to the mouth of the Nelson. That was one of my jobs and it was hard, lots of rapids.

Larry: Shooting rapids?

- Sammy: Yes, and pulling the boats up on the way back home. One would pull the boat by rope and one would be in the boat, pushing it.
- Larry: Did you just paddle around?
- Sammy: Yes, just paddling.
- Larry: What kind of boats you use?
- Sammy: The wooden ones. I used to trap all over this way towards Churchill. Then we went to work on C.N.R. sections, your dad, Peter and me. I worked on the section during the winter we trapped.
- Larry: Did you kill a lot of beaver while trapping?
- Sammy: Yes, we killed a lot of beaver while trapping, mink, lots to help us to survive.
- Larry: How much was fur paid for then?
- Sammy: A big beaver, \$18.00, \$8.00 for a young beaver. The martin was just about extinct at the time. So it was closed off, to kill. There was mink, muskrat, beaver those times. The lynx was extinct too. So, it was closed off from killing the lynx for awhile.
- Larry: Was that true about when Indians used to trade their pelts in the H.B.C., they had to pile their pelts as high as the height of the gun, before they were allowed to take a gun?
- Sammy: Yes, that was true but that was before I started trapping. That was the time of my grandfather, when they had to pile up the pelts of martin, to the height of the gun.
- Larry: Before they got the gun?
- Sammy: Yes.
- Larry: What did you use to trap? Traps?
- Sammy: Then we had traps already snare wire. We did not wait for beaver to emerge from the water to kill. Only Indians of way before then did that, before there was snare wire. The train stopped running during the war. It was hard then too, during the First World War, for anybody to find work, so Indians depended on trapping. Then too, beaver pelt was not bought. It was hard. It was at time of the first treaty that people were taught how to cultivate the land, and they tried hard. I think it was then that Indians started to stop trying to grow crops, when they started getting new houses. That's where it died out.
- Larry: Who done that?
- Sammy: I don't know who was responsible for that. I think it was the houses. Nobody knows for sure.

Larry: Did they did that on purpose?

Sammy: There is no explanation why people done that. Before the houses came in, Indians used to raise vegetables all the time. The chiefs used to order Indians to raise vegetables. They used to gather men together to help each other. That's what the first chiefs and councillors did. It was then, too, that Indians were not allowed to drink. And then it was legal for the Indians to drink, that is when it the Indians was spoiled and, was confused of how to survive to make a living. When we used to make gardens, there was no liquor yet.

Larry: Did they make home brew?

Sammy: Yes, that is what they used to talk about, rumors used to go around that they, Indians, used to make home brew.

Larry: Where did they learn from?

Sammy: Other Indians, that used to come here, who come from places like The Pas. I think these are the ones that taught them.

Larry: Where did they learn from, for I think Indians did not use to drink. Do you think the white men taught them?

Sammy: Yes, I think that's who done that.

Larry: When did you come back to Split Lake?

Sammy: I stayed away for ten years, worked during the summer on the railway and trapped during the winter. After ten years I came back to here. I had pension already when I arrived here. That is how I was able to eat from the pension cheques.

Larry: How old were you?

Sammy: I was 65 then. I was older and then, now I would do the odd jobs outside the house. Just like cleaning up outside when there is no snow on the ground. I think I'll still be able to make snowshoes, able to get something from. Things like that, to get something from.

Larry: Did you always work in the church?

Sammy: I always worked in the church. Even when I was out of Split Lake, I worked as a churchman, all the time.

Larry: What was your position?

Sammy: Anything I was told, like reading, and I was given to make a sermon. To help the minister, and to play the organ.

Larry: How did you learn to play the organ?

Sammy: I was taught a little and eventually I started to teach myself. I could read the English but, I'm not able to understand what I'm reading. I can't say the words.

Larry: Who taught you?

Sammy: We were taught for we went to school a little while. From there I taught myself, and everything else I taught myself. It was too bad that they quit in teaching to play the organ. That was about two years ago. I was being taught too. Well, today I am satisfied of what I learned and I don't think I want to learn anything else. For I'm an elder already. I remember before I left to work on the railroad people used to work hard, and then those days I was gone for ten years. After I came back, there was a great change. People do not work hard for themselves anymore. Before people used to have gardens to grow potatoes.

Larry: Could you tell where they got the violin from?

Sammy: Indians of long ago when they used to dance, they used drums. They started using the violin quite awhile ago, too. They got the violin from Norway House. They brought it from The Bay. They really like to use the violin to dance, the Indians from Split Lake.

Larry: Did your grandfather, my grandfather, ever tell you how the drum looked like?

Sammy: Out of a round log and moose hide. I heard that they used to make it out of sturgeon scale, to make music to dance to. I heard this from my grandfather.

Larry: How did they dance and why did they dance?

Sammy: They started to dance in a circle when the drummer started to play.

Larry: Why did they dance?

Sammy: Just like they thank the father, and this they learned from their grandfather. Just like it says in the Bible, God can be thanked anyway, like dancing. I think that's the way to show to thank God.

Larry: Could you talk about school or education?

Sammy: I bet it's just about twenty years already that kids started going to school.

Larry: When did school start?

Sammy: Kids used to go to school all the time. I think it started around 1930. People used to still go out to trap.

Larry: They didn't get a hang about going to school yet?

Sammy: Yes, that is true, then.

Larry: Before they started school, how was their attendance?

Sammy: They just attended not all the time, just a little. Not many kids went to school. And then when the big school started to function, that is when Indians started to stop their way of life [trapping]. From there they started to get new houses. Making gardens stopped. Indians were dependent on getting things.

Larry: Talk about now, about diseases. Before the whiteman came in, and today the present.

Sammy: When during the first treaty day, the government came with a doctor. The government [Indian Affairs] said that the Indians will be cured and the doctor will find out what is wrong with the Indians. It was quite awhile ago, about 1908, the doctor was sent to try to teach here in Split Lake. Then there was no nursing station, the doctor just used to come in.

Larry: What about before this time, what Indians do to cure sicknesses?

Sammy: I think they cured themselves.

Larry: What did they use?

Sammy: Anything, like senica roots that you find over the horizon in the bush someplace. That's what Indians used long ago, and they knew for sure that this senica root worked, to cure them. There was another medicine, they used to use. They got it from the ground, but many Indians didn't use this, only the medicine man knew and he used to cure people [Indians.].

Larry: Was this person considered a doctor?

Sammy: Yes, they considered him a doctor and respected him going to school.

Larry: What kind of diseases did Indians have?

Sammy: From the way of survival, Indians used to get sick from their work, probably injuries. Probably they got cold from staying outside too long.

Larry: Were those the only kinds of sickness?

Sammy: All kinds they had colds too.

Larry: When the whiteman first came, is that when some diseases came in?

Sammy: Yes, that is when I think. Before the nursing station was here, the H.B.C. and the church had medicines already. But now there is a nursing station and the school.

Larry: Now could you try to look into the future and how things will change?

Sammy: I think today Indians are living peacefully, because they are getting houses. And I do not know about the future. Hydro will raise the water level, as I hear and Split Lakers hear, so what is going to happen to their land? I think this will happen in future all the time to people of Split Lake, as what is heard.

Larry: Do you think Indians have it easy here?

Sammy: It seems like that Indians have it easy, as it is known. There are only a few people today who realize how they lived in the past, and they are very hungry, for that. There are only a few who try to live like that, like trapping. I think that will eventually disappear. It seems easy today, but there is always a shortage of money. There is shortage of money for plane rides and to ride in automobiles for the Indians.

Larry: How do you think people should try to approach the future?

Sammy: I think they should be cautious about the future. The Hydro projects and floods.

Larry: What about education? What kind of needs should be suitable for the people, what kind of things should people try to keep?

Sammy: The Indians to be strong is to fight for their own land, is to talk about it to Hydro who is trying to flood it. Their education is important too, for as it is known today. There should be help from the government, to help support the people to try to save their own land. School is important, and it should be handled carefully. Kids or students should try to finish their education. Their church is important, and the graveyard. Those are the ones that will help to be strong, to get to government to realize there is a need for help. The H.B.C. is important too, for they are here all the time, and people always got food from there. I think that is the way I see, to get the people from a reserve to be strong.

Larry: Do you think that the people should try to keep his own language? [this is the next question; he misunderstood me].

Sammy: I think Indians should keep their treaty rights.

Larry: [earlier question].

Sammy: That is hard today, for there are more speaking English and less speaking Cree. Just like it will be lost, maybe in about ten years time.

Larry: What do you think should be done for the people to try to keep the language?

Sammy: I think that a child should be taught the Cree prayer book.

Larry: What do you think they should do in schools to try to keep the language?

Sammy: I think that is where they could learn and take the first step as a little child is taught to say the ABC's. From there they could take the first step.

Larry: Now could you tell what you think and how you helped, from me taping you?

Sammy: I think my talks will point out that I'm trying to help teachers or educators and I think that teachers and students should be taught to learn the Cree language and the English language, especially the Indian children. Maybe this way, the Cree language will not be lost in the future. Teachers should be eager to teach.

Larry: How would you think Indian Affairs should contribute? To education?

Sammy: I would be happy if Indian Affairs would help in this education. I think that the step be taken so the Cree language will not be lost.

Larry: Could you say a few final words?

Sammy: I talked about various subjects, about the past, and the present. That is my own thoughts. What had happened.

The following is an account of the experiences of Mr. A. Beardy while attending the Elkhorn Residential School. Mr. Beardy spent six years of his life at this school.

This account has been translated and written by Dan G. Beardy, a B.U.N.T.E.P. student and active member of the Split Lake Band.

Residential Schools

I was born right here in Split Lake Reserve, Split Lake, Manitoba, in 1928. I spent my childhood out in the bush with my parents. My dad was a trapper in those days because it was their main source of economy. Kids nowadays start school when they are six or seven years old, but for myself when I was six, I didn't even think of school at that time.

I enjoyed the outdoor life that I was living in. I enjoyed going out every year with my family out to trap and hunt. I learned a lot from my family while being out there in the sticks. Never any shortage of food in the bush as I would encounter when I was placed in a Residential School.

I'm starting to get ahead of myself. It was Treaty Day around the month of June, 1938. I was ten years of age at that time. There was a big celebration here in Split Lake.

Then that is when I learned that I was going to be sent out to school, which school I didn't know at that time. Anyway, there were about ten or fifteen of us from the reserve that had to go out.

I can't really recall if I felt sad or anything for leaving home. I guess I felt kind of eager, because I figured the school where we were being sent was going to be nice and be treated nice.

Anyway we left in the fall. We were transported by canoes and some motors that were here already. We were transported towards the Hudson Bay Line at a place called Landing River, Mile 279.

There we caught a train to The Pas, Manitoba, and by bus to Elkhorn Residential School. This was the first time I ever saw a bus in my life. I was kind of afraid of riding in it.

Since I was born in the bush, I was amazed at the change of the environment as we were going south. The lands were flat, farms all over the place. Hardly any trees, or I should say there were some, but most of them had been cut down for farming I guess.

When we arrived at Elkhorn, it was night and we all got off the bus and standing around outside. Here stood an enormous structure right in front of us. I felt afraid in some way because I knew that we were to be here for a long time. That's when we were separated. I was ten years old at that time, therefore, I was sent to a junior's dormitory. A dormitory with about forty beds in it.

I want to describe the building and the surroundings around it a little. It was in a shape of a cross. It was three stories high. Boys on one side and girls on one side (obvious). Senior boys and girls were on the top floor, then the juniors' dormitory on the second floor, and classrooms on the bottom floor.

There was a partition where the teachers and staff had their rooms. There was a big dining room and a kitchen. A laundry pad where girls had to do the laundry and sometimes boys too. I remember, I was placed to do the laundry. The one thing I hated doing was washing the girls' bloomers (ha!). There was also a place which is a Nursing Station. Sick students were placed here and so on.

In the yard there was a big barn and sheds where cattle were kept, horses, pigs, and chickens. There were also fields around the school. I played a great part in this area.

The whole property was enclosed by a fence with a perimeter of about six miles. There was the townsite at about half a mile from the school. A railroad passed through here.

The girls side of the building was completely fenced in to the building. The fence was about 8 to 10 feet high. The school accommodated about 500 children. Indian children from different reserves and of different dialects. At first we couldn't get along with each other. We used to get into fights all the time. But later on we started to get along with each other after we knew each other.

At times there were more boys than girls and odd times more girls than boys.

We had to get up at 6:00 a.m. and breakfast was at 7:00 a.m. Then school at 9:00 a.m. to 12:00, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

But the senior boys, half of them, had to work on the barn and cattle sheds every morning and afternoon. Half of them went to school, the other half tended the animals. They had to clean the pigs' pen, cattle sheds, horses' shed, barn and work on the field. Hauling hay for the cattle, etc.

As for the senior girls, half of them went to school in the morning, half went to the kitchen and dining room, laundry, and cleaning up. They also alternated. Half a school day every day.

I was a junior boy when I entered this school but I knew I would become a senior boy eventually as I grew up. I also had to do these chores as I spent my years in Elkhorn Residential School.

Classrooms: There were six classrooms in all on the school premises. The residence itself occupied grades 1 to 7 and some of the seniors had to attend school 8 to 12 at the townsite about half a mile from there. They had to walk to school every day and walk back. Even in the cold months.

The classrooms had their desks arranged in rows with the teacher at the front. As for teachers, they were all women, there were no male teachers at that time, not in this school anyway.

These teachers set up the rules which we had to abide to. If you misbehaved or talked back or whatever, you were immediately sent to the principal's office. There the principal would give you a strapping on the hands. If the penalty was serious, he would give you a strapping bare bum.

The strictest rule the school had was that there was to be "No Smoking" anywhere in the premises. But we used to sneak in cigarettes and tobacco and smoke. If we didn't have any tobacco we used to smoke bark off the trees and roll it up in paper. If we were caught we got the same punishment, which is a strapping.

Another rule the school set up was that there was to be "no running away." Although this rule was always being broken. The reason why this was happening all the time was that we were being mistreated, and not well fed. They didn't like working on the barns and sheds, having to clean up the manure, etc.

The students that ran away would climb out the windows, go down the fire escape and run down the road to the railway. There they would hop the trains and try to head home. But the majority, or I should say all of them, would eventually get caught and brought back to the school. Some of them would end up being hungry and give themselves up.

At one occasion, in the middle of winter, I remember the whole dormitory ran away. There were only five out of the dorm that remained. They all took off and tried to run away. And of course when you were brought back you were punished for this.

Another incident or I should say incidents, are that when we received any mail from home. The staff and principal would open our mails. If we were sent any money from home, they would keep that money and only give us maybe 50¢ a week to go and spend it in town. We were allowed to go to town on Saturdays. We could buy things for a nickel or dime in those days.

And also on these Saturdays we would look around for work. Ways in which we could make money. We used to go to gardeners, farmers, and ask for work. We made money picking vegetables from fields, etc. We found plenty to eat on these fields because we were not being well fed at school.

As for our dining room setup. The tables were set up in five columns or rows. Boys on one side and girls on one side (as usual).

The staff had the luxuries in those days. They had a separate dining room and obviously well fed.

At breakfast we would feast on porridge and occasionally eat eggs. We have milk, tea to drink.

Stews for dinner and supper. This was during the second world war. Sometimes we didn't have sugar for a long time. We used to go out in the bush and kill rabbits and bring them back to school to be cooked. I don't know why we didn't eat any of the livestock that was raised there. I don't recall ever eating any bacon, except for the time when some of us seniors slaughtered, stole a pig and we went out in the bush and cooked it. We had a good feast there anyway.

Meals were no good at all. There was never enough. Because of being hungry, we had no choice but to go and steal and kill chickens in town so we could eat. We used to steal vegetables from the cellar in school and go out in the bush and eat them.

We couldn't kill the chickens that were raised right in the school premises because they were too well kept. The staff member used to count them every morning and night. But the boys who were working with the chickens would steal the eggs. They didn't count the eggs.

We used to steal from the bakery in town and also the butcher shop. I remember, I had a whole roll of sausages around my neck and I took off heading for the bush. There my friends and I had a good feast.

The senior boys used to bully the junior boys all the time. I remember this because I was a junior boy myself. I want to mention a few of the things that they had the juniors do. Obviously the juniors were afraid of them because they were bigger and if you didn't do as you were told, they would beat you up.

They used to make us fight. No boxing gloves, just bare handed. They didn't allow to stop either, until one was bawling away good. Then one of the supervisors would see what is happening and he or she would try to get us to tell them who was responsible for what happened.

We didn't want to tell on the senior boy who was responsible, because he would beat you up if you told on him. So we didn't tell on them most of the time, but the ones involved in the fighting would be punished for it.

Another incident I remember was, that there was a long rope hung from the rafters inside the barn. It must have been about forty or fifty feet high. There were bales of hay at the bottom. They used to make us swing back and forth on this rope. If you fell down you were fortunate you didn't break your leg or neck.

Another incident is: when the horses are finished work on the field, we used to sneak away these horses and take them to the bush. There we would hold races on horseback.

I remember I just about broke my neck when my horse stepped into a gopher hole. I went flying in the air and the horse almost landed on me.

Another event we used to hold amongst ourselves was who or which group could kill the most chickens, turkeys or whatever. It turned out good for us because we had plenty to eat this way.

Some of us even trapped around the surroundings, caught weasels or whatever and sold them.

As for summer holidays, some of us had to stay to tend the animals, and clean the sheds, work on the fields, harvest, etc. I was one of these people. I didn't go home for three years. I had to tend with the chores when I was to have summer holidays. We didn't have any holidays at all. We had to work on the farm all the time. We would get up at 6:00 a.m. and start at 8:00 a.m. every day until 8:00 p.m. at night. We didn't have dinner at the residence, our lunch was brought out to us.

After three years I came home for the summer holidays. Then I came back for another three years until I was sixteen years of age. We were only allowed to attend school until you reached the age of sixteen.

It was the same thing over and over again of the years that I attended until I turned sixteen. I had to work on the farm because I was a senior by that time. I used to work with the horse team ploughing fields. Cleaning manure, bringing hay for the cattle and horses. All types of work chores that a farmer has to cope with when he is raising cattle and livestock.

When I turned sixteen, I got sent home in the fall when the kids were sent to school. When you turned sixteen you were graduated.

I lost my language while attending school. I didn't know my Cree. My friends at home when I got back made fun of me because I sounded funny trying to talk Cree. It was even hard talking to my family. They would talk to me in Cree and I had to respond. I had to respond in English but they didn't understand English. But eventually I picked up my Cree as the years went by.

To close off, I would like to say that during my years in a Residential School, I didn't get anything out of it. I feel were only wanted there so that we Indian boys could do the dirty work of cleaning manure

and doing chores on the farms because that is all what we ever did. We were not well educated. Attending classes half a day every day for six years! When you turned sixteen you were finished, you didn't go back that was period.

After being sixteen years of age I didn't think of going back or continuing my education. I guess you can say that I was glad in a way that I was finished, and I didn't have to go back.

Therefore, I spent my young manhood with my dad and family trapping and hunting. It felt good to be back where you started from. I guess you can say that I felt free again. Do whatever I wanted to do.

Now when I look back at those days of Residential School, I think it was for nothing. Of course I learned to communicate with the English language but that was about all.

I learned how to be a farm hand because I was given no choice. I had to do it.

Now today, I am a married man and have a family, but above all I am not a farmer. It didn't do any good for me.

APPENDIX J

TREATY #5 AND ADHESIONS

No. 149 A

ARTICLES OF A TREATY made and concluded at Beren's River the 20th day of September, and at Norway House the 24th day of September, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five, between "Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen" of Great Britain and Ireland, by her Commissioners the Honourable Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories and the Honourable James McKay of the one part, and the Saulteaux and Swampy Cree tribes of Indians, inhabitants of the country within the limits hereinafter defined and described, by their Chiefs, chosen and named as hereinafter mentioned, of the other part....

AND WHEREAS the said Commissioners have proceeded to negotiate a treaty with the said Indians, and the same has been finally agreed upon and concluded as follows, that is to say:

The Saulteaux and Swampy Cree Tribes of Indians and all other the Indians inhabiting the district hereinafter described and defined, do hereby cede, release surrender and yield up to the Government of the Dominion of Canada, for Her Majesty the Queen and Her successors for ever, all their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to the lands included within the following limits, that is to say:

Commencing at the north corner or junction of Treaties Nos. 1 and 3; thence easterly along the boundary of Treaty No. 3 to the "Height of Land," at the north-east corner of the said treaty limits, a point dividing the waters of the Albany and Winnipeg Rivers; thence due north along the said "Height of Land" to a point intersected by the 53⁰ of north latitude; and thence north-westerly to "Favourable Lake;" thence following the east shore of said lake to its northern limit; thence north-westerly to the north end of Lake Winnipegosis; thence westerly to the "Height of Land" called "Robinson's Portage;" thence north-westerly to the east end of "Cross Lake;" thence north-westerly crossing "Foxes Lake;" thence north-westerly to the north end of "Split Lake;" thence south-westerly to

"Pipestone Lake" on "Burntwood River;" thence south-westerly to the western point of "John Scott's Lake;" thence south-westerly to the shore of "Beaver Lake;" thence south-westerly to the west end of "Cumberland Lake;" thence due south to the "Saskatchewan River;" thence due south to the north-west corner of the northern limits of Treaty No. 4, including all territory within the said limits, and all islands on all lakes within the said limits, as above described; and it being also understood that in all cases where lakes should be included in the treaty.

And also all their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to all other lands wherever situated in the North-West Territories or in any other Province or portion of Her Majesty's dominions situated and being within the Dominion of Canada;

The tract comprised within the lines above described, embracing an area of one hundred thousand square miles, be the same more or less;

To have and to hold the same to Her Majesty's the Queen, and Her successors forever;

And Her Majesty the Queen hereby agrees and undertakes to lay aside reserves for farming lands, due respect being had to lands at present cultivated by the said Indians, and other reserves for the benefit of the said Indians, to be administered and dealt with for them by Her Majesty's Government of the Dominion of Canada, provided all such reserves shall not exceed in all one hundred and sixty acres for each family of five, or in that proportion for larger or smaller families in manner following, that is to say: For the Band of "Saulteaux, in the Beren's River" region, now settled or who may within two years settle therein a reserve commencing at the outlet of Beren's River into Lake Winnipeg, and extending along the shores of said lake, and up said river and into the interior behind said lake and river, so as to comprehend one hundred and sixty acres for each family of five, a reasonable addition being, however, to be made by Her Majesty to the extent of the said reserve for the inclusion in the tract so reserved of swamp, but reserved the free navigation of the

said lake and river, and free access to the shores and waters thereof, for Her Majesty and all Her subjects, and excepting thereout such land as may have been granted to or stipulated to be held by the "Hudson's Bay Company," and also such land as Her Majesty or Her successors, may in Her good pleasure, see fit to grant to the Mission established at or near Beren's River by the Methodist Church of Canada, for a church, school-house, parsonage, burial ground and farm, or other mission purposes; and to the Indians residing at Poplar River, falling into Lake Winnipeg north of Beren's River, a reserve not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres to each family of five, respecting, as much as possible, their present improvements:...

Her successors and Her subjects the free navigation of all lakes and rivers and free access to the shores thereof; provided, however, that Her Majesty reserves the right to deal with any settlers within the bounds of any lands reserved for any band as she shall deem fit, and also that the aforesaid reserves of land or any interest therein may be sold or otherwise disposed of by Her Majesty's Government for the use and benefit of the said Indians entitled thereto, with their consent first had and obtained.

And with a view to show the satisfaction of Her Majesty with behaviour and good conduct of Her Indians, she hereby, through Her Commissioners, makes them a present of five dollars for each man, woman and child belonging to the bands here represented, in extinguishment of all claims heretofore preferred.

And further, Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves hereby made as to Her Government of the Dominion of Canada may seem advisable, whenever the Indians of the reserve shall desire it.

Her Majesty further agrees with Her said Indians, that within the boundary of Indian reserves, until otherwise determined by Her Government of the Dominion of Canada, no intoxicating liquor shall be strictly enforced.

Her Majesty further agrees with Her said Indians, that they, the said Indians, shall have right to pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered as hereinbefore described subject to such regulations as may from time to time be made by Her Government of Her Dominion of Canada, and saving and excepting such tracts as may from time to time be required or taken up for settlement, mining, lumbering or other purposes, by Her said Government of the Dominion of Canada, or by any of the subjects thereof duly authorized therefor by the said Government.

It is further agreed between Her Majesty and Her said Indians that such sections of the reserves above indicated as may time be required for public works or buildings, of what nature soever, may be appropriated for that purpose by Her Majesty's Government of the Dominion of Canada, due compensation being made for the value of any improvements thereon.

And further, that Her Majesty's Commissioners shall, as soon as possible after the execution of this treaty, cause to be taken an accurate census of all the Indians inhabiting the tract above described distributing them in families, and shall in every year ensuing the date hereof, at some period in each year to be duly notified to the Indians, and at a place or places to be appointed for that purpose within the territory ceded, pay to each Indian person the sum of five dollars per head yearly.

It is further agreed between Her Majesty and the said Indians that the sum of five hundred dollars per annum shall be yearly and every year expended by Her Majesty in the purchase of ammunition, and twine for nets, for the use of the said Indians, in manner following, that is to say: in the reasonable discretion as regards the distribution thereof among the Indians inhabiting the several reserves or otherwise included therein of Her Majesty's Indian Agent having the supervision of this treaty.

It is further agreed between Her Majesty and the said Indians that the following articles shall be supplied to any band of the said Indians who are now cultivating the soil, or who shall hereafter commence to cultivate the land, that is to say: Two hoes for every family actually cultivating; also one spade per family as aforesaid; one plough for every ten families as aforesaid; five harrows for every twenty families as aforesaid; one scythe for every family as aforesaid, and also one axe; --and also one cross-cut saw, one hand-saw, one pitsaw, the necessary files, one grindstone and one auger for each band; and also for each Chief, for the use of his band, one chest of ordinary carpenter's tools; also for each band enough of wheat, barley, potatoes and oats to plant the land actually broken up for cultivation by such band; also for each band one yoke of oxen, one bull and four cows--all the aforesaid articles to be given once for all for the encouragement of the practice of agriculture among the Indians.

It is further agreed between Her Majesty and the said Indians that each Chief duly recognized as such shall receive an annual salary of twenty-five dollars per annum, and each subordinate officer, not exceeding three for each band, shall receive fifteen dollars per annum; and each Chief and subordinate officer as aforesaid shall also receive, once every three years, a suitable suit of clothing; and each Chief shall receive, in recognition of the closing of the treaty, a suitable flag and medal....