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**WINNING THE WAR, WINNING THE PEACE:
THE IMAGE OF THE 'INDIAN' IN ENGLISH-CANADA, 1930-1948**

by

**R. Scott Sheffield
M.A., University of Victoria. 1995.**

Thesis

**Submitted to the Department of History
In partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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2000**

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ABSTRACT

WINNING THE WAR, WINNING THE PEACE: THE IMAGE OF THE 'INDIAN' IN ENGLISH-CANADA, 1930-1948

**R. Scott Sheffield
Wilfrid Laurier University, 2000**

**Advisor
Prof. T. Copp**

This dissertation examines the impact of the Second World War on the image of the 'Indian' prevalent in English-Canada between 1930 and 1948. Traditionally, historical studies have assumed that the war formed a watershed in Canadian social, cultural and Aboriginal history: marking the end of the 'era of irrelevance' for Aboriginal people and creating a paradigm-shift in feelings about 'racial' tolerance and human rights. This study explores the shift in English-Canadian images of the 'Indian' from 1930 to 1948, as a way of testing the prevailing interpretation of the war as a major historical pivot in Canadian cultural constructions of the 'other' and in state-Aboriginal relations.

The image developed by the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) is treated separately from that evident in the public domain. The former constructed the 'Administrative Indian' in a hostile and derogatory manner, necessary to legitimise and rationalise the IAB's goal of assimilation. The public, by contrast, had the luxury to think about the First Nations, or not, as they wished. The result was an ambivalent dual image, which trivialised Aboriginal people and issues and helped Canadians manage collective guilt for the displacement and plight of the 'Indian'.

The efforts to win the war and later to win the peace created acute pressure on images of the 'Indian'. While the IAB's disciplined discourse weathered the strain almost unchanged, the same cannot be said of the public discourse, which proved adept at incorporating new images into

its existing mental framework as circumstances warranted. As the country entered the post-war period, Canadians wished to do right by the Indian', in appreciation for the symbolically important contributions of Aboriginal people to the national war effort. The resulting parliamentary committee, which sat between 1946-1948, re-enshrined assimilation as the goal of Canadian Indian policy. Adherence to this policy was still based on an underlying certainty in English-Canadian society's superiority over that of the 'Indian', but it could no longer be defended on those grounds. In post-1945 Canada, assimilation was renewed and rationalised through a new faith in interventionist government, liberal-democratic principles and the promise of scientific social engineering.

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In producing a work such as this over the course of several years many debts are incurred. First, this dissertation could not have been completed without the financial support provided by scholarships from the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Program, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Department of National Defence, Security and Defence Forum.

I was fortunate to be one of the first 'pioneers' to enter the Tri-University Doctoral Program in History in 1995. It has provided me with an dynamic and supportive environment in which to grow, both intellectually and professionally. To the other students in the program at all three campuses, thanks for helping me to feel a part of a community and keeping me from getting mired in the solitary pursuit that is our stock and trade. A special mention must be made of the other 'pioneers', Ian Miller, Tracy Penny-Light and Beatrice Bessa, good friends all. Ian Miller and Liisa Peramaki provided much appreciated editing on the penultimate draft.

To Terry Copp, my supervisor, mentor and friend, I am indebted; his ability to challenge me intellectually helped me to cut through the clutter in my own mind, and nurtured the independent scholar within me. To the other members of my committee I am also grateful. John English, Jamie Snell and Jim Walker all gave generously of their time and analytical abilities. My field readings on 'race' and ethnicity with Jim Walker were especially important in pushing my work in new directions.

Lynne Doyle, the Secretary of the Department of History, helped me negotiate the often byzantine bureaucracy and regulations that face any graduate student. In addition, I benefited from the facilities and support of the Wilfrid Laurier Centre for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies, and the services of Michael Bechthold in printing and scanning material. The generous hospitality of Lee and Tammy Windsor and John Walsh and Karen Rayburn facilitated my research in Ottawa, and made my stays there a pleasure.

Finally, I owe the most to my family. To my parents, Bob and Irene Sheffield and my 'other' parents, Bob and Elaine Olafson, a big thanks for their constant support and encouragement. To my son, Jordan, and my dog, Loki, for reminding me that a walk at the end of the day is *always* more important than a deadline. And lastly to my wife, Kirsten, who inspires me to strive for my best, and for whom I do what I do.

This dissertation is much better for the efforts of all those named above, but responsibility for any errors or omissions rests with me alone.

R. Scott Sheffield

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List of Abbreviations

NWS	Department of National War Services
DND	Department of National Defence
IAB	Indian Affairs Branch
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NBBC	Native Brotherhood of British Columbia
NAIB	North American Indian Brotherhood
RG	Record Group
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
SJC	Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act

INTRODUCTION: THE IMAGE OF THE 'INDIAN' IN ENGLISH-CANADA¹

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact of the Second World War on the ways in which English-speaking Canadians of European ancestry sought to define and control the people of Canada's First Nations. It is not a study of Aboriginal people, culture or experience, though they form the topic of much of what is discussed. The dissertation distinguishes between the image of the First Nations as it existed among the officials of the Indian Affairs Branch and the public perception developed in and through the media. Significant differences developed between the construct of the 'Administrative Indian' and the 'Public Indian' and these differences require careful analysis.

The personnel of the Indian Affairs Branch conducted their routine administration and reflective commentary on the First Nations almost exclusively in the English language. The 'Administrative Indian' must therefore be studied with due attention to the complexities and meanings of that language. The 'Public Indian' is also examined as an idea elaborated in the English-language media. The pattern of interaction between French-speaking Canadians and the First Nations has been influenced by a very different historical relationship and is not examined here. Henceforth, the term Canadians refers to English-speaking Canadians, unless otherwise indicated.

¹ A note about terminology. The term 'Indian', in single quotations, refers to the constructed image of Aboriginal people in use among English-Canadians during the period under investigation. The single quotations are not used when referring to a particular title or thing, such as Indian Agent, Indian Affairs Branch, the Indian Act or Canadian Indian policy, or when specifically discussing Status Indians under the Act. However, I will generally use either First Nations or Aboriginal when discussing indigenous peoples themselves.

The original inhabitants of this continent have been the subject of stories and myths which served to explain their character to Europeans.² By the mid-twentieth century, the idea of the 'Indian' had been a common aspect of Canadians' experience for so long, that even those who had never seen a 'real Indian', let alone experienced their diverse cultures, could draw on an extensive mental framework of images, assumptions and stereotypes at the mere mention of the word. This mental framework had been shaped from childhood by school textbooks, dime store novels, wild west shows and a steady stream of silent films and 'talkies' out of Hollywood. It was passed on, promulgated and reinforced through experience or hearsay in day-to-day conversation. This framework was immediately accessible, and contained a cornucopia of powerful, yet frequently ambiguous and contradictory, images. It is the evolution of this intellectual, emotional and visual framework of ideas, assumptions and stereotypes in the collective mind of English-Canadians that forms one of the themes of this dissertation.

In developing the theory and approach for this study, the work on the discourse of 'race' and imperialism has been instructive. The classic monograph, Orientalism, by Edward Said, and, in the Canadian context, the excellent works by Kay Anderson and James W. St.G. Walker, are most directly applicable.³ This approach presumes that the mental framework of knowledge and

² Europeans struggled intellectually and spiritually to incorporate a new people into their essentially Mediterranean mind set. Euro-Canadians thus drew on a long tradition of conceptualizing about Aboriginal people from both the United States and Britain long before the nineteenth century. See Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Colin G. Calloway, Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815 (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), R.G. Moyles and Doug Owsram, Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), Peter Hulme, Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1787 (London: Methuen, 1986).

³ Edward Said, Orientalism (1978, New York: Vintage Books, 1994), Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), James W. St.G. Walker, "Race," Rights and the Law in the
(continued...)

assumption, what Walker terms 'common sense', is designed and created by the dominant society, for its own consumption and to meet its own requirements. It enables the members of that society to make sense of the world around them, though it need not reflect any objective reality. Thus, the image of the 'Indian' is more useful as a means of understanding the desires, anxieties, conceits and assumptions of Canadians, rather than telling us about Aboriginal peoples, cultures and experience.

This dissertation explores the image of the 'Indian' as it was discussed in the bureaucratic as well as in the public sphere. The working image of Aboriginal people developed by the officials of the Department of Indian Affairs (Indian Affairs Branch after 1936), what I call the 'Administrative Indian', will be one focus. This agency was not the only government body involved in Indian administration in Canada during this period, but it was the single most important, functioning almost like a mini-government in the breadth of services it provided and powers it exercised. Moreover, it was responsible for the overall direction of Canadian Indian policy, subject only to the infrequent interest of Parliament. Officials of the Indian Affairs Branch developed an image of their charges that was unique unto themselves and not representative of all government departments.

In reconstructing the official image of the 'Indian', as well as the 'Public Indian', extensive use will be made of quotations from the evidence because in many cases the tone, tempo, emphasis and double meaning can only be conveyed through the words used in the 1940s. The description of 'Administrative Indian' will be derived from a range of Indian Affairs records during the time period under consideration. For instance, the first chapter covering the 1930s will examine the

³(...continued)

Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies, (Waterloo and Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press and the Osgoode Society, 1997).

internal correspondence in the School Files of Record Group 10, the archival group holding material on Indian administration. Discussion of the education of Aboriginal children incorporated not only reference to what departmental officials believed the 'Indian' to be, but also what they hoped the 'Indian' would become. Thus the notion of the 'Administrative Indian' can be gleaned from the language used in the internal letters dealing with such mundane matters as appointing teachers, repairing school buildings and determining whether Aboriginal children would be allowed home for the holidays. In later chapters dealing with the official image of the 'Indian', the focus will shift to correspondence files dealing with Aboriginal enlistment and conscription, Indian policy reform and the Parliamentary review of the Indian Act after the war. Emphasis is on internal memos and letters, rather than public policy statements, because they are less likely to be guarded, and because the focus is on the corporate discourse: the distinct common language used by Indian Affairs officials when conversing with each other.

Alongside the 'Administrative Indian', this dissertation will examine the 'Indian' as an idea in the primary forum for public expression, the nation's print media. Newspapers are a fruitful place to prospect for the 'common sense' of the day because they "purport[ed] to deal in fact, not fiction."⁴ Not only did they describe events and offer opinion, they did so in a way that the reporters and editors felt would be informative, entertaining and provocative. Due to a lack of space, however, they were often reduced to cliché, shorthand forms of ideas that their readers could recognize without extensive elaboration. Each element of a newspaper, whether it be editorial, news story or advertisement, reveals a different means of viewing societal 'common sense' about Aboriginal people. Editorials provided an opportunity for editors to flex their rhetoric and be philosophical about an issue in a way that 'hard' news stories could not. News stories reflected the

⁴ Mary Ann Weston, Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), p.2.

interests of the editorial staff and reporters, but more importantly, exposed the language and the stereotypes that existed for them to use. In addition, they revealed what the editors believed the public wished to read and would find interesting. The frequency, type, tone and salience of news stories about the First Nations, can be illuminating when examined over a period of time.

Advertisements are also a useful vehicle to trace the imagery and ideas of the period. Using evocative pictures and brief slogans to encapsulate larger ideas, they were designed to seize a reader's attention, rousing emotions, triggering desires and informing in a very brief space of time. Drawing on all three facets, an examination of a number of papers provides an interesting glimpse of the common sense knowledge about the 'Indian' in Canada.

A broad sampling of newspapers and monthly magazines were used as the source base for the analysis of the 'Public Indian'. Importantly, no American or British publications were considered in the sampling. This decision does not imply that Canadians were free of the influence of the intellectual and cultural currents of their imperial parent or the cultural colossus to the south. Far from it, the 'common sense' about 'race' had long been shaped by ideas imported from abroad, and in particular by the British imperial experience and the American struggles over 'race'. Some of the most commonly read periodicals in Canada during this time period were American, including Reader's Digest, Time and Life.. This dissertation treats the material in the Canadian print media as part of a conversation among Canadians which included ideas contributed by British and American writers. If foreign voices made important contributions to the discourse they will be reflected in that discourse.

The periodicals sampled were selected from different regions within English-Canada, and ranged from major urban dailies to rural weeklies.⁵ Some, such as the weekly Cardston News,

⁵ The following analysis of English-Canada's 'Public Indian' is drawn from a wide range of
(continued...)

were chosen from communities in close proximity to Aboriginal reserves where interaction with the local Aboriginal population was significant, and others, like Toronto's Globe and Mail, were chosen from populations with little contact. Though undoubtedly there were rural/urban and regional differences, this dissertation cannot investigate them without much more intensive comparative research. Such variations could have been the result of editorial policy, or the prejudices of the editor, and were not necessarily symptomatic of a regionally distinct discourse. Fortunately, the commonalities that cut across regional boundaries and appear in all of the papers consulted were much more important than the differences. It is this overlap in the depiction of the characteristics, imagery, stereotypes, and assumptions that allows us a view of the core elements of the 'Public Indian' as it was understood by the majority of Canadians during the 1930s and 1940s. This methodology allows a reconstruction of the framework of 'common sense' about the 'Indian' in the public domain and enables us to track its fluctuations over time.

The 'Indian' image, both public and official, was primarily a male figure, though there were female variants on most of the images that developed in the dominant society. Nonetheless, I have not analysed the gender aspects in the discourse. The issues at hand were already quite complex without adding an additional element. The material however, would provide a rich field for a gendered approach, as Sarah Carter has already demonstrated for the late nineteenth century

⁵(...continued)

publications from across the country. These include prominent urban dailies: specifically, The Globe (and Mail by decade's end), the Winnipeg Free Press, the Halifax Chronicle, the Calgary Herald, the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix and the Vancouver Sun. All six boasted a readership that extended beyond their municipal boundary. The papers of four smaller communities were also selected for examination, two dailies, the Prince Albert Daily Herald and the Brantford Expositor, and two weeklies, the Kamloops Sentinel and the Cardston News. In addition to the community-based papers, the university journals from Toronto, Queen's and Dalhousie, the conservative weekly magazine, Saturday Night, the popular weekly Maclean's and the left-leaning literary monthly, Canadian Forum, round out the sources consulted.

Prairie West.⁶

Historical writing on Aboriginal people has focussed heavily on the contact and fur trade periods, leaving the twentieth century relatively under-represented. Ken Coates and Robin Fisher, in the introduction to their collection of essays, Out of the Background, lamented that,

despite the proliferation of fine writing in the field, enormous historiographical gaps remain. Academics have documented comparatively little about twentieth-century developments related to First Nations (particularly the post-World War II period), despite the fact that there is no shortage of detailed government and other records relating to the era.⁷

This neglect seems all the more remarkable considering the tendency of scholars in the field to treat the Second World War as an important watershed in Aboriginal history. For J.R. Miller, in his major survey, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, it marks the end of the “era of irrelevance.”⁸ Yet those that acknowledge the conflict in this fashion largely gloss over the event itself with little examination of the characteristics and historical processes that made it a significant break point in Native history.⁹ Paul Tennant’s acclaimed monograph, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics, tracks

⁶ Sarah Carter, Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada’s Prairie West (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997). Carter examines the construction of women, femininity and ‘race’ within a context of imperialism.

⁷ Ken Coates and Robin Fisher, eds., Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History, second edition (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), p.3. Coates and Fisher might have included the war years in this characterisation, but their omission is in keeping with the field’s penchant for ignoring the Second World War period.

⁸ J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p.221.

⁹ For example, Olive P. Dickason, Canada’s First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples From Earliest Times (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), p.328-329, dedicates only a single paragraph to the impact of the Second World War, and only a sentence to the effect on the dominant society, saying only that the war “ushered in a change of attitudes.” John Tobias’s important article, “Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada’s Indian Policy,” Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology (vol.6, no.2, 1976), similarly glosses over the war, portraying it as a distraction from “Indian matters,” yet acknowledging that the “apparent
(continued...) ”

almost a century and a half of Aboriginal political organisation and struggle without mentioning Second World War conscription, one of its primary catalysts.¹⁰ One of the only exceptions to this rule is the excellent recent dissertation by John Leslie, which reconstructs the development of Indian policy in Canada from 1943 to 1963.¹¹ Yet he too underrates the importance of the war in his analysis. In part this is legitimate given his focus on the Indian policy-making community as opposed to the larger society. Finally, as Kerry Abel has noted, there has been a tendency to cross the border from historical analysis to advocacy in this field, the more so in the twentieth century material.¹² While this is understandable, given the highly emotional and politicised nature of the subject matter and its contemporary resonance, passing judgment on those in the past is not likely to lead to a clearer understanding of their beliefs and motivations.

Sadly, the study of the history of 'race' and ethnicity has had little interaction with the study of Aboriginal history, because the former's greater theoretical sophistication has had a negligible impact in the latter. As Steve High notes, there has been "an implicit understanding that Amerindians are somehow outside the conception of 'ethnicity'."¹³ In many regards this is appropriate given the profoundly different historical experience of Aboriginal people, their distinct

⁹(...continued)

aimlessness [of Indian policy] changed after 1945. This interest was largely a result of the strong Indian contribution to the war effort in the years 1940-1945." The pervasiveness of this practice is evident in an article on the historiography of Native wage labour by Steven High, "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance'", *Labour/Le Travail*, vol.37, (Spring 1996): 243-64. Not only does his conceptual framework explicitly use this characterisation of the war, he refers to a number of academics who's work does the same.

¹⁰ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1848-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990).

¹¹ John F. Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943-1963* (PhD. Dissertation, Carleton University, 1999).

¹² Kerry Abel, "Tangled, Lost and Bitter? Current Directions in the Writing of Native History in Canada," *Acadiensis*. XXVII (Autumn 1996): 92-101.

¹³ Steve High, "Native Wage...", p. 248.

constitutional status and their relationship with the dominant society. However, it is unfortunate that this topical division has blocked conceptual cross-fertilisation. The outcome, according to High, is that,

from its biological origins, the concept of ethnicity has expanded to include socially constructed identities. Despite the general acceptance of ethnicity as a social construct, historians have been slow to explore its meaning. They have been even slower to locate Amerindian peoples within its boundaries... Ethnic studies has, therefore, not yet become a major player in the study of aboriginal peoples.

There are some indications that this barrier is beginning to breakdown. For instance, Elizabeth Vibert's theoretically sophisticated book, Trader's Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbian Plateau, 1797-1846, crosses the boundary; it 'unpacks' the framework of assumptions based on culture, gender, class and 'race' evident in the writings of early European fur traders in the Northwestern interior.¹⁴ This dissertation brings this theoretical and methodological richness from the study of 'race' and ethnicity to understand English-Canada's construction of the 'Indian' in the twentieth century.

The dissertation draws upon the work of both American and Canadian scholars who have explored aspects of the construction of 'Indian' identity by Europeans. As an undergraduate I had the good fortune to study with Brian W. Dippie, a Canadian student of American Indian history, whose 1982 book The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy made an important contribution to a developing debate.¹⁵

¹⁴ Elizabeth Vibert, Trader's Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1797-1846 (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). This book was short-listed for the 1998 Sir John A. Macdonald Prize for Best Book in Canadian History. Vibert's work, unlike this dissertation, also examines the other side of the cultural encounter taking place in the Columbia Plateau, by exploring the responses of the First Nations to the pressures of the fur trade.

¹⁵ Brian W. Dippie, The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present (New York: Random House, (continued...))

There is a much smaller body of writing about Canadian attitudes and policy.¹⁶ Daniel Francis' book, The Imaginary Indian, did serve to introduce many of the issues discussed in this thesis; however, Francis explores the 'Indian' image from its creation by the dominant society through to the present without sufficient attention to the historical context.¹⁷ The Imaginary Indian covers such a broad sweep of time that it can only skate across the surface of a deep and complex process. A second noteworthy study is a short monograph by Ronald Haycock entitled, The Canadian Indian as a subject and a concept in a sampling of the popular national magazines read in Canada, 1900-1970, which was published in 1971.¹⁸ This interesting study examines a select

¹⁵(...continued)

1978), Richard Drinnon, Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), Raymond William Stedman, Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982). Others have focused on a specific medium, particularly motion pictures, as examples and creators of myths and stereotypes. Ralph E. Friar and Natasha A. Friar published their classic study, The Only Good Indian... The Hollywood Gospel (New York: Drama Book Specialists/ Publishers), in 1972, but this has been replaced by Michael Hilger's more sophisticated and objective, From Savage to Nobleman: Images of Native Americans in Film (Lanham, Maryland and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1995) which discusses not only the obvious content of films, but also the importance of camera angles and editing in the creation of mood and tone. The American news media's treatment of Aboriginal people and subjects has also received excellent treatment in Mary Ann Weston's journalism critique, Native Americans in the News.

¹⁶ Sarah Carter's, "The Missionaries' Indian: The Publications of John McDougall, John MacLean and Egerton Ryerson Young," Prairie Forum. vol.9 no.1 (1984): 27-44, and Bruce Trigger's, "The Historians' Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present," Canadian Historical Review. vol. LXVII, no.3 (1986): 315-342, are two of the best examples. Canadian literature has been gleaned for perceptions of the First Nations in two major works: Leslie Monkman, A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) and more recently in an excellent study comparing the indigenous element in the literature of Canada, New Zealand and Australia, Terry Goldie, Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

¹⁷ Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Popular Culture (1992, Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995)

¹⁸ Ronald Graham Haycock, The Canadian Indian as a subject and a concept in a sampling of the popular national magazines read in Canada, 1900-1970 (Waterloo, Ont.: Waterloo Lutheran University, 1971).

group of prominent magazines read by Canadians, including American periodicals, to determine the attitudes expressed about the 'Indian' and traces the changes in those views. He arbitrarily divides the seventy years at 1930 and 1960, but argues that the "changes were ... evolutionary," and tried to maintain a chronology within each period.¹⁹ Unfortunately, he chose to define all the articles examined within a cumbersome framework of five categories that he found suitable to his evidence in 1900: religion, customs and manners, travelogue, popular history and contemporary Indian affairs. This structure proved limiting once he moved beyond his first time frame.

Beyond Francis and Haycock's work, there is remarkably little material in the field dealing with Canadian attitudes to Aboriginal people during or after the Second World War. For instance, the war and society historiography in Canada, apart from the prominent body of writing on the internment of Japanese-Canadians in the Second World War, is still quite limited on matters of ethnicity and Aboriginal people. The best work available is a collection of essays entitled, On Guard For Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945, which does not contain anything about Aboriginal people.²⁰ There are good articles available on the First Nations during the Second World War, but each is narrow in focus, and does not really examine the attitudes of the dominant society either explicitly or systematically.²¹

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.vi.

²⁰ Hillmer, Norman *et al*, ed., On Guard For Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988).

²¹ James Dempsey, "Alberta's Indians and the Second World War," in For King and Country: Alberta and the Second World War, Ken Tingley, ed., (Edmonton: Provincial Museum of Alberta, 1995): 39-52, Micheal D. Stevenson, "The Mobilisation of Native Canadians During the Second World War," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association (1996): 205-226, R. Scott Sheffield and Hamar Foster, "Fighting the King's War: Harris Smallfence, Verbal Treaty Promises and the Conscription of Indian Men, 1944," University of British Columbia Law Review vol.33, no.1, (1999): 53-74, R. Scott Sheffield, "'Of Pure European Descent and of the White Race': Recruitment Policy and Aboriginal Canadians," Canadian Military History Vol.5, no.1 Spring (1996): 8-15.

The dissertation is organized into seven distinct chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter offers a description of the image of both the 'Administrative Indian' and the 'Public Indian' in the decade before the Second World War. It argues that Indian Affairs officials employed a very different set of ideas about the First Nations than the vague and romantic notions about a noble and vanishing race which were common in the popular press. Indian Affairs officials were able to develop policies to pursue their goal of assimilation without public scrutiny because everyone 'knew' the Indian was doomed to disappear.

Chapter Two offers a detailed examination of the first stage in the transformation of the popular image of First Nations in the context of the outbreak of war and the crisis years 1940-41. The public perception of the Indian as loyal subject and valued volunteer soldier awakened interest in First Nations and challenged stereotypes.

The third chapter provides a detailed study of the ways in which the government bureaucracy dealt with the issue of First Nations military service during the war and argues that the responsible officials maintained a discourse and implemented policies which extended pre-war paternalistic and assimilationist assumptions. This chapter is followed by another which analyses the public attitudes towards First Nations in the last two years of the war when questions related to reconstruction and the long term future of Canada were under discussion. For Canadians, the apparently successful assimilation of Indians within the armed forces served as a model for a future in which the Indian problem could be made to disappear.

Chapter 5 examines the post-war efforts of the Indian Affairs administration to determine the nature of the 'Indian problem' and develop means to improve the future implementation of policy toward the First Nations. The evidence clearly establishes that the IAB was largely unaffected by the transformation in the public 'Indian' discourse and sought to reinvigorate existing approaches to assimilation.

The sixth and seventh chapters explore the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee that sat between 1946 and 1948 to reconsider Canada's Indian administration and the Indian Act. The former looks at the various images of the 'Indian' that were brought before the parliamentary committee by both the Canadian public and by First Nations communities and organisations. The latter examines the process of the debates within the Special Joint Committee over its three year tenure to see what image of the 'Indian' would emerge to form the conceptual foundation for future Canadian Indian policy.

The process of producing this dissertation significantly influenced the result. Each chapter was researched and written before the next was begun, and each examination was guided by a series of questions, which are reproduced in the chapter introductions. Thus, the analysis that follows can best be explained as a dialogue with the evidence. I invite the reader to listen in.

CHAPTER 1

THE IMAGE OF THE 'INDIAN' IN CANADA, 1930-1939

The 1930s were difficult years for Canadians. Internally, the people and their governments wrestled with a crippling depression from which the country did not finally emerge until the early stages of the Second World War. Rampant unemployment, wilting export markets, a collapse in the world price of grain and the worst drought in western Canadian memory formed the everyday fodder of public and private discussion. Social and labour unrest, always riding the coat tails of such conditions, spread across the country, most noticeably in the "On-to-Ottawa Trek" of 1935. Numerous political movements were spawned in response to what seemed to many to be the bankruptcy of the western capitalist system, among them the Social Credit of Alberta and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Canadians spent most of these ten years looking inward, consumed with their own problems. However, when they did shift their gaze to the wider world the news was not exactly heartening. The world was not a happy place in the 1930s, as Canadians anxiously noted the similar depressed conditions elsewhere during the early part of the decade, and the increasingly aggressive expansionism of the totalitarian states of Germany, Italy and Japan in the latter half.

The 1930s were also hard years for much of Canada's Aboriginal population. In many cases they felt the contractions of Canada's economy immediately, unable to get jobs off the reserve when so many 'whites' were unemployed. Even those remote from the country's economic centres felt the Depression's pinch in slumping fur prices. Aboriginal farmers on the prairies, whose reserves were often on marginal land, suffered as did other farmers from the drought and the depressed price of grain. Most of the First Nations political organisations that had formed during the 1920s, in response to various government actions, had folded before the Depression, leaving

Aboriginal people with no organised voice to carry their plight to Canadians.¹ Not that Indian Affairs officials were inclined to hear them. In 1933 the Department placed an administrative ban on Aboriginal delegations coming to Ottawa to lay their grievances or land claims before senior officials.² The combination of hard economic times, political powerlessness and the still prevalent ravages of disease made many Aboriginal people dependant on relief payments from an Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) whose budget had been cut to the bone.³ In short, their situation verged on desperate for a good portion of the decade.

Federal administrators and legislation affected the lives of First Nations people in more ways than providing relief. The height of directed 'civilization', or "coercive tutelage" as it has been termed by some scholars, occurred in the early 1920s under Superintendent General Duncan Campbell Scott.⁴ He remained in this post until 1933 and his legacy arguably lasted much longer.⁵

¹ R.R.H Lueger, *A History of Indian Associations in Canada, 1870-1970* (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1977), Donald Whiteside, Efforts to Develop Aboriginal Political Associations in Canada, 1850-1965 (Ottawa, Aboriginal Institute of Canada, 1974), Paul Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman, John Tootoosis (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1984, originally published 1982), Alan Morley, Roar of the Breakers: A Biography of Peter Kelly (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), and E.P. Patterson, *Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence* (PhD. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1962).

² H. McGill to all Agents and Inspectors, 15 March 1933 (National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Record Group 10 (hereafter RG 10), vol. 3245, file 600, 381), referred to in John Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943-1963* (PhD. Dissertation, Carleton University, 1999), p. 67, nt.# 113.

³ The Department was moved to the Ministry of Mines and Resources in 1936 and downgraded to a Branch. To maintain continuity with later chapters, the organisation will be referred to as the Indian Affairs Branch, IAB or Branch, unless there is a specific pre-1937 reference.

⁴ This term has been popularised by anthropologist, Noel Dyck, in his important study, What is the Indian 'Problem': Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration (St. John's, Nfld: The Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991). His use of this theoretical concept has been challenged by Victor Satzewich in, "Indians Agents and the "Indian Problem" in Canada in 1946: Reconsidering the Theory of Coercive Tutelage," Canadian Journal of Native (continued...)

The Indian Affairs Branch had the power to remove lands from reserves and to forcibly enfranchise Aboriginal people whether they wished it or not. While historians have argued that Indian administration “drift[ed] into a state of flux” and “ad hoc decisions” after Scott’s departure, this should not be taken to mean it was motionless.⁶ The ultimate goal, the elimination of the Indian as an entity apart from the mainstream of Canadian society, remained the *raison d’être* of Indian Affairs throughout the 1930s.

In contrast to the continuity in Canada, Indian administration in the United States was going through profound changes during the 1930s. There, the General Allotment Act of 1887 had pried away reserve lands and enfranchised American Indians with even more ruthless efficiency than had Canadian Indian policy in the same period. Beginning in the 1920s, a movement of liberal and intellectual elites, led by John Collier, popularized the idea of Indian policy reform. So effective did this critique become that President Franklin D. Roosevelt decided to make Collier the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1933. What followed was a remarkable and

⁴(...continued)

Studies vol. 17, no. 2 (1997): 227-257.

⁵ Directed ‘civilization’ was a series of policies that attempted to speed up the process of teaching Aboriginal people to be ‘white’. Among the hallmarks were increasingly arbitrary means of enfranchising the ‘Indian’, the development of residential schools that drew the children away from the negative influence of their parents for more thorough indoctrination, and the alienation of reserve lands without the consent of the band.

⁶ Olive Patricia Dickason, Canada’s First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), p. 328. John Tobias, “Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canadian Indian Policy,” in As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian-Native Studies, eds. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983: 39-55), p. 51.

dynamic era of reform that came to be known as the Indian New Deal.⁷ In Canada, however, there was seemingly no such interest in the plight of the Aboriginal population; indeed, a cartoon printed in the Winnipeg Free Press seems to suggest that there was some scepticism about American attempts at 'civilizing' the 'Indian' (see Figure 1.1).⁸

This chapter will examine the ways in which English-Canadians discussed Aboriginal people and issues during the 1930s in order to better understand the relationship between the First Nations and the society and state in which they

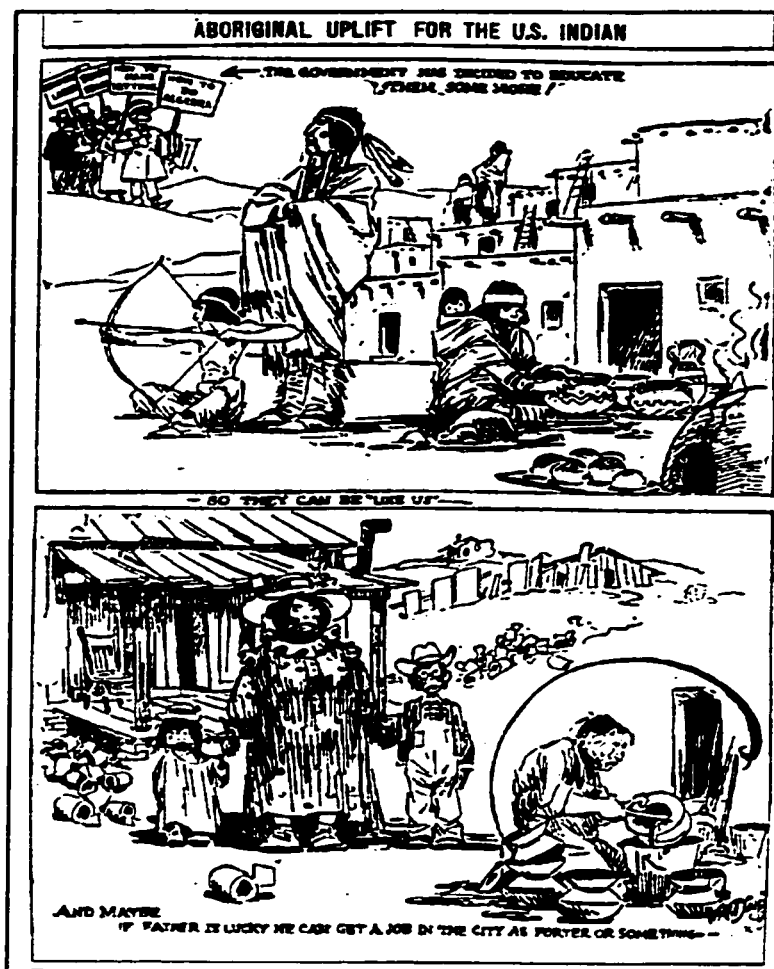


Figure 1.1 "Aboriginal Uplift For The U.S. Indian," Winnipeg Free Press (18 August 1930), p. 3.

resided: specifically, it will explore the administrative and public images of the 'Indian'. This

⁷ Kenneth R. Philip, John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954 (Tucson, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1977). This book is a useful survey of the movement from the central figure. Lawrence M. Hauptman, The Iroquois and the New Deal (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1981), and Peter Iverson, The Navajo Nation (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), both provide excellent examinations of the impact of the New Deal era on specific Aboriginal groups. More useful from the context of this paper is the ground-breaking work by Brian Dippie, The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1982).

⁸ This cartoon encapsulates many of the conflicting images that marked the discourse of the 'Public Indian'.

approach is not meant to imply a simple cause and effect linkage between public or official attitudes and specific policies. Such a link would be difficult to establish conclusively, and too crude to explain an undoubtedly complex relationship of ideas, assumptions and stereotypes. However, the Canadian image of the 'Indian' formed the context in which policy and reserve conditions were created or allowed to exist. This analysis will provide the essential precursor to the rest of this dissertation; moreover, the decade of the 1930s is noteworthy in its own right. The dramatic domestic and international events making the news during the decade provide a context in which the relative significance of Aboriginal issues can be measured. In addition, it is worth discovering whether the gyrations in Indian policy reform going on in the United States had any influence on Canada's Indian Affairs Branch or the Canadian population.

This chapter, as with those that will follow, should be conceived of as an explorative journey, in search of answers to significant questions. How did Canadians construct the 'Indian' in both the public and official domains? Where did these images arise and what were their meaning? Were there differences or similarities between the IAB and the public discourse? Finally, what purpose did these images serve for those that created them? Out of this analysis a broad range of perceptions of Aboriginal people emerge, each distinctly different from the other and often contradictory. In the end, with the aid of insights suggested by those who have studied the discourse of 'race' and imperialism, these various conceptions of the 'Indian' help to make sense of the state of Canadian Indian policy as well as Canada's varied relationships with the First Nations during the Depression years.

Undoubtedly crucial to any understanding of the period is determining how the Indian Affairs Branch administration articulated and constructed the image of their charges. The officials in Ottawa and in the field had formulated a fairly cohesive view of the 'Indian' over the many years

of administering such matters as land sales, relief payments, agriculture and education. In researching the 'Administrative Indian' during the 1930s, the focus was on internal day-to-day correspondence between senior officials in Ottawa and the agents, inspectors, principals and superintendents across the country obtained from the School Files in Record Group 10 at the National Archives of Canada. Education-related correspondence is advantageous as it discusses not only what the 'Indian' was perceived to be, but also what it was hoped the 'Indian' would become. Given the government's goal of assimilation, education was the front line in the bureaucratic battle to 'civilize' the 'Indian'. Where public policy pronouncements might be more guarded, the mundane matters of appointing teachers, constructing buildings, deciding what to do with graduates of Indian schools and determining whether 'Indian' students could visit their parents, provide a glimpse behind the facade of benevolence and paternalism that marked the public persona of the Branch.⁹ What emerges from this wealth of material is an antagonistic and often demeaning image of the wards under their jurisdiction. The 'Administrative Indians' of the 1930s were, in the words of one teacher, "[l]azy, shiftless, indolent, liars, all stomach and cunning."¹⁰

One of the most common assessments of Aboriginal people was that they shied from work, preferring to do nothing - in short, they were lazy. As one instructor from the Chehalis Indian Day School complained, "it is noted that the Indian Residential Schools in this section of British Columbia are turning out an exceptional class of young Indians, that is to say if indolence, laziness

⁹ It was also something about which the officials of the Branch were concerned, in particular that they not be seen to be wasting taxpayers' money in their programs. Public and press criticism was to be avoided if at all possible.

¹⁰ J. W. Burns to J.D. Sutherland, 23 August 1932 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6387, file 806-1, p. 1).

and uselessness can be said to be exceptional.”¹¹ While the sarcasm of the preceding statement was rare, the sentiment was not. Even when educators assumed that they had ‘improved’ their pupils, many principals of Indian residential schools wished to keep students past the sixteenth year mandated by the Indian Act because they feared the influence of ‘lazy’ parents when the children returned home. A Saskatchewan Anglican principal, in his effort to extend the careers of several boys at his school, stated with certainty that, “the Parents [are] all too eager for them to leave the School, the father becomes less energetic than ever, [and] sends the boy out to cut hay or wood.”¹²

Worse, in the eyes of Indian Affairs administrators, than being lazy was the irresponsibility they saw in the Aboriginal population. In the context of the School Files, it was the officials’ views on parental responsibilities that were most evident, and those of the ‘Indian’ were usually found wanting.¹³ The Indian Agent in New Westminster, B.C., informed the Secretary that the local day schools should be maintained, instead of sending the children to residential schools, despite the mobile existence of their families which kept the children from school for much of the year. In his opinion, the parents merely wanted “to shelve the responsibility of the upkeep of their families onto us, and as long as they have a Day School on the reserve they find it difficult to do so.”¹⁴ Even if they were not viewed as willfully negligent, Aboriginal parents were still viewed as unhelpful in turning their older kids into the type of ‘Indian’ the IAB wanted to see. The Agent in Gleichen, Alberta, argued,

¹¹ J. W. Burns to unknown, 27 March 1934 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6387, file 806-1, p. 1).

¹² R. W. Frayling to R. A. Hoey, 1 February 1937 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6033, file 150-60, p. 1).

¹³ This was not the only form of responsibility, or lack thereof, that was highlighted in this correspondence. Another that ranked highly was the perceived improvidence and spendthrift nature of the ‘Administrative Indian’.

¹⁴ A.O’N. Daunt to the Secretary, 15 April 1936 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6387, file 801-1, p. 1).

Very few parents of Boarding School children have the slightest idea of parental responsibility. This is not his fault but rather the curse of the whole educational system. As a result, you cannot put dependence on the average parent to constructively help to build a responsible character out of the boys and girls from an institution.¹⁵

Despite conceding the influence of systemic factors, even this Indian Agent deemed Indian parents irresponsible and unreliable.

Considering the view of the 'Administrative Indian' as 'uncivilized', 'primitive' and even "semi-barbar[ous]," this is hardly surprising.¹⁶ A report from an inspection of the Burnt Church Indian Day School in New Brunswick spoke warmly of the work done by the teacher, claiming "[i]n the next four or five years this Reserve should be well civilized."¹⁷ This was high compliment in the language of the Indian Affairs in the 1930s. Even within Ottawa, such phrasing crept into official memos. Discussing a provincial report that linked economic conditions to immorality and delinquency in the general Canadian population, the Superintendent of Welfare and Education informed Dr. H. McGill, Deputy Superintendent General after 1933, that "if such conditions exist amongst the white population, the task of correcting them amongst primitive and semi-primitive people, such as our Indians, is going to be exceedingly difficult work."¹⁸ In some cases officials did not even wish to force their personnel to live among such backward people on remote B.C. reserves without "Whites for society."¹⁹ The "Indian mode of life," as it was termed, was an inferior remnant that needed to be supplanted by more advanced Euro-Canadian cultural values

¹⁵ Indian Agent to The Secretary, 26 May 1937 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6033, file 150-60, p. 1).

¹⁶ J.E. Baillargeon to R. A Hoey, 25, January 1937 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6033, file 150-60, p. 1).

¹⁷ Extract from report by Father F. C. Ryan, 6 June 1930 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6061, file 276-1, p. 1).

¹⁸ Superintendent of Welfare and Training to Dr. McGill, 5 February 1937 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6033, file 150-60, p. 1).

¹⁹ Indian Agent to the Secretary, 23 April 1934 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6387, 806-1, p. 1).

and social norms.²⁰

Even the intelligence of Aboriginal people was questioned and decried. Teachers generally assessed their pupils' intellectual abilities below those of their 'white' counterparts, "about two years below," according to the Oblate Catholic Indian Missions board.²¹ Some went further:

Teachers may explain and expound and give the very best that is in them, but they can't be expected to bridge the void left by Nature in the Indian child - a receptive brain. Memory they have not, and the germ of impulse of Intelligence insofar as educational matters are concerned has not been born in them. There are a few exceptions, but the exceptions are so rare that they arouse and excite curiosity. But even in an Ape jungle exceptions will be found.²²

While this degree of 'racist' animosity was not generally expressed within IAB correspondence, the inferiority conferred on the abilities of Aboriginal children by officials encouraged a degree of fatalism with regards to the prospects of educating them.

Even when the 'Administrative Indian' was 'improved' by his or her education, there was always the danger that they would "revert to type" due to moral weakness and susceptibility to unsavoury influences.²³ Cynthia Commachio's work suggests that such concerns were not limited to Aboriginal school graduates, but extended in the interwar years to the increasing anxiety about the growing social freedom and perceived idleness of Canadian, and especially immigrant, youth.²⁴ In Indian schooling, this was the primary motivation for keeping young people in residential

²⁰ Russell T. Ferrier to Edward Pritchard, 22 April 1932 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, p. 1).

²¹ Oblate Catholic Indian Missions to R. A. Hoey, 10 January 1939 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6016, file 1-1-11, p. 1), J.D. Sutherland to Walter Mutch, 30 January 1936 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6269, file 581-10).

²² J. W. Burns to J.D. Sutherland, 23 Aug. 1932 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6387, file 806-1, pt 1).

²³ Unsigned from Shubenacadie Residential School, N.S., to Mr McCutcheon, 7 June 1937 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6057, file 265-10, p. 1).

²⁴ Cynthia Commachio, The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), and "Dancing to Perdition: Adolescence and Leisure in Interwar English-Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies, vol. 32, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 5-35.

schools after age sixteen. "Our Indian girls are exposed to great many dangers when they are dismissed from Schools at the age of sixteen. They are too young to marry and the home environment does not contribute to their moral well-being."²⁵ Nor were Aboriginal youth the only ones believed vulnerable to such negative influences. An inspector from Antigonish, N.S., recommended an Aboriginal man for a teaching post in an Indian day school, noting that his "only concern [was] that his conduct [would] be what it should be when he is living with other Indians."²⁶ Indeed, like sheep, 'Indian' students were expected to 'regress' under the influence of their parents and whole communities were believed at risk from contact with the bad sort of 'white man' or 'half-breed'.²⁷

It seems ironic that such malleable creatures could also be considered intractable and proudly stubborn in their dealings with Indian Affairs officials and policies. Aboriginal peoples' resistance to the often intrusive and oppressive measures of the government was interpreted by administrators as being "haughty (sic) and exacting."²⁸ One example from Prince Edward Island is worth mentioning. Parents of children attending the Lennox Island Indian Day School refused to send their children to school unless the teacher, an Aboriginal man and brother to the band Chief, was removed. Officials debated whether to open the school at all in September 1938, leave it open with no students attending, or, finally, whether to replace the teacher in the face of continued

²⁵ Oblate Catholic Indian Missions to R.A. Hoey, 10, January 1939 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6016, file 1-1-11, pt. 1).

²⁶ Inspector of Indian Agencies to the Secretary, 15 September 1931 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6048, file 255-1, p. 1).

²⁷ A.O'N. Daunt to the Secretary, no date (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6387, file 806-1, p. 1). This letter refers to the likely source of resistance and rebelliousness among a local band that had come into contact with men from four government relief camps in the area. Another suggested source was the dreaded 'half-breed' with access to liquor in H.A.W. Brown to the Secretary, 5 April 1938 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, p. 1).

²⁸ C. Pant Schmidt to John E Pugh, 19 November 1938 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6032, file 150-37, p. 1).

stalemate. While the correspondence did not reveal the exact nature of the dispute within the community, this is less important than the assessment given by the Agent and his superiors in Ottawa. They boiled the grievances of the parents down to petty spite, and the lack of a resolution to their "obstinate attitude."²⁹

Indian Affairs personnel often assumed the worst of the 'Administrative Indian' during the 1930s. Officials distrusted their charges, despite their supposed lack of intelligence, and saw complex schemes and nefarious goals in the actions of Aboriginal people. This emerges clearly in the School Files on the question of whether children could leave residential schools for home visits on holidays. Due to the infrequent visits allowed, Aboriginal parents were often keen to keep their children home, though officials usually made light of this reaction. In one case, an Aboriginal man was accused of having incited his son to misbehave at school so that he would get sent home.³⁰ On the Indian Agent's recommendation, the Department reduced the man's relief money by a dollar a week to dissuade others from trying the same thing. In another case, the Indian Agent in Summerside, P.E.I., requested a medical exam on a little girl who was not returned to school after the summer. The Acting-Superintendent of Indian Education was suspicious and thought, "it [was] very likely that the parents have reported to you that she is ill in order to keep her at home."³¹ The

²⁹ Memorandum from R. A. Hoey to Dr. McGill, 7 November 1938 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6059, file 271-1, p. 2). N.A. McDougall to the Secretary, 8 October 1938 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6059, file 276-1, p. 2). The dispute was not settled until the new year when the parents finally allowed their children to return to the school.

³⁰ Indian Agent, Richibucto, N.B., to the Secretary, 21 February 1939 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6062, file 277-1, p. 2).

³¹ Sutherland to McDougall, 25 September 1936 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6057, file 265-10, pt. 1). Another case of such suspicious lack of faith in 'Indians' was a directive to the Agent at Moose Factory to insure that 'half-breed' children were not adopted by a Status Indian "for the sole purpose of being permitted to attend an Indian Residential School." A.F. MacKenzie to W. L. Tyrer, 12 June 1935 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, p. 1).

'Administrative Indian' was a shifty individual, too cunning to be trusted.³²

Underlying the character traits of the IAB's 'Indian' during the 1930s was a tone, both patronizing and paternalistic, that emphasised not only Aboriginal peoples' subordinate status as wards, but also their perceived cultural and intellectual inferiority. Thus, the Inspector of Indian Agencies of Alberta could write condescendingly "that the Indian parents have a strong and parental desire to have their children home for a few days during the Christmas festivities. Such a feeling is quite natural and to be highly commended."³³ Yet in the same letter he declared that "academically, ecclesiastically, officially and personally," he could not agree to such a holiday. At Norway House and Shubenacadie Residential Schools, the children were not even allowed to return home for the summer holiday for fear that they would not be returned except at department expense.³⁴ When Aboriginal parents attempted to keep their children home, their reasons, such as having insufficient clothing for the children, were dismissed as "trivial."³⁵ Usually, Indian Affairs officials claimed to be acting in the "best interests of the pupils themselves," by which they meant "the progress of the residential schools" in contributing toward the ultimate goal of assimilation.³⁶

³² Even when there was no perceived master plan, IAB officials were not inclined to trust that Aboriginal parents would return their children. Indeed, in one letter from Hoey to an Agent in Saskatchewan, there was no need to explain the policy "For reasons that will readily suggest themselves to you." R.A. Hoey to E.A.W.R. McKenzie, 29 September 1939 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6032, file 150-37, p. 1). Other examples include J.D. Sutherland to Chas Hudson, 29 June 1936 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6057, file 265-10, p. 1), and Extract from Inspection of Lake Helen Indian Day School, 10 November 1931 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6032, file 150-40A, p. 1).

³³ C. Pant Schmidt to John E. Pugh, 19 November 1938.

³⁴ Indian Agent to the Secretary, 23 June 1939 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6057, file #265-10, pt. 1), J.D. Sutherland to Walter Mutch, 30 January 1936.

³⁵ H. F. Bury to Dr. McGill, 12 May 1933 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 281-1, p. 2).

³⁶ Hoey to McKenzie, 29 September 1939. However, there is a noticeable slackening of the faith that this could be achieved through academic education and during the 1930s Indian education became increasingly vocational to better "prepare them [Indian students] for their future life." Philip Phelan to G. Young, 4 October 1938 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6015, file 1-1-6B-Ont., p. 3). In this acceptance of the likely future for Aboriginal youth, IAB administrators in effect

(continued...)

Whether young or old, the 'Administrative Indian' was conceived of as a constitutional, technological, intellectual and cultural child.

However, cloaked as they were in the prevailing negative characteristics of the 'Administrative Indian', officials did not view their charges as benignly infantile, but rather as delinquents. As such, they required discipline and supervision, as did any unruly young person, and the correspondence between Ottawa and its field officials constantly emphasised the need for control.³⁷ Robin Brownlie has argued that during this custodial period of administration, maintaining departmental authority became the central feature of Indian Affairs daily activities.³⁸ This predilection was clearly visible in the School Files for the decade of the 1930s. Usually such concerns about control were couched in paternalistic terms:

education increases ones potential either for good or bad and that the educated "crook" is the one concerning whom the police are most apprehensive. If we are going to increase the Indians' scope of action without seeing that he has a wholesome respect for authority, are we doing him a kindness or are we doing more harm than good?³⁹

However, when children were truant from school, particularly if the Indian Agent believed the parents were encouraging them, the Branch had a clearly established system of escalating the state's coercive pressure. One agent was informed by Ottawa that

³⁶(...continued)

conceded that assimilation was not proceeding, nor could it as long as opportunities were denied them in mainstream Canadian society at the time. However, threaded through the initiative was a self-fulfilling type of 'racism' that this was all 'Indians' could accomplish anyway. R.T. Ferrier to All Principals of Indian Residential Schools, 18 March 1931 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6016, file 1-1-11, p. 1), R.A. Hoey to R.W. Frayling, 29 January 1937 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6033, file 150-60, p. 1), Hoey to Mutch, 30 January 1936 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6269, file 581-10).

³⁷ A. O'N. Daunt to the Secretary, 30 June 1932 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6387, file 806-1, pt. 1).

³⁸ Robin Brownlie, "Man on the Spot: John Daly, Indian Agent in Parry Sound, 1922-1939, Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, vol. 5, (1994): 63-86.

³⁹ Extract from Inspector's report of the Lake Helen Indian Day School, 10 November 1931.

the Department suggests that moral suasion be used as far as possible; but, when it is wise to make an example, you should commit the child to school, using the service of the R.C.M.P., if necessary. Only in extremities should a parent be proceeded against under this section of the [Indian] Act. The Department considers that the arresting of the child, after due warning, is all that is usually required.⁴⁰

Adopting the administrative equivalent of gun-boat diplomacy, prosecuting a child as an example to others, betrays the fact that behind the mask of paternalism lay officials' fear of dissension and loss of control over their charges.

The degree of anxiety about threats to Branch authority was evident in the correspondence pertaining to the refusal of Aboriginal parents to send their children to the Lennox Island School, mentioned previously. The Branch refused to back down because, "if the Indians ... are permitted to dictate terms to the Department in this case, it is difficult to say where such insubordination may end."⁴¹ The memo forwarded from the Director (Deputy Superintendent General) to the Deputy Minister on the matter is revealing. He argued that "under the circumstances I think it would be very unwise for the Branch to make the concessions asked for. This would amount to practically yielding to the threat of force and withdrawal as it were under fire."⁴² The military terminology is striking. Indian Affairs personnel viewed the 'Indian' in an adversarial and even hostile manner. In effect, the 'Administrative Indian' was the 'enemy' in the war for assimilation.

The working image of the 'Indian' articulated by administrators was of a profoundly negative, unappealing and antagonistic figure. Within the bureaucracy there appeared a remarkable consensus on the prominent elements and characteristics, while the tone remained

⁴⁰ A.F. Mackenzie to Frank Edwards, 15 April 1930 (NAC, RG 10, Vol. 6032, file # 150-40A, pt. 1). The letter refers to the section of the Indian Act dealing with compulsory school attendance.

⁴¹ Memorandum from Hoey to McGill, 7 November 1938.

⁴² Memorandum from Director to Deputy Minister, 12 November 1938 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6059, file 270-1, p. 2).

paternalistic, patronizing and dominated by the language of control. The Branch was not a completely monolithic structure manned by automatons, however, and there were variations in the attitudes exhibited, and assumptions on which they were grounded. But, while there were individual exceptions, expressions of pity and occasionally a recognition of flaws in the system, there was no agreement on any single redeeming feature in the character of the 'Administrative Indian'.

Though most Canadians would have recognised some elements of the 'Administrative Indian', their own preconceptions and assumptions about the First Nations were much more innocuous and equivocal. The Canadian population had long demonstrated a profound fascination with Aboriginal people, customs and history, and thus they 'knew' a great deal about the subject of the 'Public Indian'. This common sense knowledge was discussed with surprising frequency in the public forum. Newspapers printed letters to the editor, satirical cartoons, advertisements with visual representations of Aboriginal people and stories about local 'Indian' history, archaeological finds, criminal behaviour and a host of other topics about the 'Indian'. The analysis that follows is based on wide reading of the papers and magazines chosen for analysis.⁴³ Concerns over political

⁴³ For The Globe (and Mail) each day of three years of the decade (1930, 1935 and 1939 up to the outbreak of war) was read carefully, looking at the news stories and editorials as well as scanning for advertising. These years were chosen in order to ascertain whether there was any change over the decade. However, this method provided enormous quantities of material and proved highly time consuming. In response, I chose two months arbitrarily from each of 1930, 1935 and 1939 for the other dailies. The rural dailies were examined in the same fashion as the large urban papers (two months chosen at random from each of 1930, 1935 and 1939), while every edition of the weeklies was canvassed for each of the three years. In the case of Saturday Night a subject index existed for the years up to 1937, and the stories on Aboriginal topics were located based on that. I then read 1930 and 1935 for advertising, and 1938-39 for stories and ads to complete the decade. Each issue of Maclean's was examined in the three years. Finally, I read every monthly issue of the Canadian Forum and the University journals for the decade up to the outbreak of war.

affiliation of each periodical are less important in this period due to the non-partisan nature of Canadian Indian policy.⁴⁴ A careful reading of the print media allows one to construct an image of the 'Indian' as it was publicly discussed across Canada, both in major urban centres and smaller communities.

The popular conception of the 'Indian' in the 1930s contained a broad range of positive, negative and ambiguous elements, and it was common for contradictory images to emerge even within a single story or advertisement. An advertisement for cigars told a typical tale of a man fishing in the north with an Aboriginal guide. The fishing was poor and the guide unhelpful until the fisherman gave him a cigar, after which they moved and the man caught numerous fish. The anecdote finished on a sagacious note, stating "The early traders used to bribe the Indians with beads and kind words, but the Indian of today is a different gent. He has acquired a sense of values."⁴⁵ A multitude of conflicting meanings are evident here. 'Indians' were foolish to be duped by 'beads and kind words,' and 'improved' by having developed a sense of 'values', meaning Euro-Canadian materialism. Even the circumstances of the tale itself implied stereotypes of the Indian as knowledgeable and inscrutable, seemingly positive, but also as deviously clever and untrustworthy for not showing the fisherman to the good fishing spot until bribed. There existed a broad range of public conceptions of the 'Indian' encompassing everything from the lazy drunk to the wise elder, and from the licentious 'squaw' to the brave warrior. In the discussion that follows it should be remembered that, while there existed distinct images of the 'Indian', these images were neither monolithic nor rigidly sustained.

⁴⁴ The debates on Indian Affairs during the 1930s found in Hansard rarely broke down on partisan lines. Occasionally the committee or House debates did divide along party lines, but these were over issues of protocol or procedure rather than substantive differences. The discussions suggest that the goal of speedy assimilation was believed to be logical and right for the government, the taxpayers and for Aboriginal people.

⁴⁵ Saturday Night (24 Aug. 1935), p. 5.

Within this context, the 'Indian' most commonly appeared as colourful and alien in the public print media of the 1930s. They formed the romantic and alien attractions in advertisements for cruises up the Pacific coast to Alaska, or the Atlantic coast to Labrador. The prospective tourist was enticed with the opportunity to see exotic lands "conquered by a song," with their "quaint Indian villages" on "totem poled isles" inhabited by "nomad Indians."⁴⁶ During the decade, no other writer published as prolifically on the subject of the 'Indian' or pressed the themes of exoticism and 'noble savage' so strongly as did ethno-historian Marius Barbeau.⁴⁷ For him, 'Indians' were fascinating, "a colourful field," rife with mysticism.⁴⁸ These themes emerge strongly in his description of a chief from Alert Bay, British Columbia:

His stately demeanor was one never to be forgotten. He was more impressive than a king on a throne. He did not look at us. We moved aside to let him pass. His features were massive, his complexion like reddish copper. There was something of the grizzly-bear in him - the grizzly-bear of his mountains which he must have hunted many times. Yet he was distinctly Mongolian. He was thick and squatty. I thought of Buddha, after he had gone - a Buddha that had journeyed all the way from Manchuria, across the Siberian wastes and the strait of Bering, then down the West Coast to the country of the American Natives.⁴⁹

Barbeau's repeated linkages between the First Nations of the Pacific Coast and Asia, another powerful exoticism in Canadian popular culture, only served to enhance the 'otherness' of the

⁴⁶ Cardston News (3 July 1930), p. 2, Saturday Night (10 May 1930), p.8, Saturday Night (20 May 1939), p. 9, Saturday Night (22 July 1939), p. 8, Prince Albert Daily Herald (5 July 1930), p. 15. Such advertisements appeared in most Canadian publications with regularity during the decade.

⁴⁷ Marius Barbeau, "The Thunder Bird of the Mountains," The University of Toronto Quarterly, vol. 2, no. 1 (1932): 92-110. Marius Barbeau, "The Indians of the Prairies and the Rockies: A Theme for Modern Painters," University of Toronto Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 2 (1931): 197-206. Marius Barbeau, "Our Indians - Their Disappearance," Queen's Quarterly, vol. 30, no. 4 (1931): 691-707. Marius Barbeau, "Indian Eloquence," Queens Quarterly, vol. 39, no. 3 (1932): 451-464. Marius Barbeau, "How Totem Poles Originated," Queen's Quarterly, vol. 46, no. 3 (1939): 304-311.

⁴⁸ Marius Barbeau, "The Indians of the Prairies and the Rockies," p. 197.

⁴⁹ Marius Barbeau, "On the Way to Asia," Canadian Forum (November 1935), p. 366-67.

'Indian'.⁵⁰ Of one trip to the British Columbia coast he waxed dramatic, stating that, "more than ever it seemed we had already gone over the border, from America into the realm of the mystic dragon, beyond the sea."⁵¹

Often the fascination with the exoticism of the First Nations revealed itself in an emphasis on the pageantry of Aboriginal dress at ceremonies, country fairs and other events.⁵² For example, in the coverage of the Royal visit in 1939, almost every publication examined carried at least one story, and some many more, highlighting the participation of Aboriginal peoples, their alien behaviour and curious appearance.⁵³ Inevitably, mention was made of the "native costume" of the

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, Marius Barbeau, "Our Indians - Their Disappearance," Marius Barbeau, "The Indians of the Prairies and the Rockies," p. 199. The 'Orient' and all things 'Asiatic' were viewed by Canadians as highly exotic and mystical during the early part of the twentieth century. See Kay J. Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1991).

⁵¹ Marius Barbeau, "Our Indians - Their Disappearance," p. 703.

⁵² "Indian Ceremony Adds Color to Exhibition," Winnipeg Free Press (11 August 1930), p. 3, "Sun Dance at Blood Reserve Sees Gathering of U.S. and Canadian Tribesmen," Cardston News (27 July 1939), p. 5.

⁵³ "God Save the King is Chanted in Cree Before Their Majesties," Winnipeg Free Press (3 June 1939), p. 2, "Silk-Stockinged Indians," Vancouver Sun (3 June 1939), p. 4, "Modern Indian Love Call," Vancouver Sun (3 June 1939), p. 4, "Iroquois Clan Cheers as King and Queen Pass," Globe and Mail (19 May 1939), p. 19, "Crees Chant National Anthem in Tongue Strange to Royalty," Globe and Mail (3 June 1939), p. 1, "'Indian Welcome' for King, Queen," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (13 January 1939), p. 7, "Indians Honor Their Majesties," Halifax Chronicle (1 June 1939), p. 1, "Indians and Indians," Halifax Chronicle (1 June 1939), p. 10, "Hear Anthem Sung in Cree Indian Tongue," Halifax Chronicle (3 June 1939), p. 1-2, "They Wanted Papooses Too," Halifax Chronicle (12 June 1939), p. 27, 'Alberta - "Great White Father,"' Halifax Chronicle (12 June 1939), p. 33, "Indian Chiefs To Attend Pageant," Halifax Chronicle (13 June 1939), p. 16, "Indians To Stage Show For Monarch," Kamloops Sentinel (12 May 1939), p. 11, "Indian Chiefs Are To Be At St. Paul's," Kamloops Sentinel (28 May 1939), p. 6, "Their Majesties Meet Indian Subjects," Kamloops Sentinel (30 May 1939), p. 8, "Indians Treasure Robes Trodden By Royalty," Calgary Herald (2 June 1939), p. 9, "Royal Visitors Enjoyed Calgary Indian Display Mayor Tells Convention," Calgary Herald (14 June 1939), p. 20, "Squaws Become Style Conscious," Prince Albert Daily Herald (7 August 1939), p. 4, "Crees Chant National Anthem In Tongue Strange To Royalty," Brantford Expositor (3 June 1939), p. 2, "Six Nations Form Another Link In Long Loyalty Chain," Brantford Expositor (7 June 1939), p. 2, "Six Nations At Kitchener," Brantford Expositor (7 June 1939), p. 3, "Fifty Thousand Joined in Great

(continued...)

'Indians'. One reporter noted that the Stony, Cree and Chippewa bands that had come to Calgary and Banff to meet Their Majesties "all had new wardrobes: new beaded headdresses complete with feathers, fancy vests, mocassins, gauntlets, belts and coats," while a second emphasised the "gorgeous garb with handsome headdresses and lots of beads" of the Iroquois from Caughnawaga in Montreal; a third was impressed by the Six Nations who met the Royals in Brantford, where "the chiefs, in war paint, feathery headdresses, buckskins and beads and carrying hatchets, wampuns [sic], and a pipe of peace, captured the imagination of the children."⁵⁴ Judging from how frequently observers and commentators made note of the "regalia" of the First Nations, these events and the splendour of 'Indians' appearing in traditional clothing captured the imaginations of more than the children in Canada.

The 'Public Indian' was usually the human interest story for slow news days. They became newsworthy either when they did something that captured the essence of the Canadian idea of the 'Indian', or when Aboriginal people acted in ways that seemed at odds with the dominant society's assumptions and stereotypes. Thus, the operatic excellence of baritone Chief Os-Ke-Non-Ton performing at Varsity Arena in Toronto seemed a poignant example of the clash of the ancient and 'primitive' with the modern and 'civilized'.⁵⁵ Similarly, the Cardston News printed a

⁵³(...continued)

Demonstration to the King and Queen," Brantford Expositor (7 June 1939), p. 1, 10, "Illustrated Address of Six Nations of Grand to their Majesties Here," Brantford Expositor (7 June 1939), p. 36, "Their Majesties' Visit to Brantford as Seen by Expositor Staff Photographers," Brantford Expositor (8 June 1939), p. 11, "Royal Signatures in Historic Queen Anne Bible," Brantford Expositor (20 June 1939), p. 11.

⁵⁴ "They Wanted Papooses Too," Halifax Chronicle, p. 27, "Iroquois Clan Cheers ...," Globe and Mail, p. 19, "Six Nations At Kitchener," Brantford Expositor, p. 3.

⁵⁵ "Os-Ke-Non-Ton Pleases Crowd," The Globe (6 September 1935), p. 11. Chief Os-Ke-Non-Ton was a prominent Six Nations baritone who performed widely across North America and Europe to wide acclaim. He often mixed Aboriginal songs and subjects in to his repertoire, and performed in "all the glory of his native attire." This juxtaposition of the primitive 'Indian' with
(continued...)

picture of an 'Indian' chief in full regalia trying his hand at the bagpipes, while a Highland piper in his own regalia leans back laughing at his efforts.⁵⁶ A final example demonstrates both expected behaviour in the expressions of loyalty, as well as the unexpected in a rendition of God Save the King in Cree during the reception of the King and Queen in Edmonton on 2 June where:

Indians of the Winterburn Reserve chanted "God Save the King" in the strange Cree language to the throbbing beat of tom toms when their Majesties stopped today outside the Red men's encampment here. Cree words fit none too readily to the tune, and war whoops are more natural to the tribesmen, but they paid homage gallantly to the King and Queen from across the "great water."⁵⁷

For newspaper editorial staffs, 'Indian' stories provided a little spice and flash or comic relief to their otherwise drab recitation of the day's events.

Despite a colourful flair, the 'Public Indian' discourse reflected little understanding of the cultural or physical diversity among Aboriginal people. The 'Indian' had a distinct and consistent appearance that drew largely from Plains Native culture and dress as well as stereotyped physical traits. The Plains tribes, particularly the Dakota (Sioux) and, in Canada, the Blackfoot, came to represent the 'Indian' in North America during the later part of the nineteenth century.⁵⁸ The last and greatest of the Indian Wars, the wild west shows and Hollywood conspired to make the eagle feather headdress, buckskins or breech cloth, 'aquiline nose' and tall powerful physique the dominant impression of the 'Public Indian' in Canada. Few traded as explicitly or graphically in

⁵⁵(...continued)

the complexities of modernity was a common theme, for instance see "Natives Bring Furs, Enjoy Modern Cafes," Prince Albert Daily Herald (4 January 1939), p. 4.

⁵⁶ "The Red Man Tries the Pipes," Cardston News (16 October 1930). A portion of the background of the photo has been cut-out around the two men and a hand drawn tepee added to complete the picture.

⁵⁷ "Crees Chant National Anthem ...," Globe and Mail, p. 1

⁵⁸ John C. Ewers, "The Emergence of the Plains Indian as the Symbol of the North American Indian," in American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography, ed. Arlene B. Hirschfelder (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1982): 16-32.

the image of the 'Indian' as did the McColl-Frontenac Oil Company with advertisements that ran in The Globe, the Brantford Expositor and Saturday Night during the first half of the decade.⁵⁹

The aura of physical prowess, endurance, silence and speed were evident in the pictorial representation of the be-feathered 'Indian', paddling his birch bark canoe (see Figure 1.2). Moreover, it was epitomized by the ever present logo of two lithe 'Indians' in silhouette running effortlessly in perfect synchronisation (see figure 1.3).

Even non-physical traits were stereotyped across Aboriginal cultures. First and foremost, the 'Indian' was assumed to be courageous. In one instance, an Aboriginal man broke his leg after a



Figure 1.2 Brantford Expositor (14 April 1930), p. 11.

fall from his wagon, but managed to capture his horse and ride two miles into town for help. This tale gained the notice of the local paper which claimed that, "Indians have always been credited

⁵⁹ The Globe (18 March 1930), p. 5, The Globe (2 Apr. 1930), p. 5, Brantford Expositor (14 April 1930), p. 11, Brantford Expositor (28 April 1930), p. 2. A multitude of commodities were sold using 'Indian' logos or themes in advertising, almost always with Plains 'Indian' attributes, among them, Consumer's Gas ran an add for their refrigerator that claimed it ran as "Silent as a Stalking Indian." This was visualized with a vague picture of two Indian warriors bearing tomahawks and creeping, presumably quietly, through some bushes, Saturday Night (3 September 1938), p. 10. Another was the Saskatoon Brewing Company, one of who's products was called "Big Chief Beer," advertised regularly with the image of a Plains Chief's head, Prince Albert Daily Herald (2 June 1939), p. 5, Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (10 January 1930), p. 10. Even such mundane products as Donnacona Insulating Lumber, Windsor Salt and Arrowhead Flour drew on "the Romance of the Plains" and 'Indian' imagery to help sell their products: The Globe (27 May 1930), p. 5, Saturday Night (25 May 1935), p. 20, Prince Albert Daily Herald (7 June 1939), p. 5.



**FAITHFUL
to the TASK!**

The gods once punished an Indian's greediness by changing him into a sea serpent. A young hero offered to kill the monster and thus free his people forever from the curse of greed. Armed with only a hunting knife, he plunged into the sea. Days, then weeks passed, and he did not return, but his tribe would sometimes see him standing on a high promontory greeting the rising sun before disappearing again into the sea. Four years passed before he returned with the weapons seen that he had finally pierced the mighty serpent's heart.

Red Indian Motor Oil never gives up. Made to withstand the severest operating conditions, it delivers unfailing protection to your motor no matter how long or hard you drive. Pure, wax-free, carbon-reducing, it is the safest oil you can put in your crank-case . . . it will never break down. Use Red Indian always, and get peak performance out of your motor.

SEALED IN CANS . . . IT'S SURE TO BE PURE

RED INDIAN

THE OIL OF ENDURANCE

ROAD MAP—Ask any Red Indian dealer for the new McColl-Pennamere Road Map. Also for Official Road Information based on weekly Postmaster Government Bulletin.

MARATHON 'BLUE'

THE POWER GASOLINE

MCCOLL-PENNAMERE OIL COMPANY LIMITED

An M.P. Canadian Company

Figure 1.3 Saturday Night (29 June 1935), p. 4.

with having an abnormal share of 'grit' and tales of their bravery have often been told by the pioneers."⁶⁰ A play advertised for the Strand Theatre in Calgary, that included "Real Danger, Real Indians, Real Romance," spoke to the intensely masculine nature of the 'Public Indian', promising its audiences a "Powerful Drama of Actual Life of Strong, Silent Manhood."⁶¹ Once again, however, it was an unusual series of ads for the McColl-Frontenac Company's Red Indian Oil that attempted to capitalise most aggressively on the 'common sense' knowledge of the 'Indian'. Each of the advertisements contained a different melodramatic story of 'Indian' life with striking visuals to grab the readers' eye and drive home the message. In one, an 'Indian' woman who was taken captive by enemies after her village was attacked, gained vengeance at the cost

Loyal to the Last!

An Indian tribe once attacked an enemy village, killing all its warriors and taking its women captive. The victorious war party and their prisoners took an overland route, then set off by canoe, taking along one old woman to guide them through the strange and treacherous waters. To avenge the slaughter of her people, and at the service of her own life, she led her enemies over a cascade to their death.

Motorists like the way Red Indian Motor Oil stands up under the severe punishment of hard driving and motor heat. Owners of new cars feel safe with this pure, wax-free, carbon-reducing oil in the crank-case. Those who drive the models of yesterday point proudly to the quiet, youthful performance of their motors . . . All have learned that, no matter how strenuous the going, Red Indian, "The Oil of Endurance", can be depended upon not to break down.

SEALED IN CANS . . . IT'S SURE TO BE PURE

RED INDIAN
THE OIL OF ENDURANCE

MARATHON BLUE
THE POWER GASOLINE

MCCOLL-FRONTENAC COMPANY LIMITED

The Silent Team

Figure 1.4 *The Globe* (23 May 1935), p. 7.

of her life by guiding the canoes of foolish enemy braves over a waterfall (see Figure 1.4). In

⁶⁰ "Chief Jimmy Has Courage," *Kamloops Sentinel* (25 November 1930), p.1. The fact that it was the pioneers that told these stories emphasises the historical nature of the 'Public Indian'.

⁶¹ "The Silent Enemy," *Calgary Herald* (25 September 1930), p. 5.

another, a young 'brave' and a 'maiden' from opposing tribes had fallen in love, but when the brother of the young woman caught up with them, intent on killing his sister to expunge "the dishonour done his tribe," her young lover stepped in front of the fatal arrow (see Figure 1.5). These advertisements and the other bloodthirsty episodes suggested the company's oil was, like 'Indians', "Faithful to the Task," and "Loyal to the Last," while providing "Matchless Fidelity," and "Unflinching Protection" (see figure 1.6).⁶² The 'Public Indian' was a dramatic and positive figure, embodying courage, integrity, loyalty and stoicism. All of these representations of the 'Indian', both physical and non-physical, harken back to the glorified period in history when Aboriginal people were



Figure 1.5 *The Globe* (4 July 1935), p. 5.

⁶² *Saturday Night* (29 June 1935), p. 4, *The Globe* (23 May 1935), p. 7, *Saturday Night* (25 May 1935), p. 10, *The Globe* (4 July 1935), p. 7. Southam Newspapers assured readers of their integrity by conjured up the memory of the greatest of 'Indians', Tecumseh, who "by the sheer weight of his integrity, held his Indian confederation faithful to the British, and who died in battle for his adopted cause." *The Globe* (8 May 1930), p. 5.

great and powerful, supposedly living in a 'primitive golden age.'

Indeed, the 'noble savage' formed the central tenet of Canadians' image of the 'Indian' well into the twentieth century, and certainly during the 1930s. This concept had a long history in the Western psyche, deriving from the belief that human kind had once lived in a state of savage bliss and innocence, but had lost that innocence through civilization, never to be recovered. The idea itself had existed long before Jean-Jacques Rousseau

elaborated on it and popularised

MATCHLESS FIDELITY...

As Indian they were taken prisoner by an enemy tribe which attacked his village. He survived the tortures with which they tested his courage and was adopted into the tribe, where he soon proved to men there as a warrior. When a certain chief was chosen as his people, he was selected to lead the war-party. They failed to find their victim, and their leader went ahead to scout. Making his way to his own tribe's hidden camp, he warned them of their peril and together they planned an ambush. Then he returned and led the attacking warriors into the trap, where they met their death. He was rewarded by his people, naming him to become a great chief.

The scorching heat in your motor tests the purity and stamina of your oil. If it weakens and shows out, damaged cylinders, pistons and bearings are the price of its failure. Rich, enduring Red Indian Lathon Oil retains its body through the whole range of operating temperatures, and gives you a wide margin of safety besides. It contains an anti-foam factor under extreme heat. It keeps your motor young. Follow the nice example of thousands and buy this reliable lubricant in sealed cans at the sign of the Red Indian.

MADE IN CANADA...IT'S SURE TO BE PURE!

RED INDIAN

THE OIL OF ENDURANCE

ROAD MAP—Ask any Red Indian soldier for the new Red Indian Road Map, also for Official Road Information, based on newly projected Government Routes.

LATHON BLUE

THE POWER GASOLINE

RED INDIAN LATHON OIL CO. LTD. TORONTO, CANADA

AN I.R.C. COMPANY

Figure 1.6 Saturday Night (25 May 1935), p. 10

its application to the indigenous inhabitants of the new world in the mid-eighteenth century.

Initially, the 'noble savage' had emerged as a potent tool for social criticism. However, it became increasingly romanticised, particularly by American writers of the nineteenth century.⁶³

Romanticism dominated the 1930s manifestations of the 'noble savage' in Canadian

⁶³ Dippie, The Vanishing American, p. 18-21.

newspapers. Commenting on a stirring speech made by an Aboriginal man in a Sault St. Marie court room in response to charges against him for hunting out of season, the editor of the Globe waxed eloquent:

This man must have in his veins the blood of the famous Chiefs of his race whose eloquence thrilled the explorers at the dawn of Canadian history. . . The dignity and force of this language removed the Indian from the class of men who shoot game out of season, and made him a splendid figure pleading the ancient right of his race to live on what nature has prepared for him.⁶⁴

A literary review that appeared in the Canadian Forum in 1931 echoes similar, if more introspective, imagery.⁶⁵ In considering a murder committed by the primary character, a man named Mala, the reviewer argued that “it is so appropriate that Mala should murder, so necessary, it would seem, to his incredibly primitive self-fulfilment, that it appears almost a virtue in him. I would no more sit in judgment on the fury of Mala than on Ajax or Achilles.” Declaring the book a masterpiece, the reviewer made an interesting comment:

It is more than a century since Romantic-minded writers began to idealize ‘the noble savage’ and it is nearly as long since men argued the fallacy of it. And now when you would have thought that we had heard the last of the idea, there comes a realization of this supposedly fictitious creature at once more savage and certainly more noble than anything Rousseau ever dreamed of. Here is ‘the noble savage’ made classical.

Even though demonstrating an awareness that the character of Mala was an idealized entity, the reviewer “never questioned [the] utter veracity” of “this starkest of books.”

In light of Canadians’ assumptions about the ‘Indian’, the odd phenomenon that was Grey

⁶⁴ “Let the Indian Hunt,” The Globe (13, May 1930), p. 4

⁶⁵ Inconstant Reader, “Preferences section,” The Canadian Forum, vol. XII, no. 133 (October 1931): p. 22. In this particular case, the novel referred to an Inuit man. However, the reviewer’s commentary on the ‘noble savage’ and its personification in the principle character are relevant to discussions of the ‘Indian’. There were differences in the way that Canadians constructed the ‘Eskimo’ from the ‘Indian’, but in this regard they were virtually identical.

Owl, at the height of his fame during the 1930s, makes some sense.⁶⁶ He was in every respect the perfect 'Indian' for Canadians, as indeed he was also for Americans and particularly the British, where he made several lecturing tours to great acclaim. His physical features matched the stereotypes with his long black braided hair, his tall lean physique, hawk-like nose, penetrating eyes and the "forest costume" of buckskins that he typically wore.⁶⁷ Moreover, Grey Owl's demeanor was that expected of an 'Indian', he was stern, wise, inscrutable, at one with nature and honourable as well as a passionate and intriguing speaker.⁶⁸ Grey Owl combined all that was best, most exotic and engaging about the 'noble savage' with the ability to convey it to a modern audience through his articulate writings, motion pictures and popular speaking engagements. The result was that he became the most famous 'Indian' during this decade, as well as a very effective spokesperson for the conservation of the wildlife and the wilderness of Canada. The great irony was that Grey Owl knew how to capture the imaginations of 'white people' because he was himself an Englishman and not of Aboriginal descent. His name was Archie Belaney, born and raised in Sussex, where as a lonely child he had himself been enraptured with the mystique of the 'Red Indian'. Even when his facade was exposed after his death in 1938, Canadians did not begrudge the deception because his cause had been an honourable one and they accepted that the masquerade had lent his message a legitimacy and impact it would never have had otherwise.⁶⁹

Going hand in hand with the romanticised 'noble savage' was the certainty that the 'Indian

⁶⁶ The best biography available is the excellent work by Donald B. Smith, From the Land of Shadows: The Making of Grey Owl (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990).

⁶⁷ "Grey Owl to Lecture," Halifax Chronicle (30 October 1935), p. 9.

⁶⁸ An interesting example of his eloquence can be seen in the text of a speech he was to make on the BBC in Great Britain in early 1938. The conservation themes he argued so strenuously were not always deemed acceptable to a British listening public where sport hunting interests was still immensely powerful. "Grey Owl's Silencing," Saturday Night (29 January 1938).

⁶⁹ Donald B. Smith, From the Land of Shadows, p. 214-215.

race', diminishing in numbers and vitality, was doomed to an inevitable demise. This concept had been a pervasive aspect of Canadian and American 'common sense' about the First Nations for so long that it required "no justification apart from periodic recitation."⁷⁰ The idea had been based on very real demographic decline resulting from the ravages of war, deprivation and disease; however, the population of the First Nations reached its nadir and began to rebound around the turn of the century in the United States and Canada. Data to the contrary did not appear to dent the armour of myth and the potent emotion of nostalgia that wrapped the trope of the 'Vanishing Indian'.⁷¹ Indeed, the sentimental tone and tragic language of the 1930s convey much of the sense that Aboriginal people were disappearing.⁷² In one lyrical and sad essay published in Saturday Night in 1937, titled "Gone is the Old Trail,"⁷³ the author concluded with an aching requiem:

I have to say good-bye to the old narrow trail. At night the cry of the coyotes - or is it the lamenting voices of the Indian dead? - still echo against my cottage door, and the sob of the loons is a soul in pain. But they [the Indians] do not come to me as formerly across the old living trail. Never again at bud of leaf, or at mournful rustling of dying leaves shall I wander idly adown it, reliving its glorious but tragic pageant. The old trail is gone forever. Yesterday, government engineers tore it up and built a gravel highway.

The metaphor of the 'Indian trail' formed a powerful expression of the inevitable extinction of

⁷⁰ Dippie, The Vanishing American, p. xii.

⁷¹ A fact that was twice noted in Saturday Night, once in an article titled "Our Indians Grow More Numerous," (8 July 1933), p. 3, by James Montagnes, and again in a report of Dominion government department announcements that included the numbers of Indians according to the latest census in 1938 (30 Apr. 1938), p. 5. The Indian Affairs Branch census revealed a significant growth of over 9%, increasing from 104 000 in 1924 to 114 000 in 1938. Such evidence also appeared in the other publications as well: "Reports of Indians Dying Out Denied By Alberta Agent," Calgary Herald (19 February 1935), p.13, "Indian Population Increase Expected," Calgary Herald (26 June 1939), p. 2, "Says Indians Not Becoming Extinct," Halifax Chronicle (6 March 1935), p. 2.

⁷² This is evident in a well written piece by Frederick Niven, a man who published regularly on 'Indian' historical topics and his own acquaintances among the Blackfoot, "Amerindian," Dalhousie Review, vol. XIX, no. 2: 143-146.

⁷³ Mary Weeks, "Gone is the Old Trail," Saturday Night (2 January 1937), p. 1, 3.

Aboriginal people, or at least their 'Indianness', before the irresistible force of modernization and assimilation.⁷⁴

Two advertisements by Canadian Pacific, announcing the fiftieth anniversary of its founding and the driving of the last spike appearing in 1931 and 1935 respectively, demonstrated these sentiments in visual form. The first contained a drawing of the Banff Springs Hotel against a mountain backdrop, but overhanging all was the ghostly, fading, apparition of an aging, proud Plains chief, astride a horse (see Figure 1.7). Even more poignant was the celebratory advertisement of the fiftieth anniversary of the railroad's completion (see Figure 1.8). The picture symbolised Canada's march of progress according to Canadian



Figure 1.7 Canadian Forum (April, 1931), p. 273.

Pacific. Proceeding from left to right, the image encapsulated fifty years: the train changes from an early steam locomotive to a more modern type; the dress of the people, from all walks of life,

⁷⁴ A similar dichotomy appeared in another piece in the same publication by Frederick Niven. In this story he was speaking to an old chief who "could recall when the last buffalo herds were seen on the prairies." The author juxtaposed this romantic image of the noble 'Indian' as he once was with the modern image of the grain elevator advertised in a poster on the wall, the implication being that the ancient ways of the 'Indian' were gone, and soon would follow the 'Indians' themselves. Frederick Niven, "Winter Count," Saturday Night (5 February 1938), p. 2.



Figure 1.8 Saturday Night (9 November 1935), p. 20.

changes to reflect the passage of time and the variety of people that the railway brought. This march of progress heads off page to the right, with an industrial city of high-rises and an aeroplane in the background showing how far Canada had come. Almost missed in this busy picture is the figure of a Plains warrior, sitting forlornly on his horse at the far left edge of the page, who has already partially slipped from the edge into historical oblivion.

The inevitability of the 'Indians' extinction tinged the discussions of Aboriginal rights and issues with fatalism. One editorial summed up a long discussion of the 'noble savage' rather abruptly, saying "Anyway, the forests are gone, and so is the noble red man. So what's the use in talking about it?"⁷⁵ In another describing the devastation of migratory bird stocks around Moose Factory on Hudson Bay by Canadian hunters and the resulting starvation among local Aboriginal

⁷⁵ "The Red Man's Way," The Globe (9 Feb. 1935), p. 4.

groups, the editor closed on an apathetic note:

The dominant race will take what it needs; that is the way of the world. But a pitiful consequence of this is that the tribes which ruled supreme on this part of the continent a few hundred years ago cannot now retain a bit of good hunting territory even as far north as Moose Factory. The white hunter must have his wild ducks and geese; consequently his red brother, who needs the food, must go without. An old adage might in this case be revised to say that one man's wild fowl means another man's starvation.⁷⁶

'Common sense' wisdom of this nature was indicative of the indifference that such fatalism fostered.

Even when the media portrayed Aboriginal people in a positive, if often inaccurate, manner, there was a tendency to belittle and trivialize through the language and tone of the editorial or news story.⁷⁷ For instance, a front page story of several men from the Six Nations reserve at Brantford who came to Kitchener to greet the Royal train in 1939 bore the headline, "Chiefs Use Wives' Lipstick as 'War Paint' to Meet King."⁷⁸ In a parody of the terms Canadians believed typical of 'Indian-speak', Euro-Canadians became "Palefaces," the King became "the Great White Father," and their abodes inevitably "tepees" or "wigwams." Aboriginal people were denied a sense of humanity in terms that referred to men as "chiefs" or "braves," women as "squaws," and children as "papooses." For instance, the Halifax Chronicle ran a front page picture that bore a caption which read, "In full regalia hundreds of Indian chiefs, braves, squaws and papooses

⁷⁶ "The Indian's Lost Hunting," The Globe (10 November 1930), p. 4.

⁷⁷ One example was the Toronto dance craze of early 1939, called 'The Injun,' developed by a well known local dance pair, and described at length, with photos in Saturday Night, "Palefaces Follow in the Steps of the Red Men," (7 Jan 1939). The principle steps titled 'the Injun', 'the Tomahawk', 'the Tepee', and the 'Ki-Yi, Ki-Yay,' were a parody of Euro-Canadian perceptions of Aboriginal forms of dance and their supposedly war-like nature.

⁷⁸ "Chiefs Use Wives' Lipstick as 'War Paint' to Meet King," The Globe and Mail (7 June 1939), p. 1. This story was also carried under a less bemused headline by the Brantford Expositor, "Six Nations in Kitchener," Brantford Expositor (7 June 1939), p. 3.

converged on Calgary to offer a warm and loyal welcome ...”⁷⁹ An article in the Brantford Expositor, a paper that generally refrained from this type of characterisation, ran an article about the Six Nations which concluded saying, “evidently when war paint is worn by braves, a woman’s place is in the tepee.”⁸⁰ Even more mocking was a Vancouver Sun editorial describing a meeting between the King and ‘Indians’ in Calgary: “most of the Indians spoke English which was just as well - the King and Queen could not speak a word of Indian, although His Majesty’s ‘Ugh’ when he saw the dirty old pipe of peace was passable Indian.”⁸¹ The comedic and droll tone of such stories reduced Aboriginal people and their cultures to a caricature, one that need not be taken seriously.

Though hardly an unambiguous figure, this image of the ‘noble savage’ was the dominant articulation of the ‘Indian’ in the public discourse, and was generally constructed in a positive, if comical, manner by Canadians during the 1930s. He, because the ‘Indian’ was overwhelmingly male, was strong, wise and honourable. However, the combination of the conglomeration of ideas that made up the ‘noble savage’ with the trope of the ‘disappearing red man’, meant that the principal manifestation of the ‘Public Indian’ was a largely historical figure. Grey Owl’s appeal rested on his ability to present himself as the embodiment of this historical mystique in a modern setting. Even when discussed in a contemporary story, journalists couched their terms and context in some distant and glorious past that had long since faded away. In a sense, consigning Aboriginal people to the past denied them a present and fatalism denied the possibility of a future. The ‘noble savage’ of the 1930s was a heroic, but tragic shadow.

⁷⁹ “Indians Honor Their Majesties,” Halifax Chronicle, p. 1.

⁸⁰ “Six Nations in Kitchener,” Brantford Expositor (7 June 1939), p. 3.

⁸¹ “Modern Indian Love Call,” Vancouver Sun, p. 4.

The 'noble savage' image was not the sole manifestation of the 'Indian' in the public discourse during the 1930s. Canadians had been defining and mythologising Aboriginal people for far too long for even such an ambivalent figure as the 'noble savage' to capture the complexity of the 'Public Indian'. Underlying the historical and positive image of the 'Indian' was another antithetical image, distinctly unappealing and resident in the present. Though much less prevalent than the 'noble savage' image, this articulation of the 'Indian' was a constant presence in the public media during the decade, with examples in almost every publication examined. When discussing the 'Indian' in this framework, Canadians emphasised the negatives that they saw in contemporary Aboriginal people and living conditions. This image of the 'Indian' had no redeeming qualities, it exhibited a host of vices and character flaws ranging from drunkenness to cultural backwardness, and infantile irresponsibility to a lack of intelligence. This 'Public Indian' was often either inebriated or committing a crime, and frequently both. The presumption of blame for this state of affairs lay squarely with the wretched 'Indian'.⁸² Overall, Canadians constructed a loathsome contemporary counterpart to the 'noble savage'.

One of the more common contexts in which the negative 'Public Indian' appeared was in the crime stories that filled the pages of the papers, then as now. Here was the blood and violence that titillated, amused and, most importantly, sold newspapers. Regularly, the language or tone of

⁸² In this the 'Indian' was not alone, but shared some of the same stigmas middle and upper class Canadians associated with poor and unemployed. This was an age when most English-Canadians believed in the liberal ideals of self-help and 'pulling one's self up by the boot straps', though such assumptions were increasingly questioned as the Depression wore on longer than anyone expected. Those unfortunate enough to be unemployed and require relief were stigmatised. It would not be until 1943, when the country began developing its intense interest in reconstructing a better Canada after the war, that the rise of the concept of universality would overcome the 'blame-the-victim' atmosphere and foster the formation of 'social rights' to which all members of society were entitled. James Struthers, "Family Allowances, Old Age Security, and the Construction of the Canadian Welfare State, 1943-1951," in The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada, Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, eds. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998): 179-204.

these stories suggested that 'Indians' were naturally violent or even enjoyed such activity. One

Calgary Herald article told of two 'Indian' men who,

were very glad to see a policeman Thursday afternoon, at 6 30 o'clock. They had been fighting each other for an hour, causing damage to furniture in the process, and were growing weary. The arrival of the constable revived interest in the battle. They went to work on him with vigor and enthusiasm.⁸³

Even when the events were reported in more neutral language, inevitably, the headlines gratuitously identified the accused or victim as 'Indian'.⁸⁴ Highlighting the 'racial' other in headlines was established practice. The practice produced an exaggerated sense of the degree of crime and violence among the First Nations in Canada. Canadians had no need to even read the stories, because the headlines alone told that it was merely another tale of what they already expected of the 'Indian'. The reader could skip past, confident that they understood all they needed to know.

Whether intermingled with crime stories or on its own, the public discourse revealed one of the pervasive assumptions about 'Indians' - they could not resist liquor, were usually drunk, and

⁸³ "Indians Halt Fight To Battle Constable," Calgary Herald (4 January 1930), p. 22. The article finished with a witty reference to the men being intoxicated, saying, "Regretfully they glanced behind as they left the courtroom, where two jugs of wine and a can of 'heat' occupied a prominent position on the centre table."

⁸⁴ Examples of this abound, including: "Indian Kills Police Constable During Chase," Prince Albert Daily Herald (28 August 1939), p. 2, "Indian Arrested on C.N.R. Train," Halifax Chronicle (15 September 1930), p. 4, "Indian Woman Gets 20 Years," Calgary Herald (2 February 1935), p. 2, "Indian Fined For Carrying Firearm On Game Preserve," Calgary Herald (7 February 1935), p. 13, "Accused Indians Injured in Crash," Calgary Herald (18 October 1935), p. 1, "Three Indian Brothers Convicted," Calgary Herald (25 October 1935), p. 3, "Indians Get Long Terms For Trying To Derail Train," Calgary Herald (30 October 1935), p. 2, "Four Years For Indian," Kamloops Sentinel (18 February 1930), p. 1, "Indian Murderer Tracked Down South from Cariboo, Offered Life Imprisonment to Hang White, But Refused," Kamloops Sentinel (4 March 1930), p. 1,4, "Two Indians Held For Theft of Car," Brantford Expositor (10 April 1930), p. 15, "Dawson Maracle, Indian, Is Held in Connection With Murder of Bilton," Brantford Expositor (22 February 1935), p. 5, "Caughnawaga Reserve Indian Is Fined," Brantford Expositor (16 June 1939), p. 5, "Sentenced Indian On Perjury Charges," Brantford Expositor (3 August 1939), p. 4, "Police Seek Indian For Triple Slaying," Brantford Expositor (26 August 1939), p. 47, "Fear Foul Play in Indian's Death," The Globe (14 December 1935), p. 2.

became violent when intoxicated.⁸⁵ In one story about a flood in the Sumas Valley of British Columbia, the reporter managed to find “undercurrents of drama and humor.”⁸⁶ One of the elders was quoted as saying, “Ugh ... I’d like drink of whisky,” at which point the reporter departed from the subject of the flood stating: “it transpired that the Indians had been getting relief orders for emergency clothing from the provincial government. They had been selling the new clothes to unscrupulous whites in return for whisky and a mild tribal drunk had ensued.” Whether the allegations were accurate or not, the anecdote had nothing to do with the flood and was inserted into the story for no other reason than to evoke a knowing snicker from readers. It made a mockery of people whose homes were flooded, not only denying them their humanity, but robbing them of any sympathy for their predicament. References to alcohol, or “fire water” as some liked to call it, were frequently expressed in a snide manner, such as in one article about a fight that broke out in a home on a reserve where a wedding was being celebrated “with a dance and it is alleged with something else - that goes to the head besides the feet.”⁸⁷ Such derisive and droll humour applied to these subjects erected a barrier that made it difficult for Canadians to empathise with Aboriginal people and their plight.

Crime and alcohol were merely vices on the surface of this image of ‘Indian’ that hinted at the depravity and weakness within. Inferences and vague comments in stories, editorials and comics suggested that the contemporary ‘Indian’ was plagued by a wide range of character and

⁸⁵ “MicMac Chief Fined In Court,” Halifax Chronicle (16 September 1930), p. 3. This is a fine example of how the twin vices of alcohol and violence intertwined in Canada’s more derogatory ideas of the ‘Indian’.

⁸⁶ “Sumas Chief Fearful of Farm Dykes, Prophecy Fulfilled When Big Valley Inundated,” Calgary Herald (25 February 1935), p. 15.

⁸⁷ “Indian Took Fire Water,” Brantford Expositor (18 February 1935), p. 6. According to the secondary headlines, the man was “Tamed by Night in Cells.” “Charge Indians Assaulted Officer,” Brantford Expositor (3 April 1940), p. 6.

cultural flaws. Among the more widespread stereotypes was that the 'Indian' was lazy, that "they can lay any lesson or task aside if a trip is in prospect."⁸⁸ Perhaps worse, it was assumed they were unintelligent, to such a degree that it became part of a parable used by the Cardston News to encourage more advertising:

remember the old story of the Indian who heard about feather beds and thought he would try one. He took one feather, laid it on a plank and slept on it all night. In the morning he woke up with a crick in his back and growled: "White man say feather bed heap soft. White Man big fool."⁸⁹

The moral was that the 'white' business man ought not to be as foolish as the 'Indian' because "it takes more than one [feather] to make a feather bed." In addition, the contemporary 'Indian' was infantilised, as demonstrated by a pair of editorials in the Kamloops Sentinel that seem to echo the basis of the 'Administrative Indian'. The editors had argued consistently that "bottom of all the Indian problems ... is the fact that the reserve is too close to the bright, shining lights of the city, with all its glitter and appeal to the childish Indian imagination," and that the solution was to "treat them as the Indians as the juveniles they are: protect them from the evils which they cannot abhor when they are close at hand."⁹⁰ Given their handicaps and the poverty in which they lived, the modern-day 'Indian' might have been an object of pity for Canadians. However, given the drunkenness and violence expected of them as a result of their 'racial' flaws, there was little such

⁸⁸ "They Wanted Papooses Too," Halifax Chronicle, p. 27. Similarly in "Humble Red Squirrels Prove Valuable as Fur Producers; Indian Hunters Reap Rewards," Calgary Herald (11 February 1935), p. 11, the Aboriginal hunters were said to be so enamoured of making \$4 or \$5 per day "with a bit of comfortable target work and low-price ammunition that the more strenuous effort such as buckskin tanning, etc. is temporarily shelved."

⁸⁹ "One Feather Not Enough," Cardston News (20 February 1930), p. 4.

⁹⁰ "Indian Problems," Kamloops Sentinel (8 February 1935), p. 2, "Protect the Indian," Kamloops Sentinel (21 February 1939), p. 2. The former editorial recognised that the general public was largely indifferent to the circumstances of the local Aboriginal bands, claiming "the continuous apathy certainly indicates too that among us white people the attitude is too much of "It's only an Indian after all." Only rarely was such sentiment expressed during the decade.

sentiment evident in the public discourse during the 1930s.

This debauched and pathetic creature which was the 'drunken criminal' image of the 'Public Indian' was in almost every way the opposite of the 'noble savage'. Where the one was contemporary, the other was historical. Where one was despised, the other was admired. It seems strange that, throughout the decade, the 'Public Indian' discourse could construct such dichotomous images when Aboriginal people, issues or cultures were discussed. Yet the two seemed to co-exist despite their inherent contradictions. Having said this, the dualistic images were alike in two ways. First, both were extremes that bore little resemblance to the vast majority of Aboriginal people. Second, both the 'noble savage' and 'drunken criminal' were objectified and trivialised through comedy. But whereas the humourous treatment of the 'noble savage' was bemused and light in tone, the representations of the present-day 'Indian' evinced a more derisive and sardonic edge. Nonetheless, the effect was the same: it satirized Aboriginal people and the difficult social problems they faced in substance abuse, poverty and violence.

This exploration of the images of the 'Indian' held by English-Canadians during the 1930s reveals very different conceptions of the First Nations. The official view of the 'Indian' was profoundly unlike the dominant image of the 'Public Indian', both in form and in substance. The image of the 'noble savage', though ambivalent and often contradictory, was a largely positive and dignified figure. How is it possible to reconcile such disparate images of what was considered a single 'racial' group among Canadians within the span of a single decade? Perhaps more importantly how did these various 'Indians' develop and what do they mean for our understanding of the 1930s?

In coming to grips with the vastly different forms that the 'Indian' took in Canadian conceptualizations, the theoretical approach of discourse analysis can provide some insights. The

important aspect of a 'racial' and imperialistic discourse is that the identity of the 'other' is conceived as a construction of the dominant group. Both the IAB and the Canadian public developed and constructed a different 'Indian' because each had different requirements and perspectives in their relationship with the First Nations. Finally, discourse incorporates the relationship of power between the dominant groups and the defined 'other'. Canadians of various stripes defined the 'Indian' as they wished because they could, largely irrespective of Aboriginals' sense of themselves.

The most cohesive and distinct construction of the 'Indian' was that developed by the federal department responsible for administering the Aboriginal population. Uniformly negative and derogatory, the discourse of the IAB reflected an antagonistic relationship with their charges. Unlike the public, Indian Affairs officials did not have the luxury of ignoring Aboriginal people, they had to think about and interact with 'real Indians' on a daily basis; it was their *raison d'être*. Nor could administrators avoid viewing their charges in the present tense rather than as historical entities. Moreover, they were responsible for implementing policies designed to destroy the culture of the First Nations and supplant it with an idealized version of English-Canadian culture. In order to legitimise and rationalise such work and their own existence, administrators needed a strong, overt feeling of both their own superiority and their wards' depravity and backwardness. Their conceptualization of their relationship with the 'Indian' as a hostile and combative one was accurate if the significant historiography on Aboriginal resistance to this aggressive assimilation is any indication.⁹¹ In part, the cohesive and potent discourse of the Branch can be explained by its

⁹¹ Tina Loo, "Dan Cramner's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951," Canadian Historical Review (1992), J. R. Miller, "Owen Glendower, Hotspur and Canadian Indian Policy," Ethnohistory (1990). Both these look at the attempts to suppress the Potlatch ceremonies of the Pacific coast peoples, but the subject of Aboriginal resistance is receiving wider attention, such as Katherine Pettipas, Severing the Ties that Bind:

(continued...)

own peculiar nature, and by the influence of the man who had ruled it as his fiefdom for almost twenty years.

The IAB of the 1930s was Duncan Campbell Scott's creation. He had crafted its ethos in his own "narrow vision" and selected its personnel over two decades as the senior bureaucrat in charge.⁹² To a remarkable degree its officials stayed within the Branch in one capacity or another for very lengthy periods, what Harold Hawthorn termed a "grass-roots pattern of career mobility."⁹³ Scott himself was involved in the work of the Department from the late nineteenth century, but other individuals such as R.A. Hoey, T.R.L. MacInnes, Dr. H. McGill, W.M. Graham and John Daly demonstrate that such longevity was not unique.⁹⁴ Thus, there was a long period of indoctrination and selection that insured that those who excelled and gained promotion under Scott were those who shared his vision.⁹⁵ The result was a strangely cloistered group of civil servants,

⁹¹(...continued)

Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), and F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," Prairie Forum (1988).

⁹² Brian Titley, A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada (Toronto: Butterworths, 1986).

⁹³ Harold Hawthorn, ed., A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: A Report on Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies, vol. 1 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966 and 1967), p. 369.

⁹⁴ Each of these individuals served long careers in the Department. For instance, R.A. Hoey became the Superintendent of Education and Training in 1933 and served in that post until 1944 when he took over as Director. T.R.L. MacInnes after a long career as an Indian Agent became Secretary in 1935, and held that position until the 1950s. Dr. H. McGill replaced Scott as Director and remained there until 1944. Both Graham and Daly served long careers as Indian Agents, the former as the moving force in the famed experimental File Hills Reserve colony before being promoted to provincial Inspector, see Brian Titley, "W.H. Graham: Indian Agent Extraordinaire," Prairie Forum vol. 1 (1983):25-41. The latter was the Agent in Parry Sound for almost twenty years, and the subject of Robin Brownlie's interesting study, "Man on the Spot: John Daly, Indian Agent in Parry Sound, 1922-1939," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association vol. 5 (1994): 63-86.

⁹⁵ Duncan Campbell Scott is also well known for his poetry, much of which contained 'Indian' themes and characters. The 'Indian' of Scott's poems descended from a wild and romantic (continued...)

almost monastic in nature, that maintained a highly conservative, nineteenth-century view of the 'Indian'.

The 'Public Indian' of the 1930s was a complicated and conflicting duality composed of a tragic and noble resident of the past, soon to be gone from this earth, and a miserable remnant that existed in the here and now. Canadians, through their media, and as a result of the segregation of the First Nations on remote reserves, had the luxury to think of Aboriginal people, or not, in whatever way they wished. In this sense it was easier and more pleasant to conceive of the 'Indian' in a romantic and positive manner, an impulse that was probably stronger in the public media with its goal of entertaining as well as informing. In doing so, Canadians were partly attempting to cope with a sense of collective guilt, or at least obligation, resulting from the dispossession and devastation of the First Nations.⁹⁶

Several mechanisms can be seen in this discourse for managing the pain of guilt. One is

⁹⁵(...continued)

past, but there was a clear division between the wild 'savage' historical 'Indian' and the degraded and declining remnants that he was forced to deal with in his position as Deputy Superintendent General. He repeatedly portrayed struggles between the energetic old ways and the new realities of 'civilization' for Aboriginal people. Controlling the flickers of this wild energy of the past was the essence of the civilizing mission, particularly as he emphasised the infantile nature of Aboriginal people and viewed the assimilation process as one of maturing and weaning the Indian from his 'primitive state'. See Leslie Monkman, A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), and Terry Goldie, Fear and Temptation The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

⁹⁶ The language used in many editorials, news stories and literary pieces frequently mention that the responsibility for the 'Indians' decline belongs to Euro-Canadian/American society, as did the obligation to do something. As one writer summed up, "This Indian problem is strictly of the white man's making - and the white man alone can remedy it." Philip H Godsell, "Indians on Relief," Saturday Night (12 December 1936), p. 5. Only rarely did commentators directly attack Canada for its role, more commonly the blame was spread to the 'white race' as a whole. One example that goes against this general rule was written by a former Superintendent of the Six Nations Indians, Lt.-Col. C.E. Morgan, who challenged his readers to "[a]sk yourself who is better off, the Negroes in the United States who were slaves, with nothing, and are now free citizens, or the Indians, who owned Canada and are now but little better off than were the Negroes before emancipation." "Lo, the Poor Indian," Saturday Night (2 April 1938), p. 2.

the construction of the 'Indian' as an historical figure, a useful buffer from considering the contemporary harsh conditions on reserves in the 1930s. In addition, Canadians, arguably with some legitimacy, tended to include themselves within a broader 'white race' responsible for the decline of the original inhabitants of the continent, thus diluting their own responsibility. Even when they did turn their gaze on the contemporary 'Indian', what they saw was the pathetic drunk with whom they could not empathise; this creature did not deserve their pity or concern. The repeated trivialization of Aboriginal issues, culture and people through demeaning and comical language and tone helped Canadians by reducing the 'Indian' to manageable proportions. Finally, the canon of the 'Vanishing Indian' provided a last line of fatalistic defence, because the decline of the 'Indian' was viewed as inevitable and, in a social Darwinian sense, natural. There was nothing that Canadians could do but speak prosaically of some romanticized past and the tragic harsh truth of the survival of the fittest.

What can be inferred from these findings about the image of the 'Indian' in Canada during the 1930s? The various images of the 'Indian' that existed at that time formed the intellectual and conceptual environment in which policies pertaining to Aboriginal people, and the conditions in which they were forced to live were created or allowed to exist. Following the retirement of Duncan Campbell Scott as Director of Indian Affairs, and with him his zealous sense of purpose, the Department was left with little but an infrastructure and a sense of authority. If anything, the IAB's need to maintain its control was augmented by the conceptualization of the 'Indian' as a wayward delinquent child in need of rules and a firm hand. The attempts during the decade to gain legislative amendments that would strengthen the intrusive powers of the Department similarly make sense in light of the intransigence expected from 'Indians' and the combative view of the relationship held by administrators. The public image of the 'Indian' is useful for understanding the roots of Canadian indifference to the plight of the First Nations. 'Indians' were historical entities,

not contemporary human beings; they were objects of trivializing comedy, not of serious concern. Even when unpleasant modernity was discussed, there was little impulse to do anything because 'common sense' told them that 'Indians' were a doomed 'race' nearing extinction.

This indifference left the Indian Affairs Branch with an almost free hand to pursue assimilation in whatever manner it saw fit. There was no popular movement as in the U.S., even among radical intellectual and socialist elites, to reform the manner in which the country treated its indigenous population. Sadly, First Nations people, neither as noble nor as depraved as the extremes of Canadians' image of them, were caught somewhere in between, struggling to maintain their cultural existence against the onslaught of the government and the indifference of the country.

CHAPTER 2

THE 'PUBLIC INDIAN' GOES TO WAR, SEPTEMBER 1939 -DECEMBER 1941

Less than two weeks after Hitler's legions marched into Poland on 1 September 1939, Canadians found themselves at war for the second time in a generation. The population exhibited little of the wild euphoria that had marked 1914. Nonetheless, thousands of young men presented themselves at recruiting offices, and the majority of Canadians dutifully steeled themselves for the sacrifices and hardships to come. The various branches of the military girded for battle and the economy began, progressively, to shift into war production. After the lean and directionless years of the Depression, the country suddenly seemed to have a sense of mission again.

Following the initial burst of activity during the battle of Poland, the war entered the static and oddly calm period of the Phoney War. Little happened on the battle front between the Allied and German armies, and complacency dominated the home fronts. In Canada, the government continued a relatively measured and restrained rearmament program, while the economy was only slowly changing into war production. However, this stability was destroyed in the spring and summer of 1940 when the Wehrmacht smashed Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France in quick succession. The fall of France in June shattered Canadians' peace of mind. In the summer of 1940 they were suddenly Britain's largest and most important ally, and the spectre of defeat hung over the population.

Beginning in May 1940, public pressure rising from the worsening situation in France forced the government to enact a series of measures escalating the national commitment to the war. These included sending the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division to England ahead of schedule and mobilising the 3rd Division, followed shortly by the 4th. In June, the Prime Minister introduced the

National Resources Mobilisation Act (NRMA) to allow for the effective and efficient mobilisation of the country's human resources for the defence of Canadian territory. The NRMA explicitly assured Canadians that the men conscripted under the plan would not be sent overseas, thereby meeting Mackenzie King's personal pledge not to enact conscription and assuaging the fears of French-Canadians. It would take time before the country was fully geared to fight a total war, but in that frightening summer people came to grips with the idea.

Once the threat of a German invasion of the British Isles receded in the autumn of 1940, the situation did not noticeably improve, despite the British victory over the Italians in north Africa. The new year brought the waning of Allied fortunes in a series of defeats, culminating in the fall of Yugoslavia, Greece and Crete to the Axis in the spring. These disasters were followed by Operation Barbarossa, and the stunning German advances deep into the Soviet Union. Each day Canadians read nervously about the latest reverses and wondered when the United States would join the cause. Through the dark days the country was galvanised, transforming its war effort into a national crusade, with almost every segment of the population pitching in to do its part. Not until the late stages of 1941 did the first glimmers of hope emerge for Canada and the Allies: the United States was brought into the war by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor; and the Soviet Union not only stopped the Germans short of Moscow, but also launched their own winter offensive which drove the enemy back.

The first twenty-eight months of the Second World War was an emotional roller coaster for Canadians, swinging from over-confidence to profound anxiety and back to cautious optimism. Canadians were forced to clarify who they were, as well as why they were fighting. Almost as importantly, in an environment highly charged with danger, English-Canadians needed to ascertain who was with them and who was against them. As such it is a useful period in which to examine

the image of the 'Indian' in Canada's newspapers. Here we can see the transition from peace to war and its effect on the language and iconography used in the public discussion of the First Nations. The war's early years also provide a chance to see whether the 'Public Indian' discourse, which had remained static through the 1930s, was more responsive to events affecting the dominant society than to influences originating from within the subject group.

Within this context, the contradictory duality that had marked the peacetime 'Public Indian' faced some significant challenges in the early stages of the Second World War. The nature of the pressures on the 'Public Indian' and the way in which the discourse responded suggest some intriguing questions. Most obviously, did the war force alterations in the way Canadians constructed the 'Indian'? If so, what adaptations were evident and what were the mechanisms of change? Did a new image emerge? If so, what traits and characteristics endowed this new 'Public Indian' image? Did this new 'Indian' supercede the old dichotomy, or were all the images able to co-exist despite their inherent contradictions? The answers to these questions will not only clarify the nature of the relationship between the Second World War and the 'Public Indian', but will also aid in validating the foundations of discourse theory in this study.

The outbreak of hostilities brought little change in the ways in which the 'Indian' was represented in the public media or even in the frequency of stories on Aboriginal subjects.¹ Only gradually did connections between the war and the 'Indian' begin to be made in the papers, and these were constructed within the existing conceptual framework of the 'Public Indian'. By

¹Of the papers surveyed, the Vancouver Sun, Winnipeg Free Press, Halifax Chronicle, Brantford Expositor, Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Kamloops Sentinel, Cardston News and Prince Albert Daily Herald all carried a relatively large number of 'Indian' stories, with some showing a slight increase. Only the Toronto Globe and Mail significantly reduced its normally large number of Aboriginal human interest stories.

January 1940, the 'Indian' was declining in salience in the face of more important war news, but there was little change in its frame of reference. These early links between the 'Public Indian' and the war reveal a tension resulting from the poor fit of Aboriginal support for the war effort within the existing dualistic images. However, a number of stories hinted that this pressure was forcing changes in the way Canadians constructed the 'Indian', and provided a glimpse at an emerging new icon.

Overwhelmingly through the early phase of the conflict, the 'Public Indian' appeared in the media in all the guises that had been evident prior to the war. Crime stories in particular formed a significant proportion of the attention paid to the First Nations in all the papers. This attention was due, in part, to several sensational murders which all occurred through the period under review.²

² The most widely reported and brutal of the cases was that of Nelson Sammy, a Cree of the White Bear Reserve in Saskatchewan, who was eventually executed for the murder of his wife, her parents and a RCMP constable in August 1939. "Indian Accused Of Murdering Four Persons" Prince Albert Daily Herald (28 September 1939): p.8. The crime was also reported in the Winnipeg Free Press "White Bear Reserve Indian Goes On Trial For Murders," (28 September 1939): p. 3, "Commits Indian On Murder Charge," Halifax Chronicle (29 September 1939): p. 3, and "Charge Indian In Four Deaths," Toronto Globe and Mail (28 September 1939): p. 22. Sammy was hanged on the morning of 5 July 1940 in Regina for the killing of the RCMP constable (he received a life sentence for the three Aboriginal people he killed), "Indian Pays With Life For Murder," Prince Albert Daily Herald (5 July 1940): p. 2. Another case was that of a Blood man named Round Nose, or in some stories 'Big Nose', who was charged with the murder of his wife in September 1939. The Calgary Herald noted the incident (23 September 1939): p. 4 and the trial "Charge Indian Murdered Wife," (12 October 1939): p.1, but the Cardston News carried extensive coverage of the death and the subsequent trial: "Blood Indian Held At Lethbridge Jail as Wife Near Death At Local Hospital," Cardston News (21 September 1939): p. 1, "Blood Indian Faces Murder Charge," Cardston News (12 October 1939): p. 3, "Round Nose Confined For Trial," Cardston News (19 October 1939): p. 1. Other stories included, "Charge Indian With Break," Halifax Chronicle (2 January 1940): p. 3, "Indians Jailed on Liquor Counts," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (6 October 1939): p. 17, "Jail Indian, Drunk in Car," Calgary Herald (16 October 1939): p. 10. So casual and self-evident was the connection between the 'Indian' and alcohol in Alberta that the list of persons who were legally deprived of access to liquor in the province for drunkenness was called the 'Indian List', as one article stated, "Your ancestors may have come over on the Mayflower, you may have hair as fine as cornsilk and eyes as blue as forget-me-nots, but to the government you may still be an Indian," see "The Indian List: Alberta Roll of Interdictions Tragic Record of Drinkers," Calgary Herald (2 September 1939): p. 24.

In all of these stories the offender was invariably identified in the headline as an 'Indian'. Such coverage merely denoted another violent act by an 'Indian', which, when combined with other stories about drunkenness, which maintained the negative aspects of contemporary stereotypes. Interestingly, the Cardston News, after reporting on a number of such cases, felt it necessary to print a debatable disclaimer that "headlines in newspapers giving the race along with the name of the individual is more descriptive than distinctive."³

In addition to crime stories were a number of stories that applauded the government's relations with, and benevolent treatment of, the indigenous population.⁴ Some came in the form of reports about 'Indian' crafts, art and festivals, which were always glowing in tone. Usually, however, these pieces credited the work of the Indian Affairs Branch and of the Indian schooling system for the quality and success of Aboriginal work and events.⁵ However, the best coverage for the Indian Affairs Branch concerned the improvements in Aboriginal health and the fact that the population was again growing.⁶ Canadians needed little other assurance that their government

³ The Cardston News (19 October 1939): p. 2. This disclaimer was at the end of a short editorial that assured Cardstonians that, despite the recent spate of crime stories involving people from the nearby Blood Reserve, the Blood 'Indians' were really a peace loving and law abiding people. The editors went further noting "the wonderful progress in adopting the ways and manners of living of their neighbours."

⁴ "Six Sarcees Had Income of \$2,500 in '38," Calgary Herald (30 January 1940): p. 10.

⁵ "Clever Display By B.C. Indians," Vancouver Sun (17 September 1939): p. 18, "Museum Show Stresses Beauty of Indian Art," The Globe and Mail (11 January 1940): p. 5. All too often, large segments of each story were taken up in listing the important Indian Affairs Branch officials in attendance, even if the festivals and events were organised by Aboriginal individuals or committees, for instance see, "Indian Fair To Start Tuesday," Brantford Expositor (5 October 1939): p. 6.

⁶ "The Vanishing American Isn't Vanishing," Halifax Chronicle (5 January 1940): p. 4. "Indians Not Vanishing," Brantford Expositor (5 September 1939). The greater publicity given to the growth of the Aboriginal population still seems not to have fully penetrated the myth of the decline and inevitable extinction of the 'Indian' race, see for instance "Injun Summer," Winnipeg Free Press Magazine Section (14 October 1939): p. 1. The poem describes an old-timer telling a
(continued...)

was doing all it could for the 'Indian'.

Above all else, the 'Indian' was still primarily represented as the colourful and exotic 'other' in Canadian public discourse during the early phase of the conflict. Such articles ran the gamut of contradictory and ambivalent images and stereotypes that made up the 'Public Indian'.⁷ The colourful character of 'Indian' subjects extended beyond the factual human interest story to lyrical and historical pieces where journalists flexed their rhetorical and imaginative muscle. Few writers wrote more florid prose on the subject than P.H. Godsell, who published occasional articles in the Free Press Weekly Magazine Section. In one essay about Indian Day on 30 September, he informed his readers that, "today, redmen of erstwhile warring tribes join in fraternal celebration to smoke the friendly calumet and engage in ancient sports that were old when the paleface first stepped on the rock-bound shores of the New World."⁸ Godsell's writing, though sympathetic and informed, was couched in the heroic and historical language that would seize the imagination of

⁶(...continued)

young boy about the 'Indian Summer' and the 'Injuns' of days gone by. He assures the boy that although there were once "heaps of Injuns around here - thousands - millions, I reckon," there was no reason to be frightened as there "hain't none around here now, leastways no live ones. They been gone this many a year. They all went away and died, so they ain't no more left." Flattering coverage was also given to increasing IAB efforts on the treatment of tuberculosis among the First Nations, "High Death Rate: Federal Authorities Fight Tuberculosis Among Indians," Winnipeg Free Press (9 September 1939): p. 5. This article glossed over the death rates, which stood at 614 per 100 000 population as against 54.7 among the general population, and lauded the "noticeable progress" that IAB officials claimed to be making in combatting the disease.

⁷ One article made light of legends among the Cree of northern Manitoba regarding an aquatic moose, which the papers dubbed "[A] Moose Of The Ogopogo Class" and a "submeroose." "Here's Moose of the Ogopogo Class," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (8 September 1939): p. 6. Ogopogo was the name of a famous mythical creature that Aboriginal people claim inhabited Lake Okanagan in British Columbia. The story had wide repercussions through the practice of printing articles from other papers, and reached the Halifax Chronicle, via the Montreal Gazette, by the end of September, "Amphibious," Halifax Chronicle (30 September 1939): p. 4.

⁸ P. H. Godsell, "Today is Indian Day," Winnipeg Free Press Magazine Section (30 September 1939); p. 6. Indian Day was an event celebrated by a number of Aboriginal groups, and came to form the foundation for the contemporary National Aboriginal Day, which is sponsored and supported by the federal government.

Canadians. Thus, in the same article where he argued for educating Canadian children about the 'Indian' and lauded the contributions of the First Nations to Canadian history and society and their contemporary attempts to organise themselves politically, he spoke of "dusky democrats," "tawny tribesmen" and "be-feathered sachems in all their barbaric glory." Canada's children can be forgiven if they were unclear as to the message Godsell was presenting. Much less ambiguous was an utterly derogatory editorial in the Vancouver Sun. Entitled "Three Squaws," it described a number of folk and indigenous signs that forecasted a severe winter for that year. However, the editor was unimpressed by the 'Indian' claims.

I know the Indian who invents all the hard winters - my old friend Andy Ned, of the Three Horse Mountain Reservation. Why, Andy has been in the business of predicting snow three squaws deep for the last 20 years. It always makes all the other Indians get in plenty of firewood and then Andy can conveniently steal it at night. He has heated his cabin on these beaver stories and three squaw winters as long as anyone can remember.⁹

Not only was the principal character in this tale a manipulative and sly thief, the other 'Indians' appear stupid and gullible: accepting the predictions, setting up a large stock of wood and not noticing its theft year after year. All in all, the editorial presented a decidedly unflattering image of the 'Public Indian'. The war originally had little impact on these traditional representations, which survived in all their traditional and contradictory guises: historical and noble or contemporary and depraved.

Throughout the early phase of the Second World War, links began to be made between the current conflict and the 'Public Indian' in a number of different ways. Infrequent and initially tentative, these stories tended to appear in the language and imagery that had marked 'Indian' stories before the war. Thus, the 'Indian' appears as noble savage and social critic or as quaint

⁹ "Three Squaws," Vancouver Sun (10 October 1939): p. 4.

and colourful. Even stories that talked about the enlistment of Aboriginal men in the armed forces or about First Nations support of the war effort tended to emphasise the ‘Public Indians’ colourful nature or historical context. However, in a number of these cases, a tension was evident in the language of the stories rising from the ill-fit of such positive, contemporary events within the existing ‘Public Indian’ framework. Unable to fully accommodate the square peg within the round hole, the glimmerings of an ‘Indian-at-war’ image can be seen: a new cultural icon, both positive and contemporary.

A prime example of the colourful ‘Indian’ in the context of the war was the attention generated by the comments of one Alberta chief about the loyalty of the First Nations and his predictions for the coming war. Chief Walking Eagle assured Canadians that young Aboriginal men would enlist because “every Indian in Canada will fight for King George.”¹⁰ His only fear was that they would not be able to get into the fight before the war ended because “Chamberlain is mad at Hitler now, and he’ll soon fix him. Before they talked too much, but now the English heap angry and they’ll sure get busy. Pretty soon Chamberlain blow Hitler to hot place.” The quaint pigeon-English and claims of loyalty to the King harkened back to the historical ‘Indians’ of stories and film, who always spoke in a broken and unusual idiom and signed solemn treaties with the British crown. In this story, the ‘Indian’ was delivering messages that Canadians wanted to hear. Indeed, when the story was picked up by the Halifax Chronicle from the Stratford Beacon-Herald in October, it was edited down to its most colourful essentials: the claims that “every Indian would fight for the King”; and the prediction, which the Chronicle termed a “delightful forecast,” that

¹⁰ “Hitler Fated For Hot Place Now British Angry,” Prince Albert Daily Herald (15 September 1939): p. 8.

Chamberlain would send Hitler to hell.¹¹ The sincerity and seriousness of Chief Walking Eagle was lost in this pared down and condescending presentation of his statements. Yet the pleased tone and wide distribution of this story demonstrated the genuine appreciation Canadians felt towards this display of loyalty by an 'Indian.' The war definitely did not simplify the ambiguities that bedecked the 'Public Indian'.

Another Canadian Press story that received extensive attention similarly portrayed the 'Indian' in a traditional light: in this case backwards, but still quaint and childlike. Residents of the Nelson House Reserve in northern Manitoba, who came to The Pas for supplies, only discovered that war had broken out on September 14. "Groups of Indians clustered around the traders radio ... would not at first even believe the broadcast stating Great Britain was at war with Germany."¹² The image of 'uncivilized' and 'primitive' people huddled around one of the wonders of modern technology, the radio, and their disbelief at what it had to say were striking representations of the 'Indians' backwardness. It was the lack of belief on the part of the Nelson House people that the Calgary Herald emphasised in its headline, "Indians Did Not Believe War On." The Halifax Chronicle chose to highlight a different aspect of the story in its headline, "Indians Discover Conflict's Effect."¹³ This headline referred to the 'Indians' dismay upon learning about the imposition of 'war taxes' and a fear that they would not receive as much support from the government. Both papers accentuated aspects of the story that represented the First Nations from Nelson House in an unflattering light, and one which fit within the existing image of the 'Public Indian'.

Nonetheless, both papers carried the story with a closing sentence in which the 'Indian',

¹¹ "An Indian Chief," Halifax Chronicle (11 October 1939): p. 4.

¹² "Indians Did Not Believe War On," Calgary Herald (15 September 1939): p. 11.

¹³ "Indian's Discover Conflict's Effect," Halifax Chronicle (15 September 1939): p. 2.

using some 'primitive' wisdom, played the role of social commentator. The story closed quoting "one native" who said, "You white people have been talking of war for four years and it has never come." In saying this the 'Indian' is not saying something new, but in a sense parroting for the readers the 'common sense' spoken between Canadians themselves. Many Canadians had been stunned that after years of talking about war, it had suddenly become a reality only a generation after the end of the 'War To End All Wars'.

The use of the 'Indian' as a tool for this kind of social comment and criticism appeared more strongly in a peculiar editorial in the Vancouver Sun in October 1939.¹⁴ The central character was Andy Ned, who had appeared in the "Three Squaws" editorial mentioned previously. Andy, who was guiding a friend of the editor on a duck hunt, asked the man how many people had been killed in the war. The fellow replied perhaps a hundred thousand. To this Andy, in traditional 'Indian' parlance, said "Huh." The story went on:

After an hour he asked again how many people had been killed. My friend said he thought about a hundred thousand. "Huh," Andy said. After a while he added: "If you was to pile all them dead people up, they'd reach higher than that tree." My friend said they would reach much higher than the tree, up to the top of the mountain yonder. Andy looked at the mountain for a long time and said "Huh" again. They got on their horses and rode towards camp. Ten miles along the trail, Andy stopped and, turning in his saddle, said: "That's too dam' many dead people."

Ambivalence permeates this odd parable. Here was the noble savage, though perhaps more dim-witted than noble, pointing out the folly of western civilisation with his simplistic and primitive wisdom. Andy's conclusion was far from surprising and reflected prevailing sentiments about the horrors of war and the futility and waste of so many lost lives. However, it was significant that an 'Indian' was the vehicle for this restating of the obvious; the idyllic and pristine nature from which the 'Indian' as noble savage had sprung had long been used in this fashion as a stick to beat the

¹⁴ "Andy Ned," Vancouver Sun (26 October 1939): p. 4.

societies of Europe and their colonial offspring. Had any other icon but the 'Public Indian' been used to make the same truistic point, it would not have had the same resonance and significance for the readers. And yet the editor defined the lead character in negative and age-old stereotypes, such as the grunted replies and the glacially slow mental process.

Whereas using the noble savage or presenting the 'Public Indian' as colourful could be accomplished within the confines of the existing dualistic discourse, accounts of young Aboriginal men enlisting or stories about various First Nations making patriotic gestures in support of the Red Cross and the war presented some difficulties. In this context, the historical and vanishing noble savage was of little use in making sense of Aboriginal voluntarism and loyalty in the present conflict. Nor could the contemporary but negative, drunken criminal image of the 'Indian' explain the loyalty and enthusiasm of the First Nations' support of the national war effort. Occasionally such references would be included without editorializing, as in the Cardston News on 14 September 1939, in a story about local volunteers due to leave for Army service.¹⁵ The fact that the first volunteer accepted locally was one of two Blood 'Indians' from the nearby reserve was mentioned in passing. However, other papers took more notice of these incidents.

The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix printed a large and dramatic story of Aboriginal enlistment in the Saskatchewan Light Infantry under the major headline on its third page, "Eighteen Mistawasis Indians Join Infantry."¹⁶ The story was positive and appreciative in tone commenting on the "good-looking group" of volunteers. However, the initial thrust of the story was the historical context of the Mistawasis band and of its Chief, Joe Dreaver, who brought the recruits in to

¹⁵ "First Local Volunteers For Army Service Leave Here For Training," Cardston News (14 September 1939): p. 1.

¹⁶ "Eighteen Mistawasis Indians Join Infantry," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (14 October 1939): p. 3. The story also ran in a slightly abbreviated fashion, minus the prominent headlines, in the Prince Albert Daily Herald, "Indians Offer Their Services," (14 October 1939): p. 8.

Saskatoon.¹⁷ The secondary headline read “Spirit of Chief who signed No.6 Treaty Lives On” and referred to Mistawasis, the great-grandfather of Chief Dreaver, saying:

Chief Mistawasis, one of the Indian leaders who signed Treaty No.6 at Carleton in 1876, rests peacefully today in the Indians’ happy hunting ground. As a young man a bitter enemy of the whites, Chief Mistawasis lived to be a friend of the British, and today he can sleep undisturbed, serene in the knowledge that his descendants not only adhere to the terms of the treaty which he signed with the Great White Queen but his sons and grandsons, living on the big reserve named after him, north of Leask, are still true Indians, true to their bargain and true to their beliefs.

Exactly what was believed to be a ‘true Indian’ was clarified further into the article where the attitudes of the ‘Indian’ recruits was described: evidently “they did not look upon joining the army as anything unusual, the love of fighting still being strong in their veins.” This simple phrase conjured up the image of the ‘Indian’ as a natural and bloodthirsty warrior, one of the most compelling and long-standing of the historical manifestations of the ‘Public Indian’. It also reflected the still common belief that a war-like nature, or other economic, political, social or cultural characteristics ‘ran in the blood,’ and were immutable.¹⁸ Despite the immediacy of the events described in the story, the journalist could not help but use the colourful terminology, imagery and historical emphasis that had long characterised tales of the ‘Public Indian’. However, this conceptual framework could not explain the whole story and the latter stages of the article

¹⁷ Two photos were included with the story, one of the eighteen recruits, the other of Chief Dreaver in full regalia, complete with eagle-feather head dress and heavily beaded buckskin clothing.

¹⁸ The prevalence of scientific ‘racism’, eugenics and belief in the fixed nature of ‘racial’ categories and attributes in Canada during the first half of the twentieth century is evident in: James W. St. G. Walker, “Race,” Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies (Waterloo: Osgood Society and Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1997), Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), and Howard Palmer, Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), W. Peter Ward, White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policies Towards Orientals in British Columbia (2nd ed, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), and Kay J. Anderson, Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991).

reveal an unabashedly positive and more respectful tone than was found prior to the war.

In explaining the keen spirit of the Mistawasis Crees, both the high ratio of enlistment by the band and Chief Dreaver received flattering portrayals. The story went on from its historical opening to say that Mistawasis would find few “braves in his wigwams,” as almost every able-bodied man of military age on the reserve had already enlisted.¹⁹ Chief Dreaver believed:

If people of all nationalities in Canada rallied to the colours as willingly as the Indians, the people who lost their country to the British, and who, by nature and instinct should be the last to offer their services, this Nation would be an example to the world.

The journalist clearly endorsed Dreaver's views. To him it meant that the “Indians evidently appreciate their country and the Union Jack.” Rarely did the media at the time report the words and opinions of Aboriginal people unless they were colourful. However, Chief Dreaver was quoted at length, without any colloquial ‘Indian’ grunts or pigeon English, and his opinions were given respectful and positive consideration. In part, this novel treatment was probably due to the fact that his comments struck a cord with the patriotic sentiments of English-Canadians. The point was made that he had served in the 3rd Canadian Engineers during the Great War, and that he was both a leader of his people and a business man. None of these roles fit the ‘Public Indian’, but Dreaver was a man of the times despite his Aboriginal heritage, and both he and the actions of his band were inspiring. Their story, in the context of the war's early phase, required something more than the traditional images of the ‘Public Indian’, and pushed the boundaries of the old dichotomy in new directions.

Another Aboriginal demonstration of support for the war effort drew media interest in January 1940. The Nelson House band that had made the news across the country in September

¹⁹ According to the story, if all of the eighteen passed their medical exam (11 had already passed) then there would be 20 men enlisted out of a reserve population of about 225.

1939 was again the centre of attention, but this time in a very different article.²⁰ Following a council among the band members, described in the papers as a “war council,” the chief and a councillor made the 200 mile trip in winter to The Pas where they met with the Indian Agent.²¹ They told the Agent not to be “concerned about the problems of the Red Men,” and that their band would make do without relief payments and government supplies so that the resources could be used for the war.²² The Cree leaders went on to say that a Red Cross drive was under way on the reserve collecting “bundles of weasel skins, moccasins, and sometimes a little coin.” In Winnipeg, the editors of the Free Press deemed the incident of such importance that they made space on their busy editorial page for some commentary, rather than burying it in the minor news stories. The editorial emphasised that “it is a far out Reserve this of Nelson House and only the winds and the moccasin telegraph tell the news of the world in flames,” and that the ‘Indians’ had not come by air, but by “dog and carriage.” The imagery was romantic and historical, complementing the positive nature of the story.

Had the story quit here, it would have been little different from other stories confined within the limits of the ‘Public Indian’. But it went on to cast the Nelson House band in a positive and contemporary framework. The Free Press argued that “this [was a] tale of war effort, than which no proud city or settled county district can claim finer.” Suddenly the ‘Indian’, who Canadians had always believed ought to act more like themselves, was providing the example for the nation to follow. The editorial closed with a curious comment that referred to an incident that received wide press coverage in Canada: the British press response to the first Canadian

²⁰ See footnote #12, “Indians Did Not Believe ...,” Calgary Herald.

²¹ “Cree Indians Given Thanks of Canada,” Brantford Expositor (27 January 1940): p. 7.

²² “Honor Where Due,” Winnipeg Free Press (18 January 1940): p. 11.

contingent's arrival in the United Kingdom, when they dubbed them the "Maginot Mohicans".²³

While this literary license demonstrated that Canadians had no monopoly on fanciful and farcical ideas about Aboriginal people and their place in Canada, to the editors it had another meaning.

They felt certain that "Canadians who know their history, realize that the suggestion is not without honor for them. The Red Man has written proud pages in Canada's story, and to these the Nelson House band has added a paragraph."²⁴ Once again, ambiguity in the message is evident, despite the fact that the editorial is undoubtedly complimenting the Nelson House Cree. In having to 'know their history,' the editors referred to the positive historical image of the 'Indian'. However, the recent actions of the Nelson House people were not articulated as simply important for the contemporary national situation, instead their significance came in adding a "paragraph" to the "proud pages" that the 'Indian' had already contributed to Canada's past. The event was sparked by the war situation, but it had salience and meaning because the Nelson House Cree's selfless, noble and patriotic gesture seemed to encapsulate all that had been great about the historical 'Indian' in the popular imagination.

Thus, the early phase of the war did not significantly alter the peacetime 'Public Indian'

²³ On 6 January 1940, the Canadian Press released a story from Canada House in London, based on selected clippings from British papers' treatment of the arrival of the first soldiers from Canada. The story was amusing and belittling of the naivety and ignorance of the British journalists who paid particular attention to the Aboriginal and black soldiers. One of the terms coined by the Glasgow Evening News that was singled out for particular derision was "Maginot Mohicans." See "Maginot Mohicans," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (6 January 1940): p. 2, Prince Albert Daily Herald (6 January 1940): p. 5, "British Press Welcomes Canada's 'Redskins'," Vancouver Sun (6 January 1940): p. 7, "Canucks Chuckle at Press Reports," Halifax Chronicle (6 January 1940): p. 1-2, "Indian Soldiers Get British Eye," Globe and Mail (6 January 1940): p. 1, "Without Their Tomahawks," Brantford Expositor (10 January 1940): p. 4. Most carried the Canadian Press story verbatim, but the Expositor printed an editorial that went far beyond the bemused tone of the original piece. It was more darkly sarcastic and caustic in its assessment of the British press.

²⁴ "Honor Where Due," Winnipeg Free Press.

discourse. The traditional dichotomy of the positive historical and negative contemporary image continued to form the core of media representations of Aboriginal people. Even stories that linked the ongoing conflict to the First Nations did not automatically have to discard this conceptual framework. Nonetheless, situations brought about as a result of the war, specifically Aboriginal enlistment and support of the war effort, did present ideas and emotions that were difficult to assimilate within the existing discourse. Repeatedly, these stories were cast into a historical context because that was the only manner in which positive stories about the 'Indian' made sense. The two stories about First Nations support for the war effort revealed indications of a new 'Indian' icon, not yet fully articulated, that could explain Aboriginal people in a way that was both centred in the present as well as positive and sympathetic.

The bloated sense of security prevalent in Canada through the first eight months of the war deflated like the air let out of a balloon, beginning in May 1940. The German Army had already crushed Denmark and Norway, forcing the Allies into an embarrassing evacuation from the latter country. However, the worst was yet to come as Hitler launched the invasion of the Low Countries and France, on 10 May. Within six weeks, the bulk of the British Expeditionary Force along with some French troops, were forced to flee the continent at Dunkirk and the French government sued for peace. The speed with which this occurred astonished the world, including Canadians. Only Britain and the Commonwealth remained to stand against the Axis, and complete defeat was no longer unimaginable. The results in Canada were dramatic, with massive expansions in the armed forces and concomitant acceleration of the transition to a war economy. Total war had arrived.

On the home front, press coverage of 'Indian' stories remained relatively high in most Canadian papers throughout the summer, but peaked during and after the French capitulation on

22 June. This is remarkable considering the extent and dire nature of the news from around the world that was competing for space with stories about the 'Indian'. Also noticeable was an increasing tendency to link the 'Public Indian' to the war in a number of ways. These stories were all marked by a single defining characteristic: each applauded and attested to Aboriginal support for the war effort. Almost every paper consulted carried at least one such piece reassuring Canadians that 'Indians' believed in the national crusade and were doing their bit for the cause. The summer of 1940 brought about the proliferation of the positive and contemporary 'Indian-at-war' image, ensconcing it alongside the other images of the 'Public Indian' in the Canadian imagination.

By June 1940, the propagandists' most positive spin on the events taking place in France could not disguise a disaster in the offing. Newspapers began to publish more editorials and stories designed to encourage Canadians not to despair and to rally around the flag. Stories connecting Aboriginal people to the war formed a greater proportion of those about 'Indians' than heretofore in most places in the country. In the Winnipeg Free Press and the Brantford Expositor, such stories became the norm, largely displacing other 'Indian' stories through the summer. At the other extreme, the Vancouver Sun and Kamloops Sentinel maintained their always-minimal coverage of Aboriginal issues to the trivial and the traditional. Nonetheless, the overall impression was of a country taking a renewed interest in its indigenous population in light of changed circumstances.

One subject of initial concern to Canadians was the loyalty of the First Nations. Could the 'Indian' be trusted? Inflated reports of the activities of Nazi agents, subversives and saboteurs poured out of Europe in the wake of the German conquests. Some reports even claimed that the defeated had not been bested by military might, but by the insidious work of fifth columnists undermining their morale and fighting ability. An overwrought press and RCMP told Canadians that even their own country had been infiltrated by potentially thousands of these "dangerous

agents in the guise of German immigrants, refugees, German Canadian citizens, even discontented Eskimos or Indians, and who knew what else.”²⁵ The result was a highly charged environment where every segment of Canada’s polyglot society was suspect, including ‘discontented Indians’. The alarm was first raised by concerns in the United States that “foreign-fostered groups and domestic anti-Semitic organisations were trying to stir up dissention [sic] among the Indians by stressing grievances against the government.”²⁶ The story also carried Canadian reaction to the news, which amounted to Indian Affairs officials assuring journalists that “there is no reason to believe that any Indians in Canada have Nazi inclinations.” However, the loyalty issue did not simply disappear with this casual official dismissal.

A more articulate and substantiated appraisal of Aboriginal loyalty appeared a month later in the Calgary Herald, which carried a full column editorial under the simple title, “Indians Are Loyal.”²⁷ The editor went so far as to claim that there was “no more loyal element in Canada’s mixed population than the Indians.” The editor referred to historical alliances among the Six Nations and to the mystic loyalty to the British crown among ‘Indians’ in remote regions.

²⁵ Robert H. Keyserlingk, “Breaking the Nazi Pact: Canadian Government Attitudes Towards German Canadians, 1939-1945,” in On Guard For Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945, eds. Norman Hilmer *et al.* (Ottawa: Canadian Committee For the History of the Second World War, 1988): 53-69, p. 60.

²⁶ “Nazis Seeking To Rouse Indians,” Winnipeg Free Press (5 June 1940) p. 3. The story was also carried in “Reports of ‘Fifth Column’ Operation Among U.S. Indians,” Brantford Expositor (5 June 1940), p. 12, and in a different format in “Hitler Includes American Indian,” Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (7 June 1940), p. 7. There was in fact a concerted if ill-informed and poorly executed German propaganda campaign aimed at Native Americans during the late 1930s and into 1940. American-based pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic groups also worked diligently to woo Natives to their cause, from the mid-1930s onward, with slightly more success. Such efforts had largely fizzled out by the fall of 1940 under concerted pressure from the Indian Affairs Bureau and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. See Kenneth William Townsend, *At the crossroads: Native Americans and World War II* (Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1991), chapter 3. There is no evidence that a similar attempt was ever made in Canada.

²⁷ “Indians Are Loyal,” Calgary Herald (4 July 1940), p. 4.

However, the most convincing demonstration was the fact that Aboriginal men had served in the Great War: “over four thousand” according to Dr. H. McGill, Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, and “it is expected that the Indian contingent this time will be at least as large.” This was lent greater significance because the point was made that “all Indian participation in the war must be voluntary,” as it had been in the last war.²⁸ The symbolic nature of voluntary military service and sacrifice underlie this starkly positive, yet contemporary manifestation of the ‘Public Indian’.

The editorial concluded with glowing praise for an award-winning essay by a local Aboriginal student about the current war, the Nazi menace and Britain’s fight “for liberty and free institutions . . . [and] maintaining the force of decency against barbaric peoples.”²⁹ The student’s essay ended on a fervent and patriotic note: “So in the meantime let us pray, pray, pray, and at the last may God save the King.” This seems to have encapsulated the feeling of the moment for the Herald editors, who gushed, “few white children in the Dominion could improve on this statement of a young Indian inhabitant of the Blood Reserve in Southern Alberta.” Conspicuously, there was no mention of the ‘Indian’ child’s name; the significance of the message in the youth’s essay came not from who he or she was, but from what ‘racial’ group he or she represented. Nonetheless, it was high praise that only a few ‘white’ children in the Dominion could improve upon the Blood child’s affirmation of loyalty. Calgarians could take comfort from the positive news that the ‘Indian’ was emphatically on side. Given such passionate comment and glowing editorialisation,

²⁸ This assumption turned out to be unfounded. Not only were Aboriginal men liable to conscription for non-combatant duties during the Great War, they would be conscripted for home defence for most of the Second World War. Even combatant service overseas was deemed applicable for the majority of the First Nations in late 1944. Only about one sixth of the Indian population was exempted due to explicit verbal treaty promises that had been made during the negotiation of Treaties 3, 6, 8 and 11, between 1876 and 1921. These treaty areas covered much of the Prairies, as well as north-western Ontario, north-eastern British Columbia and parts of the Territories.

²⁹ “Indians Are Loyal,” Calgary Herald.

who could doubt that the 'Public Indian' was loyal?³⁰

More than the assurances of Indian Affairs personnel or self-styled specialists, it was news of the actions and sacrifices of Aboriginal people themselves that laid to rest English-Canadian anxieties about their loyalty.³¹ On the same day that news of France's imminent collapse broke in the papers, the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix carried a prominent story under the headline, "Indians Display Loyalty in Gift Of Treaty Money."³² It referred to a number of bands from the Battleford Agency that had refused to accept their treaty payments for that year or request government assistance, so that the money might go to aid their "Glorious King and Queen" in the war. Even more impressive, the First Nations of northern Saskatchewan found what other money they could to offer in support of the war effort. In light of such gestures, questioning the loyalty of the First Nations must have appeared almost absurd, and the concerns seem to have been allayed.

Where the papers had been both feeding and assuaging the fears of Canadians in the initial shock of the fall of France, the news began increasingly to reflect the need for shoring-up civilian morale, preparing them for the sacrifices ahead and encouraging support for a total war effort. In

³⁰ Concern over Aboriginal loyalty had not entirely disappeared. The Brantford Expositor carried an article in July quoting a well-known "Indianologist" who was supremely confident in his certainty that "Canada's basic minority" was "immune to Nazi-inspired unrest." Any such attempt, the expert assured Canadians could only be based on utter ignorance of Aboriginal people and was "doomed to complete failure" because most 'Indians' regarded Nazi Germany with "disgust and loathing." "Indians Immune To Nazi Inspired Unrest," The Brantford Expositor (12 July 1940): p. 7.

³¹ "Indian Generous to War Causes," Saturday Night (10 August 1940), p. 17. The piece opened claiming, "Assuredly to be counted among the most patriotic of Canada's citizens are Saskatchewan Indians who have given generously of their money, and in one case have donated an ambulance, to help the Empire war cause."

³² "Indians Display Loyalty in Gift Of Treaty Money," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (17 June 1940): p. 4. An abbreviated version of the story appeared also in the Winnipeg Free Press, "Indian Aid: Give Treaty Money To Help Win War," (17 June 1940): p. 10, and a few weeks later in the Halifax Chronicle, "Three Cheers For The Crees," (3 July 1940), p. 8. The Chronicle piece was taken from the Windsor Star.

this changing context, the "Public Indian" discourse also went through a transition. The positive, present-day 'Indian' filled several new roles to meet the differing needs of English-Canada as it adjusted to total war. The tone of media stories no longer suggested a need to mollify Canadians' worry about 'Indian' loyalty. Instead, the interest in the 'Indian' focussed on the positive demonstrations of Aboriginal patriotism and sacrifice. These reports proved beneficial in encouraging, reassuring and even shaming Canadians into greater exertions for the war effort.

The humanitarian spirit and compassion of the 'Indian' received notice in stories about their generous support of the Red Cross. Even the Vancouver Sun, which seemed to scrupulously avoid printing material with the new positive 'Indian' image or stories linking Aboriginal people to the war, printed a heart warming story about the marvellous work done by Aboriginal children for the Red Cross.³³ Interestingly, while the majority of the story concerned the other projects and achievements of the Chilliwack Red Cross Branch, the headline spoke only about the case of the "Indian children."³⁴ The story noted that the pupils of the Coqualeetza Residential School, ranging from seven to eighteen years of age, had "expressed a wish to do war work some time ago, and said that they could knit and sew." Here is another element of the new positive, contemporary 'Indian': a sense of agency.³⁵ Where the negative contemporary image of the 'Indian' so often appeared as passive, in this the journalist was careful to say that the children had been the

³³ "Indian Children Assist Red Cross," Vancouver Sun (6 July 1940), p. 16.

³⁴ This was also the case in a similar article in Winnipeg, "Aid From Indians: Residents of Manitoba Do Bit In Filling Red Cross Coffers," Winnipeg Free Press (7 August 1940), p. 3.

³⁵ This was not uniformly the case. The paper in Saskatoon assured its readers that the Fishing Lake Band made the decision to donate \$1000 to the government for war costs entirely of their own initiative, but went on to claim that "the articles published in the Star-Phoenix concerning the recent donations from other Indian bands in the Province were more or less responsible for the decision of this particular band". Leaving aside the professional conceit and a bloated impression of the influence of their work, the Star-Phoenix equivocated in its impression of the agency and initiative of the 'Indian'.

instigators.

In the context of the war and this ongoing re-assessment of Aboriginal peoples in the public forum, even activities that would have been viewed as traditional and colourful 'Indian' activities prior to the war took on a more nuanced meaning and gained respectful consideration. An excellent example of this was the Calgary Herald coverage of a Sun Dance in late June 1940.³⁶ The paper ran two major stories about the event, both by the same journalist. The first opened with the colourful phrasing so long typical of 'Indian' tales, "Indian drums throbbed along the banks of the Bow in the heart of the legendary Sun Dance Valley."³⁷ The second began with a long evocative introduction:

"heh-h-h, heh-h-h, heh, hei, ho, hei-h-h." It is night on the prairie and from the dimly lit Sun Lodge in the middle of the Indian camp comes the plaintive wail of the Sun Dance song, clear and high above the steady beat of the drums. Outside in the big circle of the main camp, fires gleam dully, throwing fanciful shadows on the bushes and the trees. Here and there a hobbled pony crops at the short grass. The camp is silent except for the continuing singing and drum beating in the Sun Lodge. The interior of the lodge presents a weird and colorful sight. In the main circle to the left a group of old men sit and grunt approval as the younger braves pound their tom-toms and chant the Sun dance song.³⁸

Had the tenor and emphasis of the articles not changed dramatically, they could have been dismissed as another example of the 'Public Indian' as colourful and exotic.

However, the first story went on to give a detailed and sympathetic explanation of the Sun Dance and its spiritual meaning for the Stony people, mixed with their patriotic concerns:

It was not the barbaric Sun Dance of the early '70s where Indian braves were forced to dance until the buckskin thongs affixed to the muscles of their chests were torn

³⁶ "Stonies at Ceremonial Sun Dance Pray For Victory For Britain," Calgary Herald (20 June 1940), p. 1-2. The Herald actually ran two stories about the Sun Dance that day: "Tom-Toms of Stonies Beat Time For Tribesmen's Sun Dance Ritual," Calgary Herald (20 June 1940), p. 1,5.

³⁷ "Stonies at Ceremonial Sun Dance ...," Calgary Herald.

³⁸ "Tom-Toms of Stonies ...," Calgary Herald.

loose from their fastenings, but a colourful ritual which culminated with the Indians, young and old, joining in a prayer for victory for their King across the water and the armies under his command.³⁹

In great detail, the journalist described the decision to hold the ceremony, as well as the complicated process of setting up and holding the Sun Dance. He recognised the fusion of Christian beliefs and traditional spiritualism, informing the reader that, far from being an un-Christian or 'heathen' ritual, "the Indians, through the medium of the dance, are merely praying to Almighty God for help and guidance in the age-old native fashion, rather than through the medium of the Christian church." The second article went on to describe the prayers in support of the war and Britain, noting the Stony people's hope that they would not be called upon to kill, as well their willingness to do whatever was needed to further aid in the successful prosecution of the war. It is difficult to imagine, even with its traditional imagery, such a balanced and insightful representation of an Aboriginal event in years prior to the war and the flowering of a positive contemporary 'Public Indian'.

Even more noteworthy than Aboriginal compassion and spirituality, demonstrations of their enthusiasm for the war effort were frequent and the press appeared eager to print them whether it involved cases of enlistment or other topics.⁴⁰ A series of stories kept the 'Indian' in the public eye throughout the climax of the summer in Saskatchewan, beginning with the northern Bands' decision to refuse their government relief and contribute their treaty money to the government, reported on 17 June. Two days later, the Star-Phoenix printed another dramatic announcement, declaring that "the Indians of the Mistawasis Reserve are patriotic to say the least,"

³⁹ "Stonies at Ceremonial Sun Dance," Calgary Herald.

⁴⁰ "Men of Tough Northern Breed with Grey and Simcoe Foresters at Camp Borden," Globe and Mail (1 July 1940), p. 5. This was a brief photo essay, but the largest picture was of "Private Jack Kahbejee, Chippewa Indian from Southampton district, [who] laughs broadly as he starts to fill his palliasse with straw."

because they made a donation of \$2 080 for the purchase of an ambulance for work overseas.⁴¹ This was followed on 2 July by a story about a Métis declaration of support, on 5 July by a story about Chief Dreaver's call for an all-Indian battalion and on 25 July by another story about the donation of \$1 000 by the Fishing Lake Band.⁴² In all these cases, the actions of the First Nations were interpreted as patriotism of a highly developed sort, and a great example for Canadians to follow. In this sense, the example of the 'Indian-at-war' image helped to encourage Canadians to do their utmost for the war effort by providing a bench mark of what could be done. But the stories also created an exaggerated sense of the zeal behind Aboriginal actions, and ascribed meaning and motives that perhaps reflected Canadian desires more than the real attitudes of the First Nations themselves. This is not to say that Aboriginal people did not believe in the fight against Hitler, or that they did not demonstrate genuine patriotism in supporting the national crusade. Clearly, they supported the war and most did what they could to help, but their reasons for doing so were more complex than the dominant society's discourse acknowledged.⁴³

⁴¹ "Indians Donate \$2,080 To Purchase Ambulance," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (19 September 1940), p. 11. A similar story about several Alberta Cree communities who gave an ambulance to the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps ran on the front page in Brantford a week later, "Cree Indians Give R.C.A.M.C. Ambulance," Brantford Expositor (25 June 1940), p. 1.

⁴² "Metis Pledge Their Support," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (2 July 1940), p. 3, "All-Indian Battalion Suggested," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (5 July 1940), p. 4, "Indian Band Donates \$1,000 to War Effort," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (25 July 1940), p. 4. Chief Dreaver's call for an 'All-Indian' unit was carried as well in the Prince Albert Daily Herald and in the Winnipeg Free Press: "Indians May Form Battalion," Prince Albert Daily Herald (5 July 1940), p. 3, "All-Indian Battalion," Winnipeg Free Press (5 July 1940), p. 7.

⁴³ Patriotism and a desire to end the tyranny of Hitler's Nazi regime certainly spurred many First Nations men to enlist and many Aboriginal communities to contribute in any way possible to the war effort. However, there were other reasons for their actions. The reasons for young Aboriginal men enlisting were as numerous as they were for any other young man in Canada: for some it was patriotism; for others the prospect of a steady pay check and three square meals a day; some wished to escape an unhappy home life or a bad marriage; others craved the adventure of travelling overseas; but as often as not, young men enlisted because their buddies did and it was the thing to do. Add to this the desire, in those First Nations which still had warrior

(continued...)

The examples of the 'Indian' aiding the nation not only encouraged Canadians on to greater sacrifices, but, due to the underlying perception of the 'Indians' inferiority, also served to push them. This dual purpose can be seen in stories about the gestures made in support of the war effort. For instance, Aboriginal poverty was emphasised in stories about the refusal of government assistance by northern Saskatchewan First Nations, and their subsequent contributions to the war effort.⁴⁴ One story made careful note that \$101 had come from the Thunderchild Reserve alone, despite the fact that the "Thunderchild band has known every vicissitude of recent drought years." Similarly, the Halifax Chronicle noted that these Aboriginal peoples were "never in the best of circumstances financially."⁴⁵ The emphasis on the difficult straits of the 'Indians' is noteworthy because it amplified the depth of the sacrifice they were making and set the bar that much higher for the rest of the population to try to meet. This served to quiet the arguments of those Canadians who were unwilling to do their bit because they had just emerged from the hard times of the Depression. But more importantly, it shamed those supposedly superior 'white' Canadians who had not done as much as had the 'lowly Indian'. In a sense, this was the 'noble savage' reborn in a very different and modern guise, while retaining its age-old role as an instrument of social criticism. Even in setting the 'Indian' on a pedestal, Canada constructed an ambiguous image.

While the preceding analysis might suggest that the positive, contemporary 'Indian-at-war' image completely displaced other representations of Aboriginal people in the public discourse during the summer of 1940, such was not in fact the case. The traditional dichotomy also thrived

⁴³(...continued)

societies and who valued the warrior, for young Aboriginal men to attain their rights of manhood following in the steps of fathers and uncles who fought during the Great War, and of ancestors further back who had fought other Aboriginal nations and the advancing Europeans in previous centuries.

⁴⁴ "Indians Display Loyalty ...," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

⁴⁵ "Three Cheers For The Cree," Halifax Chronicle.

through June, July and August of 1940, though in varying degrees depending on the paper. For instance, in the Vancouver Sun these older images continued to dominate stories about the 'Indian', whereas the Prince Albert Daily Herald and The Globe and Mail maintained a more even balance.⁴⁶ On the other end of the spectrum, the Winnipeg Free Press, Brantford Expositor and Saskatoon Star Phoenix circulated the 'Indian-at-war' image to the exclusion of any other. Yet even in these papers, representations of the 'Public Indian' remained as complex and contradictory as ever, with gratuitously headlined crime stories running alongside the colourful and quaint, and the historical with the contemporary.⁴⁷ The continuity in the imagery and rhetoric of these stories is remarkable in the wake of the changes brought about by the war's first year.

Nonetheless, in some of the stories about subjects apart from the war, a sympathetic and less fanciful tone can be detected. A prime example was a story about Aboriginal celebrations

⁴⁶ "Worshipped by Indians," Vancouver Sun (7 June 1940), p. 10, "Kamloops Gale Kills Indian," Vancouver Sun (13 July 1940), p. 16, "Artistry of B.C. Indians Feature of Exhibition," Vancouver Sun (29 August 1940), p. 13. Traditional images abounded still in the following articles: "Canada Has Wealth of Folklore and Handicraft," Prince Albert Daily Herald (1 June 1940), p. 4, "Indian Charged With Murder," Prince Albert Daily Herald (21 June 1940), p. 3, "Indian Pays With His Life For Murder," Prince Albert Daily Herald (5 July 1940), p. 2, "Two Indians Drown In Nelson River Rapids," Prince Albert Daily Herald (7 August 1940), p. 5, "Indian Remains Calm As Murder Count Read," Globe and Mail (22 June 1940), p. 7, "Survived All Progeny, Big Wind Dies at 101," Globe and Mail (13 July 1940), p. 5, "Kilted Indians Arrive, Dumfound Scot Writers," Globe and Mail (3 August 1940), p. 3.

⁴⁷ "Rubbing Alcohol Given To Indians," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (13 June 1940), p. 17, "Indian to Hang Friday in Regina," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (4 July 1940), p. 4, "Tribal Tradition Believed Factor In Indian Slaying," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (14 June 1940), p. 3, "Indian Sun Dance Gets Good Results," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (17 July 1940), p. 11, "Speaking Birchbark," Winnipeg Free Press (8 June 1940), Magazine Section p. 5, 8, "Playing Indian, Canucks Whoop It Up," Winnipeg Free Press (9 August 1940), p. 12, "Indian Held For Killing," Brantford Expositor (21 June 1940), p. 10, "Tablet For Six Nations Indians To Go In Brock's Monument to Commemorate Valor in War of 1812," Brantford Expositor (17 July 1940), p. 6, "Aged Mohawk Chief Led Celebration," Brantford Expositor (22 July 1940), p. 6, "Colorful Figures in Ranks of D. and H.R.," Brantford Expositor (2 August 1940), p. 6.

following their receipt of annual treaty money.⁴⁸ After receiving their yearly payment from government officials, the Aboriginal families spent the day buying supplies from the host of vendors and enjoying some entertainments. In the past such an event, if it received any attention at all, might have provided an opportunity for many of the negative 'Indian' stereotypes to emerge. The story might have spoken angrily of the indolence of a people dependant on government handouts, or demeaningly of the 'Indian's' profligate and impulsive spending, or suggested innuendo of illicit liquor and the quintessential 'drunken Indian'. Instead, the author noted how tiny was the treaty money allotted to each person, the meagre and cautious purchases made and the fact that the Aboriginal families made the money last all day. In a similar vein, the Herald's coverage of the Calgary Stampede in July 1940 gave extensive treatment to Aboriginal competitions, parades and events.⁴⁹ Always, the 'Indian' appeared as a respectful and full participant in the larger Stampede, and stories that might have reduced the First Nations to the colourful and exotic human interest piece refrained from doing so. However, these were still the exception to the majority of 'Indian' stories, which continued to be constructed within the parameters of the traditional dualistic image.

The summer of 1940, with all its trials and strains, drew Aboriginal people to the attention of Canadians in a fashion that forced a re-evaluation of long standing notions about the 'Indian'. The public discourse could not explain the First Nations' contributions to the war effort using the

⁴⁸ "Indians Celebrate Their Treaty Day," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (22 June 1940), p. 8.

⁴⁹ "Fifteen Stony Tepees For Fair Indian Camp," Calgary Herald (2 July 1940), p. 10, "Indians Seek Prize Last Won 28 years Ago," Calgary Herald (8 July 1940), p. 9, "Braves, Squaws Thrill Crowds At Street Show," Calgary Herald (9 July 1940), p. 9, "Chiefs, Braves Play Ball," Calgary Herald (10 July 1940), p. 2, "Sarcees In Finery Thrill City Visitors," Calgary Herald (10 July 1940), p. 10, "Indians Display Best Wigwam Competition," Calgary Herald (15 July 1940), p. 10. The coverage of 'Indian' material also appeared in a number of other Stampede articles during the week, and in numerous pictorials.

images available; a new image of the 'Indian', therefore, developed to fill the need. This new icon, the 'Indian-at-war,' differed in that it was a sympathetic and flattering figure that existed in the present. Infused with an enviable spirit of sacrifice, unswerving loyalty, fervent patriotism and a dynamic initiative, this 'super-Indian' was nearly as distorted an image as other popular conceptualisations of the First Nations. But despite the utter dissimilarity between it and the existing versions of the 'Public Indian' - indeed the outright conflict between these various images - all three continued to co-exist in seeming harmony in the public forum. While the 'Indian-at-war' took its place alongside the contemporary 'drunken criminal' and the historical, vanishing, 'noble savage', it did not displace them.

Heartened by the spectacular British victories over the Italians in North Africa from December through to February, Canadians regained some of their equilibrium and threw themselves into assembling the armed forces and material needed for the coming year. However, the worst was yet to come and Allied fortunes reached their nadir. Yet Canadians were not so shocked by the continuing reverses as they had been by the defeat of France the year before. Nonetheless, levels of gloom and concern persisted. The media, either censored or self-censored, amplified the minor victories and played down the losses and setbacks, doing what they could to foster civilian morale. Even having the Soviet Union and the United States join the cause by year's end could not fully dispel the apprehension. Germany remained at the height of its power and December provided a long litany of what Japan was capable of accomplishing in the Pacific. Canadians held no illusions about the job ahead, but they hoped that they had weathered the worst of the Axis storm.

In the face of such important international events, stories about the 'Indian', regardless of

which incarnation, might have been expected to recede into the background.⁵⁰ While there was a noticeable drop from the crescendo of interest during the summer of 1940, the 'Indian' appeared in the media at least as frequently as in peace time in most publications.⁵¹ Based on the on-going, relatively high profile of the 'Indian' in the public forum, it is worth exploring whether or not the discourse changed further in 1941.

The stories linking the 'Public Indian' with the war continued to form a significant proportion of the representations of Aboriginal people in most publications. It remained dominant in the Expositor, the Free Press and the Star-Phoenix. Stories largely focussed on Aboriginal enlistment and on Aboriginal soldiers, such as a photo essay about Six Nations Indians in the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles.⁵² The photos were from the visit of two chiefs to the Six Nations

⁵⁰ For 1941, I examined every issue of the weekly publications and January, April 27 to June 6, June 22 to July 30, and December in the dailies. These time periods covered the British winter victories in the Desert, as well as the German conquest of Greece and Crete, Erwin Rommel's entry into the African theatre, Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union and the Japanese offensives of December, notably Pearl Harbor and the invasion of Hong Kong (because it was the first time Canadians ground forces fought in pitched battle).

⁵¹ Of course, there were wide variations among the papers consulted, most noticeably in the virtual disappearance of the 'Indian' from the Halifax Chronicle. Only three articles involving 'Indian' subject matter or imagery appeared in the time periods searched, less than half the number that appeared in September 1939 alone. "P.E.I. Soldier Killed Overseas," Halifax Chronicle (4 January 1941), p. 3. "Barn Owned by Indian Burned," Halifax Chronicle (30 April 1941), p. 3. "Indian Yells Are Put To Good Use," Halifax Chronicle (19 July 1941), p. 2. The Globe and Mail and Prince Albert Daily Herald also significantly decreased their coverage of 'Indian' stories. However, only slight declines were evident in the Brantford Expositor, the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix and the Winnipeg Free Press and no decline at all in the Calgary Herald, Cardston News and Vancouver Sun. Remarkably, the Kamloops Sentinel, which had previously given only minimal attention to the 'Indian', significantly increased its coverage in 1941, printing 27 stories about 'Indians' as opposed to the 2 they had printed in 1940.

⁵² "Six Nations Indians With the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles," Brantford Expositor (4 January 1941), p. 2. Other stories about enlistment or Aboriginal soldiers include: "Indian Soldier Writes School From England," Kamloops Sentinel (27 November 1941), p. 11, "Six Recruits From Cardston," Cardston News (3 June 1941), "Indian Soldier Reported Ill," Calgary Herald, (16 December 1941), p. 10, "Crees Enlist When Chief Calls," Calgary Herald (26 June 1941), p. 3, "Seven Sons Serving," Prince Albert Daily Herald (5 December 1941), p. 3, "Indians Put On
(continued...)

soldiers serving with the unit at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their traditional dress and feathered bonnets figured prominently in all the pictures alongside the grinning faces of the young men. But the tone was up-beat and cheerful, including one picture with the caption, "Lesson In Scalping - Chief Blueeyes shows how the process might work on one Adolf Hitler." The other principal manifestation of the 'Indian-at-war' was in stories about donations by Aboriginal bands to the Red Cross or to patriotic funds for the furtherance of the war effort.⁵³ In Cardston, the residents of the Blood reserve contributed about ten percent of the district amount.⁵⁴ A grateful gathering of local dignitaries held a banquet in honour of the Blood's \$200 contribution from their band funds, which was presented in a "colourful and almost dramatic manner," by Chief Shot Both Sides. The speeches of the many Aboriginal and civic leaders at the event were fully recorded in the lengthy

⁵²(...continued)

Uniform," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (28 May 1941), p. 3, "Proud of Warrior, Now at Hong Kong," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (17 December 1941), "Men of All Races Flock to Join Canada's Army," Winnipeg Free Press (22 May 1941), p. 3, "29 Enlisted From The Pas District," Winnipeg Free Press (30 June 1941), p. 6, "No Eskimos in Canadian Service," Brantford Expositor (20 January 1941), p. 3, "Indians Serve In War Units," Brantford Expositor (31 January 1941), p. 3, "Col. Martin To Command At Nanaimo," Brantford Expositor (20 May 1941), p. 14, "Saskatchewan Has Platoon Of Full-Blooded Indians," Globe and Mail (4 July 1941), p. 13, "Eskimo Women Would Enlist," Globe and Mail (5 December 1941), "Indian Women Go On 'War Path'," Globe and Mail (18 December 1941), p. 7.

⁵³ "Natives Value Civilization, Aid War Fund," Globe and Mail (8 July 1941), p. 3, "Indian Trappers Buy Certificates," Brantford Expositor (28 January 1941), p. 14, "Indians Contribute To Red Cross From Treaty Money," Prince Albert Daily Herald (21 July 1941), p. 4, "Indians Have Come Here Annually For 60 Years," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (26 July 1941), p. 3, 6, "London Fund Aided By Cree Indians," Winnipeg Free Press (2 June 1941), p. 4, "Red Cross Fund Aided By Indian Reserve," Winnipeg Free Press (5 June 1941), p. 7, "Stonies Aid Red Cross," Calgary Herald, (23 May 1941), p. 10, "Indian Girls Help Park Spitfire Fund," Calgary Herald (30 May 1941), p. 18, "Stony Indians Dig Down Deep," Calgary Herald (2 July 1941), p. 15, "Peigan Aid Red Cross," Calgary Herald (31 July 1941), p. 5, "Sun Dance Helps Red Cross," Cardston News (22 July 1941), p. 1, "Indians Win Prizes," Kamloops Sentinel (5 June 1941), p. 7, "Ancient Legends of Thompson Indians Are Dramatized," Kamloops Sentinel (15 May 1941), p. 11, "Indian Women First To Buy War Bond," Vancouver Sun (31 May 1941), p. 37.

⁵⁴ "Blood Indians Generous To War Service Fund," Cardston News (29 April 1941), p. 1, 2.

story run by the local weekly, which made repeated note of the fact that the Blood nation was loath to sell its land and thus had rather “meagre tribal funds.” There is no mistaking the sincere appreciation in the speeches of the Cardston Canadian War Services Committee members, nor the genuine feeling of disparate elements pulling together as a community for a common cause. This story was not remarking on the event because an exotic ‘other’ performed something unusual and bizarre, but because a prominent segment of the regional population had made a patriotic and heart-felt gesture.

While tales of Aboriginal generosity and patriotism must have pleased Canadians, that in and of itself does not explain the high salience that the information continued to hold in the public forum through 1941. An editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press provides a hint as to the meaning of the ‘Indian-at-war’ and why it remained a steady presence in the public discourse.⁵⁵ The piece addressed reports that ‘Indians’ were not being accepted as recruits, declaring them untrue, “as an inspection of almost any battalion now training in the country would show.” Evidently, officials in Ottawa had declared that there were no official impediments to Aboriginal enlistment.⁵⁶ Reassured that the allegations were not official policy, the editor nevertheless had no trouble conceiving of how such an incident might occur:

Every now and then some stupid local official undertakes to lay down some rules for

⁵⁵ “Racial Prejudice,” Winnipeg Free Press (16 July 1941), p. 13. The paper had previously reported the comments of the Indian Agent from Birtle, Manitoba that Aboriginal men were being refused the opportunity to enlist. “Agent Says Indians Unsuccessfully Tried to Enlist,” Winnipeg Free Press (8 July 1941), p. 4.

⁵⁶ The reality was that policies affecting the eligibility of Aboriginal men for enlistment were not uniform across the country. At this time, the District Recruiting Officer for Manitoba (Military District 10), Major M. Garton was encouraging his subordinates to inhibit Aboriginal recruits. See, also R. Scott Sheffield, “...in the same manner as other people”: Government Policy and the Military Service of Canada’s First Nations People, 1939-1945 (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1995), and Michael D. Stevenson, “The Mobilisation of Native Canadians During the Second World War,” Journal of the Canadian Historical Association (1996): 205-226.

himself on the subject of who should or should not be admitted to our armed forces, and sooner or later such persons develop a form of racialism as objectionable in its way as the racialism of the Nazis themselves ... This they do without knowing, or without understanding, that racial prejudice, be it against Indians, Jews or Scotsmen, is one of the evils in the world that this war is being fought to eradicate. Perhaps we have come now to a time when such statements about the loyal Indians of Canada can be stopped once and for all.

In this sense, the 'Indian-at-war' was an allegory for why Canada was fighting against the Axis, of what made Canada different and morally superior to fascist Germany, and of the type of country Canadians hoped to build once peace returned. Thus, undermining the ability of Aboriginal men to enlist struck at the very significance of the 'Indian-at-war' image, as well as the symbolic nature of military service in a democracy.

Given the profound nature of the 'Indian-at-war', it seems remarkable that there were still numerous examples of the 'Public Indian' in its traditional guises. Contemporary stories about the Aboriginal war effort continued to reflect the historical noble savage in some cases. The quintessential example of such appeared under the dramatic headline, "Red Men Dig Up the Hatchet."⁵⁷ More clearly than in any other article, this 'colourful' piece, in stating the litany of Aboriginal contributions to the war effort, evoked the image of the great 'Indian' warrior:

Now the red men are on the war-path once again. But Fennimore Cooper would rub his eyes if he could see the khaki-clad warriors of the Mingo, Mohawk, Seneca and Shawnee tribes advancing in single-file through the hedge-covered byways of the English countryside. Still more would he wonder to see sons of buffalo-hunting Crees and Blackfeet mounted on snorting motorcycles instead of galloping pintos . . . armed with Bren guns in place of tomahawks and bows and arrows . . . and wearing the tin hat and tunic of the modern soldier in place of the war paint and dancing eagle feathers of former days.

While the 'noble savage' remained, the negative, contemporary image of the 'Indian' appeared to

⁵⁷ "Red Men Dig Up the Hatchet," Winnipeg Free Press (24 May 1941), Magazine Section p. 5.

wane during 1941, though it did not disappear completely.⁵⁸ While most newspapers continued to identify Aboriginal people in headlines of crime stories, the tone tended toward that of a balanced hard news story, rather than the colourful and gory details coupled with innuendo about alcohol that so often marked these reports previously.⁵⁹ Perhaps it was no longer proper or seemly to discuss the First Nations in this fashion in the public domain, or perhaps people finally recognised the contradictions inherent in the images Canadians constructed of the 'Indian'.

The 'Indian-at-war' had made it possible for the present-day 'Indian' to be both a positive and respectable figure. Though still limited, this image increasingly spilled over from stories about Aboriginal support for the war effort into other subjects during 1941.⁶⁰ The Calgary Herald printed an unusual 'Indian' story in July, about a man proud of the accomplishments of his daughter.⁶¹ She had organised a patriotic pageant of her school mates that had performed at both her school and in Banff and launched the girl into the public eye. The same story might have appeared about any father and daughter, it just so happened that the man in this story was Chief Walking Eagle and his daughter was Annie Beaver of the Stony First Nation. The story went on to mention the history of the Stony people, the Morley Residential School which Annie attended, and Walking Eagle's other children. The tone was respectful and the 'Indian' characters were neither

⁵⁸ The Calgary Herald, Cardston News, Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Prince Albert Daily Herald, Winnipeg Free Press, Brantford Expositor and Halifax Chronicle all demonstrated this decline in negative or demeaning portrayals of Aboriginal people during 1941.

⁵⁹ An example of this more balanced treatment can be seen in: "Saw Indian Hit Woman," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (17 December 1941).

⁶⁰ "An Indian Legend," Kamloops Sentinel (24 April 1941), p. 12, "Peaceful Indian Village Conceals Secret Woe," Calgary Herald (9 July 1941), p. 10, "Address By Chief Mike Mountain Horse," Cardston News (4 February 1941), "Remove Injured Indian To Reserve Hospital," Cardston News (22 July 1941), "Indian Women Sees Family Die of Hunger," Winnipeg Free Press (30 January 1941), p. 4, "The Final Frontier," Prince Albert Daily Herald (14 January 1941), p. 2.

⁶¹ "Chief Proud Of Daughter," Calgary Herald (22 July 1941), p. 16.

demeaned, nor reduced to being colourful, nor even relegated to a historical context as was typically the case with positive Aboriginal figures in the public discourse. What is stunning was that Chief Walking Eagle was the same man that appeared in the press in September 1939 for his comments about the British being “heap angry” and Chamberlain “blow[ing] Hitler to the hot place.”⁶² A greater juxtaposition of the changes in the ‘Public Indian’ is hard to imagine. This shift also suggests that the sharp duality in the ‘Public Indian’, evident prior to the war, was beginning to break down under the pressures of the war and the new ‘Indian’ icon. It also could be taken as indicative of Canadian society’s willingness to include Aboriginal people in their conceptualisation of Canada, rather than as an external and alien ‘other’.

An article in the Halifax Chronicle speaks more directly to this transition.⁶³ The headline read “P.E.I. Soldier Killed Overseas,” and discussed Pte. Daniel Peters, a veteran of the Great War, whose name was included on the latest casualty reports from the Canadian (active) Army. The information on the man was sketchy. All that was known was that he was “of Lennox Island Indian reservation in Malpeque Bay, P.E.I.,” and had been residing on the mainland where he was believed to have enlisted. In addition, it was reported that the previous winter he had married a woman from Lennox Island, his second wife, but the paper was unable to learn whether the man left any children behind. What is striking about this report is that it does not centre around his Aboriginal heritage. Normally such a story would carry a headline that made prominent note of the fact that the man was an ‘Indian’. Indeed, this would have been precisely the information that would have made the item newsworthy. However, in this case, the Chronicle merely reported the news of an Island soldier who had been killed, along with what information was available about

⁶² See page 11, also “Hitler Fated For Hot Place ...,” Prince Albert Daily Herald, and “An Indian Chief,” Halifax Chronicle, p. 4.

⁶³ “P.E.I. Soldier Killed Overseas,” Halifax Chronicle.

Daniel Peters the man, rather than Daniel Peters the 'Indian'. Without making too much of one article, this story offers a glimpse at the dominant public discourse constructing the 'Indian' in an inclusive, rather than exclusive, manner. Whether it was a hallmark of things to come remained to be seen.

The answer to the initial question guiding this chapter, "did the war force alterations to the way Canadians constructed the 'Indian'?" is clearly, yes. The dualistic peacetime images of Aboriginal people found in the public discourse were simply not designed to accommodate and make comprehensible the 'Indian' response to the war. The result was an expansion of the parameters of the public discourse to include a positive, present-day image. The beginnings of this new 'Indian-at-war' icon were evident almost immediately after war was declared, but did not gain widespread currency and usage until the summer of 1940. The ascendancy of the 'Indian-at-war' image through 1941 created a distinctly different 'Public Indian' than that with which Canadians had entered the war.

More important than the advent of a new 'Public Indian' image were the reasons for its emergence and the mechanisms that fostered or forced change in the discourse. On the surface, this examination seems to go against the premise of the theory that discourse is more receptive to external influences affecting the dominant society than to information emanating from within the subject group. Yet clearly, the reporting of statements made by Aboriginal people and their demonstrations of loyalty and support for the war effort had an effect on the way Canadians perceived and spoke of them. Such activities were far outside the collective assumptions and stereotypes that composed the 'Public Indian,' and in this sense, the First Nations were able to force the dominant society to take note of them and acknowledge their loyalty and patriotism. The static nature of the 'Indian' during the 1930s certainly gave no indication that Canadians could be

so receptive to influences, actions and attitudes of Aboriginal people themselves. To a certain degree therefore, part of the mechanism altering the 'Public Indian' discourse was the very fact that the First Nations believed in the fight against Hitler and were willing to lend their support to the national war effort.

On their own, however, Aboriginal actions probably could not have forced the creation of a new image because Canadians had always had the luxury to think about and discuss the 'Indian' as they wished. The First Nations performed the patriotic deeds, but the dominant society assigned the deeds meaning and significance for their own purposes. The fact that these stories could not be easily articulated within the existing intellectual-cultural framework need not have been a problem, as they could have been ignored. These stories proliferated because editors and journalists deemed them interesting, entertaining, informative and/or educational. That they were not ignored demonstrates that the actions of the First Nations mattered to Canadians, that they fulfilled some emotional or intellectual need within the dominant society. The dramatic changes in the international situation played havoc with the emotions and morale of the population through the first twenty-eight months of the war. A definite correlation appeared between events affecting the dominant society and the transformations of the 'Public Indian'. This was the primary element of the mechanism driving change in the discourse. The actions of Aboriginal people were circulated and publicised because Canadians wanted, even needed, to know and because they provided some comfort in anxious times.

The attention the media lavished on the First Nations and the creation of the 'Indian-at-war' served the emotional needs of Canadians in four principal ways. First, Canadians appreciated information that the 'Indian' supported the war effort because it meant that they were not alone in

the fight.⁶⁴ When thrust into the front rank as Britain's major ally after France's defeat, it was natural for English-Canadians to take a look behind to ensure that they were not alone. Second, the 'Indian' gained a prominence during the summer of 1940 because of the paranoia about fifth columnists that swept through Canada following the shock of the German victories through the spring and summer. News of the demonstrations of loyalty made by Aboriginal groups in various parts of the country quickly allayed any such anxieties. The third manner in which the 'Indian-at-war' served the needs of the dominant society during the first years of the war was in helping Canadians to feel better about themselves, their society and their government. Canadians viewed Aboriginal people's enthusiastic support for the war effort as a product of the benevolent administration provided by their government over the years. As such, it helped to expiate some of the collective guilt for the Euro-Canadian displacement and domination of the First Nations that seemed to permeate the 'Public Indian' discourse, and to validate and confirm that Canada was a kind and just society. The 'Indian-at-war' symbolised all that was different between 'us' and the Nazi regime, and provided an icon for the nation's moral crusade.

Finally, the 'Indian' served as a useful incentive in the efforts to foster national morale and encourage full participation in a total war effort. This role for the 'Indian-at-war' was increasingly evident as 1940 turned into 1941. In this capacity, the 'Public Indian' proved remarkably flexible, providing both an example to inspire and encourage, as well as a whip to shame and push. The distorted 'super-Indian' that the 'Indian-at-war' became provided an ideal of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the rest of Canada to try and match. However, beneath the surface of the positive characteristics of the 'Indian-at-war' were the negative stereotypes that pressured Canadians to

⁶⁴ English-Canadians were not just concerned about the First Nations in the regard, news that French-Canadians were not shirking, that the various ethnic minorities were behind the war effort and that other nations and peoples around the world stood with them also mattered greatly.

equal the efforts of Aboriginal people or be humiliated at being bested by the 'lowly Indian'. This utility should not be overlooked as a reason for the proliferation and salience of 'Indian' stories even when the world seemed to be falling apart around them. Thus, the activities of the First Nations not only made Canadians feel good about themselves; it also became part of the forces which galvanised and prepared the country for the long and difficult road ahead.

CHAPTER 3

THE 'ADMINISTRATIVE INDIAN' AS SOLDIER AND CONSCRIPT, 1939-45

Along with the First Nations and the rest of the government bureaucracy, the Indian Affairs Branch went to war in September 1939. Like everyone else, the IAB was unprepared for the new strains and demands that the war would place on its jurisdiction, on its infrastructure and on its image of the 'Indian'. The most serious challenge to the Branch's image of their charges proved to be the voluntary enlistment or conscription of thousands of Aboriginal men. The result was an overlapping of jurisdictions between the IAB, National Defence and National War Services, as well as the Department of Justice and the RCMP. Out of this morass a confusing policies emerged, were reversed and then reinstated. The IAB's network of field personnel was ill equipped for transmitting rapidly changing policy to the country's indigenous population who remained uninformed or misinformed about regulations that had significant bearing on their day-to-day lives.¹

The attitudes of IAB administrators relating to Aboriginal military service and conscription provide an excellent vantage-point from which to glean the perceptions of the 'Administrative Indian' and the relationship between the IAB and its charges. Similarly, the idea of what the 'Indian' is, as well as some future ideal of what the 'Indian' might become through their experiences in the Army, emerged strongly. Perhaps more importantly, it would be

¹These events have been outlined in R. Scott Sheffield, "... *in the same manner as other people*": *Government Policy and the Military Service of Canada's First Nations People, 1939-1945* (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1995). Also useful Michael D. Stevenson, "The Mobilisation of Native Canadians During the Second World War," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association (1996): 205-226. Some additional information on policy matters can be obtained Janice Summerby, Native Soldiers Foreign Battlefields (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1993) and Fred Gaffen, Forgotten Soldiers (Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books Ltd., 1985).

meaningless to study the impact of the Second World War on official images of the 'Indian', without understanding something so symbolically significant as Aboriginal military service. American historiography is agreed on the point that the Native American record of enlistment and participation in the U.S. war effort became one of the central catalysts for reform after both World Wars.² Given the importance in the U.S. experience, the First Nations' record deserves examination in the Canadian context.

As with the image of the 'Indian', military service in Canadian society was rich in meaning and symbolism. As Jonathan Vance has ably demonstrated in Death So Noble, the icon-laden memory of the soldiers and their sacrifice during the First World War deeply affected Canadians during the inter-war years.³ Serving one's country in wartime was both the highest honour and the most profound duty for a young man. It demonstrated his willingness to assume the most demanding and dangerous obligations of citizenship, and created a debt of gratitude owed by the society he had fought to protect. Voluntary enlistment was preferable to compelling a person to fight; it marked the pinnacle of one's democratic right to choose and was more valued because it was freely given. Nonetheless, Canada has demonstrated a willingness to suspend some of the freedoms associated with democracy when a threat to the whole was perceived to be sufficiently serious. When the survival of the state was deemed at risk, the privilege of defending the country became a duty that might legitimately be demanded of everyone. However, even if conscripted, the

² Alison Bernstein, American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), Tom Holm, "Fighting a White Man's War: The Extent and Legacy of American Indian Participation in World War II," The Journal of Ethnic Studies, vol. 9, no. 2 (1981): 69-81, Jeré Franco, *Patriotism on Trial: Native Americans in World War II* (Dissertation. University of Arizona, 1990), Kenneth William Townsend, *At the Crossroads: Native Americans and World War II* (Dissertation. University of North Carolina, 1991).

³ Jonathan F. Vance, Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1997).

soldier was owed something by the state and society for his sacrifices, although the recompense might be less than that provided to those who volunteered. These multiple layers of meaning and shades of significance would have important implications for the First Nations during and after the Second World War.

The Indian Affairs Branch was the traditional voice for Aboriginal issues in Ottawa, and at least in theory, the agency responsible for protecting their interests and administering government policies pertaining to them. At times, the Branch was intimately involved in making policy with the military and mobilisation authorities vis-à-vis the First Nations. However, for the majority of the conflict, the senior IAB officials voluntarily abdicated any role in how military service and conscription would apply to the 'Indian'. Nonetheless, a significant correspondence exists between the field staff and Ottawa since the IAB infrastructure was put at the service of the mobilisation bureaucracy to facilitate the registration, call-up and medical examination of potential Aboriginal enlistees and the prosecution of those who resisted. In addition, the IAB communicated repeatedly with the RCMP and the Departments of National War Services, National Defence and Justice. The language of these communiqués is revealing, as are the policy decisions, actions and lack of action by the IAB during the war. Taken as a whole, they speak volumes about the rigidity and strength of the official image of the 'Indian'.

This chapter will focus on the interaction between the 'Administrative Indian' and the policies affecting military service by First Nations men and women. The official image of the 'Indian', drawing both on the IAB's mission and its negative stereotypes of its charges, meant that the Branch developed a peculiar view of Aboriginal military service, distinctly different from that evident in the public forum. Despite profound pressures and challenges to their conceptualisation of the 'Administrative Indian' by the symbolic meaning of Aboriginal military service and conscription, the official discourse maintained its traditional cohesion. As with each chapter in this

dissertation, the exploration is guided by a number of intriguing questions. How did the official discourse explain military service by 'Indians'? What significance and meaning did conscription of Aboriginal men have in the minds of administrators? How might the negative and hostile 'Administrative Indian' image elucidate IAB policy and actions during the war? And finally, did Aboriginal military service alter the overall image of the 'Indian' in IAB circles, or was an 'Indian soldier' constructed that was separate and distinct from a continuing and little changed 'Administrative Indian'?

Before exploring the official view of the 'Indian' in military service, it is necessary to briefly describe the development of recruitment and conscription policy, as well as the IAB's role in this process, during the Second World War. Voluntary enlistment by the First Nations was governed by the recruitment dictates of each of the three armed forces, with little input from Indian Affairs. As a result of a 'racial' ban in Royal Canadian Navy policy, only people who were "Of Pure European Descent and of the White Race" were accepted until the 'colour line' was revoked in 1943.⁴ The Royal Canadian Air Force had its own 'colour line', but specifically decided to accept "North American Indians" from the beginning of the conflict.⁵ Nonetheless, the especially stringent health and educational standards of the RCAF were hurdles that very few Aboriginal men or women were able to get past, especially given the abysmal state of health care and education

⁴ MacLachlan to Camsell, 18 March 1941 (Dhist, 112.3H1.009 / D293). In fact, several Aboriginal men did manage to enlist prior to 1943, but their numbers were very small as a proportion of overall enlistment.

⁵ Hollies to OIC, RCAF Recruiting Centre, Montreal (National Archives of Canada (NAC), Record Group 24 (RG 24), vol. 3307, no. H.Q. 282-1-2 v. 2). The motivation for this decision is uncertain, the memo cited contains no explanation for the decision and no mention of it was found elsewhere.

provided by the government prior to the war.⁶ The only avenue left to the First Nations was the Army, which accepted several thousand into its ranks, many of whom served with distinction.⁷

The Indian Affairs administration was more involved, at least initially, in applying the National Resources Mobilisation Act (NRMA) to the Aboriginal population. Despite some initial confusions as to whether Aboriginal people would be registered with the rest of the country, the Department of National War Services conferred with McGill in September 1940 and agreed that 'Indians' too should be registered. This process was largely accomplished over the next year, as many First Nations groups living in remote regions could not be located until treaty time the following summer. However, once registered, Aboriginal people became liable to thirty-days compulsory military training. The IAB found out only when the call-up notices were received on many reserves across the country and immediately sought clarification of the legal issues raised.⁸ The Branch legal counsel assured McGill that there was nothing written in the NRMA that might preclude conscripting 'Indians'.⁹ Convinced that conscription of Aboriginals for home defence was legal, and happy to disclaim any jurisdiction or responsibility on the matter, the senior officials of Indian Affairs left the formulation of conscription policy to the mobilisation authorities for most

⁶ Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert and Don McCaskill, Indian Education in Canada, Volume I: The Legacy (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), p. 18. The authors detail the low average level of education acquired during the interwar years (the period when those who would attempt to enlist were being educated); only one in four Aboriginal children attained greater than Grade 3. As for the health concerns, any of the annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs / Indian Affairs Branch during the 1930s reveals the widespread nature of serious communicable diseases. Tuberculosis and Trachoma were those most likely to have caused rejection of would-be Aboriginal recruits to the RCAF or the Army.

⁷ Nor does this tell the whole story, as well over half of Aboriginal recruits were rejected due to health or education restrictions, or as a result of 'racist' recruiters and policies. For more information on this see, R. Scott Sheffield, "'Of Pure European Descent and of the White Race': Recruitment Policy and Aboriginal Canadians, 1939-1945," Canadian Military History, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 8-15, and also Sheffield, "...in the same manner as other people."

⁸ Director to Cory, 24 September 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

⁹ Cory to McGill, 26 September 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

of the duration of the war.

First Nations leaders and communities protested vigorously, but to no avail, as the Branch refused to do anything about Aboriginal eligibility. The Branch remained deaf to Aboriginal concerns even when NRMA conscripts training period was lengthened to four months, followed by mandatory enlistment in the militia for the remainder of the conflict. Nor did this indifference change when 'home defence' was redefined to allow service in Newfoundland, the Carribean and the U.S., including the potentially hazardous amphibious assault on the Aleutian Island of Kiska. In the interim, the mobilisation authorities in National War Services, the National Selective Service and the Department of Labour determined the fate of Aboriginal conscripts. Michael Stevenson has demonstrated that this bureaucracy failed to establish consistent and coherent policy towards 'Indian' conscripts.¹⁰

The IAB might have brought some clarity, but it was not until the conscription crisis of November 1944 that it again entered the policy-making arena. Once conscripts could be sent overseas into combat, the legality for First Nations men was called directly into question. During the negotiations of several treaties with western and northern indigenous groups in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, verbal promises had been given that "[the Queen] would not ask her Indian children to fight for her unless they wished."¹¹ T. A. Crerar, at the urging of his IAB officials, requested that the Cabinet War Committee agree to provide a limited exemption for

¹⁰ Stevenson, "The Mobilisation of Native Canadians"

¹¹ Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba, the North West Territories and Kee-wa-tin (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1880), p. 218, 234. See also Memorandum for T.R.L. McInnes, by R. Grenier, 13 June 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 8594, file #1/1-11, pt. 1). For a more involved discussion of these limited exemptions, the treaty promises and the legal issues raised, see R. Scott Sheffield and Hamar Foster, "Fighting the King's War: Harris Smallfence, Verbal Treaty Promises and the Conscription of Indian Men, 1944," University of British Columbia Law Review, vol. 33, no. 1 (1999): 53-74.

the minority of First Nations covered by the treaty promises. Those who fell within the region concerned amounted to approximately one sixth of the Status Indian population. All others were still available to be shipped overseas; in practice, however, few, if any, were included in the 16 000 conscripts sent to Europe in the winter of 1944-45.

Generally, Indian Affairs personnel were keen to encourage the enlistment of the 'Indians' in their charge. This eagerness sprang in large part from the unusual meaning that Aboriginal military service came to have in the language of the department. Where the Canadian public beheld 'Indians' fighting for their King and country, and demonstrating tremendous patriotism, administrators saw a useful tool for furthering the assimilation of the First Nations. What is striking in the IAB correspondence is the virtual absence of the symbolism and significance of Aboriginals fighting the Axis that became so prevalent in the 'Public Indian' discourse. For the vast majority of IAB personnel, military service was merely a pragmatic means to the ultimate end of eliminating the 'Indian problem' from Canada. While Aboriginal military service was generally viewed as 'good' for the 'Indian', officials were not so certain about the benefits and value for the national war effort. This ambivalence arose from the negative and combative image of the 'Indian' with which administrators had entered the war. Some of the contradictory policies pursued by the Branch during the war begin to make sense in this light.

The internal correspondence of the IAB rarely demonstrated an appreciation for the symbolic nature of enlistment by Aboriginal men throughout the Second World War; instead, it was overwhelmingly centred on the pragmatic utility of army service. For most officials there were two meanings to the utilitarian idea of the 'Indian' serving in the armed forces: one, a long term view toward eventual assimilation to be discussed below; and two, meeting the short term needs of Aboriginal people who were unemployed or underemployed. As J. Ostrander, Indian Agent in

Battleford, Saskatchewan, noted in September 1941, he had "been advising the Indians to enlist, where possible, as a means of providing a living for their families for the coming winter, if for no other reason...".¹² It was not clear whether he considered that the Aboriginal men who did enlist would be soldiers for longer than just the next winter, but such advice was not unusual in the actions of the IAB. Similar reasoning was behind the original decision to include the Aboriginal population in the national registration in August 1940 at the last minute, after it became clear Status Indians would lose their jobs if they did not hold a registration card. It evidently did not occur to the Branch that Aboriginal men would become eligible for conscription by so doing. Generally speaking, the notoriously under-funded and pecuniary department was pleased to have the 'Administrative Indian' off the relief roles; indeed, this was the most immediate and practical value of Aboriginal enlistment to Branch personnel.

Perhaps more significantly, the enlistment and military service of Aboriginal men was viewed as highly beneficial to the IAB's mission of civilising and assimilating the stubborn and backward 'Administrative Indian'. It is not hard to see why Indian Affairs would view military training and service as well suited to the task of altering the 'Indian's' values and cultural norms. For centuries one of the purposes of basic training in armies the world over was to take raw recruits and break down their sense of individuality and their civilian cultural values and replace them with a new identity and a new set of social norms. Such a system was not in fact much different from the residential schools set up in many parts of Canada, but the army could be more forceful and wielded greater moral authority in demanding compliance.¹³ In addition, individual

¹² J. Ostrander to the Secretary, 11 September 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6764, file #452-6, pt. 2).

¹³ In both, a highly regimented day, combined with hard labour, strict discipline, group punishment for individual infractions and corporal punishments were designed both to destroy the
(continued...)

Aboriginal men would be immersed in a massive organisation that was predominantly Anglo-Saxon in orientation without the cultural support of their fellows. Under those circumstances they would face significant pressure to conform in order to attain the respect of their comrades in arms.

Certainly, administrators hoped that experience in the military would teach young Aboriginal men proper Anglo-Saxon values, or at least be 'good for them'. The Agent in Parry Sound sarcastically dismissed the opposition to compulsory military training of the First Nations in the area, who wanted him, in his words, "to stretch out a long arm and halt all the functions of government."¹⁴ He was disinclined to interfere in any event because he expected "that they will benefit by it [military training] both physically and mentally." In a similar vein, the Agent on Christian Island, Ontario, was asked to make a recommendation as to whether a young Aboriginal man should receive a compassionate exemption from military training. He reasoned that the boy's father was an unsavoury influence, and "taking all this into consideration and the fact that Solomon is receiving training in the army which should make him a more valuable citizen when he returns after the war, I cannot recommend his exemption from military service." Perhaps most

¹³(...continued)

cultural traits previously existing and inculcate a new set in their place. Western military establishments wished to turn individuals into group-oriented machine parts amenable to discipline and subservient to authority, a task achieved consistently and effectively. Canada's residential schools on the other hand took Aboriginal children, who came from more collectively based cultures, and attempted to turn them into individuals with notably less success, though often with destructive consequences for the people involved. I was first struck by the parallels while reading the first-hand accounts of Aboriginal children who had experienced residential schools in Celia Haig-Brown's, Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School (Vancouver: Tillam Library, 1988). J.R. Miller's book, Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), based on extensive archival and oral research, is the best survey of the residential experience in Canada to date. His monograph provides ample examples of this pattern, the dominant society beliefs upon which it was based, and some painful examples of its impact on First Nations children.

¹⁴ Samuel Devlin to The Secretary, 2 October 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file # 452-20, pt. 4).

importantly, given the notorious irresponsibility and other negative traits attributed to the 'Administrative Indian', officials hoped that Aboriginal men and women serving in the armed forces would learn responsibility and discipline. Indeed, the Inspector of Indian Agencies, Quebec, was of the opinion that "compulsory military training is the best thing that could ever happen, to give the young indians [sic] some knowledge of discipline."¹⁵ Underlying this hope was the deep seated faith in the eventual attainment of assimilation.

The Indian Affairs Branch, believing military training and service to be 'good' for the 'Indian', often attempted to aid the mobilisation authorities and expedite the recruitment of Aboriginal men and women throughout the Second World War. In this manner the field agents of the Branch fulfilled a number of important official and unofficial roles. Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, T.R.L. MacInnes, the Secretary of the Indian Affairs Branch, issued a circular letter to all Agents and Inspectors cautioning them against initiating any enlistment proceedings among the 'Indians', but it would "be in order for you to give any information or assistance that may be desired to the proper authorities."¹⁶ Once the NRMA came into effect in the summer of 1940 the Director volunteered the services of his personnel to the Department of National War Services; this offer was accepted and the Indian Agents were sworn in as Registrars for their charges. However, the IAB stopped short of having its personnel act as official recruitment officers for the Department of Defence, as they feared this "would be inappropriate, and indeed might place them [Indian Agents] and the Department too, in a somewhat invidious

¹⁵ J. Thibault to the Secretary, 21 April 1942 (NAC RG 10, vol. 6768, file # 452-20, pt. 4).

¹⁶ Circular Letter from T.R.L. MacInnes, 13 September 1939 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6764, file # 452-6, pt. 2).

position.”¹⁷ Nonetheless, the role of IAB personnel was crucial and the senior officials exhorted the field staff to do their utmost to aid recruiting.¹⁸ Most of the field agents did not need the encouragement however, as they were keen to get their ‘Indians’ into military uniforms.

In contrast to the exuberance about the benefits of military training and service for the ‘Administrative Indian’ was a contradictory doubt that the ‘Indian’ was capable of contributing to the national war effort as a soldier, sailor or airman. Such skepticism grew out of the limited expectations and generally negative opinion that IAB personnel had developed of their wards. One Agent from Alert Bay, B. C., was “inclined to feel that the Indians could best serve their country by being exempted from active military service and kept home in the fishing industry.”¹⁹ Nor was this an isolated example. The IAB concurred with the Department of National War Services and the RCMP when they decided that it was a waste of time trying to conscript Aboriginal men from remote areas.²⁰ Official doubt also manifested itself on the question of organising ‘all-Indian’ military units, a notion raised several times during the conflict and partly employed during the Great War.²¹ In response to one such request in 1942, Dr. H. McGill, Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, replied that the consensus among his officials was that, “from the standpoint of the Indian himself and the effectiveness of his service in the Armed Forces, we are not at all sure that

¹⁷ T.R.L. MacInnes to M. Christianson, Esq., 2 July 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6764, file # 452-6, pt. 2).

¹⁸ Director - Circular Letter, 31 July 1943 (NAC, RG 10 vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

¹⁹ M.S. Todd to the Secretary, 2 April 1942 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

²⁰ See Sheffield, “...in the same manner as other people,” chapter 3 and 4.

²¹ For instance, see James W. St. G. Walker, “Race and Recruitment during World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force,” Canadian Historical Review, LXX, no. 1, 1989: 1-26, and Stephen A. Bell, “The 107th “Timber Wolf” Battalion at Hill 70,” Canadian Military History, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 73-78.

an Indian battalion would be of much value.”²² This comment expresses all the ambiguities and contradictions of the IAB view of Aboriginal military service. Clearly McGill and his staff were not confident that an ‘all-Indian’ combat unit would perform well, and might hamper the “effectiveness of his service in the Armed Forces.” However, the statement can also be read as concern that putting Aboriginal soldiers together would negate the assimilative potential of military service, not allowing the ‘Indian’ to get the ‘full value’ from the war.

In part, this doubt about the value of Aboriginal military service might have been symptomatic of a growing loss of confidence that assimilation of the ‘Indian’ was ever going to be achieved. In this light, combat duties were less likely to be of use to the ‘Indian’ on a reserve after the war than more applicable skills developed by continuing in agricultural or fishing pursuits on the home front. By March 1944, the Kwawkewlth Agency on the British Columbia coast had recorded 106 deferrals for essential service in the fishery, with six men serving in Canada and only one overseas.²³ Another option was raised by Victor Webb, Indian Agent on the Peigan Agency of southern Alberta, who suggested he would like “to see a battalion of Indians raised for non-combatant duties, that is as a labour battalion for road building etc, as such with white men officers they could do a lot of good work, and the training etc would be beneficial to them.”²⁴ The implications are that whereas combat duties might prepare the ‘Indian’ for assimilation, labour

²² Director to Col. C.R. Hill, 19 August 1942 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6764, file # 452-6, pt. 2).

²³ Report of Kwawkewlth Agency, March 1944 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20-3). The First Nations of this Agency were especially involved in the fishing industry after the removal of the Japanese from the Pacific coast. Fully 70% of the fishing fleet and 80% of the cannery workforce was composed of Aboriginal men and women respectively. The number of deferrals was also due to the intransigence of the National Selective Service authorities who were not keen to accept Aboriginal conscripts by this stage of the war, see Michael Stevenson, “The Mobilisation of Native Canadians”

²⁴ Victor Webb to the Secretary, 22 October 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

skills like road construction would be more useful in a continued life on the reserve. This cynicism and loss of faith in the IAB's mission does not seem to have been widespread, but helps explain the contradictory stance of some Indian Affairs personnel on the issue during the war.

The conscription of Aboriginal men raised a number of problems for the Indian Affairs Branch during the Second World War, particularly the sustained and widespread protest by First Nations from all parts of the country. Even more than voluntary military service, the conscription of an individual was linked closely to his membership in the society requiring his service. In order for the defence of the state to be viewed as a duty demanding compulsory measures, those called had to belong and to have a stake in the society and the state. Voluntary enlistment and military service in general were seen as a positive for the 'Indian', but compelling them to fight raised new questions about their constitutional status. Could Aboriginal men, wards of the state and legal minors, be enlisted forcibly? Did they have the same obligation to defend the state as did those with full citizenship? Finally, if they could be conscripted, was this only for service in Canada, or could they be sent overseas despite their indigenous roots? The Indian Affairs Branch wrestled with these difficult questions for much of the war, retreating behind a wall of jurisdictional and legal confusion. In the end, they decided that Aboriginal men were liable, but it was not out of any sense of egalitarianism.

Status Indians were considered wards of the state under the Indian Act (1927) and legal minors. They possessed none of the rights of citizenship, most conspicuously the franchise, but were still considered British subjects. This status left them in something of a constitutional 'no man's land' in relation to conscription, because as British subjects they were legally in the same position as other Canadian citizens.

The senior officials of the Branch quickly sought legal clarification when the issue of conscription first raised its head in September 1940. Rather than request clarification on the principles of the issue, McGill phrased his question to the Branch solicitor in a more narrowly legalistic vein - he wondered "whether you consider this thirty-day training by Indians would constitute military service."²⁵ McGill's concern was for the applicability of the precedent established in the First World War of giving Aboriginals an exemption from compulsory combative service. The fact that the Branch sought an answer to such a narrow legal point is noteworthy. Only a direct legal imperative would force the Indian Affairs Branch to involve itself in pressing an exemption for the First Nations, something it could probably have attained at any point had senior officials so desired. Instead, they determined that there were no legal impediments to their encouraging conscription of the 'Indian', an indication of their keen desire to see Aboriginal men in uniform.

The Branch legal council clarified the issue with the Department of Justice and National War Services in September 1940. The Deputy Minister of the latter, Major-General LaFlèche, seems to have made the initial decision that as British subjects the First Nations should be liable to conscription along with everyone else. Indian Affairs Branch quickly bowed to his authority on this matter.²⁶ This was confirmed and reconfirmed by the Department of Justice and the courts during much of the war's duration.²⁷ Buttressed by the claim to jurisdictional authority by NWS

²⁵ Memorandum from Director to Mr. Cory, 24 September 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol 6768, file # 452-20, pt. 4).

²⁶ W. Cory to the Director, 26 September 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file # 452-26, pt. 2).

²⁷ The IAB and NWS repeatedly referred the question to the Department of Justice in 1940, 1941, 1942 and twice in 1944, and the courts had their say in *Le Roi vs. Harris Smallfence*, a test case in Montreal during 1943. See *Le Roi vs. Harris Smallfence*, Court of the King's Bench in Montreal, Quebec, 21 June 1943 [unreported], see also (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file # 452-20- (continued...))

and legitimised by the rulings of the Department of Justice, Branch officials declared themselves irrelevant on the issue of Aboriginal conscription. In this way, Indian Affairs protected itself from the difficult moral and philosophical issues raised by 'Indian' conscription, despite the repeated, forceful and often eloquent appeals and accusations received from First Nations communities and leaders in all parts of the country.²⁸

Although there were variations among Aboriginal groups, in general the First Nations questioned their liability to conscription on four grounds: first, in the case of the Six Nations, that the Canadian government had no authority to conscript them as they were still allies of the British crown, not British subjects; secondly, that in the First World War they had been granted an exemption from conscription; thirdly, that it was morally wrong to compel wards, bereft of citizenship, to protect their guardian; and finally, that in several of the treaties signed with the First Nations, verbal assurances had been given that this would not be done. The Branch declared the Six Nations' claims of allied status ridiculous, quickly examined and verified the inapplicability of the 1918 exemption as legal precedent and largely ignored the First Nations' status as wards, content in the knowledge that before the law all that mattered was that they were British subjects.²⁹ The senior officials in Ottawa refused or were unable to respond to the Aboriginal arguments on the moral grounds. Instead, they loudly and repeatedly disclaimed any role or responsibility in the

²⁷(...continued)

10. pt. 2).

²⁸ See Sheffield, "*...in the same manner as other people*," chapters 3 and 4 contain a great deal about Aboriginal protests and resistance to registration and conscription, see also Stevenson, "Mobilising Native Canadians"

²⁹ Director to Deputy Minister, 7 February 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2), mentions the Branch's concerns regarding this question on the issue of how the Six Nations would record their nationality in the National registration form. The dismissal of the 1918 precedent of exempting Aboriginal people from conscription was already mentioned, see Cory to the Director, 26 September 1940.

policy.

The average Indian Agent or Ottawa bureaucrat cared little about the constitutional niceties of Aboriginal status, which played little part in their reasoning on the question of whether 'Indians' could be made to serve.³⁰ For instance, Samuel Devlin, Indian Agent in Parry Sound, argued "that there should be no reason why their young men, many of whom have at the moment nothing else to do, should not be willing to put in thirty days of military training to fit them for the defence of Canada which should be just as much their obligation as it is of their white brethren."³¹ Devlin provided no justification behind why the 'Indian' should bear the same obligation as his "white brethren", something common in the Branch correspondence. In effect, officials believed that the 'Administrative Indian' ought to be conscripted. If there was any question for the IAB it was not, 'why should they be liable to conscription,' but 'why shouldn't they be?' And "the conclusion reached was that no good reason existed for the special exemption of Indians," the burden of proof lay with the 'Indian' and virtually all their arguments were either ignored or legally circumvented.³²

Only the matter of the verbal promises of exemption from compulsory military service that were extended at some treaty negotiations held sufficient legal or moral claim on the Branch to impel them to act. However, this did not occur until conscripts were to be sent overseas into combat in November 1944. Prior to that, administrators were legally certain that the 'Indian' could be forced to serve inside Canada. Only in December of 1944 did the IAB administrators feel compelled to seek an exemption from conscription for some Status Indians, but even here they

³⁰ Frank Edwards to the Secretary, 26 September 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file # 452-26, pt. 4).

³¹ Devlin to the Secretary, 2 October 1940.

³² Sheffield, "*in the same manner as other people...*", p. 98, quoting from Director to Randle, 5 November 1940.

requested the minimum required by law. Only those Aboriginal men covered by Treaties 3, 6, 8 and 11, where records existed of explicit promises being made by the crown's treaty negotiators, were included. This distinction provided exemptions to only about one-sixth of the Status Indian population of 125 686.³³

Curiously, at no stage of this debate did the idea that the First Nations indigenous roots freed them from the obligation to defend Britain make an appearance. Among many British-Canadians there was a wide spread and strong emotional tie to the motherland, and a sense of obligation to aid in the defence of the Empire.³⁴ Many Anglo-Canadians assumed that others must feel, or at least ought to feel, the same way. From this supposition sprang the arguments used to encourage French-Canada to support the war effort for France if not for Britain. It mattered little that the francophone population felt little or no connection to its old imperial parent, nor any desire to save it from Fascist aggression. There were similar assumptions made about Canadians whose heritage was from occupied Europe, often legitimately. However, the anomaly of forcing a people who had no emotional or historical connections with the Old World to fight and die in its defence never seems to have raised any eyebrows in the Indian Affairs Branch during the war.

³³ The Status Indian population of the four treaty areas was 22 450 according to a departmental census in 1939, when the total Status Indian population had been 118 378. By 1944 the total Status Indian population had risen to 125 686. See, Canada. Parliament, Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence (No.1, 28 and 30 May 1946), p. 8.

³⁴ Saying this in no way should suggest that English-Canadians entered the war against the Axis for simple reasons of sentiment, although that factor undoubtedly played an important part. Jack Granatstein argues that English-Canadians rushed to defend the colours out of a colonial sense of duty and the emotional tie to the mother land, in his book, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945 (2ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). This devalues the philosophical and moral principles that many Canadians believed were at stake, and for which they believed Canada should fight. For a convincing counter to Granatstein, see Terry Copp, "Ontario, 1939: The Decision for War," Ontario History LXXXVI, 3 (September 1994): 269-78.

From the beginnings of the conflict the Indian Affairs Branch scrupulously wished to avoid any policies or actions vis-à-vis military service and the NRMA that would set their Aboriginal charges apart from the population at large. Only days after the Parliament declared war, MacInnes issued the Branch's first circular to its field personnel on the matter of Aboriginal service in the armed forces.³⁵ He ordered the Indian Agents not to initiate the enlistment of Aboriginal men because "in this regard, [they] are free agents and not differentiated from other members of the community." Such concerns with equality before the law may appear out of character given the prevailing negative image of the 'Administrative Indian', but a secret letter to the provincial Inspectors and the Indian Commissioner in B.C. revealed the rationale behind the policy.³⁶ The senior officials in Ottawa wanted to have their opinion regarding a new policy proposed by the National Selective Service, which would in effect ignore the failure to report by Aboriginal men if they lived on remote reserves. What was intended was not an amendment to the NRMA regulations to specially exempt 'Indians', "as such action obviously might establish an embarrassing precedent," but a working arrangement.³⁷ Thus, official attempts to avoid differentiating 'Indians' from the rest of the population did not spring from a deep commitment to egalitarianism. Administrators feared that doing so might provide the First Nations with a precedent that they could later use to impede the assimilation mission of the IAB.

³⁵ Circular letter from MacInnes, 13 September 1939.

³⁶ Secretary to Inspectors of Indian Agencies and the Indian Commissioner of B.C. - Strictly Confidential, 17 April 1942 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file # 452-20, pt. 4). The letter concerned problems being encountered in getting Aboriginal men located in remote areas to respond to their call for medical exam and military training. If the RCMP was sent to apprehend these individuals the expense was often great and even if the 'Indian' was located, the chances of his passing the medical exam were not great.

³⁷ *ibid.* So worried with the appearance of equality was the Branch, that the Secretary closed this circular with an extra admonishment to maintain secrecy and avoid leakage of such information. Were word to get out it would have had similar consequences of establishing an unwanted precedent of special treatment for the 'Indian'.

The irony of this obsession with making the 'Administrative Indian' just like everyone else was that it required a whole range of special legal, legislative and bureaucratic measures which either existed already or were set up during the war.³⁸ These distinctions had the effect of utterly setting the 'Administrative Indian' apart from Canadians on the question of conscription. An example was the working arrangement set up between the Indian Commissioner of British Columbia, D.M. MacKay and the Divisional Registrar, C.G. Pennock in January 1942, which later became standard procedure for the rest of the country. By this accord, the mobilisation authorities would notify the Indian Agent concerned before sending a call for a medical exam to any Aboriginal man.³⁹ The Agent would then inform the Registrar if there were geographical or medical reasons why the man should not be sought for conscription. In addition, the Registrar would avoid calling up coastal First Nations who would likely claim deferment for essential work in the fishery. In cases where an 'Indian' wished to gain deferment from military training or service, the application would be forwarded through the Indian Agent. The Agent attached his own recommendation on the suitability of the claim, which generally determined the success of the request. MacKay informed the Secretary of this arrangement when he received the confidential circular in April 1942, arguing:

It would, of course, be out of the question to defer any particular calls on the Indian population from the provisions of the National Resources Mobilisation Act as the Act stands, nor, is it considered desirable to ammend [sic] the Regulations to exempt our Indians. The working agreement made here does not interfere in any way with the purposes of the Act, but was designed to insure that, action compelling Indians to report for service would only be taken in the case of those medically fit and otherwise

³⁸ This was noted by John Tobias in his land-mark article, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," Canadian Journal of Anthropology, vol. 6, no. 2 (1976).

³⁹ D.M. MacKay to C.G. Pennock, 16 January 1942 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

in a position to obey the law.⁴⁰

MacKay felt no need to justify his attitude towards an exemption from military service for the Aboriginal population. The problems of the embarrassing precedent such a decision would create were so obvious to both the Secretary and himself that "of course" it would be out of the question. So instead, the Branch instituted this bureaucratically cumbersome system to avoid creating even the perception that they were differentiating the 'Administrative Indian' from anyone else.

This reluctance to allow the creation of a legal precedent, or even the perception of special treatment on conscription, remained paramount in the minds of IAB administrators for the duration of the conflict. Even in 1945, with the war winding down, appearances had to be maintained as much as possible. The Acting Director, A. Hoey, informed all personnel about the decision to provide a limited exemption from overseas service to those Status Indians covered by Treaties 3, 6, 8 and 11 in February. He recognised that those First Nations not covered by the ruling would be outraged, but rationalised the ruling by saying:

It has been decided . . . that only in the case of treaty Indians aforementioned [covered under the four treaties] would the government be justified in differentiating between Indians and other of His Majesty's subjects in the matter of military service, and then only in fulfilment of a verbal commitment made by Commissioners representing the Crown at the time the treaties were negotiated.⁴¹

The Acting Director closed the circular letter with the stock phrase that 'Indians' were "subject to the NRMA Regulations in the same manner as other people." However, despite the too-shrill claims of IAB officials, the 'Administrative Indian' was far from in the same position as other people, constitutionally, legally, administratively, and certainly not conceptually.

⁴⁰ D.M. McKay to the Secretary, 24 April 1942 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

⁴¹ A. Hoey - Circular to all Indian Agents, Inspectors of Indian Agencies and the Indian Commissioner of British Columbia. 12 February 1945 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20, pt. 6).

While the IAB was usually keen to see its 'Indians' enlisted or conscripted, the feeling was not always shared among Canada's First Nations. Aboriginal leaders and communities across the country usually supported and encouraged the voluntary enlistment of their young men and women, as well as supporting the war effort through other avenues such as buying war bonds and donating to the Red Cross. However, most First Nations people were also strongly opposed to the application of conscription to their people. The prolific and consistent protest, combined with resistance by many First Nations men, caused the IAB difficulties throughout the conflict. The way in which IAB personnel articulated and responded to this resistance demonstrated the centrality of maintaining authority and control in their day-to-day interaction. It also made clear how withered the IAB's sense of mission was by the war years; there was little left but their power and they fought to maintain at least that. Underlying these themes, the IAB's response to Aboriginal resistance suggested an image of the 'Administrative Indian' little changed from that evident prior to the conflict.

The records of the Indian Affairs Branch are filled with letters and petitions received from Aboriginal leaders and band councils from across the country, all expressing their anger and distress at being subject to conscription.⁴² Beyond issuing protests, however, active and passive

⁴² Many of these protests arrived at the IAB via the Indian Agents' reports, for example: Brisebois to Indian Affairs Branch, 5 October 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4), T.W. Webb to the Secretary, 22 October 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4), A.G. Smith to the Secretary, 30 October 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4), Blackfoot Council Meeting - Minutes, 30 May 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4), W.P.B. Pugh to the Secretary, 1 October 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4), Randle to Indian Affairs, 15 March 1943 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20, pt. 6), Blackfoot Council Meeting - Minutes, 21 February 1945 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20, pt. 6). However, frustrated by the lack of action on the part of Indian Affairs, many Aboriginal protests were sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and even the British High Commissioner, Shot Both Sides, Frank Red Crow, Percy Creighton, Fred T. Feathers and Cross Child to Minister of Defence, 3 September 1942 (NAC RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20, pt. 5), "Jas S. Hill" Oshweken to W.L.M. King, 21 September 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2),
(continued...)

resistance became commonplace on many reserves. Aboriginal men and women refused to register under the NRMA in many communities, but civil disobedience was prevalent even in other communities that did register. Most commonly, young men refused to report for medical examinations or for military training, often with the encouragement and aid of their community and elders. Some living close to the border slipped over into the United States to avoid conscription, which worked until that country enacted its own draft legislation. Others in northern and more remote reserves simply vanished into their hunting territories and were rarely found. In the most extreme incident at Caughnawaga, a large disturbance erupted when the RCMP seized three draft dodgers from a restaurant on the reserve in 1943.⁴³ The police, their tires flattened, were forced to retreat under a hail of stones, from a large and angry crowd. One officer, who was separated from his colleagues, shot three of his assailants before making good his escape. While violence was rare, Aboriginal determination to defy the government's effort at conscription was a constant thorn in the side of the Indian Affairs Branch.

Once removed from the policy making process on Aboriginal military service and conscription in 1940, the IAB only rarely re-entered that arena until late in the war. They did so only when they felt their authority over their charges threatened. One such incident occurred in 1942 when the question of whether the mobilisation authorities should pursue Aboriginals from remote reserves who failed to report, particularly given the high cost and difficulties involved and the number of them who subsequently failed the medical. The Department of National War Services and the RCMP simply wanted to ignore such cases, but asked the IAB prior to instituting

⁴²(...continued)

Anderson to Malcolm MacDonald, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, 22 February 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2).

⁴³ Brisebois to McGill, 2 December 1943 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file # 452-20, pt. 4), the Agent attributed the outbreak in part to the tensions created by the conscription issue.

the policy. This decision precipitated a confidential circular from Ottawa to the senior field personnel to canvas their opinion on the utility and ramifications of such an approach.⁴⁴ The replies are revealing. C. Schmidt, the Inspector of Indian Agencies for Alberta, thought that ignoring delinquents was a good idea, because if the authorities could not apprehend the fugitives "it will start gossip in the various neighbourhoods, when insinuations will no doubt be made that the Indians 'are getting away with it.'"⁴⁵ This sentiment was something that IAB officials were loath to let fester, fearing such a loss of respect could infect their own dominance and authority. The Inspector for Manitoba, A.G Hamilton, expressed precisely this point in a letter to the Secretary:

Personally, I think it would be better not to call the Indians unless the call is followed up. I find a growing feeling "that they (the Indians) are not obliged to obey the Government, nor the Army, and so, why should they even notice instructions issued by the Indian Agent or Inspector." . . .Allowing the Indians merely to disregard their notices is not good - they assume it to be their right and the notices are treated more of less as a joke. There is an underlying feeling of defiance which is becoming more and more evident; and is already showing its effect in our general administration of reserve matters.⁴⁶

Defiance and insubordination was a slippery slope to chaos and irrelevance that had to be avoided at all costs.

Indian Agents, Inspectors and senior bureaucrats explained the resistance of Aboriginal communities to conscription so as to diminish and disarm its legitimacy, falling back on the stereotypes of the 'Administrative Indian' for support. Often intransigence was ascribed to ignorance on the part of the 'Indians'. To some extent this was a legitimate issue which became a

⁴⁴ Secretary to Inspectors of Indian Agencies and the Indian Commissioner of B.C. - Strictly Confidential, 17 April 1942.

⁴⁵ C. Schmidt to the Secretary, 26 May 1942 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4).

⁴⁶ A.G. Hamilton to the Secretary, 10 November 1942 (NAC, RG 10, vl. 6769, file #452-20, pt. 5).

serious problem as the IAB infrastructure was ill-suited to quickly and accurately disseminate information to a widely scattered population.⁴⁷ However, frequently IAB simply belittled their charges, such as the Agent in Birtle, Manitoba, who forwarded the protest of the Rolling River Band council over conscription, relegating their opposition to the fact that "neither the Chief or Councillor were at school, and they do not realise the meaning of the war to the Indians."⁴⁸ However, not all were convinced that a lack of information was the problem. McGill told the Agent at St. Regis, Quebec, that he was of the opinion "that Indians in organised districts frequently ignore the regulations, not because of ignorance, but because of their stubborn refusal to admit that the laws of the country apply to them."⁴⁹ Either way, the legitimacy of Aboriginal concerns was undermined within the government.

Most commonly, however, IAB personnel blamed First Nation intransigence on the influence of agitators and trouble makers, a scapegoat that had long been used to explain difficulties.⁵⁰ The 'Administrative Indian' was a notoriously sheep-like character, easily misled by nefarious individuals, and the IAB assumed that agitators were behind a good deal of the

⁴⁷ Director - Circular to all Indian Agents, Inspectors and the Indian Commissioner of B.C., 31 July 1943 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4). This letter was circulated in response to complaints from NWS and NSS that they were still experiencing great difficulties in applying the NRMA regulations to the Aboriginal population. McGill urged all his personnel to overcome the resistance, which he ascribed in part to ignorance and misunderstanding.

⁴⁸ Smith to the Secretary, 30 October 1940.

⁴⁹ Director to T.L. Bonnah, 5 April 1944 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20-10, pt. 1).

⁵⁰ Much of the opposition to conscription among Aboriginal groups up and down the Pacific coast was attributed to the activities of the "Native Brotherhood," though it is not clear whether the Agents were referring to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia or the North American Indian Brotherhood, led by Andy Paull. W. Christie to the Secretary, 11 October 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6768, file #452-20, pt. 4), and F. Earl Anfield - Report for December 1943, Bella Coola Agency (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20-3), Chief Executive Assistant to S. H. MacLaren, 31 July 1943 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6769, file #452-20, pt. 6). Robin Brownlie demonstrated the tendency to blame agitators in IAB correspondence during the interwar years in her article, "Man on the Spot: John Daly, Indian Agent in Parry Sound, 1922-1939," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, vol. 5, (1994): 63-86.

difficulties encountered in conscripting the First Nations. However, the problem was not just with Aboriginal trouble makers. The Indian Commissioner of B.C. was of the opinion that the ignorance of the 'Indian' had "undoubtedly permitted certain white subversive elements of foreign extraction to capitalize on the subject and create a considerable doubt in their minds."⁵¹ Under no circumstances could the IAB understanding of the 'Indian' accept that the Aboriginal opposition might be based on logical concerns and a considered decision to resist government actions they believed illegal and immoral. Accepting such a premise would have involved a profound change in the concept of the 'Administrative Indian', particularly in their perceived intellectual and cultural inferiority. In effect it would have called into question the very purpose of the Branch.

The IAB developed several methods to combat and suppress the First Nations' resistance to conscription. As discussed previously, the Branch deprived the Aboriginal population of its traditional voice in government by withdrawing from policy formulation on conscription and abdicating one of the central tenets of Canadian Indian policy - protection. Secondly, the Branch constantly ordered its Agents to explain the policies and their importance to their charges in the hope that opposition could be overcome through persuasion. In the Okanagan, the Indian Agent spent over five months repeatedly trying to convince one elder, "an old agitator", to register, but to no avail.⁵² In the last letter on the subject, the Agent indicated his intention "to give this man another opportunity to register and if he still refuses to do so, to advise the authorities to take

⁵¹ D.M. MacKay to the Secretary, 13 November 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 11 288, file #139-44).

⁵² Alfred Barber - Agent's Report for the Month of October, 1 November 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2), Alfred Barber - Report for the Month of November, 30 November 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2), Alfred Barber to the Secretary, 21 March 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2). Barber was more patient than most Indian Agents in this regard. Few would have waited so long or tried so often to persuade the individual before informing the authorities and initiating legal action.

action, as a number of Indians have stated that Timoyakin is “beating the law”.⁵³ The threat of prosecution was the third stage in the IAB escalating pressure on resistant ‘Indians’.⁵⁴ A circular of 1943 encouraging all Agents to overcome the resistance of their ‘Indians’ is illustrative of the overall procedure:

The question of compulsory military service by Indians, of course, is not under the jurisdiction of this Branch and, therefore, the Indian Agents have no official status in connection with it. It is nevertheless, a matter in which the Indian Agent can use his good offices with advantage as the friend and natural advisor of the Indians. The subject is one which should be approached with tact, discretion, and patience. Where, through ignorance or subversive influence, Indians show a disposition to avoid or evade the call-up, a mere curt warning that they must obey or be punished may result only in more obstinate resistance and ill-will on their part. It is felt that in many cases, better results might be obtained by careful explanation to them of their duties and appeal to their pride, self-respect and loyalty. If reasonable persuasion fails, however, then, of course, the law must take its course, and this fact should be clearly explained to the Indians, where necessary.⁵⁵

Strong doses of condescending paternalism were served up with each stage of this process. Despite their best efforts, however, many Aboriginal men continued to resist until prosecuted and forced to register, report for medical exam or for military service.

The registration of the Six Nations population demonstrated all elements of the IAB’s penchant for jealously guarding its authority, and the degree of anger generated when that control was flouted. Many within the Six Nations, such as the Hereditary Chiefs and other organisations, believed that their ancestors had never surrendered their independent status and were not British subjects covered by the laws of the Dominion of Canada, but allies of the British crown. The Canadian Government had always declared this position ridiculous, but the issue had persisted for

⁵³ Barber to the Secretary, 21 March 1941.

⁵⁴ Usually the Agent would try to isolate the principle ‘agitators’ and persuade them first in the hopes of diffusing the opposition within a community. Failing that these individuals were then made an example of, and prosecuted.

⁵⁵ Director, Circular to all Indian Agents, Inspectors and the Indian Commissioner of B.C., 31 July 1943.

generations.⁵⁶ When the IAB scheduled the registration of the Six Nations Reserve at Brantford for 25 September 1940, Arthur Anderson, Secretary of the Hereditary Chiefs, posted a public notice claiming that all 'Indians' need not register.⁵⁷ Significant portions of the community were already predisposed against registering, but the fact that Anderson so brazenly signed the public notice and the subsequent failure to register the whole population caused quite a stir in official circles. D.J. Allen, the Superintendent, Reserves and Trusts, was livid and notified the Director of the incident immediately, arguing that:

this incident at the Six Nations Reserve at Brantford presents an opportunity of declaring the whole Long House Group, the Mohawk Workers' Organisation, and all organizations harbouring the theory that they are not British subjects illegal organizations, and definitely and finally putting them out of business. This in the judgement of the writer should be followed by a seizure of all their books and records on all reserves, and particularly in the case at Brantford the arrest of Anderson and possibly all members of the hereditary council on charges to be preferred under The Defence of Canada Regulations.⁵⁸

Cooler heads prevailed in this case, and the draconian reaction put forward by Allen was not pursued, but the severity of his response to a relatively minor incident demonstrates how seriously IAB personnel took their authority.

⁵⁶ In 1922-3, the Six Nations gained a hearing of their grievances at the League of Nations, where they succeeded in gaining the support from the governments of Ireland, Persia, Panama, Estonia and the Netherlands. Only harsh diplomatic words and pressure from Canada and Great Britain forced the foreign countries to back down and squelched the Six Nations' efforts. Nonetheless, the Canadian government was seriously embarrassed by the episode, and it might help explain the degree of hostility that the IAB demonstrated in their dealings with the Six Nations on the registration conflict. For more information on the incident see Robert Veatch, Canada and the League of Nations (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), and also Olive Patricia Dickason, Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), p. 355-358.

⁵⁷ D.J. Allen to the Director, 25 September 1940 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2).

⁵⁸ *ibid.* Allen reference to "all reserves" and all groups that held this "fanciful theory" as he calls it, being suppressed at once. Similar difficulties to those experienced at Brantford were experienced by the IAB as a result of the activities of affiliated groups on other Iroquois reserves such as St. Regis, Caughnawaga, Tyendinaga and others.

The issue did not go away, as a longer term conflict developed over how the Six Nations would fill in Question #7 on the Registration form. This question pertained to nationality. Many within the Six Nations community refused to sign as British subjects and insisted on registering only if they could note their separate Aboriginal nationality, to which the IAB was strongly opposed. In a memorandum to his superiors in February 1941, the Director said:

I am now apprehensive, however, that if the Six Nations Indians are permitted to register other than as British subjects they will treat that fact as a recognition - and concession to - their allied status claim by the Government of Canada. On that basis they would try to re-open the whole question and I may add that they are particularly apt and pertinacious in making use of any precedent or foothold which might strengthen their argument in any way.⁵⁹

The standoff posed a difficult dilemma for the Branch. If they followed their usual procedure to its logical conclusion, the authorities would be prosecuting and incarcerating large portions of the Six Nations population. The Associate Deputy Minister of NWS, T.C. Davis, assured McGill that the Ontario Government did not have adequate "gaol facilities to deal with the ensuing problem."⁶⁰ However, if they simply tried to ignore the problem, they would run the risk of losing face and could have found themselves losing control of the largest group of Aboriginal people in the country.

Neither option appealed, so instead, in collusion with NWS, they decided to try subterfuge. They would let the 'Indians' answer Question #7 with "Canadian-born member of the Six Nations Indians," because "this description cannot mean anything else but a British subject."⁶¹ Regardless of what the Six Nations might put down under nationality, the IAB decided that their status would not be altered, but by allowing the 'Indians' to think so, the crisis could be overcome. Although

⁵⁹ Director to the Deputy Minister, 7 February 1941.

⁶⁰ T.C. Davis to McGill, 2 May 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2).

⁶¹ C. W. Jackson to Dr. McGill, 14 February 1941 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2), T.C. Davis to C.W. Jackson, 12 February 1941 (NAC, RG 10, file #452-26, pt. 2).

the Branch recognised that “a concession to the Indians in this matter may cause trouble” down the road, the alternatives were sufficiently unpalatable that they had little choice but to hand the ‘pertinacious’ Six Nations an ‘embarrassing’ precedent.⁶² However, the IAB’s gambit did not prove successful, as later correspondence demonstrated that difficulties continued, and that an estimated 1000 people were still refusing to register in March 1943.⁶³

The issue of Aboriginal military service and conscription demonstrated that both the attitudes of the Indian Affairs Branch and the image of their charges employed by its personnel were less amenable to change than was the public view of the ‘Indian’. At a time when the Canadian people were re-evaluating their ideas about Aboriginal people, the official image of Aboriginal people appears to have remained virtually identical from 1939 to 1945. The bureaucrats and field staff of the Indian Affairs Branch were able to accommodate the recruitment, resistance and, less comfortably, the conscription of their charges within the framework of their existing discourse. Military service and conscription did not develop the same symbolic resonance among IAB personnel, who, unlike the Canadian public, felt no need to construct a new icon to explain the new issues raised by the Aboriginal enlistment.

Through the lens of this discourse, driven by the *raison d’être* of the IAB and cast in terms of its negative assessment of the ‘Indian’, the meaning of Aboriginal military service was transformed into a means to an end and little more. The Army was to be an assimilation machine, which officials hoped, would create good ‘white’ citizens where only an ‘Indian’ had existed. However, a tension existed throughout the war between what the IAB wished the ‘Indian’ to

⁶² Jackson to McGill, 14 February 1941.

⁶³ Dr. McGill to T. C. Davis, 6 May 1941 (NAC, RG 10, file #452-26, pt. 2), RCMP Division File No. 40 T 172 / 73, 30 March 1943 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6770, file #452-26, pt. 2).

become and what they believed the 'Administrative Indian' to be. The negative and pejorative stereotypes, prejudices and assumptions that the IAB had built over the years to help explain their failure to assimilate the First Nations raised doubts in their minds about whether 'Indians' in military service was actually beneficial to the national war effort. It is this conflict that explains the contradictions evident in IAB policies towards Aboriginal enlistment that at once encouraged it, while also aiding Aboriginals to legally defer their service obligations. In part, this ambivalence reflected an underlying loss of purpose and a declining faith that the mission of assimilation could be attained.

The problems of conscription were not so easily accommodated and explained by the existing image of the 'Administrative Indian'. Conscription involved different philosophical and moral questions that were lacking in the debates over voluntary enlistment. For the Branch, these often proved uncomfortable and awkward, putting pressure on the boundaries and imagery of the official discourse of the 'Indian'. To have addressed them directly and accepted the positions of protesting First Nations communities would have necessitated a profound re-evaluation of their conceptualisations of their charges: something the IAB could not do since it might undermine that which they most needed to continue their work - an unquestioned belief in their own cultural, moral and intellectual superiority. Instead, administrators confined their role to a narrow legal vein and declared themselves free from responsibility and jurisdiction. In this approach, and in the IAB's unwillingness to differentiate Aboriginal people from Canadians in general, there was an air of almost obsessive and reflexive denial. Incapable of meeting the accusations of the First Nations on the philosophical and moral high ground, the Branch covered its eyes and talked loudly over the objections.

However, the IAB acted to defend against any challenges to its authority over its charges during the war; in many ways that was all that they had left given the waning sense of purpose.

Even the custodial administration performed by the Indian Affairs Branch was deemed to be based on an unquestioned obedience by the 'Administrative Indian'. Thus, defiance of the NRMA regulations demonstrated in many Aboriginal communities across Canada was routinely met with hostile and vigorous emotions and reactions by the officials involved. And any policies of the mobilisation authorities that fostered or allowed such flagrant insubordination caused the IAB to enter the policy making arena in order to safeguard its authority. In doing so, the personnel of the Branch needed to explain the resistance of the First Nations and deprive it of legitimacy. For this purpose, the existing 'Administrative Indian' proved an ideal framework. It had, in part, been developed to explain the historical Aboriginal resistance to the policies and goals of the Indian Act and the government department charged with their implementation. As a result, they cast Aboriginal resistance as the product of ignorance, unintelligence, obstinance and the work of agitators and subversives. All these traditional tools of the official discourse of the 'Indian', were meant to disarm, trivialise and de-legitimise discontent among the First Nations. Able to accommodate the Aboriginal recruitment and resistance within its existing discourse, and having shielded itself on the more difficult issue of conscription through legal and jurisdictional machinations, the IAB had no need to alter the 'Administrative Indian'.

CHAPTER 4

WINNING THE WAR ONLY TO LOSE THE PEACE? RECONSTRUCTING THE 'PUBLIC INDIAN', 1943-1945

With the dawn of 1943, the fortunes of war had begun to turn against the Axis. The Soviet winter counter-offensive led to the defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad, the Americans forced the Japanese out of the Solomon Islands after the naval victories at the Coral Sea and Midway, and by spring the Allies had defeated the German and Italian forces in North Africa. Although no one saw final victory on the horizon, the possibility of imminent defeat had at last been banished. This confidence that the war would eventually be won grew steadily through 1943 and into 1944, as Allied armies, navies and air forces seized the initiative and drove Axis forces before them in every theater. With the immediate task of winning the war seemingly well in hand, the world at long last began to turn its attention to the future and the shape of the post-war world.

These developments were mirrored in Canada, which was booming by 1943. Wartime production was increasing exponentially and peaked in 1944, full employment had been reached, and most of the population looked with pride at the nation's war effort and the accomplishments of its military personnel. All across the country people, the media and governments began to plan for the great 'new order' they hoped to build out of the ashes of the present conflict. Driving the agenda was a deep anxiety that Canada, having won the war, might lose the peace. In large part this was a legacy of the Great War experience and the lingering sense of dissatisfaction with its aftermath. For a cautionary tale, Canadians had only to look back at the social unrest of 1919-1920, the inadequate provisions made for the veterans who had sacrificed so much, the crushing world-wide depression of the 1930s, and the rise of totalitarian, fascist and communist regimes in various parts of the globe.

This chapter explores the impact of the changing world and national situation on the public

discussions of the First Nations from 1943 to the end of the war in Europe in early May 1945.¹ Of concern is whether the confidence in victory and the anxiety for the future, so prevalent in Canada during the latter years of the war, left their mark on the 'Public Indian' discourse? What kind of country did Canadians hope to build in the post-war years? Was there a place for Aboriginal people in the 'new order'? If so, why and on what basis?

In late September 1943, the National Liberal Federation held a convention of the party faithful. Their delegates expressed their concern that the government ministers, "in directing all their energies to the war, have failed to meet a real interest on the part of the public in post-war policy."² Until this time the cabinet had been loath to address reconstruction for fear, "that the fighting morale of the nation might be affected adversely by over-much talk of post-war planning."³ The stodgy Tories had already jumped on the social security band wagon at their national party convention in December 1942, but those attending the Liberal convention needed little reminder of the importance of the issue for Canadians: they had seen the stunning rise in the fortunes of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). In the two months prior to the Liberal convention, the CCF had won two federal by-elections, become the official opposition of Ontario with 34 seats, and received the support of 29 percent of decided voters in one of the early public opinion polls which placed them ahead of both the Liberals and Conservatives in popularity.⁴ While its social-

¹This discussion is based on an intensive examination of the daily newspapers in the months of October 1943, September 1944 and April-May 1945, as well as every issue of the weeklies from 1943 to May 1945.

² Grant Dexter, "Liberals and the C.C.F. Challenge," Winnipeg Free Press (8 October 1943), p. 11.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ J.L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Policies of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 264-265.

democratic message had not won the party widespread support or electoral success during the Depression or the war's early years, by 1943 it had begun to resonate with voters hungry for a clear vision of social security and the post-war era. Liberal delegates saw "no reason why the government should give the C.C.F. a clear field on post-war policy."⁵ The convention passed resolutions promising a substantial and generous benefits package for returning veterans and calling for "the Liberal party to occupy the broad field of social policy, including family allowances, higher and contributory old age pensions, health insurance, housing, rural electrification, etc."⁶

Editorials and letters to editors in 1943 suggest that public interest in reconstruction and the post-war period was gaining centre stage on the national agenda, and not all Canadians were confident that government's promises would amount to much. As one veteran queried in a prominent letter featured in several major papers:

I have been wondering what other men discharged from the army, particularly those who were overseas, think of the prospects for a new order in Canada. From many discussions in camps they will have formed ideas, visions, expectations, of what the new Canada should be like. Does what they now see promise fulfilment of those hopes? Do they see the dawning light of the new day?⁷

The writer noted with scepticism the plans drawn up by the authorities, claiming "promises just as glowing were made for the future during the last war, with results we know all too well. . ." Those soldiers who had been fighting and those who had played their part on the home front were "entitled to some guarantees of the new order. After all they have endured, are they going to leave the future to chance and the politicians again?" While such cynicism was not uniformly present, it

⁵ Grant Dexter, "Liberals and the C.C.F. Challenge," Winnipeg Free Press.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ G. Cairns, "What of New Order? Soldiers Want to Know," Globe and Mail (7 October 1943), p. 6. Also appeared as "War Veterans and the New Order," Calgary Herald (9 October 1943), p. 4, and curiously under the name of A. Riddell in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (9 October 1943), p. 10.

was indicative of how strongly Canadians, particularly veterans, felt about these issues.

Reconstruction and social security mattered, a point driven home unequivocally in the closing sentence of this letter, “next to winning the war, there is nothing of more urgent importance than that we, on the home front, shall have taken some definite steps toward winning the peace before the boys return.”

In fairness to the Liberal government, preparations for the eventual peace had begun almost as soon as the hostilities commenced. Indeed, the first such measure was passed through cabinet on 8 December 1939, an order-in-council creating a cabinet committee to study problems of demobilisation.⁸ In 1943, the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction submitted its report titled “Report on Social Security for Canada,” commonly called the Marsh Report after the Research Director of the Committee, Leonard Marsh. Though controversial and initially down-played by the King government, this remarkable document, with its provisions for family allowance and health insurance, would provide the blueprint for Canada’s social security system.⁹ By 1943, an extraordinary and complex system of committees and sub-committees had been erected to explore, examine and make policy on every imaginable aspect of the problems associated with reconstruction and the development of social security.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the public forum was clearly dominated by these concerns after 1943. The Throne Speech in January 1944 included almost no

⁸ Peter Neary, “Introduction,” in Peter Neary and J. L. Granatstein, eds., The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), p. 6.

⁹ Peter S. MacInnis, “Planning Prosperity: Canadians Debate Postwar Reconstruction,” in Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and Their World in 1945, Greg Donaghy, ed. (Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997: 231-259), p. 241. This report was Canada’s answer to the famous Beveridge Report produced in Britain just prior to the Marsh Report.

¹⁰ Reference Papers, Wartime Information Board, Post-War Planning in Canada - No. 1, 30 July 1943, (National Archives of Canada (NAC), Record Group (RG) 38, vol. 211, file # 6468).

mention of the war per se. Instead, the speech focussed on the government's reconstruction agenda which was composed of three main components: the rehabilitation and reestablishment of returned veterans; the smooth shift to a peace time economy; and the construction of a social security safety net.¹¹ While this extended discussion of domestic political and social concerns about reconstruction and the 'new order' may seem tangential to Aboriginal people and issues, it formed an essential context in which the 'Indian' discourse formed a distinct thread.

Equally important were Canadians' visions of what the 'new order' ought to look like, of what kind of country they believed Canada should become. Undoubtedly, there were as many versions of the future as there were Canadians, and not all would have agreed on many key points, but most agreed that something needed to be done. In a poll taken on 1 October 1943, 71% preferred post-war reforms rather than a return to the way things were before the war.¹² It is not even certain that a clear sense of what the 'new order' should consist of had been fully articulated by this stage of the war. Judging from opinion polls, editorials and news stories of the period, there were several major elements that seemed to appear popular and widely held. Essentially, Canadians wanted a country protected from the excesses of war and depression that had wracked the society for much of the previous generation. As one commentator put it in a speech before the Cardston Rotary Club, what Canadians wanted was "freedom - economically, religiously, and physically, and the latter freedom especially from war . . . [and] any government that will eliminate want and unemployment, is the one that we would ordinarily, and in wisdom, support."¹³ In

¹¹ J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War 1939-1945, (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), p. 168.

¹² Public Opinion Quarterly, vol 7, no. 4 (1943), p. 748. Interestingly, this figure was much higher in Canada than was the case in either the United States or Great Britain where the corresponding figures were 32% and 57% respectively.

¹³ "Rotarian K.L. Lee Addresses Club On The Subject of Post War Reconstruction," Cardston News (4 March 1943), p. 1.

addition, tolerance of difference, be it 'racial', linguistic or religious was touted as desirable.

George Drew, Premier of Ontario, argued at a banquet in Guelph on 14 October 1943, that 'one of the outstanding lessons of this war "is the danger of any new order based upon appeals to prejudice."' ¹⁴ A third noticeable trend was an increasing number of Canadians willing to accept an active and leading role for government in the economic and social life of the country. ¹⁵ These three elements of the 'new order' were not the sum total, but they did form the commonly accepted core of the concept.

So how did the 'Public Indian' fare in this climate? The short answer is that the 'Indian' had lost a good deal of its relatively high profile across the country so evident in 1940-41. The pervasive anxiety of that period had been banished by the Allied military successes of 1942 and 1943, and the 'Indian-at-war' was no longer required to bolster shaky morale, though it could and did still draw admiration. The 'Indian-at-war' continued to appear, but it was no longer weighed down with the moral responsibility of being a tool for social criticism. ¹⁶ Instead, the 'Indian' returned to its traditional place in human interest stories: heart-warming, positive and sometimes colourful, though now without the bemused and farcical tone that had characterised the 'Public

¹⁴ "Dangers of Prejudice Pointed Out by Drew," Globe and Mail (15 October 1943), p. 15.

¹⁵ Certainly this emerges strongly from the speech by K.L. Lee to the Cardston Rotary Club, as he suggests that government controls on prices and wages ought to continue in peacetime. "Rotarian . . ." Cardston News. This becomes even more evident in opinion polls the following year. In one poll in October, 49% of Canadians thought that the federal government should take the lead in promoting post-war employment, a further 16% favored provincial and municipal governments taking the lead, and only 23% believed industry and business should fill that role. Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 9, no. 4 (1944-45), p. 601.

¹⁶ "Alberta Indian wins in Army Sports in Italy," Calgary Herald (26 October 1943), p. 15. There was no attempt to make this story colourful or quaint, it merely noted with pride that, Pte. Gordon Yellowfly, an 'Alberta Indian' from Gleichen, Alberta, had excelled in competitive sports in the Army as he had while at home before going overseas. Yellowfly had captured third place in the Calgary Herald Road Race a year previously, just before being shipped overseas. The article also noted that the soldier had seen active service in Africa, Sicily and Italy with the "famous 8th Army." For another example of this type of story, see: "Three Cree Indians Join Active Army," Winnipeg Free Press (5 October 1943), p. 4.

Indian' of the pre-war era.¹⁷ In the wake of the wartime experience, Canadians' public discussions of Aboriginal people reflected more respect and sympathy even in the human interest story.

This change was no where better demonstrated than in a major story and photo collection in The Globe and Mail, a paper that had been more inclined than most to portray the 'Indian' in a comical and trivialising fashion.¹⁸ The article opened claiming:

Cape Croker's Chippewa Indians have gone to war. Without fanfare or trumpets or even a mild sort of war-dance, practically every able-bodied Indian man - and nine of the women - are in the uniform of one of the armed forces. And those that are staying behind are doing their bit toward making their little world a better place in which to live.

In this case, it was not just the Chief who encouraged his band to donate money or buy bonds, nor just the Aboriginal individuals that enlisted that earned the positive accolades of the 'Indian-at-war' image, but the whole community. The story did not end with the usual details of high enlistments, in this case over 10% of the population, or of the band contributions to local Victory Bond drives, but went on to give a detailed description of the activities of the women and children who remained on the reserve. Of note is the fact that they were credited with traits and activities not commonly associated with the 'Public Indian' before the war. The author mentioned cases of 'Indian' women repairing their homes, planting gardens, taking over the lake trout fishery on Georgian Bay left vacant by the men serving in the armed forces, and exercising care and caution in their spending.

The moral of the story was best summed up by Chief Thomas Jones:

We appreciate the seriousness and horror of the war," Chief Jones said. "We want to get it over as soon as possible, and anything we can do will be done. But one thing

¹⁷ "Brant Descendant Shows Stamina in Campaign in Italy," Brantford Expositor (9 October 1943), p. 1. This more colourful article highlighted 'heredity' in the exceptional service performed, by Pte. William Brant, great-grandson of famed Chief Joseph Brant, as a runner in the rugged hills of Italy.

¹⁸ Jack Hambleton, "Their Braves Gone to War, Cape Croker's Indian Women and Children Carry On," photo collection, Globe and Mail (23 October 1943), p. 15, and "Bruce Peninsula Reserve Does Bit To Put Every Victory Loan Over Top," Globe and Mail (23 October 1943), p. 15.

is certain - Cape Croker's women and children will have better homes, better economic conditions, and better health because of their own efforts when their men do come back.

Canadians, given a choice, had typically exercised the luxury of thinking of the First Nations in the least painful way possible. By 1943, this respectable, intelligent and thoroughly modern 'Indian-at-war' was by far the most appealing of 'Indian' images available in the 'Public Indian' discourse, and remained dominant.

The major 'Indian' story in October of that year concerned a large delegation of Aboriginal leaders who held a conference in Ottawa and attempted to air their grievances with governmental officials. Aboriginal political organisation was sparked by issues of conscription and taxation resulting from the war, but the grievances articulated bespoke a longstanding concern with their relationship to Canada.¹⁹ The next several years would see a proliferation of new organisations.²⁰ This particular convention gained significant national attention as the Canadian Press wire service turned to the subject with a series of stories between 20-23 October.²¹ Many English language

¹⁹ This is evident in a number of works on prominent Aboriginal leaders and organisation in this era, including: Patterson, E.P., *Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence* (PhD. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1962), Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman, *John Tootoosis* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1984, originally published 1982), Alan Morley, *Roar of the Breakers: A Biography of Peter Kelly* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967).

²⁰ The October 1943 convention was not the meeting of a particular Aboriginal organisation, but the coming together of prominent leaders from many parts of the country. These events would become more regular and reflect the increasing level of organisation among the First Nations. A number of associations appeared to present Aboriginal views and grievances to the government and publicise their case in the press, including what would become the North American Indian Brotherhood, led by Andrew Paull, the only body with a claim to national representation of the First Nations.

²¹ "Indians Ask Exemptions," *Prince Albert Daily Herald* (23 October 1943), p. 8, "Indians Ask Tax Exemptions," *Vancouver Sun* (21 October 1943), p. 11, "Indians Ask Tax, Army Exemptions," *Vancouver Sun* (22 October 1943), p. 25, "Indian Petition Was Presented," *Brantford Expositor* (23 October 1943), p. 4, "Indians Press Gov't To Grant Exemptions," *Calgary Herald* (23 October 1943), p. 7, "Indian Deputation Preparing Written Argument in
(continued...)

dailies carried these stories of the conference on at least one day, while both the Vancouver Sun and Globe and Mail ran their own independent analysis of the events.²² An 'Indian' delegation of between 40 and 55, in Ottawa for the conference, spent several days trying to gain an audience with the Prime Minister or some responsible minister in order to press their claims for exemption from the provisions of compulsory service and income tax. Reporters noted that the representatives were kept waiting for two days as the Indian Affairs Branch refused to see them because the delegates were "unauthorised" and administrators were uncertain whether they had "a bona fide right to speak for their people."²³ In the end the petitions were presented to various officials, and the Aboriginal leaders returned home having generated national exposure for their concerns.

What stands out in all the coverage was the utter lack of any recrimination directed at the First Nations for their desire to be exempt from compulsory service and income tax. At an earlier stage of the war, such a stand might have drawn a backlash from highly patriotic Canadian journalists as cowardly and potentially undermining the war effort, but nothing of the sort

²¹(...continued)

Museum," Globe and Mail (21 October 1943), p. 13, "Indians Ask For Army, Tax Exemptions," Globe and Mail (22 October 1943), p. 7.

²² "Indians Plead for Exemption from Income Tax, Army Service," Globe and Mail (21 October 1943), p. 4, "Indians Present Petition," Globe and Mail (23 October 1943), p. 2, "Canadian Hero Drops in On Parliament Hill," Vancouver Sun (25 October 1943), p. 13. The latter Globe article was a dramatic photo of a number of 'Indian' chiefs in "full regalia" standing on the steps of the Parliament buildings, where they were received by M.J. Coldwell, the leader of the CCF. Evidently, the CCF, which had other concerns prior to the war, had, as did many Canadians, begun to develop an empathetic position on the 'plight of the Indian'. Indeed in the post-war, the CCF (later National Democratic Party) would become an out-spoken champion for Aboriginal issues. However, this did not mean that the party's vision, when translated into policy did not include its own brand of well-meaning but patronizing paternalism, as James Pitsula demonstrated in his article "The Saskatchewan CCF Government and Treaty Indians, 1944-1964," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 75, no. 1 (March 1994): 21-52.

²³ "Indians Ask Tax Exemptions," Vancouver Sun (21 October 1943), p. 11 "Indians Ask for Army, Tax Exemptions," Globe and Mail (22 October 1943), p. 7.

appeared. The issues were presented in a detached fashion, with little attention to the pageantry of 'Indians' in traditional costume. Aboriginal grievances appeared reasonable, and their assertions of full support for the war effort were accepted without commentary.²⁴ Lack of media reproach suggests that with the war going well, and the highly documented efforts of the 'Indian-at-war', it was possible for Canadians to accept the legitimacy of First Nations protests.

In 1941, the contemporary and positive characteristics had spilled over from 'Indian-at-war' stories into sensitive treatment of other Aboriginal subjects not linked to the war. This trend was obvious by 1943. Such stories appeared in two distinct types. The first examined 'Indian' issues or events in a complementary and approving manner such as that exhibited in a story in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.²⁵ The reporter spoke of the agricultural success that the 'Indians' of the Battleford Agency had met with in that year, despite overcoming the hardship of a late planting. The reason for their success was simple fact that "the Indians had worked hard this year." This article was based on information from the Indian Agent, J.P. Ostrander, who may have had his own reasons for emphasizing the positive results obtained by his charges. Nonetheless, the manner in which the material was reported was straight forward, and did not ascribe the achievements of the various reserves to anything other than the initiative and efforts of their inhabitants. Prior to the war, such a story would likely have included a sermon on how this result was the crowning feat of Indian Affairs benevolence and wise management. No such slant was visible. The 'Indian-at-war' had made it possible to recognise Aboriginal accomplishments for their own sake.

The other manifestation of this sympathetic construction of Aboriginal people was much more inclined to portray the 'Indian' as the victim. In a Vancouver Sun article about the Aboriginal delegation in Ottawa seeking government exemptions from conscription and income tax.

²⁴ "Indians Ask Exemptions," Prince Albert Daily Herald.

²⁵ "Indians Have Fine Harvest," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (23 October 1943), p. 13.

the focus was on a hero of the First World War.²⁶ Francis Pegahmagabow, Chief of the Parry Island Ojibwa, with “service medals of the last war and the military medal with two bars,” was among the ‘Indian’ representatives. He had been credited with killing 378 Germans as a sniper in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in France during the First World War. Having noted his extraordinary record, and that of his band in the previous conflict, the story closed with a stunning revelation: “Friday he dropped in on the Canadian Legion and bought the first poppy of this year’s campaign. Then the Legion discovered that it was his last 50 cents.” That such an obviously capable man with strong claims on the society’s generosity, as both a war hero and a legal ward of the state, could be brought so low revealed something profoundly wrong with the country. Though he was undoubtedly trying to make a poignant comment, it is not clear whether the journalist recognised what a devastating indictment this story was of Canada’s handling of its First World War veterans, and more particularly of its treatment of the First Nations. Certainly many readers may have interpreted the story in such a way. However, the journalist did not go beyond the veiled criticism to clarify precisely what this anecdote symbolised.

Other writers, keen to avoid blaming the victim, were more willing than heretofore to specify failings in the system and in Canadian society that prevented a solution to the ‘Indian problem’. At a ceremony making Conservative M.P. John MacNicol an honorary Chief of the Delaware First Nation at Moraviantown, the newly-named ‘Chief Wassaingua’ advocated the “appointment of a Royal Commission to find why the education of Canadian Indians has not been stressed.”²⁷ The politician went on to claim that “the Indian population has not been given the opportunity to which it is entitled ... Indians should be teachers and doctors.” This story provided

²⁶ “Canadian Hero Drops in ...,” Vancouver Sun (25 October 1943), p. 13.

²⁷ “MacNicol Made Indian Chief,” Globe and Mail (12 October 1943), p. 21. Interestingly, John MacNicol (Davenport) was becoming a keen critic of Canadian Indian policy, and would be appointed to the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee to examine the Indian Act in 1946.

one of the early measures of criticism levelled at Canadian Indian policy in what would become a torrent during the debates about reconstruction. Public censure of the country's Indian administration was not unheard of, but, previously, such commentators had been lone voices crying in the wilderness. In another article reporting a post-war plan of action developed by Major D.M. MacKay, the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, to solve the 'Indian problem', the blame was thrown wider.²⁸ The writer of the story noted in an aside from the text of MacKay's proposed program that "at present there is an unfortunate lack of interest in the Indians of B.C. and their care is the responsibility of the Canadian people." While both of these articles reveal critiques of the 'system' rather than of the 'victims', neither goes very far beyond vague recognition that the primary fault for the continuing existence of the 'Indian problem' should no longer be blamed on Aboriginal people themselves. These stories mark the beginnings of Canadians' willingness to examine themselves and the Indian administration to which they had acquiesced for so many years.

The sixteen months between January 1944 and May 1945 witnessed the dramatic march of Allied armies to victory in Europe. In Canada, the focus of the national crusade had always been on defeating Nazi Germany, and in terms of their own forces, what mattered was the fighting in Italy and, after 6 June 1944, in Northwest Europe. Between late July, with the American breakout from the Normandy bridgehead, and early September, as the First Canadian Army drove south to close the Falaise Pocket, the Allies shattered the beleaguered German Army in France. By September, all Allied forces were racing eastwards, liberating France and Belgium before reaching the Netherlands. When Operation Market-Garden, the Allied airborne gamble to get across the

²⁸ "Outlines Program for B.C. Indians," Kamloops Sentinel (8 December 1943), p. 13. MacKay had always been one of the more progressive and sympathetic of the senior officials in the Indian Affairs Branch.

Rhine River that autumn, ground to a close having failed to gain the last bridge at Arnhem, the euphoria of the previous weeks died. More hard fighting lay ahead, particularly for the Canadian forces in the flooded polder country of Belgium and Holland. However, the overwhelming strength of Allied arms could not be withheld for long, and the papers of April and early May 1945 were filled with the exploits on the front and anticipation of the joys to come on V-E Day.

On the home front, the excitement about the victories overseas was tempered by the increasing concern with the post-war period. In August 1944, 61% of the country's population believed that the end of hostilities would be followed by a period of significant unemployment, and only one in four Canadians believed that such a period could be avoided.²⁹ The depth of concern was evident in the willingness of a majority of the population to accept a 30-hour work week in order to spread the work around to more people.³⁰ However, the first concrete steps had been taken in the realms of social security, with the introduction of Unemployment Insurance in 1940, and the institution of Family Allowances just prior to the federal election in 1945. Other prominent elements of the social security net promised by the Liberals, most notably contributory old-age pensions and national health insurance, were put on hold by jurisdictional battles with the provinces. Within this environment of unease, public debate about the 'plight of the Redman' accelerated and diversified.

During this last sixteen months of the war the 'Indian' again made a resurgence in the media in most parts of the country. In the British Columbia and Saskatchewan papers canvassed, the Cardston News, and the Globe and Mail, the 'Indian' returned to, or exceeded, the relatively high salience of the summer of 1940. However, it remained virtually absent from the Halifax Chronicle and much diminished in the Winnipeg Free Press. Throughout the period under

²⁹ Public Opinion Quarterly, vol 9, no. 3 (1945), p. 375.

³⁰ Public Opinion Quarterly, vol 8, no. 4 (1944-45), p. 601.

consideration, the 'Indian-at-war' image remained prominent in the discourse, but only in the Cardston News was it still the dominant public representation of the 'Indian'. The historical and colourful 'noble savage' remained scarce, but demeaning stereotypes of contemporary Aboriginal people still occasionally reared their ugly head. The Prince Albert Daily Herald carried a trite American cartoon that portrayed the 'Indian' character as both foolish and lacking understanding of 'civilisation'



Figure 4.1 Prince Albert Daily Herald (30 September 1944), p. 9.

(see Figure 4.1). In an article for Saturday Night magazine about the custom of British Columbia 'Indians' crossing the border into Washington State for seasonal occupations, a journalist noted that:

even though the Indian, as a rule, acts on the principle that wages should be spent quickly, he likes to get as much money as possible in a given time. He is not unionized, but he long ago found that a sit-down strike is a more potent factor than economic arguments in a struggle for higher pay. And, after a dispute is settled, contractual obligations mean little to him.³¹

While such 'racist' stereotypes had almost vanished from the public discourse during the war years, they had long been deeply entrenched elements of the 'Public Indian' and were never far beneath the surface.

³¹ P.W. Luce, "Ranchers Resent Indians Crossing Boundary Line," Saturday Night (12 June 1944), p. 40.

In spite of the continuing existence of such divergent images of the 'Indian' in Canada, what marked the latter stages of the war was the rise of a clear and articulate call for reform in Canadian Indian policy and administration. The first such call appeared in the spring, but more and more similar articles were published after the Normandy invasion, reaching a crescendo through the fall of 1944 and into the spring of 1945. The trend was perhaps nowhere more evident than in the Kamloops Sentinel. This weekly paper had traditionally been disinclined to print 'Indian' stories, and those that had appeared usually adhered to the contemporary drunken criminal image of the 'Indian'. However, for unknown reasons, the paper revealed a complete about face in its representation of Aboriginal people during 1944 and early 1945. The 'Indian-at-war' appeared repeatedly in a highly positive light.³² Beyond this change, a number of stories were published about provincial measures in favour of Indian policy reform, the good work of the Kamloops Residential School and its pupils' diligence, and efforts of Aboriginal agricultural labourers.³³ In addition, several public lectures on Aboriginal peoples, cultures and crafts, as well as Canadian Indian policy received extensive coverage.³⁴ Finally, one issue provided an in-depth presentation of

³² "Canada's Indians Nobly Upholding Traditions," Kamloops Sentinel (12 April 1944), p. 6, "50 Kamloops Indians Wearing Uniform," Kamloops Sentinel (12 April 1944), p. 6, "Many Indians in Canada's Forces; Brave Fighters," Kamloops Sentinel (12 April 1944), p. 6, "Indian Chief's Son Killed in Action, France," Kamloops Sentinel (19 July 1944), p. 1, "Dies of Wounds," Kamloops Sentinel (17 January 1945), p. 1, "Two Indians Become Casualties," Kamloops Sentinel (21 March 1945), p. 4.

³³ "Legislature Urges Dominion to Better Conditions for Indians," Kamloops Sentinel (22 March 1944), p. 12, "Greater Emphasis Being Placed at Indian School on Technical Training; Boys Learn Farming, Mechanics; Girls, Home Arts," Kamloops Sentinel (12 April 1944), p. 1-2, "1000 Indians Visit Children at School; Enjoy Concert," Kamloops Sentinel (12 April 1944), p. 1-2, "500 At Indian School Concert," Kamloops Sentinel (28 February 1945), p. 6, "1000 Indians Visit Children at School, Attend Concert," Kamloops Sentinel (4 April 1945), p. 5, "More than 250 Indians Busy on Hop Harvest," Kamloops Sentinel (20 September 1944), p. 12, "Indian Land near Lytton Put Under Irrigation," Kamloops Sentinel (4 April 1945), p. 11.

³⁴ "Pictures and Stories on Work of Indians," Kamloops Sentinel (8 March 1944), p. 1, "Indian Agent Exposes White Man's False Ideas About Natives," Kamloops Sentinel (21 June 1944), p. 1,3, "Bracken Club Gains Better Understanding Of Indian Problem" Kamloops Sentinel (continued...)

the provincial debate over the 'Indian' land question in British Columbia, complete with the Vancouver Sun story that sparked the controversy and the editorial opinion of the Vernon News and Penticton Herald and its own staff.³⁵ It is hard to imagine a more complete transformation in the ways in which a newspaper constructed the 'Indian' than that demonstrated by the Sentinel. Viewed as a whole, the paper's 'Indian' stories of this period suggest a concerted attempt to educate and influence the readership about the need for reform in Indian policy, and the worthiness of Aboriginal people for such consideration. Whether or not this was a conscious editorial policy, the paper was not alone in its growing attention to the need for reform, though it perhaps pushed the agenda further than any other.

At the foundation of the desire to change the circumstances of Aboriginal people, and the nature of their relationship to the state, lay the unavoidable reality of Aboriginal military service. The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix noted that "some 3000 Canadian Indians were serving in the armed forces, a fact that has injected the problem of Indian policy directly into the field of post-war plans."³⁶ Indeed, the inequity and bitter irony of accepting and even compelling the military service of those denied the franchise and the rights of full citizenship was not lost on Canadians. A brief submitted to the Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment advocating a new deal for the First Nations stated simply: "people who can be conscripted and compelled to pay income tax

³⁴(...continued)

(4 April 1945), p. 1. This last story drew a passionate letter to the editor in response from an individual who warned that the information provided to the Bracken Club by H.E. Taylor, the Kamloops Indian Agent, was not to be fully trusted, particularly with regard to the intelligence of the 'Indians' and his lack of understanding of 'Indian sociology', C.G. Wallace, "For the Indians," Kamloops Sentinel (11 April 1945), p. 11.

³⁵ "A Reproach to All of Us," Kamloops Sentinel (4 April 1945), p. 2. This page also contained the response to the Vancouver Sun by the highly sympathetic President of the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts, Albert Millar, "Champions Native Indians," Kamloops Sentinel (4 April 1945), p. 2.

³⁶ "The Canadian Indian," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (25 September 1944), p. 9.

surely can be citizens.”³⁷ Nor was this anomaly recognised in reference to Aboriginal people alone. An editorial in the Kamloops Sentinel referred to a petition circulated by the Indo-Canadian community of British Columbia, which claimed that extending the franchise to them would, among other things, “remove the inconsistency of receiving East Indians into the Canadian Army to shed their blood for Canada, while denying them the symbol of citizenship.”³⁸ Both Japanese and Chinese-Canadians eagerly attempted to enlist in the armed forces for precisely this reason, and met significant resistance from B.C. political authorities who urged the military to refuse their enlistment because they feared that “military service was the ‘thin edge of the wedge’ leading to enfranchisement.”³⁹ By 1944-45, the war service by Aboriginal men and women had clearly pried open the minds of Canadians, and made it uncomfortable to ignore the status quo any longer.

For the first time, intellectual elites entered the fray, driving the public discourse in new directions. An article appearing in the Canadian Forum in July 1944 marked the beginning of this trend.⁴⁰ The author asked the question, “what are the responsibilities of a democratic society towards Canada’s Indian population of 118,000 human beings?” He went on to explore the nature of the ‘Indian problem’ in socio-psychological terms:

Human beings are better adjusted in a predictable, thoroughly comprehended cultural environment than in one that is new and foreign and which has been forced upon them . . . Where the old culture produced balanced human beings living harmoniously within a pattern of well-understood relationships, the new conditions produce confusion, disorganization and strong anxiety that often shows itself in a complete

³⁷ Miriam Chapin, “New Deal in Order for Indians of Canada,” Saturday Night (23 September 1944), p. 10.

³⁸ “East Indians and the Vote,” Kamloops Sentinel (29 March 1944), p. 2.

³⁹ Patricia E. Roy, “The Soldiers Canada Didn’t Want: Her Chinese and Japanese Citizens,” Canadian Historical Review vol. 59, no. 3 (1978): 341-358, p. 343. See also Marjorie Wong, The Dragon and the Maple Leaf: Chinese Canadians and World War II (Toronto: Pirie Publishing, 1994).

⁴⁰ John J. Honigmann, “Canada’s Human Resources,” Canadian Forum (July 1944), p. 84. For other articles in this same vein see, Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” Canadian Forum (October 1944), p. 153-55, and Chapin, “New Deal in Order . . .,” Saturday Night.

inability to do anything - what psychologists call regression or flight.

Such an argument carried a great deal of weight, backed as it was by all the increasing legitimacy and influence of 'science'. By the end of the Second World War, the 'scientific' study of human beings and their social relationships was gaining influence, with the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychiatry and psychology carving prominent places within national life.⁴¹

Seemingly, two decades after a similar movement in the United States, an educated and liberal, or social democratic, Canadian elite at last expressed an interest in the First Nations and Indian policy reform.

However, budding concern for the 'plight of the redman' should not be dismissed as merely a narrowly based movement of intellectuals and academics. There were indications that the foundations of support for rehabilitating the 'Indian' in the post-war period were much broader. For instance, in March 1944, the British Columbia legislature unanimously passed an unusual motion proposed by the CCF members from North Vancouver and Similkameen. The motion stated that, "under the Atlantic Charter no minority section of Canadians should be debarred from the enjoyment of the rights and privileges of full citizenship," and therefore the federal government ought to do more to help the First Nations prepare "to participate in all the rights and privileges of Canadian citizenship."⁴²

Saturday Night further emphasised the widespread nature of Canadian support outside the

⁴¹ For material on this subject, see Mona Gleason, "Psychology and the Construction of the 'Normal' Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60," Canadian Historical Review, (vol. 78, no. 3 (September 1997): 442-77, Terry Copp and Bill McAndrew, Battle Exhaustion: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Canadian Army, 1939-1945 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990). The growth of the Social Sciences and specifically Sociology in stature during the inter-war years is examined in Marlene Shore, The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School and the Origins of Social Research in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), and by Harry H Hiller, Society and Change: S.D. Clark and the Development of Canadian Sociology (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

⁴² "Legislature Urges Dominion ...," Kamloops Sentinel.

intellectual elite. In one of a pair of articles, a submission put before the Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment by the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts from Oliver, British Columbia, was detailed.⁴³ To the author,

it seem[ed] odd that the most intelligent and understanding suggestion for the modernisation of Canada's policy towards the Indians of the Dominion should come from a little community in British Columbia . . . none of those signing the brief is, so far as we know, well-known outside their own province; none is an official. They are simply good citizens, exercising their right to be heard, and feeling, as Quaker elders used to say, a 'concern' about an important matter.

This brief was founded on the "desire to see a Canada made up of many racial origins, and we want no theories of holding aboriginal inhabitants down to the quaintness of the past, isolating them in picturesqueness for the tourist trade." This first article prompted a letter to the editor from an individual in Prince Edward Island that appeared two weeks later. The writer stated that the "condition of the Indians . . . [was] receiving consideration here also," noting a report presented to the Diocesan Church Society of P.E.I. the previous spring that had called on the government to do something to raise the "low estate" of 'Indians' in that province.⁴⁴ Thus, there were suggestions that many Canadians were moved by the challenge that the 'plight of the Red man' presented to their views of what their country ought to look like.

Inherent in these calls for changes to Canada's Indian policy was a painful self-examination of the social and systemic causes of the 'Indian problem'. The crux of the 'Indian problem', as it emerged in the public discussions of 1944-45, was that, "in Canada, the Red Indian, the noble red man of the romantic novel of Canadian history and the Hollywood screen has been bound by a policy of perpetual wardship and denied the status of citizenship and the ordinary

⁴³ Chapin, "New Deal in Order . . .," Saturday Night. In a letter submitted to the Kamloops Sentinel in April 1945, the president of this organization claimed to have received "nearly three hundred letters" since the distribution of its brief to the Committee for Reconstruction and Re-establishment, "Champions Native Indians," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁴⁴ "Indians, West and East," Saturday Night, (11 November 1944), p. 2.

opportunity of economic advancement."⁴⁵ In essence, the 'Indian' had not been integrated into the physical, constitutional and economic mainstream of Canadian society. For most Canadians this meant that assimilation had not occurred. Failure was universally blamed on two factors, as articulated by the president of the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts:

The truly sad picture these Indians present today is a direct reflection of our unjust administration. They are wards of the government in the fullest sense of the word, and we, the citizens are responsible for the actions of our government. What the Indian is today we have made him through neglect . . . [and] in criticizing the Indians, we are but criticising ourselves.⁴⁶

First and foremost, Canadian Indian policy and its administration bore the brunt of the blame, for failing to "formulate and introduce a modern policy - [because] Indians have changed a lot since 1868 when the last regulations were made."⁴⁷ According to one report on the Northwest Territories, "centuries of tutelage have robbed the Indian of his independent spirit and self-reliance."⁴⁸ It also acknowledged that this condition was "a heavy indictment against us in our treatment of a once proud people . . . and we have meant so well." Not all commentators were so self-aware. In contrast, the Penticton Herald claimed that all that was necessary was "to bring a sleep-walking department into awareness at the present hour."⁴⁹ However, this simplistic solution failed to recognise what most other commentators were quick to concede, that in a democratic

⁴⁵ "The Canadian Indian," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

⁴⁶ "Champions Native Indians," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁴⁷ Chapin, "New Deal in Order . . .," Saturday Night. Arguments in a similar vein were expressed in "Legislature Urges Dominion . . .," Kamloops Sentinel, Kathleen Coburn, "The Red Man's Burden," Canadian Forum, T.E. McNutt, "Indians, West and East," Saturday Night (11 November 1944), p. 2, "The Canadian Indian," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, "A Reproach to All of Us," Kamloops Sentinel, "Champions Native Indians," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁴⁸ "Where Rivers Run North," Winnipeg Free Press (19 April 1945), p. 13. The report quoted in this story was by Dr. Andrew Moore "for the Canadian Social Science Research Council," yet another indication of the growing interest of academics in the social conditions of the First Nations at the close of the Second World War.

⁴⁹ "A Reproach to All of Us," Kamloops Sentinel.

society the 'Indian problem' could not be blamed solely on "the deplorable neglect of the Indians by the responsible dominion government authorities."⁵⁰

The second major impediment to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and welcoming them into national life was a more general ignorance, apathy and even 'racism' among the population. One article argued that "to modernize Canada's Indian policy, a thorough transformation of public opinion will be required . . . so long has the public neglected the Indian and so fixed has become the idea that he is an inferior person."⁵¹ A writer in the Canadian Forum went further, making direct reference to the current conflict and decrying the existence of "that complacent racial superiority that we dislike so much in other people that we're willing to fight a war with them about it."⁵² These were strong words, and a remarkable about face from the pre-war discourse that had found no fault with either the Indian administration or the attitudes of the dominant society.

Such a transformation in the public discourse also led to a further evolution of the 'Public Indian'. What became most noticeable was that, as a rule, the public discussion of the 'Indian' increasingly began to emphasize the problems and poverty that were the norm for many Aboriginal people. For instance, when staffing shortages at Indian hospitals across the country reached an acute stage in early September 1944, the media took note. The Globe and Mail picked up a Canadian Press article about Indian Affairs announcements that wartime demands were making it impossible to maintain several reserve hospitals in the west.⁵³ The story warned that the Morley Reserve hospital had already been shut down in Alberta, and two others were in imminent danger

⁵⁰ *ibid.* This was quoted from the Vernon News.

⁵¹ "The Canadian Indian," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

⁵² Kathleen Coburn, "The Red Man's Burden," Canadian Forum, p. 153.

⁵³ "Must Close Indian Hospitals Unless More Nurses Found," Globe and Mail (2 September 1944), p. 13.

of closure due to the exhaustion of their staffs. The article pointed out that this would leave almost 1500 Stoneys and Peigans and over 4000 Crees at Norway House, Manitoba, without any medical care. The Free Press also ran a story about the dire situation at Norway House, and it pulled no punches, quoting the words of Dr. Percy Moore, superintendent of Indian medical services for the IAB, who warned that "unless the plight of these hospitals is relieved it will mean suffering and death for many of our Indians."⁵⁴

Nor was the media loath to report when suffering and death did occur. This point was highlighted in a sad story of six Aboriginal children who died as a result of acute dysentery in northern British Columbia. The event drew dramatic headlines like, "Death Visits Indian Camp."⁵⁵ Significant attention was also generated by two reports of inadequate healthcare being provided to Aboriginal people in the northern areas of the country. One such story, appearing in the Calgary Herald under the headline, "Natives of Far North Prey to Tuberculosis."⁵⁶ It reported a study produced under the auspices of the Canadian Social Science Research Council which found that the death toll from tuberculosis in the Northwest Territories was 415.7 per 100 000, "all races." Among the general Canadian population the mortality rate was 52 per 100 000. A more sensationalised story reported that "inadequate medical care is given to several thousand Indians around James Bay district, where there is wide spread suffering."⁵⁷ The claims were made by a

⁵⁴ "Indian Hospitals Of Manitoba Face Desperate Need For Help," Winnipeg Free Press (7 September 1944), p. 1.

⁵⁵ "Death Visits Indian Camp," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix (5 April 1945), p. 13, "Dysentery Kills Six Indian Children," Globe and Mail (5 April 1945), p. 1, "Flying Doctor Helps Indians in Epidemic," Vancouver Sun (5 April 1945), p. 1. The last story by the Vancouver Sun typically de-emphasized the suffering of the Aboriginal family involved in favour of a sensationalist description of the attempts to bring medical aid to the victims by flying in an American doctor, even though he failed to save any of those afflicted with the malady.

⁵⁶ "Natives of Far North Prey to Tuberculosis," Calgary Herald (12 April 1945), p. 4.

⁵⁷ "Question Medical Care Given to Indians in North," Globe and Mail (17 April 1945), p. 4. A brief Canadian Press version of this story was also carried in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

(continued...)

Magistrate and Chairman of the Cochrane District Red Cross Society, who asserted that thousands were “enduring untold suffering and death because of a lack of adequate care and medical attention . . . they are at the mercy of a civil service so far removed from their daily lives as to be beyond reach.”⁵⁸ The story carried brief official reply to these graphic declarations which denied that the situation was as grim as described, but after such lurid and shocking details, the governmental viewpoint came across as flat and unconvincing. Canadians can hardly have heard such horror stories without being moved.

In the writings advocating reform, the indictments were as blunt and even more pointed.

The Okanagan brief to the Committee for Reconstruction claimed:

Indians whose crops failed get only \$4 a month for groceries, when they are too sick and old to work slow starvation. Those needing clothing are fitted out with discarded military garments. Per capita income in 1943 was \$105 a year, and out of that the men of Caughnawaga employed as steel-workers lift the average, so that most Indians get far less.⁵⁹

Even before the pressures of war began to drive up salaries, the average Canadian blue-collar worker was earning almost a thousand dollars each year. This juxtaposition drove home the disparity between the standard of living on many reserves and the Canadian mainstream. Nor was this focus on the hardships confronting Aboriginal people confined to such articles alone.

Even in other ‘Indian’ stories the emphasis on the ‘plight’ of the ‘Indian’ continued to be a theme. In a classic ‘Indian-at-war’ story published in Saturday Night, the author went beyond the colourful contributions of the Blackfoot to the war effort, including digging up the buffalo bones from “*Piskuns*,” ancient buffalo-jumps, to mention repeatedly the difficult circumstances of reserve

⁵⁷(...continued)

“Says Indians In Bad Way,” (17 April 1945), p. 2.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Chapin, “New Deal in Order . . .,” Saturday Night.

life.⁶⁰ In the article, Frederic Niven commented on the two and a half million dollar community fund, established by the sale of reserve lands and railway rights-of-way, which was touted as a wise measure because the accruing interest aided "toward an existence free from the extreme poverty and hardship that may be seen on many other reserves." The author's old friend Many Guns could recall "the days when the Blackfeet still hunted the buffalo - the days before they became so poor that they had to snare gophers." The story, though a colourful and positive tribute to the efforts of the Blackfoot people to 'do their bit' by meshing their past with the present need, really highlighted the poverty and plight of these Aboriginal people. In this way, the new image of the 'Public Indian' came to inspire pity.

Remarkably, throughout these stories Canadians consistently emphasised that the blame for the often wretched living conditions on reserves did not lay with the 'Indian'. Even though some did acknowledge "backwardness and shortcomings" in the 'Indians' character, "his lack of interest in work, and fondness for holidays and drink, his bad inferiority complex," these failings were assigned to systemic factors that had retarded the 'Indians' ability to adjust to the social and economic circumstances of contemporary Canada.⁶¹ The culpability for the creation of the situation and for the continued failure to solve the 'Indian problem' was ascribed to an initiative-killing system of administration, and an indifferent and even 'racist' society. Aboriginal communities were construed as "unfortunate and helpless" before this smothering combination.⁶² The dynamism and agency that had been a hall mark of the 'Indian-at-war' was stripped away, and

⁶⁰ Frederic Niven, "Canada's Indians Are Helping With Tons of Old Buffalo Bones," Saturday Night (10 June 1944), p. 37.

⁶¹ Albert Millar, "Champions Native Indians," Kamloops Sentinel, Kathleen Coburn, "The Red Man's Burden," Canadian Forum, p. 153. This was also clearly expressed by the socio-psychological analysis of John Honigmann mentioned above, "Canada's Human Resources," Canadian Forum, "Bracken Club Gains Better Understanding ...," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁶² Albert Millar, "Champions Native Indians," Kamloops Sentinel.

in its place appeared a figure, both pitiable and tragically powerless. The 'Indian' appeared predominantly in the guise of a victim in the public discourse as the war drew to a close in Europe.

While there was relative agreement about the causes of the 'Indian problem', there was less consensus in the public discourse about where the 'Indian' should fit in post-war Canada, and what ought to be done to get them there. The war proved central to the construction of a concept for a future place for Aboriginal people in Canada. To a large extent this connection was defined in relation to the aims and principles for which Canada was at war; the difficult realities of reserve life fell far short of the lofty rhetoric of what the country was fighting for and against. Most historians have down-played the legitimacy and relevance of principle in understanding English-Canada at war during this period, arguing that, in the words of Jack Granatstein:

Canada went to war in September 1939 primarily for the same reason as in 1914: because Britain went to war. Not for democracy, though that was crucial. Not to stop Hitler, though that mattered. Not to save Poland, though that was the ostensible reason. Canada went to war only because Neville Chamberlain felt unable to break the pledges he made to Poland in March 1939.⁶³

This simplistic dismissal does English-Canadians of the late 1930s and early 1940s a disservice.⁶⁴

⁶³ J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War 1939-1945 (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), p. 11. See also J.L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). C.P. Stacey argued a similar case in, Canada and the Age of Conflict: Vol. 2: 1921-1948 The Mackenzie King Era (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 264-69, as did Robert Bothwell and Norman Hillmer, eds., The In-Between Time: Canadian External Policy in the 1930s (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975), and John Thompson and Alan Seager in, Canada, 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985).

⁶⁴ Recently these comfortable assumptions have been challenged by Terry Copp, arguing that in Ontario a clear crystallisation of support for Canada's entry into the war was evident after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. In Copp's terms: "the consensus was based upon a belief that Hitler presented a threat to world peace and to the fundamental values of western civilization. Canada would not have gone to war if Britain had not done so - for obvious reasons - but the people of Ontario supported a declaration of war out of their informed convictions that fundamental issues were at stake." See, Terry Copp, "Ontario 1939: The Decision for War," Norman Hillmer, et al. eds., A Country of Limitations: Canada and the World in 1939 (Canadian
(continued...))

This dissertation will assume that the grand statements of principle for which the country was fighting, which appeared regularly in editorial, articles and news pieces about Aboriginal people, really mattered to Canadians. While such high-minded idealism might normally sound somewhat removed from everyday matters and even trite, the immediacy of total war lent these claims a relevance and sincerity that was palpable.

If the country was fighting 'racism' and totalitarian state oppression in the world, then it had better insure such conditions did not exist in its own back yard; and if Canadians were fighting for democracy, freedom, equality, and the Atlantic Charter then these principles should be embodied by the conduct in their own country. These sentiments was expressed in the House of Commons in July 1944, when one member rose and stated that, "we are not fighting to-day merely to defeat Germany and Japan; we are fighting in defence of definite principles. We are fighting for a peace based on justice, and justice must be granted to minorities as well as majorities."⁶⁵ When Canadians discussed the place of the 'Indian' in post-war Canada, in most cases, they believed that it had to fit within the principles for which the war had been fought. As one commentator stated, "nowhere more than in relation to the Indian do Lewis and Scott's words, 'Democracy means freedom for all, not just for some,' apply."⁶⁶ To do otherwise diminished the sacrifice of those who served, devalued the national war crusade and potentially undermined the vaunted 'New Order' they hoped to erect.

The philosophical foundations of support for Indian policy reform were broadly accepted

⁶⁴(...continued)

Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1996): 109-19.

⁶⁵ Hansard, (17 July 1944), p. 4935. Quoted from James W. St. G. Walker, "Race", Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies (Waterloo, Ont.: Osgood Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), p.20.

⁶⁶ Honigmann, "Canada's Human Resources," Canadian Forum. Honigmann is referring to David Lewis and Frank Scott, two members of the CCF brain trust, and has probably quoted from their 1943 book, Make This Your Canada.

in Canada, and most were in agreement with a number of short-term actions designed to relieve the immediate hardships of Aboriginal peoples - to end the 'plight of the Redman'. Most urgent, particularly in light of the attention given to the poor health of Aboriginal people in the media, was an improved system of medical care for the First Nations.⁶⁷ No objections were voiced to this, and most people recognised that it was "chiefly a matter of money," of injecting the resources necessary to expand existing facilities and perhaps even "providing additional hospitals specially for Indians."⁶⁸ A second component of the short-term solutions proposed was to provide more and better housing on reserves. The British Columbia legislature envisioned a system whereby, "the Indians, on leaving school, should be encouraged by financial assistance and advice to build modern homes."⁶⁹ In part, this system was linked to the health benefits of hygienic living conditions, but underneath the altruism perhaps Canadians preferred not to see Aboriginal homes "in the category of slums," one of the most tangible and visible signs of the 'Indians' plight.⁷⁰ As well, a need for the immediate economic betterment of the First Nations was seen, with an emphasis on equal treatment for Aboriginal veterans in the government rehabilitation program and "Indian relief and old age pensions on the same basis as white."⁷¹ Finally, the government had to conserve fur resources and protect game preserves from white trappers so that the 'Indian' trapper could continue to make a living.⁷² However, these were viewed as only stop-gap measures, not

⁶⁷ "Legislature Urges Dominion ...," Kamloops Sentinel, Chapin, "New Deal in Order ...," Saturday Night, Kathleen Coburn, "The Red Man's Burden," Canadian Forum, p. 154, "Indians, West and East," Saturday Night, (11 November 1944), p. 2.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, "Legislature Urges Dominion ...," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ "The Canadian Indian," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

⁷¹ Chapin, "New Deal in Order ...," Saturday Night, Kathleen Coburn, "The Red Man's Burden," Canadian Forum, p. 154.

⁷² "Survey of Indian Problems Asked," Globe and Mail (14 April 1945), p. 4. This story reported on the decision of the United Church Board of Home Missions to request a Royal Commission to study the relations between Aboriginal people and the Dominion.

long-term solutions to the 'Indian problem'.

What was really needed was a complete overhaul of the Indian administration system in Canada, and, some argued, of the entire philosophical underpinnings on which the existing system had been based. One author believed:

there ought in the first place to be an investigation and appraisal of our Indian policy by a group of experts in various fields, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, educationists, and others, working with Indians and men in the field. It should receive the co-operation but not the direction of the Department of Mines and Resources which, ironically enough, now administers Indian affairs.⁷³

Such a call was likely to be met with acceptance by a public that had witnessed the benefits of an interventionist government working on 'scientific' economic and social engineering policies generated by the academic experts that had been drawn into many government departments over the previous two decades. As yet, the almost anti-intellectual Indian Affairs Branch had demonstrated no comparable willingness to consult academe. However, the experts of the ivory tower were gaining greater esteem within the public domain, and their active participation in the day-to-day running of the country was not only legitimate, but increasingly expected. To most Canadians, revamping the Indian Act meant developing better means to achieve what had been intended with the original Act: "up to now Canadian Indian policy has done little beyond save the Indian from extinction. It has done little to open up the way for his assimilation into Canadian society."⁷⁴ However, a fundamental divide appeared in the public debate over where the 'Indian' ought to fit in Canada. This division led to disagreement over the appropriate future directions to take the country's Indian policy.

A new thread within the public discussion expressed a willingness to accept a different end goal, the continuing existence of the 'Indian' as an 'Indian', and their integration into the body

⁷³ Kathleen Coburn, "The Red Man's Burden," Canadian Forum, p. 154.

⁷⁴ "The Canadian Indian," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, Chapin, "New Deal in Order ...," Saturday Night.

politic as culturally-distinct collectivities. This agenda was largely motivated by the influence of cultural relativism in the social sciences, and the ideals and policies of the Indian New Deal in the United States. To a large degree, intellectual elites pressed this course, arguing that “the Indian can be truly free only when he has defined his freedom in a cultural frame of reference for which he alone is responsible and which he understands.”⁷⁵ However, the proponents of a New Deal-style solution to Canada’s ‘Indian problem’ were not uniformly academic in origin, as the Okanagan society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts also articulated a similar philosophy.⁷⁶ In this realm of thought, any new Indian Act had to assure “cultural entity and independence,” preferably after a study of the Indian Reorganization Act (1937) of the United States, the legislative corner piece of the American Indian New Deal.⁷⁷ The willingness to not only allow, but to encourage Aboriginal communities to maintain their cultural identity, went against centuries of Indian policy, practice and popular belief in Canada.

The result was some difference of opinion on specific policies for the future ‘progress’ of Aboriginal people. For instance, most commentators articulated a common end goal of full citizenship, complete with the franchise for the First Nations. The advocates of a New Deal envisioned immediate “full citizenship,” or at least “an educational program for Indian men, women, and children, directed towards complete and responsible citizenship for them.”⁷⁸ But this status was expected to be granted without demanding that Aboriginal people renounce their ‘Indian’ identity. Assimilationists, on the other hand, expected citizenship to occur when the ‘Indians’ became “doctors, nurses and teachers,” and “fill[ed] their places in labour, and the

⁷⁵ Honigmann, “Canada’s Human Resources,” Canadian Forum.

⁷⁶ Chapin, “New Deal in Order ...,” Saturday Night.

⁷⁷ Ibid., Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” Canadian Forum, p. 154.

⁷⁸ Chapin, “New Deal in Order ...,” Saturday Night, Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” Canadian Forum, p. 154.

professions.”⁷⁹ In other words, full citizenship would be achieved when Aboriginal people were absorbed into the mainstream and ceased looking and behaving like ‘Indians’.

Education was another critical point for the two camps, though it did not completely divide them as identical policies could be defended from both perspectives. The educational system for Aboriginal people was the one factor universally considered problematic, if not “a national disgrace,” and in need of change.⁸⁰ More, better-qualified, teachers were needed to staff more schools teaching a more useful and relevant curriculum. The British Columbia legislature motion urged Ottawa to expand,

their [the First Nations] existing facilities and opportunities for higher education, including vocational training, to the native Indian population of this dominion: that guidance officers be appointed and provided for the purpose of assisting and encouraging Indians to take advantage of all available educational facilities. . .⁸¹

The underlying assumption was that if ‘Indians’ had really been encouraged and educated ‘properly’ they would have chosen to become assimilated. The confidence that assimilation could be achieved “in a generation or so” had always proven remarkably resilient in Canada, seeming to wax each time a new swelling of interest in the ‘Indian’ and Indian policy occurred. The new-deal reformers could envision a similar emphasis on vocational training that would have some bearing on reserve life:

they have been deprived of their old tribal education and . . . nothing comparable as a means of fitting them for the life they have to live has been provided . . . If someone would just teach his lads carpentry and boatmaking now, or machine mechanics, that would be something. And if reading and arithmetic were pointed in these directions - well, they would have a point.⁸²

⁷⁹ “Legislature Urges Dominion . . .,” Kamloops Sentinel, “Indians, West and East,” Saturday Night (11 November 1944), p. 2.

⁸⁰ “The Canadian Indian,” Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, “Survey of Indian Problems Asked,” Globe and Mail.

⁸¹ “Legislature Urges Dominion . . .,” Kamloops Sentinel.

⁸² Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” Canadian Forum, p. 154.

Still others argued that 'Indian' children should be integrated into the public school system, either because it was believed they could hold their own, or because it would facilitate assimilation.⁸³

Whether Canadians wished the 'Indians' to excel in their own right, or in order to 'raise' them up to a level where they might be absorbed into the mainstream of society, education was the essential vehicle.

A final point appeared in the public discussions of the future of the 'Indian': should their existence on segregated reserves of land continue? Reserves generated mixed emotions from Canadians, who even disagreed as to the quality of the land. One story argued that "the reservations do not, indeed, support the Indian population . . . Reservation areas are generally poor land, without mineral or other resources," while another complained that, "this land, more often than not, is in the choicest locations."⁸⁴ The issue was perhaps nowhere more hotly contested than in British Columbia.

The Kamloops Sentinel carried a fascinating pair of stories revealing the debate on this question in April 1945. The first reprinted an editorial from the Vancouver Sun, and the responses from the Penticton Herald and the Vernon News, and the second was the passionate reaction of Albert Millar, the president of the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts.⁸⁵ The Vancouver Sun editorial that precipitated the debate, entitled "Blocking Progress in the Okanagan," opened saying that "the most striking fact observed by the visitor to the expanding landscape of Canada's greatest fruit area is that so much of the best land is wasted in Indian reserves."⁸⁶ These reserves were deemed "both archaic and objectionable in operation," and while

⁸³ C.G. Wallace, "For the Indians," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁸⁴ "The Canadian Indian," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, "A Reproach to All of Us," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, Albert Millar, "Champions Native Indians," Kamloops Sentinel.

⁸⁶ "A Reproach to All of Us," Kamloops Sentinel.

they had been an appropriate provision for the Aboriginal population of the valley, “six or eight decades ago, [they] remain today to interfere with progress and orderly development.” The editorial did not go beyond damning the reserve system and the ‘Indians’ who were seen as not making any use of the land, to suggest what ought to be done, but the implications were that the land should be taken away from the ‘Indians’ so that it could be ‘properly’ utilized to “provide food for thousands of people.” The Penticton Herald fully agreed, insisting that the reserves “offered a barrier [to the path of progress] that must go, and there need be no inequitable treatment of the Indians in the process.”⁸⁷ Exactly how such a little miracle of administration was to be achieved the Herald neglected to clarify.

The Vernon News, on the other hand, took the Sun to task, not so much for their assessment of the backwardness of the reserve system, but for their blaming the ‘Indian’ for the shortcomings in cultivation of Okanagan reserve lands. Instead, they laid the blame squarely at the door of the Indian Affairs Branch, and its “lack of education and supervision of the Indians in the Okanagan,” and chided “a powerful medium” like the Vancouver Sun for neglecting these glaring deficiencies.⁸⁸ Millar praised the Vernon News editorial which in his words, “evoked [interest and pleasure] in those of us who regard the Indians as human beings having the same rights as other human beings and in those of us who really believe we should practice what we preach, viz. the democratic way of life.”⁸⁹ He went further, castigating the Sun for its “unfair and almost prejudiced criticism of the Okanagan Indians,” and providing a long litany of reasons why the circumstances on Okanagan reserves were the fault of Canadian society and the federal government. His organisation was a firm follower of the principles in the American Indian New

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ Albert Millar, “Champions Native Indians,” Kamloops Sentinel.

Deal, and in its brief to the Committee for Reconstruction and Re-establishment had argued that the First Nations ought to be granted “full citizenship without loss of land.”⁹⁰ John Collier, the father of the Indian Reorganisation Act and Commissioner of the American Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1933 until 1945, judged that, “economic rehabilitation of the Indians, principally on the land,” was one of the Indian New Deal’s three main objectives.⁹¹ However, the opinions of the Vancouver Sun and the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts were two extremes between which existed an ambivalent grey area where the mainstream of the public discourse milled about on the Indian land question.

Of crucial significance in the public discourse about the future of the ‘Indian’ in Canada was the fact that in almost every case this was a debate involving English-Canadians talking to other English-Canadians, about what ought to be done. Only a single article in Canadian Forum made mention of the concerns as expressed by the author’s Aboriginal acquaintances.⁹² Though they wished to help them, in most cases it simply did not occur to the authors, journalists and editors to consult the First Nations. Even those with the best of intentions fell into this practice as did Albert Millar’s, Okanagan Society, which urged the government for a new Indian Act “assuring cultural entity and independence, to be extended to all with one-quarter Indian blood.”⁹³ Quite apart from the slippery slope of hereditary fractions, they were determining who would be an ‘Indian’ and who would not, based upon criteria of their choosing. Either Canadians assumed that they knew what was best for the ‘Indian’, or in some cases that they knew what the ‘Indian’

⁹⁰ Chapin, “New Deal in Order ...,” Saturday Night.

⁹¹ Quoted from Brian W. Dippie, The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), p. 307. The other two objectives were listed as: “organisation of the Indian tribes for managing their own affairs”; and “civil and cultural freedom and opportunity for the Indians.”

⁹² Kathleen Coburn, “The Red Man’s Burden,” Canadian Forum.

⁹³ Chapin, “New Deal in Order ...,” Saturday Night.

wanted. One article closed stating, “that the young and intelligent Indian objects that he is being forced to remain in an old and obsolete mode of living.”⁹⁴ Though there was some limited support for, or fatalistic acceptance of, assimilation among Aboriginal people, this exercise in wishful thinking was little more than the projection onto the ‘Indian’ of Canadians’ desires for assimilation. The ‘Indian problem’ was no longer just the ‘Indians’, but even as they assumed responsibility and proprietorship, Canadians also assumed the onus to fix the ‘problem’. In a sense this was fitting because it was the dominant society that had constructed the existence of the First Nations in their midst as a ‘problem’. However, though well-meaning and altruistic, their presumptuousness was also both patronising to Aboriginal people, and laced with paternalism. In effect, what this discourse demonstrated was a society preparing once more to take up, in earnest, the white man’s burden.

Whereas during the war’s early years, when Canadians had closely reexamined their notions of Aboriginal people in light of their support for the national crusade, in the latter years of the war the dominant society revealed an willingness to turn the scrutiny inward. This readiness to look within developed out of the nation’s desire to create a ‘new order’, a better Canada in the wake of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Most people believed that changes were needed, and that it was not enough to return to the pre-war status quo. In envisioning the ‘new order’, Canadians were forced to think hard about the kind of country they desired, and to clarify the principles upon which it should be based. Such debate was the more visceral and sincere because these were the same principles for which the country was fighting a total war, and for which its sons and daughters were dying.

Within such a context, Canadians turned their gaze upon the ‘Indian’, the conditions in

⁹⁴ “The Canadian Indian,” Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

which Aboriginal people lived, and the nature of the country's treatment of them. What they saw failed to measure up to the passionate rhetoric of the war, and certainly did not fit with ideals of the 'new order'. The structures and measures of the government's Indian administration came under attack, but most recognised that the problems went deeper than bureaucracy or even under-funding. Canadian society also had to bear its share of the blame for the continuing marginalisation of the First Nations, for its 'racism', indifference and unwillingness to accept the 'Indian' as a full member in its midst. The collective guilt always latent in the 'Public Indian' discourse was finally acknowledged and even embraced in these discussions. It was a remarkable change from the discourse of the 1930s which had served to suppress, divert and defuse Canada's culpability for the 'plight of the Redman'.

A new image of the 'Public Indian' developed during this period, arising largely from the discussion about the 'plight of the Redman', the shortcomings of Canada's Indian policy and where the 'Indian' ought to fit in the future. This new image, the 'Indian victim', resembled all its predecessors in some way, but the combination of characteristics was unique. In line with the 'noble savage' it was cast in a tragic light, and exhibited the same stoicism in suffering adversity; however, it was neither vanishing nor banished to the distant past. Like the 'drunken criminal', the 'Indian victim' also existed in deplorable conditions of poverty, social dysfunction, substance abuse and ill health, but the victim no longer bore the blame. In common with the 'Indian-at-war', the new 'Indian' was both contemporary and sympathetic, but it was bereft of the dynamism and sense of agency that had animated the former. What Canada's discourse revealed were positive, yet tragic, present-day figures, who, through no fault of their own, lived in wretched conditions they were powerless to change. Such a construction fostered pity and anger in Canadians and left the sensation that they, having suddenly accepted responsibility, were wallowing in their collective sense of shame. For those advocating reform, the 'Indian victim' was the principle rhetorical

weapon for mobilising national attention and generating public pressure for change.

The 'Indian victim' and the reformers appear to have been successful in generating a consensus that something needed to be done. There even appeared to be unanimity about specific short term policies to correct immediate and urgent health and economic concerns. However, long range issues and policies turned on the essence of what Canadians wished the 'Indian' to become, and where they wished them to fit in society. Even if they agreed on the means, there was a split over the ends. The majority believed honestly that assimilation was the best and only solution, both for the dominant society and the happiness, health and prosperity of the 'Indian'. A vocal minority, influenced by the American Indian New Deal in the United States, which was ironically in its death throes, advocated allowing and encouraging the 'Indian' to remain as culturally distinct and independent entities within the national multi-cultural milieu. At its essence, this divide in the public discourse reflected the age-old conflict between the principles of individualism and collectivism: between the belief that true democracy rested in the individual, and the belief that democratic states ought to recognise the rights of people to develop their own sense of collective identity.

The last significant commonality in the public discussions surrounding the 'Indian' during the later years of the Second World War was that the debate occurred among Canadians, arguing about what they believed the problem to be, and the kind of solutions they needed to pursue to correct it. Very little attention was paid to what Aboriginal people desired, or the reforms they believed necessary. This omission clearly demonstrates that while the content of the 'Public Indian' discourse had evolved significantly since the 1930s, the power relations upon which it was founded had not. The dominant society still could define its ideas about the First Nations as it saw fit, to meet its own needs. Underpinning this power disparity was English-Canada's continuing confidence in its cultural and social superiority over their 'Indian'. The white man's burden was

dusted off and reinstated by Canadians as they once again renewed their commitment to raising the 'Indian' up to the point where he disappeared within the body politic. Symptomatic of this revival was the very process of conceptualising the issue under the complex rubric of the 'Indian problem', as if it belonged to the First Nations. At its base, though, the 'Indian problem' was not the 'Indians' problem, though it certainly had far-reaching consequences in their daily lives, it was the dominant society's quandary. Canada's problem with Aboriginal people was that they continued to exist as 'Indians', and as such they remained a constant reminder to the country of their displacement and subjugation. Only with their disappearance as a distinct people would the dominant society be able to shed its guilt. The war and the desire to win the peace had therefore had a deep impact on the 'Public Indian' discourse in Canada, but it had not fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between the dominant society and its original inhabitants.

CHAPTER 5
THE 'ADMINISTRATIVE INDIAN' AT THE THRESHOLD OF PEACE.
JANUARY-MARCH 1946

Following the defeat of Japan in August 1945, Canadians could finally put into practice the rhetoric and theory of reconstruction and begin building their better Canada. Partly this meant participating in a meaningful way in the international community, either by taking a active role in the formation of the United Nations or helping to rebuild the shattered economies of Europe. Canadians generously accepted the continuation of stringent rationing, though not without some grumbling, so that the starving Dutch population could eat and families in Great Britain might have a spot of meat for their table and some coal to heat their home. At home, the machinery of war, particularly wage and price controls, was still in place, while that of reconstruction was in full swing even before the end of hostilities. Almost a million military personnel were being demobilised as quickly as shipping could be found to bring back those who were overseas, and the bureaucratic machinery would allow: 395 013 returned in 1945, and a further 381 031 in 1946.¹ Two essential elements of a social safety net were in place, Family Allowances and Unemployment Insurance. The generous benefits of the Veterans Charter awaited returning service men and women to help smooth the difficult transition ahead. In this complex, dynamic and hopeful environment, Canadians sought a return to an idealised 'normal' life free from war, depression and insecurity.

The transition to peace was an even less certain time for First Nations families and communities, riddled with mixed emotions. On the one hand, the return of Aboriginal veterans was

¹ Peter Neary, "Introduction," in, The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada, Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, eds. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998: 3-14), p. 10.

a matter for great joy and celebration. Also significant were the inroads made by Aboriginal men and women into jobs that they had never occupied prior to the conflict, the increased interaction with the society in which they lived, and the technical, linguistic and leadership skills that many brought back to their communities. On the other hand, the unprecedented employment opportunities opened up to First Nations people by the war were bound to dry up in peacetime, as war industries closed down and veterans returned to their old jobs. Fortunately, the Family Allowance program went a long way towards assuring a basic standard of living and easing the sudden drop in income. But perhaps most importantly for the future of the First Nations population, the war had created the conditions for a reform of the legislation and administration that ruled so many aspects of their lives: a growth in public interest in their plight, as well as a remarkable proliferation of political organisations on reserves across the country.

In the halls of the Indian Affairs Branch, peace brought the prospects of relieving the chronic shortages of personnel in the field staff and the educational institutions left over from the labour crunch of total war. Two important personnel changes in senior posts ushered in a new era in the Branch. Dr. H. McGill, the Director since replacing D.C. Scott, retired and R.A. Hoey, the Superintendent of Education and Training since 1933, assumed his position in an acting capacity in early 1945. Also significant was a cabinet shuffle that brought in the vibrant J.A. Glen to replace the long serving and indifferent T.A. Crerar, who retired to the Senate in April 1945.² The combination of these new appointments helped to rejuvenate a demoralised corporate structure,

² T.A. Crerar's voluminous personnel papers held at Queen's University contain less than a handful of minor references to Indians or the Indian Affairs Branch, providing an emphatic demonstration of how little involved the Minister was in IAB matters or their charges during his nine years as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. J.A. Glen was, like so many officials in the Indian Affairs Branch, a Scotsman. He was elected as a Liberal M.P. for Marquette, Manitoba in 1926, and served consistently in the House from 1935 through to his taking on the portfolio of Mines and Resources on 18 April 1945. He had previously served as the Speaker of the House of Commons.

which was revealed as sadly bankrupt of vision during the meetings of the House of Commons Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment in the spring of 1944.³ However, it would take more than a new Minister and Director to truly change the course of Canada's Indian policy, it would require parliamentary involvement and public pressure.

This chapter will explore the 'Administrative Indian' on the cusp of war and peace. On 14 December 1945, the new Minister of Mines and Resources, J. Allison Glen, informed the House of Commons that he would begin an investigation into reform of the Indian Act and administration, once an appropriate mechanism had been determined. Several weeks later, he wrote a circular letter to all Indian Agents and Inspectors in an attempt to "establish a personnel and intimate relationship," during his tenure.⁴ In it, Glen outlined some of the plans for Indian Affairs in the post-war era, and solicited the confidential advice of his field staff on several problems he viewed as impediments to the "care and advancement of the Indian population in this country."⁵ He was

³ John F. Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943-63* (PhD. Dissertation, Carleton University, 1999), p. 88, 95. This Committee was the principal government body studying reconstruction, and became interested in the issue of Indian administration in response to petitions forwarded to Ottawa by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations and individuals, as well as several well publicised visits to the capital by First Nations delegates trying to raise awareness of their grievances. Branch officials were called before the Committee in May 1944 to present the Branch's plans for the post-war improvement of reserve conditions.

⁴ Draft of Glen Circular letter, 7 January 1946 (National Archives of Canada (NAC), Record Group 10 (RG 10), vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

⁵ *ibid.* This was not the first time that the field personnel had been asked for their advice, though it was the first time this had come directly from the Minister. In November 1938, Dr. H. McGill had sent out a circular to all Indian Agents requesting their views on potential revisions to the Indian Act, Director of Indian Affairs - Circular Letter to Indian Agents, 22 November 1938 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6810, file # 470-2-3, pt. 10). He received fewer replies than did Glen, mostly from the western provinces. Interestingly, almost every one of the Agents that replied to this circular also replied to the Minister's letter in 1946, suggesting that these gentlemen were more inclined to thoughtful introspection and reflection on their work and the 'Indian problem' than was the norm among field personnel. All responses contained in NAC, RG 10, vol. 6810, file # 470-2-3, pt. 10.

concerned in particular with how best to overcome a perceived lack of trust in the government among Aboriginal people, and ways to encourage the “gospel of self-help” among the First Nations. Over the next several months, 39 of the country’s 94 Indian Agents, or forty percent, and the Provincial Inspector of Indian Agencies for Saskatchewan replied to the Minister’s letter.⁶ Most were pleased by the Minister’s gesture and used the opportunity to provide considered responses to the questions asked, writing on average two legal-size pages of single-spaced text.⁷ This body of correspondence, then, provides a unique opportunity to examine the ‘Administrative Indian’ at war’s end, as the IAB collected itself for a policy and legislative reassessment, and a renewal of purpose.

This particular body of documents has recently received a detailed analysis by sociologist Victor Satzewich in an article titled, “Indian Agents and the “Indian Problem” in Canada in 1946: Reconsidering the Theory of Coercive Tutelage.”⁸ His purpose was to test and challenge the theory of coercive tutelage applied to Indian Agents by anthropologist, Noel Dyck, in his thought provoking book, What is the Indian ‘Problem’: Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian

⁶ This file is mentioned by John Leslie as well as by Victor Satzewich, “Indian Agents and the “Indian Problem” in Canada in 1946: Reconsidering the Theory of Coercive Tutelage,” Canadian Journal of Native Studies vol. XVII, no. 2 (1997): 227-257, p. 232. Satzewich sets the number of responses at 38, whereas Leslie states only 35 Agents provided responses, Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination*, p. 108. Presumably Leslie was counting only those letters from Agents that included substantive answers to the Minister’s requests. In addition to the 38 responses in the Glen correspondence file, I found another response from T.L. Bonnah, Indian Agent at St. Regis, near Cornwall, Ontario. This letter was written in May 1946, and began by saying, “some time ago, comments were asked for with a view to any changes that might be beneficial insofar as a revision of the Indian Act is concerned.” Bonnah is almost certainly referring to the Minister’s letter from January, but because he wrote so late, and framed his response in the context of Indian Act revision it was mis-filed in a file containing correspondence about revision of the Act (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, p. 11).

⁷ Satzewich, “Indian Agents and the ‘Indian Problem’” p. 233. See also the contents of Record Group 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1, which contains Glen’s letter and all the responses received from the field personnel.

⁸ Satzewich, “Indian Agents and the “Indian Problem””

Administration.⁹ Dyck defines coercive tutelage as “a form of arbitrary restraint or guardianship exercised by one party over another,” and argues that Indian Agents, whatever their beliefs when they took up their position, became the agents of, and eventually conformed with, a racist and oppressive institutional norm and culture.¹⁰ It is the latter point on which Satzewich focuses. The theoretical dispute and conclusions of Dyck and Satzewich will be examined more systematically at the end of this chapter, in light of my own analysis of the Glen correspondence and the insights suggested by the preceding chapters.

The questions asked by Glen cut to the core the Indian Agent’s conception of the ‘Indian problem’ and its solutions. For this reason, they provide an ideal entry into the official discourse at the end of the war, and before the legislative and administrative upheavals of the subsequent five years. However, this body of documents is not methodologically unproblematic. The Agents were replying to their superior in a highly hierarchical bureaucratic structure with autocratic tendencies. This undoubtedly encouraged them to underplay the difficulties in their own jurisdictions. A number of them used the opportunity to sing their own praises, appeal for higher wages, and, in one case, to shamelessly press for an improved posting. In addition, it is not obvious why sixty percent of the Agents refrained from replying, nor is it clear how they might have answered the questions of the minister had they done so. Nonetheless, as stated above, most of the field staff that did provide Glen with advice appear to have taken the request seriously and spoken candidly, providing a wide range of explanations and suggestions for the future.

Freezing the official discourse in the early months of 1946 allows the researcher to explore a number of questions relevant to this study. How did the field staff of the IAB construct the

⁹ Noel Dyck, What is the Indian ‘Problem’: Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration (St. John’s: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991).

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.3, 77.

'Indian' in early 1946? How, if at all, did the post-war 'Administrative Indian' differ from the pre-war version? Where did Indian Agents and Inspectors foresee the place of the 'Indian' in Canada's future? Did the swelling public interest and dissatisfaction with the country's Indian administration and the quality of life on reserves have any influence? Had the IAB's fetish with control diminished, or did the 'Indian' still require a firm hand? The answers to these questions allow for the construction of a distinct impression of the 'Administrative Indian' in the first year of the post-war period.

The Honourable J. Allison Glen's letter was clearly designed to do more than merely introduce the new minister to his employees or acquaint them with the government's post-war program for "the advancement of the Indian population."¹¹ Glen went out of his way to praise the Agents and Inspectors and thank them for "the services rendered the department - services rendered by many of you faithfully and conscientiously over a long period of years." He flattered them, asserting that the success of the post-war program would,

depend to a very large extent upon the ability and the efficiency of our field officers. There is a sense in which it can be said that you occupy the front line trenches and are subject to criticisms and annoyances that many of us less intimately associated with life on the reserves escape.

More importantly, he pledged that in the future the direction from Ottawa would be better and more understanding of conditions on the reserves. He concluded by assuring his staff of his interest and willingness to help and solicited their views on several policy issues. The impression created by Glen's letter was that of a general rallying his beleaguered and demoralised troops, a notion only emphasised by his military allusion to Indian Agents occupying the front-line

¹¹ Draft of Glen Circular letter, 7 January 1946.

trenches.¹² Judging from the genuine pleasure and surprise expressed by most of the Agents that replied, his efforts were much needed to reverse the intense alienation felt by field personnel across the country.

Significantly, the Minister informed them that the Branch would no longer actively oppose Aboriginal political organisation. This reversed decades of law, policy and practice under Scott and McGill. Glen perceived Aboriginal activism and political organisation, which had accelerated noticeably during the war years, as a sign that the ‘Indians’ were “becoming steadily more conscious of their responsibility for conditions on their reserves ... [and] evidence of the interest of Indians in their own advancement.”¹³ From his perspective, “it is unthinkable to me in an age of organized effort and collective action that the Indian would seek to remedy his ills by individual action.” However, this acceptance was not unconditional or unequivocal. Glen believed that this activism “should be guided by our officers as far as it is possible to guide it into sane and constructive channels.” More importantly, “Indians should be encouraged to exercise the greatest possible care in the selection and election of their officers ... [and] also to exercise moderation in their claims for public support.” Assuming these two things occurred, Glen foresaw a constructive role for Aboriginal organisations within Canadian Indian administration.

The Minister specifically sought advice on three matters that were of paramount importance to him. First, “the establishment of a greater measure of confidence on the part of the

¹² The language of conflict and armies was a not uncommon element in IAB discourse, as first noted in Chapter 1. The fact that this comment struck a chord with several of the Agents who mentioned it specifically in their responses suggests that the Branch’s relationship with the ‘Indian’ was still conceived of as a long, on-going, ‘war’ to civilise and assimilate their charges. Glen was then in a very real sense preparing his ‘soldiers’ to renew the fight with fresh conviction and *élan* in the wake of the Second World War.

¹³ Draft of Glen Circular letter, 7 January 1946.

Indians in the department and in the good intentions of its officials.”¹⁴ In particular, he hoped that the IAB would take the ‘Indian’ into its confidence to a greater extent than previously, and even employ Aboriginal people in its operations in the near future. Second, he wished “to see a sincere attempt made to encourage the gospel of self-help amongst Indians.” Glen hoped that the instituting of advisory boards on reserves to care for, and organise activities in, reserve buildings and specifically community halls would aid in this direction, assuming these endeavours had “proper supervision.” Finally, the Minister wondered whether there might be great benefit in taking advantage of more provincial services, such as educational courses in health, sanitation and agricultural activities or the restocking of fish in lakes and the conservation of fur and game animals. He then closed by acknowledging that,

while the results at times appear disappointing, nevertheless we can proceed - extracting a measure of satisfaction from the consciousness that we are assisting a group of people to adapt themselves to modern conditions and in so doing, encourage them to assume a greater share of the rights, duties and responsibilities ... In this task, the thought of failure should have no place in our minds.

The optimism combined with the sympathy and deference with which Glen treated the field personnel in this letter, aside from marking a profound change from the aloof and autocratic Crerar, appears to have won the confidence of many of the Agents and Inspectors.

One of the hallmarks of the official ‘Indian’ discourse prior to the war had been its cohesion. Some representations of the ‘Indian’ did not fit with the dominant administrative discourse, but these arose from the idiosyncrasies of a few members within a large corporate entity with no agreement amongst the dissenting views. During the war, this cohesion held together to a large degree, despite the pressures of Aboriginal enlistment and conscription. A perusal of the

¹⁴ *ibid.*

Glen correspondence reveals that, although old stereotypes of the 'Administrative Indian' were still prevalent, the disciplined adhesion to the norms of Branch culture, so striking before and even during the war, had loosened. This emerged most clearly in the Indian Agents' answers to Glen's concern about the 'Indians' lack of confidence in the IAB and their perceived lack of ambition. Many still articulated negative characteristics and demeaning stereotypes that enabled them to 'blame the victim' for the failures of the assimilation project. However, to a degree unseen before in the official discourse, many also accepted that the hostility of Aboriginal people might be justified by legislative and administrative inadequacies and past errors, as well as the degree to which Canadian society marginalised them.

In explaining the lack of trust in the IAB among the First Nations, the Agents commonly blamed character or 'racial' flaws of the 'Administrative Indian': all of which had long been core elements of the official discourse. In line with the 'common sense' knowledge about 'racial' traits of the era, several Agents assumed the mistrust was "inbred", "inherent and "handed down from generation to generation."¹⁵ One Agent veiled the same sentiments in the more modern accoutrements of social psychology, claiming that "the Indian problem is basically psychological and the removal by uplift of a racial inferiority complex must be paramount in any approach to Indian rehabilitation."¹⁶ Other Agents simply wrote the suspicion of 'their Indians' off to their

¹⁵ Norman Paterson to The Honourable Minister of Mines and Resources, 4 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), H.E. Taylor to J. Allison Glen, 1 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), R. Howe to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 4 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

¹⁶ F. Earl Anfield to the Mr Glen, 30 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1). Nor was Anfield the only Agent to request the aid of psychology in the effort to further the cause as A.G. Smith in Birtle, Manitoba, also asked whether a psychologist could give them some advise, A.G. Smith to The Hon. J. Allison Glen, 23 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

“backward” nature or the fact that they were “more or less the primitive types.”¹⁷ As the Agent from Charlottetown explained, the ‘Indian’ had “to rise above the stage of illiteracy and ignorance,” before there was any chance of ‘advancing’.¹⁸ The social darwinian assumption of the Aboriginal people’s intellectual and eugenic inferiority still formed an important element of the official discourse in 1946.

The First Nations’ wariness of government was also blamed on the traditional scapegoats of the IAB: the ‘white’ agitators and Aboriginal troublemakers who stoked the fires of suspicion in the impressionable minds of the gullible ‘Administrative Indian’. Indian Agents had traditionally undermined Aboriginal resistance to their efforts by branding the leaders as malcontents or self-interested rabble-rousers in their correspondence with Ottawa, and the responses to Glen reflected this behaviour.¹⁹ The Agent from the Caradoc Agency in Muncey, Ontario, acknowledged that

there is ...a spirit of suspicion and distrust. This condition to a large extent emanates from minority groups whose only policy is and always has been to oppose local administration, destroy and oppose government assistance and council, and generally, unduly, criticise their Indian Councils.²⁰

Unfortunately, from the Agents’ perspective, the only ‘Indians’ willing to take an active role on the reserve “have, in most cases, very little to recommend them other than the ability to talk fast.”²¹

However, the difficulty with troublemakers among their charges was less of a concern in 1946,

¹⁷ *ibid*, H. Lariviere to The Hon. J. Allison Glen, 19 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file 470-2-8, pt. 1).

¹⁸ J.E. Daly to Mr Glen, 19 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

¹⁹ J.L. Bryant to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 26 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1). Bryant generalised this to all reserves, making the obvious point that, “of course on all reserves there is always the odd Indian who is inclined to oppose anything one tries to do.” See also T.L. Bonnah to the Indian Affairs Branch, 14 May 1946.

²⁰ Geo. W. Down to Mr Glen, 18 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

²¹ J.P.B. Ostrander to the Honourable J.A. Glen, 4 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

than was the Agents' frustration with meddlesome outsiders and the "readiness of so many Indians to give credence to the statements of ill-informed and irresponsible whites, who confuse the Indian with a hodge-podge of radical ideas and malicious information."²² One Manitoba Agent felt that it was easier to deal with the outlying reserves than those "near a white settlement [where] the Indians are often more dissatisfied owing to persons outside the reserve agitating that the Indians in the reserve are not getting the help they should."²³ The Agent in Parry Sound, Ontario, was clearly angry when he claimed that the obvious suspicion of the Aboriginal population, whose "minds [were] clogged with very hazy notions as to the rights which they are entitled to enjoy under various treaties," was "not at all helped by irresponsible white people, many of whom should know better but apparently do not know any more than the Indian himself just what his standing is with regard to the Dominion Government and the other citizens of Canada."²⁴ Such willingness to be led astray by unwise council marked the 'Administrative Indian' as impressionable and childlike, confirming that they still required the benevolent guidance of the IAB.

Glen's concern about ways to encourage the "gospel of self-help" among Aboriginal people tapped into one of the eternal complaints of IAB personnel about their charges: they had no sense of responsibility and less ambition.²⁵ One Agent stated the 'common sense' knowledge that "an Indian lives for today and hopes for tomorrow," as "a problem which has been upper most on

²² Taylor to Glen, 1 February 1946, Ostrander to Glen, 4 February 1946, Howe to Glen, 4 February 1946, N.J. McLeod to Honourable J. Alvin [sic] Glen, 20 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), Indian Agent, Peigan Agency, to Mr. Glen, 3 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

²³ E. McPherson to Mr Glen, 30 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

²⁴ Samuel Devlin to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 22 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

²⁵ S.H. Simpson to the Honourable J.A. Glen, 19 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1). Simpson claimed that 'Indians' not only were lacking in responsibilities, but "in so many cases refuses to accept," them even if offered.

all reserves.”²⁶ However, worse than irresponsibility was the laziness and indifference that the field staff found blocking their endeavours: “if they just had a little ambition we would have no problems on their behalf at all.”²⁷ Many Agents ‘knew’ that “the Indians generally speaking are a shiftless lot (with some exceptions) & wont [sic] help themselves if they can get help elsewhere.”²⁸ The Agent in Griswold, Manitoba, was certain that “if they are not in need of food they prefer to ‘sit and sun themselves’.”²⁹ Another field officer thought the problem was due to ‘Indians’ belief in their divine right as the initial occupants of the continent:

It seems to be the general opinion of an increasingly large number of Indians at present to endeavour to get something for nothing or at least at the expense of the other fellow, so long as they are not called upon to foot the bill. They seem to consider they are entitled to this as a Divine Right, having been the original inhabitants of this Country, which they claim was taken from them by force.³⁰

The level of frustration is evident in the tone and derision of the language in these letters, as is the less than flattering impression many IAB personnel still had of their charges. Whatever the changes that the war and the coming of peace had brought to their relationship with the ‘Indian’, it remained adversarial.

Importantly, however, the field personnel did more than just blame the ‘Indian’ for their mistrust and perceived lack of ambition; they also turned their critical gaze inward on their own administration and outward to the society they served. The first thing that came under attack was the distant manner and indifferent direction that came from Ottawa, both in the relations with the

²⁶ Indian Agent, Peigan Agency, to Glen, 3 February 1946.

²⁷ Smith to Glen, 23 January 1946.

²⁸ Robert Lamothe to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 21 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

²⁹ W. Young to the Hon. J.A. Glen, 6 February 1946.

³⁰ A.D. Moore to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 28 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1). This concept of certain rights and privileges as the First Nations of the country is referred to as Aboriginal rights, and has become a part of the common parlance in late twentieth century legal and constitutional debates.

field staff and more significantly the Aboriginal population of the country.³¹ The Agent in Bella Coola, British Columbia, summed up the essence of the issue, arguing that “the attitude of the Government towards the Indian has been in large measure, a reflection of the position occupied in Indian custom by the Chief; supreme, benign and largely unapproachable.”³² Many of the responses stated, or inferred, that one of the main reasons for the ‘Indians’ suspicion was that “in the past there was a tendency to keep the Indians uninformed in regard to the workings of the Department.”³³ Another Agent criticised “the superimposing of a strictly cold legalistic implacable attitude on all Reserve matters,” making the point that “a cold, aloof administration, however efficient, will not win the support of these people.”³⁴ Most of these critiques of the imperious and distant attitude of the Ottawa bureaucracy were measured and restrained. However, one Indian Agent from Saskatchewan apparently took advantage of the confidentiality promised by the Minister to offer this biting indictment:

there was a time when I was under the impression that the Officials at Ottawa felt that the Indians were a problem that we would always have on our hands and there was not very much that could be done about it other than seeing that the old and destitute were given sufficient food and clothing for a bare existence, and the sick were provided with some medical and hospital care sufficient to more or less satisfy the general public.³⁵

Such a scathing condemnation sent to the senior bureaucrats in Ottawa would probably have gotten

³¹ *ibid.*

³² Anfield to Glen, 30 January 1946.

³³ J. Waite to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 29 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), A.D. Moore to Mr Glen, 28 January 1946, Stuart Spence to the Ministers Office, 28 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), R.G. Lazenby to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, Esq., 21 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), Taylor to Glen, 1 February 1946, J.M. Barre to the Honourable Mr. Glen, 23 January 1946, Howe to Glen, 4 February 1946, J. Gillet to the Honourable Minister, 26 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), Bryant to Glen, 26 January 1946.

³⁴ F.J.C. Ball to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, M.P., 30 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

³⁵ Bryant to Glen, 26 January 1946.

this individual fired, but it demonstrates that the Minister's letter had won the field staff's confidence and elicited some very candid responses.

Beyond the general tenor of IAB administration, the Indian Agents also felt the First Nations' anger and distrust of the government and lack of 'advancement' was a product of a substandard education system and the inadequate provision of health and welfare services.³⁶ The Indian Agent from Punnichy, Saskatchewan, surmised that "if we had better schools, with competent teachers and up to date teaching methods including manual training, etc, the Indians would feel the Department is taking a real interest in them, and consequently we would gain their confidence."³⁷ The sentiments were similar with regards to the other services provided by the IAB, particularly for health care. On the Sioux Lookout Agency in Northwestern Ontario, the Agent informed the Minister that,

many of our Indians feel that the Government has not provided adequate Medical services ... if remedial measures could be provided in this field alone, it would go a long way toward eliminating the feeling of distrust. In fact at present I believe this to be the crux of the whole situation insofar as the establishment of friendly relations and confidence is concerned.³⁸

Just down the road at Kenora, Ontario, the Indian Agent assured the Minister that there was much room for a greater measure of help for the sick, aged and destitute, "such as a more balanced and increased monthly relief ration, and more and better clothing. This extra help, I believe, would

³⁶ Daly to Glen, 19 February 1946, J.E. Gendron to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 29 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), McLeod to Glen, 20 January 1946, J. G. Burke to The Honourable J Allison Glen, 23 March 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), Howe to Glen, 4 February 1946.

³⁷ R.S. Davis to J. Allison Glen Esq., 4 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

³⁸ Gifford Swartman to the Hon. J.A. Glen, 4 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

break down a good deal of the hard feelings towards the Department's policy."³⁹ These concerns would not have come as surprise to the Minister, particularly given the widespread public discussion of these specific points.

Another common point of concern highlighted by the field personnel was past mistakes in administration and policy, which had alienated the 'Indians' and soured relations with the Branch. First and foremost among these were past injustices, but especially the breaking of promises made to Aboriginal people and communities. In most cases, this meant promises made during treaty negotiations. One Saskatchewan Agent proposed supplying a copy of the relevant treaty to each Agent or a list of treaty rights because "the number of Indians who complain that the Government has not carried out its treaty promises with them is surprisingly large."⁴⁰ At Chapleau, Ontario, the Agent had found that "during this last five years that the greatest handicap in my dealings with the Indians has been the lack of confidence they feel due to promises being made without due consideration and which were ultimately found to be impracticable."⁴¹ Although he hastened to add that this dated back ten to twenty-five years and did not apply to the present administration. The potential difficulties led some field staff to take rather extreme measures to protect themselves from this contingency, such as the Agent from the Fisher River Agency in Manitoba, who made it one of his personal rules to

never make a definite promise to any Indian about anything whatever. I learned the

³⁹ Paterson to the Minister, 4 February 1946.

⁴⁰ Simpson to Glen, 19 January 1946. The issue of treaty promises, especially verbal ones not written into the text of the treaty, and the disparity between the official record of the negotiations and the First Nations oral record of the spirit of the agreements has generated a large body of case law, as well as a growing historiography. For instance see the important book by the Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council, The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

⁴¹ F. Matters to the Hon. Mr. J. A. Glen, 15 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

folly of doing this very early in my experience. If one makes a 'promise' to an Indian, and then for some quite unforeseen reason is unable to fulfil it, then no amount of explanation, however logical it may be, will satisfy him. You 'promised' and did not keep your promise, so lose the confidence of that particular Indian, and he tells others about it.⁴²

This remark is a good example of a consistent pattern in the Glen correspondence. Even when expressing an understanding and sympathetic idea about IAB policy or their own dealings with the 'Administrative Indian', frequently Indian Agents entwine it with unflattering inferences - in this case that 'Indians' would not accept logical explanations.

Beyond broken promises, a number of the responses to Glen's letter expressed dissatisfaction with the IAB's lack of consideration for the viewpoints and culture of Aboriginal people as well as demeaning administrative practices. The Agent in Kamloops, British Columbia, partially blamed the distrust of the 'Indian' on the "failure of many of us, in the Department, to understand the Indian's viewpoint and mentality."⁴³ His sentiments were echoed by the Agent at Moose Factory, Ontario, who approved of hiring "educated and well trained" Aboriginal people in responsible field positions so that "we could more readily come to a better understanding of basic needs and mental processes of their own people."⁴⁴ A remarkable letter from Indian Agent F.J.C. Ball, in Vancouver, who had held his post since 1919 and was due to retire, was also critical of Branch behaviour. He castigated senior officials who had recently been "treating the Indians as if they are employees of the Department."⁴⁵ He also criticised the earlier decision to number all 'Indians' for efficiency which had hurt their pride, arguing that "we are not here to be efficient office people only." In recognising that IAB policies and administration were demeaning and ill-

⁴² Lazenby to Glen, 21 January 1946.

⁴³ Taylor to Glen, 1 February 1946.

⁴⁴ Dr. T.J. Orford to the Hon. J Allison Glen, 1 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

⁴⁵ Ball to Glen, 30 January 1946.

using the very people they were designed to help, these field personnel accepted Aboriginal people at a more human level than had previously been voiced in the official discourse.

Looking beyond their own activities, two field officers found part of the cause of the 'Indian problem' in general societal attitudes and prejudice towards the First Nations. The lack of confidence in the 'Indians' was attributed by one Agent to "the quite natural reaction of the Indian to this exploitation through past years, and the arrogant superiority shown towards him by so many Whites."⁴⁶ In Port Arthur, Ontario, the official blamed the 'Indians' reaction to being discriminated against by provincial laws and regulations in commercial fishing, forestry and mining: "the Indians cannot understand why the white man should be given much greater privileges than he ... In many cases, the Indian has been treated unfairly, and it is very difficult to keep him from being suspicious of, and distrusting, the white man."⁴⁷ There was little the Agents could do about such problems, except hope that the level of 'racism' and indifference in Canadian society would diminish in the future.

Most of the field staff's explanations, thus far, had blamed the 'Indians' shortcomings, society and, to a considerable degree, their own organisations' policies and activities. However, a small minority of the responses also raised systemic issues that challenged the underlying *raison d'être* of the IAB and the essence of its program. For instance, two Ontario Indian Agents expressed doubts about isolating Aboriginal people on reserves. The official from Desoronto, said

I do consider that too much segregation on Reserves under the provisions of the Indian Act, as now constituted, too much inter-marriage, lack of contact with other citizens of the country, to be harmful rather than beneficial to Indians and is retarding their advance to obtain qualifications that will eventually fit them for enfranchisement

⁴⁶ Taylor to Glen, 1 February 1946.

⁴⁷ Burke to Glen, 23 March 1946.

to accept full Canadian citizenship.⁴⁸

J.A. Marleau, from Sturgeon Falls, believed that 'Indian' students should go to school with their 'white' counterparts, as "these children get much more out of mixing with whites than they do segregated on the reserve."⁴⁹ Success with shaping the 'Indian' child was a matter of extreme importance. Most Agents would have agreed with Marleau that "for the average Indian of fifty years of age or more the case is hopeless, but the younger generation, through mixing with whites at school, work, sports, also reading and listening to the radio, are much more amenable to advancement." Originally, the reserve had been intended as a protective measure, so that the 'Indian' could be tutored in 'civilized' behaviour, safe from the manipulation and exploitation by unscrupulous 'whites'. However, these letters mark some of the first indications that Branch personnel were considering a policy of termination, such as that followed in the United States after 1953, and finally proposed for Canadian policy in the 1969 White Paper on Indian Affairs.⁵⁰

Others believed that their wards' problems sprang from a lack of consideration for their cultures and ways of doing things, or in the words of the Indian Agent from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, "pride of race and tradition has never been instilled in the Indian."⁵¹ Another individual went further, expressing his belief that the Branch should reconsider

[the] ignoring of Indian customs and traditions ... The Indians, as all native races, have certain ways of doing things which appear haphazard to us, especially in dealings among themselves regarding property, land, etc., but it is surprising how well their unbusinesslike [sic] methods work, where strictly legal methods cause

⁴⁸ Moore to Glen, 28 January 1946.

⁴⁹ J. A. Marleau to the Honourable J. Allison Glen, 26 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1).

⁵⁰ They were not the only such, see Moore to Glen, 28 January 1946, to be discussed below, who advocated a clear and strong call for termination in his letter.

⁵¹ Waite to Glen, 29 January 1946.

confusion, resentment and unrest.⁵²

Such suggestions flew in the face of the whole purpose of the Indian Affairs Branch and much of Canadian Indian policy, which had sought to stamp out the First Nations' culture and "haphazard" ways and to replace them with an idealised version of Euro-Canadian values and practices.

Finally, a number of responses suggested that the government had created the very dependency they hoped to correct: as one Agent politely stated, "the Indians have been relieved of many responsibilities, which perhaps has not been a kindness to him."⁵³ The IAB had gradually assumed greater and greater control over the day-to-day lives of the First Nations: their business practices, their spending habits, their political lives, their social activities, their movements and even their morality. In so doing, some field personnel argued that the Branch had become too invasive and autocratic in exercising its power, stifling the 'Indians' scope for independent action and thought. One west coast Agent argued that, "too much has been done for the Indian; not enough with him."⁵⁴ This was a repudiation of the coercive elements of the directed civilisation program. However, as will be seen later, this did not mean that they were prepared to limit their supervision and control of Aboriginal activities; indeed most wished to reaffirm or even expand their capacities. In the context of government-fostered dependency, the field staff praised the initiatives promised by the Minister and suggested some of their own that might help to foster the 'gospel of self-help'.

The diverse nature of many of the explanations for the 'Administrative Indians' suspicion

⁵² Presumably Ball is referring in part to the anti-Potlatch laws enacted by the government on the west coast of British Columbia from 1885, and perhaps also the regulations against the Sun and Thirst dances and other ceremonial events among the Plains peoples. See Ball to Glen, 30 January 1946.

⁵³ Simpson to Glen, 19 January 1946.

⁵⁴ Anfield to Glen, 30 January 1946. Underline emphasis in original.

of government and lack of ambition might create a misleading impression that the official discourse had suddenly fragmented. However, this was not necessarily the case. The large majority of letters from Indian Agents and Inspectors articulated an image of their charges conforming fairly closely to the 'Administrative Indian' of the pre-war and war years. Moreover, all but a few of the explanations critical of the Branch and past policy were precursors to technocratic solutions that sought to improve upon the way in which they did their jobs. Only a tiny fraction raised the spectre that something might be wrong with the very nature of Canada's Indian policy or the IAB's purpose. Arguably, this variety of responses indicated a loss of the discipline that had marked the official discourse previously. Like the 'Public Indian', which was riddled with ambiguities and inconsistencies, the cohesive 'Administrative Indian' now exhibited its own quirks and contradictions. It seems likely that this change appeared in part in response to the changes in the senior personnel. The confidence that many field personnel expressed in the new Director, R.A. Hoey, and particularly the open and frank nature of the Minister's circular letter created an environment of candour. Whether this degree of dissent had existed previously is not clear, but if it had it was largely muzzled by the strongly centralised and rigidly hierarchical structure of the bureaucracy, as well as the culture of conformity within the organisation.

The nature of the Glen's requests provoked responses that reveal the field personnel's vision for the future direction of Canadian Indian policy. The majority of letters agreed that "the Indian is capable of great and lasting improvement," but beyond this basic affirmation of their mission the field staff differed over the prospects of success and the goals attainable.⁵⁵ For a

⁵⁵ Anfield to Glen, 30 January 1946.

quarter of respondents, the war had made an appreciable impact on their wards' progress.⁵⁶ Some remained wedded to the conviction that assimilation could and should happen. Others would only venture that 'advancement', 'improvement' or 'progress' might be achieved through better funding and administrative reform. Overall, there was a notable slackening of the missionary zeal that had previously motivated the IAB in their quest to assimilate the 'Administrative Indian'.

Only a few Agents actually stated what they perceived the final goal of their mission ought to be, and all that did were essentially in agreement. The goal was articulated as full citizenship by some and assimilation by others, but was predicated on fostering self-reliance and eliminating the 'Indians' dependence on the government.⁵⁷ The Agent from Charlottetown conveyed the basic message mixed with paternalism, claiming that "the Indian in order to survive must become a self-supporting reliable Canadian citizen."⁵⁸ The wording used by a Saskatchewan Agent was almost identical, arguing that the Branch needed to assist "these people to become decent self-supporting citizens."⁵⁹ The use of the words "reliable" and "decent" is noteworthy because their presence implied the lack of these qualities in the contemporary 'Indian', betraying the degree of continuity in the official discourse despite its new variability. Other Agents constructed the end goal as assimilation, as "the absorption of [a] minority group into the body politic."⁶⁰ A.D. Moore from

⁵⁶ Bryant to Glen, 26 January 1946, Howe to Glen, 4 February 1946, Wm. Christie to the Hon. J. Allison Glen, 5 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), Swartman to Glen, 23 January 1946, Lazenby to Glen, 21 January 1946, Waite to Glen, 29 January 1946, A.D. Moore to Mr. Glen, 28 January 1946, G.E. Hurle to Mr. Glen, 24 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1). Only J. G. Burke from Port Arthur, Ontario, mentioned a negative impact from the war. Apparently on his Agency the agricultural activity had suffered because so many of the Aboriginal people had joined in war activities, Burke to Glen, 23 March 1946.

⁵⁷ McPherson to Glen, 30 January 1930.

⁵⁸ Daly to Glen, 19 February 1946.

⁵⁹ Bryant to Glen, 26 January 1946.

⁶⁰ Anfield to Glen, 30 January 1946.

Desoronto seemed confident about the outcome, arguing that:

considering that the Indian population is 125,000 in a Canadian population of approximately 12,000,000, it would not appear too big a task for this country to absorb the entire Indian population within the space of four or five generations, in the same manner as it absorbs European races.⁶¹

Thus when they addressed the issue, the field personnel remained consistent in their belief that assimilation remained the logical goal to end the 'Indian problem' and the best option for all concerned.

Moore was not alone in his faith that the IAB could achieve its purpose. Two Agents assured the Minister that they made a practice to "try to impress upon the Indian that the officials are endeavouring to help them conduct their affairs only until such time as they are in a position where help is no longer needed," and that the temporary nature of the assistance provided did not "imply on the part of the government a responsibility for [the 'Indians'] upkeep."⁶² Some assumed that assimilation was in a sense 'natural' and inevitable. One Agent stated "let us try and educate our Indians and the rest, by proper guidance from the Department, will come by itself."⁶³ It was difficult for IAB personnel to understand that Aboriginal people might not actually want to assimilate, and they felt sure that if the impediments could just be removed the process would resume its logical course. However, these were merely a tiny minority; the majority of responses were not quite so sanguine.

No other letter offered the same degree of certainty about assimilation or optimism about

⁶¹ Moore to Glen, 28 January 1946.

⁶² W.J.D. Kerley to Hon. J. Allison Glen, 16 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-8, pt. 1), Devlin to Glen, 22 January 1946.

⁶³ Gendron to Glen, 29 January 1946. J.E. Daly expressed the hope to the Minister that "we shall all do our utmost to treat the Indian as a rational creature, capable of attaining the status of ordinary working people, and in so doing we may rest assured that many of our most difficult problems will in time disappear." Daly to Glen, 19 February 1946.

the readiness of some Aboriginal communities to 'graduate' from their status as wards, than did that of A.D. Moore mentioned above. He alone, among all the field personnel who responded, suggested that "in the not too distant future, all Indians will obtain full citizenship, and segregating Indians on Reserves will be abolished entirely."⁶⁴ From his perspective, "many of the Indians, including all Service men, of our Southern Reserves are, at the present time, better qualified for full Canadian citizenship than are a good many of the foreign peoples that enjoy the privilege." Moore argued that once the improvements proposed in the Minister's letter were instituted and,

the Reserves brought on a parity to adjoining municipalities, possibly within 10 to 20 years or so, that a Board of Inquiry be instituted to investigate and report to the Government on the advisability [sic] of enfranchising, or giving full Canadian citizenship, to all Indians in Ontario south of the 45th Parallel.

This policy was then to be extended to "the Indians of the more remote sections of the country ... when their state of advancement warrants such action." Moore's opinions diverged sharply from his colleagues in the field; although they matched quite closely those of the Branch Secretary, T.R.L. MacInnes. Speaking before the Commons Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment on 18 May 1944, MacInnes created quite a furor among Aboriginal people across the country, and earned reproach from his superiors, for suggesting that 'Indians' in organised districts ought to be "divorced from the reserve system entirely -- put on their own."⁶⁵ Such sentiments were radical by the standard of the IAB in 1946. Most still held strongly to an image of the 'Indian' that was too backward, lazy, stubborn and childlike to accept such an acceleration of the assimilation machinery.

⁶⁴ Moore to Glen, 28 January 1946.

⁶⁵ Canada. House of Commons. Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment (Minutes, 18 May 1944), p. 312-319. MacInnes was apparently unapologetic as he published similar sentiments in an article in the Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science in 1946, T.R.L. MacInnes, "History of Indian Administration in Canada," Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, vol. 12, no. 3 (1946): 387-394.

More common by far was a tendency to formulate limited and short-term goals. Generally, this was in reference to a specific policy that would "further the education and welfare of our Indian population," "improve his lot", and lead to "advancement" or "progress".⁶⁶ For instance, in advocating a policy of increased interaction between Aboriginal and 'white' children in schools, R. Howe from Vanderhoof, British Columbia, argued that "contact with whites hastens progress and greatly improves their mode of living."⁶⁷ Another official wrote that "with hard work, sufficient help, careful planning and practical consideration of our many and peculiar problems that will arise from time to time, I am sure the coming year will see further advancement in the betterment of the people with whom we are working."⁶⁸ The majority of field personnel seemed unwilling or unable to conceive of a goal beyond the immediate and open-ended 'improvement' of their charges; although most refrained from explicitly declaring that they were sceptical of achieving the IAB's stated aim.

Two of the Indian Agents, however, indicated their satisfaction with the current rate of 'progress' exhibited by the 'Indian' population, and warned that to accelerate the process might prove counterproductive.⁶⁹ The Agent in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, opined:

We must bear in mind that our Indians are still in a transitory stage in comparison with present modern civilization and it can be said that the Indian has improved his living condition and adapted himself to our way of life in a shorter space of time than in comparison with our ancestors, especially in view of the fact Western Indians have only in a short space of time (Approximately 150 years) adopted our way of life and are finding some difficulty adapting themselves at this time. It is impossible to

⁶⁶ Down to Glen, 18 January 1946, Ostrander to Glen, 4 February 1946, Lazenby to Glen, 21 January 1946, Taylor to Glen, 1 February 1946. See also Daly to Glen, 19 February 1946, and J.M. Barre to the Honourable Mr. Glen, 23 January 1946.

⁶⁷ Howe to the Glen, 4 February 1946. J. A. Marleau pressed for a similar policy for exactly the same reasons, believing this would be "a step towards progress." Marleau to Glen, 26 January 1946.

⁶⁸ Bryant to Glen, 26 January 1946.

⁶⁹ Lariviere to Glen, 19 January 1946.

expect, overnight as it were, changes in their way of life and it would also prove disastrous to the Indian Race were they to change their way of life as quickly as a few men, especially in this province, believe it can be done⁷⁰

However, most others did not show such contentment with the status quo.

Even such muted aspirations as they expressed were not expected to be easily achieved.

Letter after letter in the Glen correspondence complained that the results of their efforts were "at times very discouraging," and acknowledged that the task of 'bettering' the 'Indian' would be a long one requiring hard work, perseverance and patience.⁷¹ Simply renewing the First Nations' trust in the Branch, in the words of one Agent, would "not be accomplished immediately," as it was something that would "have to be 'sown' and 'nurtured' and 'grown' over a period of time."⁷²

Similarly, increasing the economic well-being on reserves was also expected to be difficult:

I have no Illusion [sic] that this raising of the standard of living etc. is going to be either easy or of short duration; but feel sure that after two or three generations have had the benefit of education and improved medical care, we will then be able to see some worth while results for the work that has been expended.⁷³

The Agent from the Griswold Agency in Manitoba, summed up the common sense of most field

⁷⁰ McLeod to Glen, 20 January 1946. McLeod's final comment refers to the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan, and other 'white' agitators, who were actively encouraging the First Nations of that province to organise and take their concerns to the Premier, Tommy Douglas, who would aid them in their cause. For more on this subject see, James Pitsula, "The Saskatchewan CCF Government and Treaty Indians, 1944-1964," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 75, no. 1 (March 1994): 21-52, and the more recent book by F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

⁷¹ Simpson to Glen, 19 January 1946. Dr. T.J. Orford also mentioned the difficulty of maintaining morale when slow progress was made, Orford to Glen, 1 February 1946. Norman Paterson, Agent in Kenora, and Samuel Devlin, in Parry Sound, both predicted that their work was a "long term proposition," "since it involves a gradual change of character." Paterson to the Minister, 4 February 1946, Devlin to Glen, 22 January 1946. The following Agents all spoke of the need for hard work, patience and perseverance, Bryant to Glen, 26 January 1946, Gendron to Glen, 29 January 1946, Ball to Glen, 30 January 1946.

⁷² Lazenby to Glen, 21 January 1946.

⁷³ Matters to Glen, 15 January 1946.

personnel precisely when he wrote:

Our hope undoubtedly lies with the boys and girls. We may by intensive thorough training give them a different outlook on life and a different sense of values, but I am convinced the change will be slow and will require patience and perseverance. Leadership in thought, in work, and in amusement is necessary, but to overcome indifference, indolence, distrust and natural inbred desires is a real task, and one that only years of relentless work will change.⁷⁴

Few of the IAB personnel that responded to the Minister's letter seemed to envision a place for the 'Indian' in post-war Canada significantly different from that they already occupied. Instead, they could articulate only incremental improvements in their condition, and vague 'progress' with no end in sight.

In the Glen correspondence, field personnel suggested a wide range of possible solutions to their problems, but running throughout the responses was a concern with the power relations between themselves and their charges. For instance, the primary rationale for expanding the staff in the Agencies was to insure that adequate supervision of reserve activities could be maintained. The IAB's fixation with their authority was so inextricably interwoven into the IAB structure and purpose that it coloured almost every solution proposed.

The wartime constraints on labour had left the Branch lacking Agents, Farm Instructors, teachers, medical personnel and other support staff, which, when combined with the rapidly increasing Aboriginal population, left the IAB bureaucracy stretched to the limit of its capacities.

We in the Field service feel our offices are understaffed and the reserves under our supervision are in some instances (due to increasing Indian population) without proper supervision and proper attention cannot be given to individual Indian problems arising from time to time due to overworked field staff with the results that plans and organization work amongst the Indians is not being followed up in the proper manner

⁷⁴ W. Young to the Hon. J.A. Glen, 6 February 1946. Education was usually seen as a panacea for the 'Indian problem' in this era, regardless of the proponent's agenda. The content and aim of that education was a different matter.

to produce results.⁷⁵

A number of the responses to Glen's letter advised that the future plans of the Branch ought to include significant hiring. However, it was the Agents' justification that was enlightening. Whether they were talking about schools, commercial fishing or agriculture, more help was desired because "such work requiring as it does, daily encouragement and constant supervision, can only be attempted on widely scattered reserves, with adequate help."⁷⁶ The assimilation mission required the continuous surveillance and direction of all reserve activities. The consequences of this lack of control through inadequate staffing were serious, as one Agent with thirty-two years experience made clear in his letter's closing sentence: "I know from practical experience what can be accomplished by Indians under suitable guidance and I have seen failure through lack of supervision and encouragement."⁷⁷

The paternalistic theme of supervision and guidance was a constant in the field staffs' reaction to three of Glen's suggestions for transferring more responsibilities to their charges: first, allowing the political organisation of the First Nations to proceed; second, instituting reserve advisory boards to care for and operate community buildings; and third, hiring Aboriginal people to work in the IAB bureaucracy. All these proposals required IAB personnel to surrender a measure of their control over their wards. Only a single Agent openly disagreed with one of Glen's ideas; and even he did not dismiss them out of hand, accepting that 'Indians' should be employed in the future. But in his estimation, "the time has not yet arrived when employment of Indians in administration of their own affairs will meet with the approval of the Indians and will cause

⁷⁵ McLeod to Glen, 20 January 1946.

⁷⁶ Taylor to Glen, 1 February 1946.

⁷⁷ Gillett to the Minister, 26 February 1946.

jealousy and incompetance [sic] in the administration of their affairs.”⁷⁸ Aside from this bold individual, no one spoke directly against the Minister’s proposals, but only a very few were willing to support them unequivocally.⁷⁹

More commonly, the field personnel acknowledged the benefits of the three ideas, while advising caution and providing caveats. For instance, many Agents were willing to accept the setting up of advisory councils to run community halls for public functions; indeed many reserves already had such structures. As one individual noted, “all the villages in this Agency have pretentious halls for public use, but in every case lack proper supervision and organizational guidance.”⁸⁰ Another Indian Agent would agree to this suggestion on the condition that “the hall should be supervised and it should be given for socials or meetings only on the condition that it will afterwards be scrubbed and made clean.”⁸¹ The response to Aboriginal political organisation was similar. The senior field officer from the Fisher River Agency in Manitoba was “of the opinion that such organizations, if competently guided in the right channels, could accomplish much for the general advancement of the Indian peoples.”⁸² While another respondent agreed that “a good organisation can be useful to the Indians,” but warned that “a badly officered one could be an embarrassment to the Department.”⁸³ In all cases, the field personnel expressed reservations, and argued that such policies would only be successful if they could provide the leadership and

⁷⁸ McLeod to Glen, 20 January 1946.

⁷⁹ Only three Agents advocated setting up advisory boards, Anfield to Glen, 30 January 1946. Lazenby to Glen, 21 January 1946, Stuart Spence to the Minister’s Office, 28 January 1946. And just a single Agent believed that the politicisation of the First Nations was a “healthy sign,” without expressing some reservations, Christie to Glen, 5 February 1946, or was willing to recommend hiring ‘Indian’ employees without qualification, Howe to Glen, 4 February 1946,

⁸⁰ Gillett to the Minister, 26 February 1946.

⁸¹ W. Young to the Hon. J.A. Glen, 6 February 1946.

⁸² Lazenby to Glen, 21 January 1946.

⁸³ Ball to Glen, 30 January 1946.

organisational ability that they found lacking in the 'Administrative Indian'.

At the heart of the field staffs' hesitancy about allowing these activities, even if supervised, was an apprehension about, and distrust of, the 'type of Indian' that would be selected to lead these endeavours. J.L. Bryant, from Kamsack, Saskatchewan, counselled against too hastily hiring Aboriginal people to work in the Branch, insisting that the process "should be very gradual," and that due care be "exercised to get the right men."⁸⁴ The concern was even more acute in the case of encouraging their charges to organise. One field officer argued that "much care would have to be taken in choice of the right type of men to represent the reserves," because "it has been my experience and I think that of other Agents that the men most willing to accept such positions are not the most suitable for such appointments."⁸⁵ One Agent admitted that the Branch had "in the past, looked with suspicion upon Indian organisations, probably because we felt that the key men were self-seekers, who were doing more harm than good."⁸⁶ But having followed a policy of opposing and stigmatising Aboriginal leaders and organisations for so long, most Agents were clearly uneasy about encouraging such efforts, fearing that "in the wrong hands they could become a menace."⁸⁷

Somewhat surprisingly, many responses to Glen's letter demonstrated a similar dubious reaction to the rather innocuous measure of advisory boards. The Agent in Birtle, Manitoba, claimed that they would only work well, "if we had the right Indians on them, but likely they would

⁸⁴ Bryant to Glen, 26 January 1946. Another Agent argued that Aboriginal war veterans would be ideally suited to receive positions in the IAB bureaucracy. G.E. Hurl to Mr. Glen, 24 January 1946.

⁸⁵ MacPherson to Glen, 30 January 1946.

⁸⁶ Taylor to Glen, 1 February 1946.

⁸⁷ Ball to Glen, 30 January 1946.

elect some agitators to the said boards, and if so we would get nowhere.”⁸⁸ The field officer in Portage la Prairie provided his assessment and a potential solution to the problem.

Advisory Boards are workable. The Indians on the board would have to be carefully chosen; and I would suggest that the choice be made by the Indian Agent. The Indians chosen would also have to have the confidence of the Indians also. If the members of the board were chosen by the Indians, the non-progressive Indian, who is not afraid to ask for “hand-outs” would be chosen. However, if the board was chosen by the agent, the Indians would soon fall in line behind a board that had their confidence.⁸⁹

IAB personnel rejected and feared Aboriginal leaders that they could not adequately control, who might not agree with the assimilation project, and who could embarrass the Branch. What they wanted was to ensure that “the better class of Indian,” those more amenable to their direction, attained the positions of leadership in Aboriginal organisations and advisory boards.⁹⁰ The answer was to increase the power of the Indian Agent to regulate the political and social activities of First Nations communities.

This preoccupation with control in the Glen correspondence was evident across a broad range of issues beyond those already discussed. On a macro level, several Agents suggested that the IAB ought to seize more complete control of Indian education and health services. One officer went so far as to argue “all matters, health, etc., more so in the field should be 100% a matter for this ‘Branch’,” because provincial administrators did not have the requisite knowledge and experience of ‘Indians’.⁹¹ At a more finite level, field personnel wanted the ability to manage

⁸⁸ Smith to Glen, 23 January 1946.

⁸⁹ Waite to Glen, 29 January 1946.

⁹⁰ Ostrander to Glen, 4 February 1946.

⁹¹ Lariviere to Glen, 19 January 1946. This policy was also advocated by N.J. McLeod who disliked the interference of Provincial Education Inspectors who he held responsible for giving Aboriginal children the same curriculum as “White” children, but which was, in his opinion, “definitely beyond the capabilities of Indian children at this time.” McLeod to Glen, 20 January 1946. In addition, Dr. T.J. Orford, from Moose Factory, Ontario, believed that the use of

(continued...)

Aboriginal peoples' monetary habits and business transactions: in the words of a Manitoban official, "some control of their earnings would be beneficial."⁹² This was not new: during the war, the IAB had managed to get the Department of National Defence to send Aboriginal soldiers' Dependents' Allowance cheques to the respective Indian Agents, who could then manage them for their spendthrift charges. The establishment of Family Allowance payments to Aboriginal people provided much the same opportunity to the field personnel.⁹³ One Agent wished that a full time social worker could be employed on each reserve "to supervise the expenditure of the monies."⁹⁴ A relocation policy was proposed by the official in Prince Edward Island that would concentrate all Aboriginal people in a central location because in their scattered communities, it was "difficult at times to exercise control over them."⁹⁵ A final example was the rationale used by the Agent from the Peigan Agency to support his case for higher wages: "when an Indian Agent has to handle Indians who are making from 4 to 5 times as much money as the Agent does, it looks very

⁹¹(...continued)

provincial extension services should be kept to an advisory capacity only, because "the health and welfare of Indians is essentially the responsibility of a Department set up for that purpose and we must assume it in entirety." Orford to Glen, 1 February 1946.

⁹² W. Young to the Hon. J.A. Glen, 6 February 1946. Young also believed that the restrictions which prohibited the sale of cattle by 'Indians' should be maintained, because "if close supervision and restrictions on the sale of stock were lifted, I think the cattle would disappear by half within a year."

⁹³ Ostrander to Glen, 4 February 1946. The Inspector assured the Minister that "Farming Instructors and other employees who are in daily contact with the Indians will use the payment of family allowances to advise and encourage the Indian women in the proper preparation of meals and the proper use which can be made of children's clothing to get the most out of the expenditure." The Family Allowances were greeted with some suspicion by many Aboriginal people who feared that they might undermine their treaty rights, however by 1946 many had agreed to accept the payments which significantly improved the basic standard of living on reserves across the country.

⁹⁴ Kerley to Glen, 16 February 1946.

⁹⁵ Daly to Glen, 19 February 1946.

ridiculous for us not to meet them on a level of one business man with another."⁹⁶ The loss of face from the disparity in income undermined the authority of the Agent amongst his charges; from the administrators' viewpoint, this was just one step shy of chaos. These responses highlight the degree to which the maintenance of authority permeated the official language at war's end.

Many of these same administrators that were advocating more control be given themselves, or at least that there be restraints on the power being transferred to the 'Indians', were the same individuals that had acknowledged that too much responsibility had been taken from them in the past and that encouraging the "gospel of self-help" was their primary goal. Even though the diagnoses of the 'Indian problem' contained in the responses to Glen's communiqué recognised faults in the way the Indian administration had been conducted, the field personnel could only prescribe more supervision, more control, more tightly constraining the 'Indians' scope for independent thought and action. One Agent went further than any other to argue that, "since the Indian is considered a minor, he is incapable of spending money for the betterment and advancement of the band ... Officials of the Department should decide what is good and worthwhile if we are to better their condition."⁹⁷ Missed, as it always had been in the official

⁹⁶ Indian Agent, Peigan Agency, to Glen, 3 February 1946.

⁹⁷ Marleau to Glen, 26 January 1946. It is ironic that the designation of legal minority was placed on Aboriginal people because they were not believed capable of making their own decisions, whereas this official turned that rationale on its head to argue that the legal definition determined the 'Indians' ability. Often 'common sense' about the inferiority of a minority group and the legal and legislative structures that formalise the power relationship serve to reinforce each other in a vicious circle. This has been ably revealed in James W. St. G. Walker's, 'Race', Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies (Waterloo and Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press and the Osgoode Society, 1997). It has also formed a prominent place in the debates about European and American 'racism or New World slavery as to which came first, the institution of slavery or the 'racism' that deemed it right. David B. Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), Winthrop D. Jordan, The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1975), Barbara J. Fields, (continued...)

discourse, was the irony that the sole means to make the First Nations 'like everyone else' was to differentiate them legislatively, constitutionally, administratively, spatially, and socially: in effect, to make them 'Administrative Indians'.

How, then, does the analysis of the Glen correspondence provided by this chapter compare with that produced by Victor Satzewich in his article employing the same body of evidence? To fully appreciate the differences, it is necessary to first glance briefly at the object of his concern, Noel Dyck's book, What is the Indian 'Problem'. Dyck's study is based on an intriguing premise.

Posed more often than not in rhetorical fashion, the question, "what is the Indian 'problem,'" tends not so much to enquire into that which is puzzling or unknown as to signal the speaker's intention to put forth one or another favoured 'solution' to the 'problem.' Discussions of the Indian 'problem' revolve around a deep-rooted belief that perceived differences between Indians and other Canadians constitute a regrettable situation that needs to be remedied. Paradoxically, then, the phrase "what is the Indian 'problem'" is not so much a question as an assertion that a 'problem' exists. This belief is so widespread that discussions of the Indian 'problem' may proceed even without having to state the question explicitly. The assumption that there is an Indian 'problem' is simply taken for granted.⁹⁸

He extends from this point "to trace the origins of this doctrine and the manner in which it has shaped relations between Indian communities, government agencies, and Canadian society as a whole."⁹⁹ As the system of coercive tutelage he describes met with resistance from its intended subject and failed to achieve its stated aims of 'civilizing' and assimilating the 'Indian', the IAB reacted by blaming the failure on inadequacies of Aboriginal people and by increasing the amount

⁹⁷(...continued)

"Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," New Left Review, vol. 18, (1990): 95-118, George L. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964, originally published in 1944).

⁹⁸ Dyck, What is the Indian 'Problem', p. 1.

⁹⁹ *ibid*, p. 2.

of control exerted over their lives. He concludes that the doctrine and practice of coercive tutelage, though designed to solve the 'Indian problem', instead became its primary cause. The 'Indian problem', in Dyck's estimation, was not some objective thing that belonged to Aboriginal people, but rather existed in Euro-Canadian society's prevailing assumption of its superiority over First Nations societies. The theoretical assumptions that underpin Dyck's arguments and conclusions bear some similarities to those found in this dissertation.¹⁰⁰

Victor Satzewich, though acknowledging that Dyck might be right, takes exception to one central assumption of coercive tutelage theory. Satzewich set himself the task of empirically testing whether Indian Agents were really instruments of coercive tutelage, using the Glen correspondence. He posits that if Dyck's theory is right, then the responses generated by Glen's 1946 letter ought to reflect the two types suggested by coercive tutelage theory: racist, 'blaming the victim' explanations of the 'problem', and technocratic suggestions for its solution, rather than a recognition that "the problem lay in the more complex and multi-layered nature of the historically constituted social relationships within which Indian people found themselves enmeshed."¹⁰¹

He examines the causes of, and solutions to, the 'Indian problem' articulated by Indian Agents in their responses to Glen's letter and breaks them down statistically. He loosely groups the causes into two categories: blaming-the-victim and "relational" explanations. The former are self-explanatory, while the latter include such matters as inadequate services, administrative breakdowns, broken treaty promises and racism in Canadian society. Satzewich finds slightly more "relational" answers than blaming-the-victim, a pattern that does not quite fit with Dyck's

¹⁰⁰ In particular, his findings on the Indian Affairs Branch in Chapter 6, "The Tutor's Burden," are in line with my own analysis of the 'Administrative Indian'. We differ in that I am studying the English-Canadian constructions of the 'Indian', rather than the 'Indian problem' *per se*, but the latter is implicit in the ways that the dominant society discussed and imagined Aboriginal people and vice versa.

¹⁰¹ Satzewich, "Indian Agents and the 'Indian Problem' ...," p. 232.

model. When he analysed the answers, however, the support for coercive tutelage was stronger, as the Agents proposed technocratic solutions to the 'Indian problem' that would either tinker with the bureaucratic structure or change 'Indians' to make them more governable. From his findings, Satzewich conclusions provide qualified support for the coercive tutelage model, but with the caveat that "the attitudes of Indian Agents towards Indian people, their work, and the branch of the federal government they worked for, were somewhat more complex than what is suggested by Dyck."¹⁰²

This is a measured and accurate assessment. The coercive tutelage model, at least as Dyck applies it in his book, is too rigid a conceptual tool to accommodate the complexities in the relationship between the Canadian state and Aboriginal people. Imposed from the top down, the theory rests on a thin base of evidence with little sensitivity to context. The result is a characterisation that changes little between the mid-19th century and the present: in the process over-emphasising the continuity. In this sense, Satzewich's article is a useful corrective. Nonetheless, his reading of the Glen correspondence is not fully convincing for two reasons. First, in extracting the responses of the Indian Agents from the context of their letters to provide a straight statistical analysis, Satzewich misses a crucial component of the Agents' discourse: specifically, the intense concern with their own authority. Secondly, he measures the 'progressiveness' of the Agents in 1946 Canada by the yard stick of late 1990s 'enlightened', or in his words "correct-thinking," perspectives on Aboriginal issues and Canadian Indian administration. For Satzewich,

one of the things that is truly striking about some of the assessments and proposals that Indian Agents offered was their relative modernity ... In other words, several of the assessments and proposals for change that Indian Agents offered over fifty years ago have now become part of the battery of solutions that many of the correct-

¹⁰² *ibid*, p. 250.

thinking analysts have proposed for the so-called Indian problem.

His surprise at the Agents' sophisticated responses amplified the significance of what he called "relational" explanations to a degree not warranted by the Glen correspondence. The Glen correspondence was a unique body of documents, generated by the peculiar social and cultural milieu of war's end and the advent of a more open regime than at any time during the tenure of D.C. Scott or Dr. H. McGill. Ironically, had Satzewich chosen a body of documents from five, ten or twenty years earlier, his conclusions might have more fully supported Dyck's argument and theory.

What then can be inferred from the Glen correspondence about the state of the official discourse and the 'Administrative Indian' at the transition from six years of war to a much anticipated peace? As with much else discussed in this dissertation, the answer to that question is neither simple nor unambiguous. At war's end, there was some discontinuity, which was manifested in the emergence of contradiction and a disappearance of the discipline that had previously marked the official construction of the 'Indian'. However, the discourse also revealed a degree of continuity that was remarkable in comparison with the transformations in the public discourse during the same period.

The official image of the 'Indian' in 1946 differed from that in evidence during the war years or the pre-war period in two key ways. First, the field personnel of the IAB demonstrated a newfound willingness to look outside the traditional avenues of the 'Administrative Indian' to explain their failure to achieve the organisation's purpose of assimilating the First Nations. In so doing, a greater appreciation for the intelligence of Aboriginal people was exhibited and, in some cases, a more respectful assessment of their cultural, social and moral norms and capabilities. Constructing their charges in this way did not fit within the more pejorative framework of the

'Administrative Indian'; however, there were limits to these shifting perspectives. None of the Agents was entirely consistent in constructing the 'Indian' in this new fashion, usually mixing demeaning or paternalistic elements in with those that did not fit the official construct. Nor was there a sufficient degree of agreement to constitute the formation of a distinct new image of the 'Administrative Indian'. Thus what resulted was a complex and contradictory collection of conceptualisations of the 'Indian', not unlike that always evident in the less cohesive 'Public Indian'.

Second factor that distinguished the post-war 'Administrative Indian' discourse was the clear loss of vigour and optimism for their *raison d'être* among IAB personnel. Arguably, one of the reasons why more than half the Indian Agents and Inspectors did not answer the Minister's circular letter was apathy or cynicism. For the most part, those officials that replied continued to accept that assimilation remained the logical goal for Canadian Indian policy, but there was a noticeable decline in the certainty about the prospects of success. This defeatism emerged clearly in the small number of responses that bothered to mention a final objective. But what was more striking was the large number who could at most articulate finite and open-ended aspirations to achieve some form of limited 'progress' or 'improvement'. Here, surely, is evidence of the descent into custodial administration by the Indian Affairs Branch, bereft of purpose or hope, mentioned by other commentators on Canadian Indian administration in the middle part of this century.¹⁰³

Despite the discontinuities, the post-war official discourse, as revealed by the Glen correspondence, remained intact. Somewhat surprisingly, there was very little evidence of

¹⁰³ For instance see John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian-Native Relations, Eds. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S Lussier (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983: 39-55), and Robin Brownlie, "Man on the Spot: John Daly, Indian Agent in Parry Sound, 1922-1939," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, vol. 5, 1994: 63-86.

influence from the growing public debate about the 'Indian problem' and pressure for reform in the field staff's responses. Several Agents remarked on the phenomenon, usually positively, because the Minister had mentioned it, but some also expressed their frustrations at public criticisms of their efforts. It was no coincidence that the Branch would make its first attempts to formulate a coherent, pro-active and modern public relations policy over the next few years.¹⁰⁴ While there was some overlap between solutions discussed in the public domain and those presented by Indian Agents, the field personnel represented their own reflections on the impediments to their work, and an internal desire for technocratic reform without any direct references to public demands. There was none of the philosophical discussion evident in the public forum; instead the Agents appeared to greet the advent of reconstruction with the hope that it would mean more funds to ease their own administrative concerns. The IAB remained somewhat insulated from the broader trends and pressures of Canadian society, separated by its purpose and intimate contact with Aboriginal people.

Perhaps most importantly, the official discourse was still founded on the continuity of the 'Administrative Indian' and the paternalism and power inherent in its construction. All the essential elements of the 'Administrative Indian' remained dominant in the language and imagery used by IAB personnel to explain the causes of the 'Indian problem' and permeated their proposed solutions. In the estimation of most of the field personnel, at least part of the reason the assimilation program of the Branch had stalled was due to flaws in the character, intellect, morals

¹⁰⁴ Prior to this the IAB had done little to foster good relations with the media or promote itself, its actions or the activities of Aboriginal people. Though Branch officials had always gladly provided information to reporters, and even had some officers present material in radio talks. However, Indian Agents were not encouraged to develop relationships with local press agencies, and the departmental collection of photographs and motion picture material was to use Hoey's phrase, "almost non-existent [sic]," Memorandum, Director to the Deputy Minister, 24 April 1947 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6815, file # 482-1-1, pt. 1).

and culture of the wards under their jurisdiction. Moreover, despite their cautious willingness to transfer more responsibilities to Aboriginal communities, the field staff's obsession with their own authority remained, and, in the minds of some, needed reinforcing. It was the ongoing pervasiveness of the language of control and paternalism that formed the most significant continuity in the Glen correspondence. While the international and national context of their world had changed significantly with the end of total war, the dialectical link between the working image of the 'Indian' and the Branch's relationship with Aboriginal people existed much as it had been. Whether the resilience of the 'Administrative Indian' discourse could survive the review process of the subsequent years remained to be seen.

CHAPTER 6

INTO THE ARENA: MARSHALLING THE COMPETING INDIAN IMAGES IN POST-WAR CANADA, 1945-1948

Following the final defeat of the Axis powers, Canadians did not pause long to celebrate their victory, though there was an undeniable sense of pride and accomplishment in what the country had done. There was too much still to do if they were to win the peace and justify the sacrifice of the war years. Close to a million young men and women still wore the uniforms of the armed forces, many of whom were still overseas. The country's war industries that had been churning out bombers, machine guns and destroyers had to be transformed and retooled quickly to produce the goods suitable for civilian purposes. Housing, which was strictly controlled in major urban centres during the war, was still in critically short supply, and the labour and materials required to correct the problem were themselves largely unavailable. Other painful reminders of wartime's pinch were still evident in the maintenance of rationing and wage and price ceilings. However, the Canadian government was prepared for most of the hurdles ahead, with the massive machinery of reconstruction and rehabilitation already coming up to speed. Despite these other concerns, the issue of the 'Indian problem' continued to maintain the high profile it held in the late stages of the war. The calls for reform, in the House of Commons and in the media, only increased as 1945 turned into 1946.

By the spring of 1946, with a goodly portion of Canadian troops already returned home and the most immediately pressing matters of the transition to peace seemingly well in hand, the issue of what to do about the 'Indian problem' came to the fore of the national agenda. Parliament created a special joint committee of both the Senate and House of Commons to hear evidence and make recommendations for the revision of the Indian Act in mid-May. Some Aboriginal

organisations and English-Canadian social and religious groups had called for a full Royal Commission to investigate the issue, and were upset that a mere Parliamentary committee would perform the important task. However, the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act (hereafter referred to as the SJC) was awarded a broad mandate to hear witnesses and gather evidence. The government motion that created the SJC, charged it with examining Indian administration generally, and specifically to report on the following:

- 1) Treaty rights and obligations.
- 2) Band membership.
- 3) Liability of Indians to pay taxes.
- 4) Enfranchisement of Indians, both voluntary and involuntary.
- 5) Eligibility of Indians to vote at dominion elections.
- 6) The encroachment of white persons on Indian reserves.
- 7) The operation of Indian day and residential schools.
- 8) And any other matter or thing pertaining to the social and economic status of Indians and their advancement, which, in the opinion of such a committee should be incorporated in the revised act.¹

The last point, in particular, gave the committee *carte blanche* to evaluate the nature and extent of the 'Indian problem': a process that would continue through three subsequent sessions of Parliament.

For the purposes of this dissertation, these hearings will be treated as an arena. Into this arena, various groups brought their own images of what the 'Indian' was and articulated what they believed the 'Indian' ought to become. On the floor of the SJC these images strove for ascendancy, to see which would shape the future of Canada's relationship with the First Nations and be enshrined in legislation. Chapter 5 revealed the post-war state of the 'Administrative Indian' which the Indian Affairs Branch would present to the SJC. This chapter will examine the two remaining images of the 'Indian' and the 'Indian problem' that were brought to the table to contend for the

¹ Canada. House of Commons, Debates, 13 May 1946: 1446.

future of Canadian Indian policy. The actual minutes and proceedings of the SJC will be left to Chapter 7.

The two groups that presented their versions of the 'Indian' before the SJC were the Canadian public and First Nations people. Various elements of the 'Public Indian' entered the fray and are reconstituted here from two main sources: first, from the dozens of briefs and resolutions from labour, municipal, social, youth, religious and veterans groups received by the Indian Affairs Branch or printed in the appendices of the Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings; and, second, from the extensive and continuous newspaper coverage of the SJC activities and hearings. Beyond the 'Public Indian', the SJC provides a unique opportunity to explore Aboriginal peoples' sense of themselves. This consultation process was the first time that they had the chance to present their views before the dominant society in such a public and meaningful fashion. A large number of written briefs were submitted to the Committee by Aboriginal bands, tribal councils, chiefs and Native rights organisations, revealing both the diversity and the distinctiveness of their ideas about Canadian Indian policy and their identity.²

The following exploration is guided by a series of questions. Did the 'Public Indian' still command strong interest and sympathy once the war was over, and its immediacy had receded? How did Canadians foresee Aboriginal people fitting into Canada's society and state in the years to come? How wide-spread was the public interest and sympathy in the 'Indians' plight? To what extent were Canadians listening to the grievances and aspirations of the First Nations? Did the opinions and hopes expressed by First Nations groups have enough in common to constitute a unified discourse? To what extent did Aboriginal views have to be formulated using the language and concepts of the dominant discourse? Were Aboriginal visions of the future fundamentally in

² Nearly half of the 411 submissions to the SJC were received from Aboriginal sources.

line with, or opposed to, those articulated by Canadians? Was there any evidence of a pan-Indian consciousness forming through this period? The answers to these questions will provide a foundation from which to better comprehend the hearings and process of Canada's collective reassessment of the nation's relationship with its indigenous population.

The Special Joint Committee was called and sat during a period of unprecedented public concern about and involvement in the state of the country's relationship with the First Nations and their standard of living. During the year between VE Day and J.A. Glen's resolution in the House of Commons to establish a parliamentary investigation of the Indian Act, Canadians were confronted regularly with debate on the issue in the media. In addition, the number of letters, briefs, resolutions and recommendations received by the Indian Affairs Branch suggests that Canadians were discussing the 'Indian problem' privately. Nor did the intensity of public scrutiny of the process and the 'problem' diminish once the government met the demands for a review of Canada's Indian policy and established the SJC. The hearings were attended by Canadian Press reporters, as well as many of the major newspaper chains' staff reporters in the capital. The result was detailed coverage of virtually every report presented and delegation that attended in all the country's major dailies, with the smaller community papers supplied by wire service reports. In this diverse and massive amount of material, the 'Public Indian' emerges clearly in all its various forms, but the 'Indian victim' and the 'Indian-at-war' dominate these representations.

The material for the subsequent analysis is drawn from two major sources. First, from the extensive and continuous coverage of the SJC activities available in the nation's print media. This material was partly collected through the same sampling of papers used in previous chapters, but was augmented by two IAB files of clippings collected from across the country by various field personnel. These files are large, containing stories and editorials pertaining to 'Indian', IAB or

SJC activities, with the coverage of the latter dominant. The clippings were taken from papers in all provinces, most of which are not included in my own sampling, thus serving to broaden the spectrum of data. Generally speaking, any bias in selection of the stories forwarded to Ottawa by field personnel should be balanced by a tendency to send published material that was either especially complimentary, or deemed overly critical, of the Branch and their work. Beyond the media material, the 'Public Indian' can be gleaned from letters and briefs sent by interested Canadians to either the Indian Affairs Branch or the Chairman of the SJC. The former are available in IAB correspondence files pertaining to the Committee, and the latter appear in the appendices of the Minutes and Proceedings of the SJC itself. The combination of these sources provides a broad and extensive foundation from which to reconstruct the dominant society's image of the 'Indian' and its thoughts on the 'Indian problem' during the country's collective reexamination of the matter.

The most striking feature of the communications received by the SJC and IAB was the varied nature of the people and groups interested in the 'Indian problem'. Even prior to the establishment of the Committee by the government, the IAB was receiving numerous letters from organisations demanding a royal commission to review the Indian Act, and to improve the lot of the 'Indian'. For instance, the Dock and Shipyard Workers Union of Vancouver and District sent a letter to the Prime Minister fully endorsing the "legitimate demands" of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia for "a complete revision of the Indian Act."³ Further, they believed, "in light of the declarations of the Atlantic Charter that it would now be timely to accord our Native Indians equal status with other citizens of Canada." Similar calls were received from pro-Aboriginal groups such the Alberta-based, Committee of Friends of the Indians. However, the same

³ W.J. Robson to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, 15 October 1945 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11).

sentiments were expressed by a wide range of organisations: by veterans' organisations in Vancouver and Duncan, British Columbia; by the municipal councils in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; and by civic-minded associations, such as the Canadian Federation of Home and School or the Social Security Council of Canada.⁴ By far the most detailed such communiqué received was from "a small group of interested representative Canadian citizens." These included academics C.W.M. Hart and T.F. MacIlwraith, as well as Brigadier Oliver M. Martin, an enfranchised Six Nations Indian and Magistrate in Toronto, and the woman that had founded the Vancouver Folk Festivals, Mrs. John F. McCay.⁵

Once the Committee was in session, the already heterogeneous nature of these correspondents was further accentuated by the addition of the municipal council in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and the Board of Trade in Gogama, Ontario.⁶ Beyond these examples, letters and briefs arrived from religious groups of numerous denominations, political associations of various affiliations, veterans' organisations, professional societies, youth groups and social clubs such as

⁴ Reta G. Rowan to R.A. Hoey, 10 October 1945 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11), W.J.S. Hatter to the Indian Affairs Branch, 6 December 1945 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11), C. Willmott Maddison to the Minister, Department of Indian Affairs, 7 March 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11), H.P. McKeown to R.A. Hoey, 6 March 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11), Resolution of Sault Ste. Marie City Council Passed 25 February 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11), Mrs. K.G. Kern to R.A. Hoey, Esq., 23 April 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1), M. MacCulloch to J.A. Glen, 28 January 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11).

⁵ C.W.M. Hart et al to the Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King, 23 April 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11). Both Hart, a sociologist, and McIlwraith, an anthropologist, were from the University of Toronto, and the latter would be one of two academics to appear before the SJC to present expert evidence, the other being Dominion ethnologist, Diamond Jenness. Brigadier Oliver Martin reached the highest rank of anyone of Aboriginal ancestry in the Canadian military during the Second World War, commanding a Brigade on the Pacific coast, and would also appear before the SJC where he greatly impressed the Committee members. Unfortunately little could be found on Mrs. McCay.

⁶ (Illegible) to R.A. Hoey, 3 December 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 450-3-6, pt. 1), Gogama Board of Trade to the Department of Mines and Resources, 1 April 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 450-3-6, pt. 1).

the Calgary Branch of the Canadian Authors' Association.⁷ The sheer diversity of agencies demonstrated that the plight of the 'Indian' resonated with a multiplicity of Canadians. The content of these submissions ranged from elaborate manifestos to simple statements of support for the SJC's work, from resolutions on specific subjects to more comprehensive schemes for the solution of the 'Indian problem'. Nor were all such submissions written with the sole intent of supporting a new deal for the 'Indian'.⁸ A good example was a letter from the Secretary of the B.C. Beef Cattle Growers' Association complaining of the lack of fencing around Indian reserves that allowed non-Native's cattle, grazing on surrounding crown land, to accidentally trespass on Reserve land. This situation put the Associations' members at risk of prosecution.⁹ Taken as a whole, however, the material submitted to the SJC or sent to the IAB suggests that a large number of Canadians were actively engaged by the 'Indian problem' in the years immediately following the Second World

⁷ Rev. C.D. Powers to the Department of Indian Affairs, 11 June 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1), Rev. W.A. Cameron to the Minister of Mines and Resources, 17 May 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1), Clerical Secretary, LeR. Mooers to R.A. Hoey, 12 November 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1), R.W. Mayhew, M.P. to R.A. Hoey, Esq., 13 March 1947 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1), Secretary, Edmonton Teachers' Local Association to the Hon. J.A. Glen, 15 June 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1), Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League, Resolution Submitted, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No.5, 20 March 1947): 162, Agnes L Rean to the Hon. J.A. Glen, K.C., 16 February 1948 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 8583, file #1/1-2-16, pt. 3) Helen E. Thyne to the Hon. H. [sic] A. Glen, 7 April 1947 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1), Ramona C. Strong to the Dept. of Indian Affairs, 6 March 1948 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 8583, file #1/1-2-16, pt. 3), SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 20 March 1947): 199. The preceding is a representative sample of the types of sources mentioned, but is only a small fraction of the total received by the IAB and SJC.

⁸ For example, the Western Canada-Yukon Fish and Game Council, though expressing sympathy with the difficult circumstances of Aboriginal life was eager to amend the Indian Act to insure that 'Indians' abide by provincial and territorial game laws, as "it is incompatible with conservation that any section of the community shall be permitted to kill big game, game birds or fish during the breeding and spawning season," SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 14, 18 July 1946): 605.

⁹ J.E. Fry to the Hon. James A. Glen, 1 January 1948 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 8583, file #1/1-2-16, pt. 3).

War.

As in the past, the public discussions revealed the usual complex mix of 'Indian' images, but the extent of passionate rhetoric being bandied about in relation to the 'Indian problem' tended, if anything, to sharpen the distinctions of the various images. This process was clearly seen in the case of the two most common manifestations, the 'Indian victim' and the 'Indian-at-war'. The former had been steadily gaining the ascendancy in the public discourse since the final stages of the war, while the latter had briefly disappeared after VE Day, only to re-emerge again by the spring of 1946. The dominance of these two images should not be interpreted as meaning that other Canadian constructions of Aboriginal people had disappeared. The crime and alcohol stories still appeared regularly in many papers, and the negative contemporary interpretation of the 'Indian' was evident, though slight, in briefs received by the SJC.¹⁰ Moreover, the fanciful and trivialised 'noble savage' made a comeback in the media coverage of the "Ottawa Pow-Wow" where "Indian Braves" went on the "warpath", "Stalk[ing] MP's in Their Lair," and aimed "Verbal Tomahawks" at the government.¹¹ Nonetheless, the essence of the public discourse pertaining to the review of the 'Indian problem' was dominated by portrayals which emphasised either the wartime

¹⁰ "Indian Buys Wine to Oblige RCMP," Vancouver Sun (15 May 1946), p. 6, "Indian Stabs Another As Dance Ends," Kamloops Sentinel (9 January 1946), p. 1, "Border Liquor is Attraction to Indians of Saulte [sic] Ste. Marie," Brantford Chronicle (17 November 1945), p. 1, "Indians' View on the Virtues of Firewater," Flin Flon Miner (10 May 1947). In their brief to the SJC, the Board of Trade from Cochrane, Ontario, quoted from two late-seventeenth French documents commenting on the horrors of brandy among the 'Indians', before declaring, "modern students of the problem ['Indians' and alcohol] see little to correct in such reports. Whatever degree of equality in economic, political and social spheres may be attained for the Indian population, it would seem that they are even less capable than their white neighbours of using liquor with discretion," SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 14, 18 July 1946): 643.

¹¹ "Ottawa Pow-Wow May Net Brand New Deal for Indians," Prince Albert Daily Herald (28 July 1947), "Unruffled Ottawa Stops to Stare at Indian Braves," Prince Albert Daily Herald (26 May 1947), "Indians on Warpath Over Bingo, Jesuits," Globe and Mail (14 June 1947), "B.C. Indians Stalk MP's in Their Lair," Vancouver Sun (27 June 1946), "Caughnawaga Verbal Tomahawks Aimed at Government, Jesuits," Montreal Gazette (13 June 1947).

contributions of the First Nations, or their plight and powerlessness.

Of the two, the 'Indian-at-war' was the more prevalent. Editorials, news stories and briefs addressing the plight of the 'Indian' consistently made reference to the wartime efforts of the First Nations, and always highlighted Aboriginal veterans. For those commentators advocating changes in the country's Indian administration, the memory of Aboriginal military service formed a central component of their appeal. The British Columbia Indian Art and Welfare Society, in its submission to the SJC, challenged Canadians with the question:

how many ... have realized the quite recent shock experienced by young Indian soldiers on their return to civilian life, to find themselves relegated to the restricted status under which they lived before enlisting to fight overseas shoulder to shoulder with fellow Canadians, in the cause of freedom and equality for all nationalities, for which many gave their lives.¹²

The 'Indian-at-war' was not always spoken of in as generalised a way. Often it became personalised in the stories of individual veterans, such as the treatment accorded by the Winnipeg Tribune to Manitoba First Nations' efforts to organise themselves for their appearance before the SJC in 1947. In two extensive stories run on 4 and 7 December 1946, the paper highlighted the experiences of the spokesperson for the Manitoba Indian Association, and the most highly decorated Aboriginal soldier of the war, Sergeant Thomas Prince.¹³

Sgt. Tommy Prince, the Scantebury Indian, who spread terror through German and Italian troops in the recent war with his savage attacks and deadly sniping, is now leading fellow treaty Indians down another warpath. They are fighting for many reforms for the Canadian Indian.¹⁴

It was unsurprising that journalists would key in on a high profile case such as Prince's, but this pattern that did not require a famous hero. Moreover, references to specific Aboriginal soldiers or

¹² SJC, Minuted and Proceedings, (No. 5, 20 March 1947): 179.

¹³ "Indian War Hero Heads New Battle," Winnipeg Tribune (4 December 1946), p. 1, 5,
13, "Indians Find Champion in World War Hero," Winnipeg Tribune (7 December 1946).

¹⁴ "Indian War Hero ...," Winnipeg Tribune.

general military service were included even when it had little to do with the main thrust of the story. For instance, in an article on an Aboriginal council in Duncan, British Columbia, the last paragraph of a long story noted in passing that the “records of the meeting were taken down by Pte. Elliott, of the Canadian Army, a member of the Somenos band who served with distinction overseas, and fought throughout the entire Italian campaign.”¹⁵ Little else needed to be said to touch Canadians’ sense of obligation and appreciation for the Aboriginal war effort.

Not to be left out in the public discourse, the picture of the powerless ‘Indian’, living in abysmal conditions, and crushed under the weight of an indifferent society, a parsimonious government and an oppressive, incompetent administration was frequently conjured up by commentators. Few put the case as strongly as did the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union, in its brief to the SJC.

The Canadian Indians are a backward and a depressed race whose morale is shattered and whose self-confidence is lost. Educationally they are either illiterate or little better, and economically they are incompetent and dependent. For this condition the Indians are not to blame. Whenever and wherever they were first encountered by white men no one of these descriptions applied.¹⁶

The key elements of the ‘Indian victim’ remained. The fault for their condition lay not with themselves, but instead lay at the feet of the dominant society and its government. Guilt wracked many Canadians over this circumstance, a guilt that undercut what they believed themselves and their society to represent. One letter to the editor that appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press struck a righteous note:

To have taken the Indian lands is bad enough, then to put the Indians back on reservations and segregate them is worse. But to crown it all; to call ourselves a Christian nation and send them missionaries is the height of hypocrisy. Truly we need to set our own house in order, if we are true Christians in Canada, and not only

¹⁵ “Cowichan Indians Request New Deal From Government,” Victoria Daily Colonist, undated clipping (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file 470-3-7).

¹⁶ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2017.

repent our sins, but rectify them.¹⁷

The 'Indian victim' was perhaps the best tool to mobilise public support for Indian policy reform because it tapped into the latent collective sense of guilt in Canada over the displacement of the 'Indian'.

Significantly, these two images of the 'Public Indian' were frequently paired together, particularly by proponents of Indian policy reform. An editorial that appeared in the Saint John Telegraph Journal in July 1946 demonstrates this phenomenon.

If anything further were needed, the war effort made by the original Canadians should have earned them a right to a hearing. They served well both in the armed services and as part of Canada's labour force. But even without this war service, Indian grievances alone should have been sufficient to arouse public attention ... They are not given the franchise, however, but they are required to accept military service and pay income tax ... Those remaining on reservations, "the treaty Indians," complain of inadequate medical care, improper food, lack of housing and violations of their fishing and hunting rights. That these complaints have foundation in fact may be gathered from statistics like the following: infant mortality rate of 400 per thousand compared with fifty-two per thousand among the white population; 732 deaths per thousand from T.B. compared with fifty one [sic] among whites.¹⁸

Similarly, the joint submission of the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers to the SJC combined the two images in a succinct manner:

the Indian population, by virtue of its special status, has been precluded from benefit under all types of social legislation with the exception of family allowances. The Indians have assumed responsibility as citizens both in World War I and World War II and have made a valuable contribution to national defence.¹⁹

Juxtaposing the 'Indian victim' with the 'Indian-at-war' so sharply was designed to shock readers and make plain what Aboriginal sympathisers saw as the essence of the injustice of the 'Indian

¹⁷ "Deplores Canada's Attitude to Indians," Winnipeg Free Press (18 May 1946), p. 18.

¹⁸ "The Original Canadians," Saint John Telegraph Journal (15 July 1946). In fact the T.B. death rate was per hundred thousand, but the difference in the rates between Aboriginal people and the general Canadian population was stunning.

¹⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 20 March 1947): 155.

problem': denying them the rights and privileges of citizenship, while at the same time forcing them to accept the most onerous duties citizenship entailed in military service and taxation.

In underpinning the call for reform, both 'Indian' images served a dual role. The 'Indian victim' first served to tap into the collective guilt about the historically poor treatment accorded the First Nations by forcing Canadians to face the 'racism' and indifference in their own society and administration. Equally as important, it exonerated the 'Indian' for those same conditions, allowing them to be classed, in a sense, as 'deserving poor', worthy of pity and help. The 'Indian-at-war' most obviously associated the reform of Canada's Indian policy with the potent emotion of the debt owed to Aboriginal people for their sacrifices for the collective good in wartime. Beyond this well established role, the 'Indian-at-war' also served a new purpose. It conveyed a sense of promise for the future, of what the 'Indian' was capable of achieving when given the opportunity.²⁰ Surely, if they could demonstrate civic virtues through giving to the Red Cross, refusing their treaty payments and buying Victory Bonds, as well as excel in military service, then they could become productive, full-fledged citizens in Canada's 'new order'. Always before, the 'Public Indian' had been constructed as either a historical or a contemporary creature. However, these manifestations had said little about the future, either because Canadians believed that the 'Indian' was a vanishing 'race' and the 'Indian problem' would die with them, or because the immediacy of the war prohibited much attention for the future. Nevertheless, at the peculiar moment in time when the SJC sat in session, Canada was not only coming to the realisation that the Aboriginal population was growing strongly and thus not dying out, but was also prepared to look forward

²⁰ For instance, see the column by Elmore Philpott, "Native Voices," Vancouver Sun (4 September 1946). Philpott argued that "In two world wars, and in a thousand walks of peacetime life, the Indian people have shown that they have capacities, developed or latent, quite as high as those of any other people on earth."

and come to grips with the 'Indian problem'.²¹

Canadians for the most part held similar views about the appropriate solutions to the 'Indian problem', though not necessarily about the final goal. The principles for which they had fought formed the foundation for the proposals that the dominant society produced. This foundation was essential because the status and marginalisation of Aboriginal people were arguably the clearest contradictions of the freedom, equality and democracy that they believed Canada ought to embody. These sentiments appeared in an introspective Globe and Mail editorial that was picked up and reprinted in Saint John, New Brunswick. Expressing some encouragement at the appointment of the SJC, the writer was nonetheless appalled that the evidence already presented,

describing restraint of freedom and maladministration [sic] in the Indian Affairs Branch, [which] is a poor commentary upon our appreciation of democracy. The people of this country are quick to rally against injustice to their Japanese, Italian or German minorities and to ill-treatment of similar groups in other lands. We are inclined to deplore the treatment of coloured people in the Southern United States; we are eager to spring to the defence of the Jews in Europe. But we are strangely reluctant to gaze inward for even a momentary consideration of our obligation to the race to which we owe the most.²²

All critics agreed with the need for improvements to health care, education, social security and economic opportunity made available for Aboriginal people, but beyond that, "few will deny that the time has come for a greater equality of rights for Canadian Indians."²³ The Vancouver Branch of the Civil Liberties Union went further, setting forth the principle that "all members of our democratic society are entitled to, and should be granted, the same rights and liberties."²⁴ A new

²¹ "'Vanishing Indian' Myth," Saint John Telegraph Journal (date illegible, NAC RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-7).

²² "The Case For The Indian," Saint John Telegraph Journal (18 July 1946).

²³ "A plea for Indians," Regina Leader-Post (4 February 1947).

²⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2015.

tendency to refer to Aboriginal people as the “Original Canadians,” as “Canada’s First Citizens” or the “original owners of the country” all served to legitimise this desire to extend citizenship to the ‘Indian’.²⁵

Most Canadians seemed ready to accept that the time had come to grant the ‘Indian’ citizenship and equality. Such was the demand of the Co-operative Commonwealth Youth Movement, the National Council of the Young Women’s Christian Association, the Oak Bay Liberal Association and the Convention of Baptist Churches of British Columbia.²⁶ One veterans’ group phrased its views in a resolution that called on the government “to amend the Indian Act to bring all North American Indians who have served their country Overseas, outside the scope and provisions of the Indian Act, thereby placing them in the position of free men.”²⁷ Many were unaware of the complexities involved in making Aboriginal people citizens, or even whether they desired such status. Certainly, few demonstrated the perception of one writer who recognised that to “remedy such contradiction of modern concepts of human rights, while yet preserving the essence of guarantees embedded in Indian treaties, presents a real challenge to both the Parliamentary committee and the people of Canada.”²⁸ Nor, indeed, was everyone confident that granting citizenship would solve the ‘Indian problem’, because “our Red people are in a sense *children* and need guidance, instruction on how to live and work. The giving of votes will be of

²⁵ “The Original Canadians,” Saint John Telegraph Journal, Maddison to the Minister, 7 March 1946. “Lo, the Poor Indian,” Vancouver Sun (16 May 1946), p. 4.

²⁶ “CCYM Asks Indians Get Full Rights,” Vancouver Sun (22 April 1946), Rean to Glen, 16 February 1948, Mayhew to Hoey, 13 March 1947, “Support Indian Status Appeal Request at Baptist Convention,” Victoria Daily Colonist (28 June 1946).

²⁷ Maddison to the Minister, 7 March 1946.

²⁸ “Status of Indians Neglected,” Editorial from unknown periodical (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-7).

little benefit.”²⁹ Despite this scepticism, the vast majority of public discussion of the ‘Indian problem’ in this period expressed the belief that removing the anomaly of the Aboriginal people’s ward status should be the first and most important step.

More significant divisions appeared in the public discourse over the question of the final goal: where the ‘Indian’ should fit into Canadian society. The majority, if they even bothered to articulate the prevailing ‘common sense’ of the day, assumed that the ‘Indian’ ought to be assimilated into the mainstream of Canadian society. In the opinion of the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers, “the only defensible goal for a national program must be the full assimilation of Indians into Canadian life.”³⁰ Underlying the certainty in assimilation was a faith that the process was somehow inherently natural, that if only the proper policies and education were provided, the ‘Indian’ would progress up to the necessary standard of civilisation. Hand in hand with this conviction went a remarkable sense of optimism that a final solution to the ‘Indian problem’ was obtainable within a generation or two: “the officially declared objective of the Government of Canada should be the equalization of status between Canadians of whatever ancestry as will entail the disappearance of any specific Indian problem probably within a generation and certainly within half a century.”³¹ The ‘Indian problem’ was solvable; it simply required the removal of administrative and financial barriers so that assimilation could resume its inevitable course to the logical destination.

There was a vocal and articulate minority that continued to advocate a process of

²⁹ Roy F. Fleming, “A Word For the Indians,” Saturday Night (27 July 1947). Emphasis in original.

³⁰ SJC, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence (No. 5, 20 March 1947): 155.

³¹ SJC, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence (No. 5, 13 and 21 April 1948): 199. This was the first resolution in a seven-point plan submitted by the Graduate Student Christian Movement at the University of British Columbia.

integration rather than assimilation, though in practice the terminology was loosely applied. The best example of this view is seen in the brief of the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union which argued that there was only one way in which the SJC could produce a “Magna Carta of the Indians”:

it must propose a policy and program for the Indian Branch that are directed in a very positive way toward bringing out in the Indians the qualities of independence, initiative, self-respect, responsibility, self-reliance, and, in general, the heightened morale, to the end that, culturally and economically, they shall soon become capable of sustaining themselves in Canadian society, and of being assimilated to it.³²

The brief acknowledged that “to many Indians the word ‘assimilation’ is repugnant because to them it implies the loss of their identity as Indians. As we use it, no such meaning is intended.”³³

It then went on to say that,

in becoming assimilated, the Indians need only to add to the background they already possess, the abilities, outlook and knowledge that are necessary if they are to participate independently and responsibly in Canadian life. But we are convinced that in the final analysis, the Indians really have no choice. They must become assimilated (in the sense that we use the word) if they are to survive. History shows what will be their own historical fate. Unless, individually, they are able to adapt themselves to the society in which they exist, they are doomed to racial submergence.

Some advocates of integration were willing to accept that the ‘Indian’ could continue to hold the benefits and protections of the Indian Act and their treaties as well as be granted all the rights of citizenship. However, others assumed that the ‘Indian’ would maintain some benign cultural traits and communal connections, as did Highland Scots for instance, but only after surrendering their special constitutional status. In this period, when Canadians were dedicated to equality and universality, the idea of differentiated citizenship was not a concept likely to meet with widespread acceptance.

³² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947):2020.

³³ *ibid*, p. 2022.

"Rodeo somewhere?" the black-faced porter asked as nine Indians clambered aboard an eastbound C.P.R. train Friday night. But the Indians were not on their way to a rodeo. They took with them no feathered headdresses, buckskin jackets or sham war paint. For the first time in 70 years the Indians were on their way to Ottawa - to make history.³⁴

Much could be drawn from this quotation, but it is the final three words that are particularly noteworthy. Thus far, this study has been about English-Canadians making the 'Indian' and in a sense making 'history' largely insulated from input by Aboriginal people. For the most part, the dominant society had not been especially interested in what the First Nations thought themselves to be, or what they aspired to become. English-Canada wielded sufficient power in the relationship to ignore that which did not fit their conceptualisations of the 'Indian' and fulfil their own needs. However, the peculiar context of the latter 1940s, combining a growing awareness of the neglect that had characterised the country's treatment of the First Nations, the memory of Aboriginal contributions to the war effort and the profound desire to win the peace, made it impossible for Canadian society to ignore the 'Indian' any longer. In no small measure this recognition was the product of the publicity accorded to an increasingly active and vocal Aboriginal political movement.

Aboriginal people, in the war's wake, were themselves unwilling to have their fate dictated. There seems to have been some unrest and an increasing degree of excitement on a number of Indian Reserves across the country, spurred on by the promise of reform and improved conditions. Nor were IAB personnel happy with what they viewed as agitation and the change in attitude among their charges.³⁵ The Agent in Walpole Island, Ontario, noted that the "unrest of the Reserve

³⁴ "Indians To Seek Changes in Law," Calgary Albertan (19 April 1947).

³⁵ Quarterly Report of the Agent for Period Ending June 30th 1946, Bella Coola Indian Agency, B.C., F. Earl Anfield, Indian Agent (NAC, RG 10, vol. 8583, file # 1/1-2-16, pt. 1), T.L. Bonnah to the Indian Affairs Branch, 28 May 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-3-6, pt. 1). Bonnah forwarded a petition from the Hereditary Chiefs of the Caughnawaga and the St. Regis (continued...)

at the present time is without a doubt the greatest it has been during the past 16 years," while his counterpart in Fort Frances, Ontario, complained that "the Indians [sic] manner is changing in demanding certain concessions since they have been receiving so much publicity through the press."³⁶ On one reserve in Ontario, the Agent's quarterly report at the end of 1945 complained that:

there is also a noticeable change in the attitude of the Indians towards Departmental Officials and the Indians quite often express the opinion that they are dominated by rules, regulations and decisions that have not been fair to the Indians and made without being given any voice to express approval or disapproval, who maintain they are being treated more like a conquered minority ...³⁷

This Agent also noted the "marked feeling of unrest among the Indians of Tyendinaga Reserve, which, in part, can be attributed to a participation in the activities of the North American Indian Brotherhood and other Indian organizations." These communiqués suggest that IAB personnel were still not at ease with the idea of allowing their charges to organise, but more importantly they reveal how intensely engaged were Aboriginal people in the reform proceedings and preparing for their part in them.

Central in articulating and publicizing the First Nations' grievances and convictions were the numerous political and Aboriginal rights associations that had formed in recent years. During the war years, sparked by outrage at being deemed liable to national registration, conscription and

³⁵(...continued)

Reserves to Ottawa along with an attached letter stating that "it is regretted that some of our Indians should have nothing else to do but entertain themselves in such a manner."

³⁶ Agent's Confidential Report, Walpole Island Agency, James W. Daley, Indian Agent, 15 July 1946 (NAC, RG 10, vol. 8583, file # 1/1-2-16, pt. 1), Report for the Quarter Ending Dec. 31 1946, J.F. Lockhart, Indian Agent (NAC, RG 10, vol. 8583, file # 1/1-2-16, pt. 1). Daley was particularly concerned with the newly elected Band council which was in his estimation radical and impossible to deal with "until they cool down."

³⁷ Agent's Report for the Quarter ending December 31, 1945, A.D. Moore, Indian Agent (NAC RG 10, vol. 6811, file # 470-2-3, pt. 11).

unprecedented taxation, they had begun to organise themselves in earnest in many parts of the country, in spite of administrative opposition. This process accelerated once the government's intention to form the SJC was announced in December 1945.³⁸ Generally speaking, these organisations reflected the typical pattern of early Aboriginal political organisations.³⁹ They tended to spring up in reaction to a perceived threat or crisis, such as conscription, or in response to an opportunity like the SJC, and often disbanded or lost momentum once the event had passed. In addition, these associations tended to be local or regional in character, as tribal and religious factionalism combined with difficulties in communication and lack of financial resources to inhibit more widespread activities. In some cases, the aid and support of non-Aboriginal supporters was essential in these formations, as it was with the provincial organisations in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Finally, the majority were reformist, rather than revolutionary in intent; they sought to alter the existing administrative, legislative and constitutional structures and to increase

³⁸ The surge in formation of Aboriginal political organisations during the 1940s is visible in a chart printed in Donald Whiteside, Historical Development of Aboriginal Political Associations in Canada: Documentation, Vol. 1 (Ottawa: Reference Aids - Indexes 1973), p. 38. The chart tracked the number of major organisations formed in each decade: seven during the 1920s, a further seven during the 1930s, jumping to twelve during the 1940s. Importantly most of those formed during the twenties and thirties folded prior to the Second World War. In the wake of the post-war policy reform activity, several organisations shut down and the number of new organisations shrank to 9, before the explosion of First Nations nationalism and politicisation in the late 1960s and early 1970s (33 organisations during the 1960s, and 41 between 1970-1973).

³⁹ The secondary literature on Aboriginal organisation in this period agrees on this point, and has been ably summarised by John Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943-1963* (PhD. Dissertation, Carleton University, 1999), p. 83-87. See for example, R.R.H Lueger, *A History of Indian Associations in Canada, 1870-1970* (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1977), Donald Whiteside, Efforts to Develop Aboriginal Political Associations in Canada, 1850-1965 (Ottawa, Aboriginal Institute of Canada, 1974), Paul Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman, John Tootoosis (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1984, originally published 1982), Alan Morley, Roar of the Breakers: A Biography of Peter Kelly (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), and E.P. Patterson, *Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence* (PhD. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1962).

the services and benefits provided them by the government.⁴⁰ These organisations and their leaders would be critically important in formulating the First Nations' views of Canada's Indian policy and administration and conveying those views to the dominant society.

The wave of organising was noticeable during the war, when already existing organisations, like the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia and the Indian Association of Alberta, accelerated their activities.⁴¹ In addition, a number of new organisations sprang up in Saskatchewan, Quebec and Nova Scotia.⁴² Perhaps the most significant of the new collectivities to emerge during the war, and the only one with national aspirations, was the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB), which was formed in 1943. This organisation was led by the flamboyant, well educated and very articulate Andrew Paull, a staunch opponent of anything resembling

⁴⁰ As will be seen, the exceptions to this rule were among the 'traditional' elements of the various Six Nations reserves in Ontario and Quebec, such as the Hereditary Chiefs, who viewed themselves as allies of the British crown rather than British subjects under the Indian Act.

⁴¹ The Protestant-dominated Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC) was formed in the early 1930s on the north coast of British Columbia, and, though it carried out political activities and agitated for Aboriginal rights, functioned primarily as a union for Aboriginal fisherman on the coast. Peter Kelly, a Methodist Minister and member of the Haida Nation, was the NBBC's principal spokes person for Indian policy reform, making ten trips to Ottawa between 1936 and 1946 to lobby an petition on behalf of the Brotherhood. Both he and the organisation were moderates and accepting of assimilation as inevitable and perhaps even positive for their people. Some of its other leading figures, including, Arthur Adams, Chief William Scow, Guy Williams and Andrew Paull, had already been political activists for decades, and a few would achieve very high profiles as advocates for Aboriginal rights over the next several decades. See Morley, *Roar of the Breakers*, p.144-147, and E.P. Patterson, *Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence*, chapter VIII. The Indian Association of Alberta formed in 1939, was reorganised in 1944, and claimed the support of almost every band in the province.

⁴² In Saskatchewan there were three organisations formed during the war: the Association of Saskatchewan Indians formed in 1943 under the leadership of Chief Joe Dreaver from the Mistawasis Reserve, the Saskatchewan Branch of the North American Indian Brotherhood was formed by John Tootoosis in 1944, and the Protective Association for Indians and their Treaties formed in the Qu'Appelle area. In Quebec, the most radical of all the Aboriginal leaders in this period, Jules Sioui, from the Lorretteville Reserve, led the Protection Committee of the Indian Tribes of Quebec from 1943 until 1944, when he became active in setting up the North American Indian Brotherhood. Finally, on Cape Breton island the Grand General Indian Council of Cape Breton was formed in 1944, and lasted until the emergence of the new Indian Act in 1951.

assimilation. Paull had a long track record as an advocate for Aboriginal rights, and also much experience at dealing with the media.⁴³ Ironically, perhaps, the SJC's policy of soliciting Aboriginal representatives by province served to foster the creation of several more important provincial organisations in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.⁴⁴ Whether the dominant society was prepared or not, the war and the post-war reform process had provided Aboriginal people with the catalyst to organise, the confidence to assert their right to a new deal, and the moral currency to gain a sympathetic hearing.

In all, the SJC received 150 submissions from Aboriginal sources in response to a letter soliciting their views circulated by Norman Lickers, the SJC's legal counsel.⁴⁵ The submissions originated from Native rights associations, Aboriginal leaders, band counsels and social organisations from the Pacific Coast to Quebec, and the Mackenzie River valley to the Grand River valley. Some were no more elaborate than the pointed and succinct letter from James Mitchall, Acting Chief of the Siccameen Band in Hammond B.C., who stated:

I want to remain an Indian.
I do not want to pay taxes.
I want to remain on the old Indian Act.
I have nothing against any school.

⁴³ Paull had been a sports promoter in Vancouver, running lacrosse and baseball teams for many years, and had maintained a high profile in the local and provincial media, Patterson, *Andrew Paul and Canadian Indian Resurgence*, p. 191-92. He would later use his 'colourful character' image to further his ends as leader of the NAIB.

⁴⁴ These included the Union of Ontario Indians (a Branch of the NAIB) in 1946-47, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood in 1946, the Union of Saskatchewan Indians formed in 1946 with the help of the provincial C.C.F. party and G.H. Casteldan, federal C.C.F. member for Yorkton, effectively amalgamating the three previous provincial organisations under one structure, and the Confederation of Interior Tribes of B.C. (loosely affiliated with Paull's NAIB) in 1947.

⁴⁵ Norman Lickers, an articulate Brantford barrister and member of the Six Nations, was the sole Aboriginal person directly affiliated with the process. He served in this capacity during each of the three sessions of Parliament in which the SJC sat, corresponding with Aboriginal groups to organise their attendance during the 1947 hearings.

I do not want white people on our reserve.⁴⁶

Others, such as the Indian Association of Alberta and the Mississauga of the Credit River, submitted much longer, more technical and legalistic written briefs that suggested a sophisticated plan for the renewal of Canada's Indian administration or that critiqued shortcomings in the existing act on a section by section basis.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, there is a problem with a significant minority of these submissions. Letters from Band councils and chiefs in widely scattered parts of Canada bore identical wording in some of their answers. These were uniformly from predominately Roman Catholic Aboriginal communities, to whom 'form letters' were apparently provided to be signed by the chiefs and councillors and forwarded to Ottawa.⁴⁸ It is uncertain how much weight to lend to these submissions. The wording does vary somewhat; there seems to have been several forms to each answer and each contained some local issues of concern. But it is not clear whether the variations in wording accurately reflect the opinion of the bands. Nevertheless, even if these are disregarded, there is more than enough evidence to reconstruct the distinct and complex sense of self, as expressed by Aboriginal people.

It was the very complexity and diversity of Aboriginal peoples, cultures and aspirations that proved surprising and, at times, baffling to the dominant society. The contentious issues being

⁴⁶ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 20 March 1947): 164.

⁴⁷ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 12, 21 April 1947): 571-653, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947):2094-95.

⁴⁸ The remarkable similarity of wording in these letters is immediately evident. John Leslie mentions in a footnote that evidence has been uncovered at the Archives Deschâtelets in the records of the Oblate Indian and Eskimo Welfare Commission indicating that this was done, see Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination?*, p. 162, note # 116. The Catholic hierarchy was particularly concerned with the question of denominational schooling, which all these letters strongly supported. According to Leslie, they distrusted the Protestant-dominated Indian Affairs Branch and SJC, and the IAB, in turn, viewed with cynicism these "inspired briefs".

addressed by the SJC revealed strong opinions and deep divisions among, as well as within, First Nations communities. Perhaps most controversial and divisive were the issues of liquor regulations and education. Access to alcohol was all the more evocative in light of the experiences of Aboriginal veterans, who had enjoyed the same privileges as their non-Aboriginal colleagues in the military during the war, but who risked arrest upon their return. Many briefs expressed a desire to see the special regulations regarding Indians removed from the Act, and asked that "the Indians be granted the privileges and be governed by the same laws and regulations as the Whites."⁴⁹ However, the emotions and sordid history that cloaked the 'liquor question' drew strong opposition from other bands, such as those on the Duck Lake Agency in Saskatchewan, who:

view[ed] with alarm attempts made by whites to induce our people or condone Indians who are addicted to the consumption of intoxicants. Our treaties contained a promise that no intoxicants would be permitted on our reservations and we wish to adhere to the regulations...⁵⁰

The split was even more sharp in the discussions about education, because all parties recognised its centrality in any program to improve the First Nations' living conditions. In particular, this division can be seen in the debate over whether to have the churches continue their prominent role in providing education to the First Nations, or to replace the existing program with a non-denominational one along the lines of the standard provincial systems.⁵¹ Almost half of the Aboriginal briefs were "very much opposed to the public school systems of education being foisted

⁴⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 215. This was taken from a brief submitted by Chiefs and councillors of the Carrier First Nation from north central British Columbia.

⁵⁰ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2075.

⁵¹ John Leslie counted twenty-nine briefs in favour of better-funded religious instruction and thirty-three desiring an overhauled system of non-denominational schools, see Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination?*, p. 162, note # 115.

upon us.”⁵² A majority agreed with the brief of the Union of Saskatchewan Indians, who argued that, “though parochial schools have contributed much to the education of the Indians, the time has now come when it is necessary to separate education from religion.”⁵³ While there was greater agreement on many other issues among the First Nations, the range of opinions was wide, and there were always exceptions to the rule.

At times, Aboriginal people articulated their views using language and concepts similar to those of the dominant society, since Canadians’ hegemonic discourses formed the *lingua franca* for the debate on Indian policy reform and the ‘Indian problem’. Thus, in part, Aboriginal people had to couch their cases in terms that the dominant society could understand. A good example was the submission of the Big Trout Lake Band, in the Sioux Lookout Agency, Ontario, which concluded “the above would be our idea of helping the Indians help themselves with what they have.”⁵⁴ The phrase, “help the Indians to help themselves,” was adopted as a slogan by the SJC, and summed up much of the dominant society’s hopes for the reform process.⁵⁵ However, even though First Nations’ briefs revealed similar terminology, the meaning could and did differ from the dominant society. Terms like ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’, ‘progress’, ‘citizenship’ and ‘equality’ were broad enough to accommodate a multiplicity of meanings, and Aboriginal leaders and spokespersons used such language almost as liberally as their Canadian counterparts. The brief of the “Aboriginal Natives of the Fraser Valley and Interior Tribes of British Columbia” argued that “the time has

⁵² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 25, 22 May 1947): 1338. This quotation was drawn from the brief of the Veterans’ Association of Wikwemikong from, Manitoulin Island, Ontario.

⁵³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 19, 8 May 1947): 979.

⁵⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 26, 23 May 1947): 1426.

⁵⁵ Ian V.B. Johnson, Helping Indians to help themselves - a committee to investigate itself: the 1951 Indian Act Consultation Process (Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1984), p. 17. See also D.F. Brown’s speech to the SJC membership at its opening session in 1948, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 19 February 1948): 9.

come for the recognition of us Natives as people with equal intelligence and integrity, eligible to exercise equal status of full citizenship privileges.”⁵⁶ But, whereas these words for Canadians presupposed assimilation and the disappearance of special ‘Indian’ rights and status, in this brief there was no incompatibility between exercising citizenship privileges and “maintaining all our traditions, aboriginal rights, interests and benefits.”

Moreover, Aboriginal people also seized upon and turned these same elements of the dominant discourses to their advantage. First Nations’ briefs presented claims in terms that would resonate in English-Canada’s collective psyche, in order to win sympathy and support for their cause. This is not implying that Aboriginal people were cynical or insincere in the beliefs they expressed, but certainly they recognised that the environment was ripe for Indian policy reform and they knew the most effective lines of argument to sway their non-Aboriginal neighbours. Thus, protests against having to pay taxes were sometimes framed in reference to that classic tenet of British justice, ‘no taxation without representation’.⁵⁷ Or, more commonly, First Nations groups harnessed their general appeal for a ‘new deal’ to the emotion of reconstruction through references to their loyalty and the military service during the wars. In their demand for recognition of their status as sovereign allies of the British crown, the Hereditary Chiefs of the Iroquois at the Oka Reserve, near Montreal, pulled at the heart strings of Canadians in this manner.

⁵⁶ *SJC*, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 2, 11 March 1947): 52.

⁵⁷ An example of this use can be found in the brief submitted on behalf of the Millbrook Band near Truro, Nova Scotia by their legal counsel, *SJC*, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 21, 13 August 1946): 854-55. While traditionally this phrase is associated with efforts to win the right of representation, as in the revolt of the Thirteen Colonies, in the case of many of Canada’s First Nations, most of whom did not desire the franchise, the phrase was turned around to read, ‘no taxation because we have no representation.’ A significant minority did feel that they deserved the federal vote because they were paying taxes and performing military service, such as in the brief from the band on Georgina Island, Ontario, *SJC*, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 26, 23 May 1947): 1440. Typically, Aboriginal briefs did not even bother to defend their opposition to paying taxes, but most that did based their argument on their rights under treaty.

Lest we forget now and forever that in Europe and Pacific battlefields the flowers bloom between the crosses, row on row, and in other places, lie many of our Indian braves. They went through the stench of hell fire, met the onslaught of ingenious instruments of modern warfare, the insidiousness of poison gas and other diabolical weapons of death. They lie in honoured death that the British flag may never fall, the sun never set on the British Empire, so that Britannia rules the waves and that the escutcheon of the House of Windsor be not desecrated ... Also that some day their laws and rights and sovereignty of their own people might be honoured and respected.⁵⁸

Conjuring the haunting and familiar cadence of John McCrae's poem, "In Flanders Fields," alongside the stark imagery of death and fervent loyalty was a potent combination of imagery not easily shrugged off by English-Canadians in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

Despite the heterogeneous nature of the First Nations and their views expressed before the SJC, a clear sense of themselves as distinct and separate cultural entities emerges. Two briefs even went so far as to request abolishing the term 'Indian' and renaming the legislation the Native Canadian Act. "Why should we (Natives) be called Indians. There is no valid reason for calling us (Natives) Indians simply because one white man made a mistake. We (Natives) are not living in India, we (Natives) are living in Canada."⁵⁹ Aboriginal responses to two key issues in the SJC's terms of reference set their sense of identity apart from the prevailing 'Public' and 'Administrative Indians'. Specifically, it was their views on treaty rights and obligations, and enfranchisement, both of which were integral to the future of Aboriginal people, that best exemplified the strength of conviction and determination of Aboriginal people to maintain their separate cultural existence.

For most First Nations communities, the treaties agreed to between their ancestors and

⁵⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 33, 12 June 1947):1796.

⁵⁹ This quote is taken from the brief of the United Native Farmers' Organisation of the Sto:lo Tribe in Sardis, British Columbia, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 21, 13 August 1946): 848. This argument also forwarded by the "Aboriginal Natives of the Fraser Valley and the Interior Tribes of the Interior of British Columbia," SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 2, 11 March 1947): 57. The similarity in wording suggests that there was some overlap in the membership of these two organisations.

representatives of the British crown or Canadian government were the bedrock upon which rested their relationship with the society amongst whom they lived. Almost without exception, the Aboriginal submissions to the SJC expressed a reverent faith in, and rigid adherence to, the terms of their treaties; and they expected and demanded that the government treat the agreements with equal respect. Numerous groups even argued that they would prefer to be rid of the Indian Act and re-establish their association with Canada on the basis of the treaties alone.⁶⁰ The depth of feeling and all its ramifications were best expressed in one of the eloquent briefs of the North American Indian Brotherhood. In it, Andrew Paull, President of the organisation, decried the fact that:

The average layman has a very vague notion of the position and status of the Indian in Canada. To him an Indian is very much as any other Canadian subject, except that he suffers certain restrictions ... This attitude would not matter very much if it were confined to the ordinary layman. Unfortunately it frequently extends to persons of prominence, persons who have some say in the promulgation of our laws ... They often insist that such legislation should apply to the Indians and completely disregard the ancient treaties entered into with the Indians ... Indeed, at times they find it irksome that any ethnic group or race should live within the confines of Canada and not be subject to all the laws and obligations of regular citizens.⁶¹

Paull argued that this attitude,

fails to take into account the whole history of Canada, the treaties made with the Indians and the solemn obligations created thereunder; it fails to take into account that most of this country was ceded to the Crown by the Indians in virtue of such treaties and the solemn obligations to protect the Indians in their rights and the comparatively small areas reserved for them, and them alone. It ignores the protective laws created for the Indians by the Imperial Government and the spirit and motives [sic] that actuated them, perpetuated in the British North America Act and the Indian Act. It loses sight of the fact that this whole beautiful country belonged to the Indians and that it was ceded, not as a result of conquest, but as a result of

⁶⁰ An example of this appeared in the submission of Lake Constance Band in Ontario, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 21, 13 August 1946): 862-63. More can be found in the briefs from the Six Nations reserves in Oshweken, St. Regis, Caughnawaga and Oka, including both those parts of the communities that supported the elected council and those that declared their allegiance to the Six Nations Confederacy and their Hereditary Chiefs.

⁶¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 21, 13 August 1946): 829.

honourable treaties between honourable and independent nations.⁶²

The last point is a crucial one. The relevance of treaties to Aboriginal people arose in part because these agreements confirmed the legitimate right of the First Nations to be separate peoples. The validity and respect accorded their treaties were synonymous with their continuing existence: the ongoing and steady whittling away of the rights guaranteed in treaties spelled their demise, while a reaffirmation of the terms of the treaties augured well.

Enfranchisement, though less pervasive than treaties, also struck at the very future of the Aboriginal identity. Under the existing Indian Act, the IAB had the power to forcefully nullify the Indian status of an Aboriginal person or band considered sufficiently advanced and to declare them enfranchised. In practice this was not used, but the fear of its potential drew near universal condemnation in First Nations' submissions to the SJC. For the dominant society, enfranchisement was a good and desirable end, but for Aboriginal people it signified only loss.

Enfranchisement to us means that we must surrender everything that we have inherited from our ancestors. We must leave our homes and our people. We become strangers among strangers. From respectable Indians worthy to be granted citizenship, once we are enfranchised, we become outcasts to our people, trespassers and a cause of discord to the tribe if we seek our own friends and relatives on the reserves.⁶³

Most were not opposed to the option being voluntary and some wanted the band to exercise control over the process. But more than anything else, Aboriginal people answered this point in terms like those of Chief Michael Jack of the Shulus Reserve in British Columbia, who stated, "I do not want to be turned into a white man. I want to be an Indian till the end of the world."⁶⁴

In order to insure that this would be the case, the overwhelming majority of First Nations'

⁶² *ibid*, p. 830.

⁶³ This quote was taken from the brief of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, *SJC*, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2046.

⁶⁴ *SJC*, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2039.

band councils and Native rights organisations wanted a greater degree of control over their own lives and communities. These desires varied widely in scope and rationale. For instance, the bands of the Duck Lake Agency in Saskatchewan were undecided over whether to accept the vote in Dominion elections.

We are not in agreement in regard to accepting the franchise or accepting the responsibilities of voting ... We do not feel that our people are ready to accept the responsibilities in connection with this important matter and we recommend that the right to exercise the franchise by our band be approved only by a majority vote of our band in Council.⁶⁵

Quite a few wanted to see control of certain issues transferred to their band councils and leaders, such as the creation of reserve school boards to oversee the administration of local schools.⁶⁶ Similarly, most Aboriginal communities were keen to have some safeguards over band membership.⁶⁷

Hand in hand with increasing their own authority were the demands to curb the powers of Indian Agents and the IAB that Aboriginal people found overbearing, intrusive and arbitrary.⁶⁸ The band from the Lower Kootenay reserve in Creston, British Columbia, summed up these sentiments clearly:

we want our reserve to have a good chief and councilmen and to have them make rulings on the reserve. We want our chief to stand in front, not next to the Indian Agent. The Indian Agent has too much to say; the Indian Agent has too much power

⁶⁵ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2075.

⁶⁶ This was a request from the Red Bank Band in New Brunswick, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 21, 13 August 1946): 882.

⁶⁷ The Mississauga of the Credit felt that cases ought to require a majority vote of the entire band, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2094.

⁶⁸ Even in this case there was an exception in the form of a dissenting brief from the Moose Woods Band in Saskatchewan, which actually requested that the powers of their Agent be increased, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 20 March 1947): 218. This desire ran directly against that of the other bands of Sioux [Dakota] represented in their joint brief, to which the Moose Woods brief was attached, who argued for a degree of self-determination, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 20 March 1947): 215.

over the chief on our reserve. We want the Indian Agent to be set back a step behind the chief.⁶⁹

Many bands, though not all, felt themselves prepared and fully capable of exercising greater authority over their own lands and people, and resented what they viewed as the excessive domination of the IAB.

Not everyone was satisfied with limited transition of power. Indeed, quite a few submissions received by the SJC articulated a more grandiose vision. Some argued for a more coherent and comprehensive scheme of self-government. The most extensive plan for transfers of power to band governments was provided by the Indian Association of Alberta in their main brief, although they did not articulate this in terms of 'self-government'.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, their demands for limitations on the powers of the Indian Agent and Superintendent-General, the return of their Chiefs and Councillors "to the status they enjoyed as the signing of the Treaties," the right to choose their leaders in whatever manner they wished, the freedom to vote on local reserve questions and the full control over band membership, expenditure of Band funds, leases on reserve lands, mineral rights and the granting of permits to band members for sale of agricultural produce amounted to as much.⁷¹ The Union of Ontario Indians wanted to go further and petitioned the government "to consider the advisability of fostering self-administration on Indian reserves by abolishing the office of Indian Agent and permitting the elective Chiefs and Band in Council direct access to the Indian Affairs Branch in all matters affecting the band and its management."⁷²

The vast majority of the First Nations did not seek to overthrow the entire system of Indian administration in Canada; but a few groups or bands were prepared to demand outright sovereignty

⁶⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 21, 13 August 1946): 865.

⁷⁰ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 12, 21 April 1947): 571-653.

⁷¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 12, 21 April 1947): 576-77, 587, 588-596.

⁷² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2083.

and an independent state of their own within the larger Canadian federation. One such assertion was put forward in a brief from the Nipissing Reserve, which argued that in order for the advancement of the

social and economic Status of the Indian Nation ... we must have our freedom by being Govern [sic] by a National Indian Government with his [sic] own Constitution Law; this is the only way that the Indian Nation will be sure that their rights and privileges will be protected.⁷³

But the most strident call for a separate sovereign status was put forward by the various representatives of the Hereditary Chiefs of the Six Nations Confederacy. These factions of the Six Nations reserves had always maintained that they never surrendered their status as independent people, and that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and various treaties confirmed their status as allies, rather than subjects of the crown. The brief from the Mohawk on the Lake of Two Mountain (Oka) Reserve stated the position most succinctly:

We hereby resolve not to subject to amendment to the Indian Act. As we are resolved to abolish the Indian Act, by virtue of our ancient treaties; that by virtue of our treaty rights Indians of the Six Nations are not liable to any federal or provincial laws within their territories ... That by virtue of our treaty rights we demand of the Canadian Government the recognition and the respect of our sovereign rights and privileges as a Nation.⁷⁴

The erudite case put forward by the Six Nations nationalists bespoke a powerful sense of self, with no doubt as to their future place in the country. This robust and independent identity formed the most distinctive aspect of the Aboriginal representations of themselves to the SJC.

The SJC had indeed been handed a difficult mission in determining the best future course for Canadian Indian policy: the more so for having to negotiate through the discordant images of

⁷³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 26, 23 May 1947): 1439.

⁷⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 33, 12 June 1947): 1794-95. The wording was different, but the nature of the demands similar in the submission from the same faction on the St. Regis reserve, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1947): 209.

the 'Indian' presented to them. What Canadians wanted out of the SJC was the immediate amelioration of the poor living conditions among the First Nations, and a long range plan that would make the 'Indian problem' go away. Only in this way could the collective shame for the nation's "Shabby Treatment" of its indigenous population be eased, and their own house be put in order.⁷⁵ In part, this sentiment reflected international shifts in notions of equality, freedom, 'race' and tolerance; these principles were embodied in the Atlantic Charter and soon to be enshrined in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But, arguably, the main wellspring for change was Canadians' homegrown desire to make their country match the values and principles for which they had fought so hard. Yet a case can be made that the dominant society's newfound 'generosity' of spirit for the plight of the First Nations in the immediate post-war period had no equivalent for other groups in Canada. There was nothing comparable expressed in favour of Canadians of Chinese, Indian or African ancestry, certainly no warmth of feeling for enemy aliens. While Canadians might have pitied Jews in the wake of the Holocaust, there was no more willingness to welcome more to Canada's shores than there had been before the war.⁷⁶ Canadians felt a special sense of obligation for the 'Indian', perhaps because they, unlike immigrant minorities, had not chosen to become a part of Canada. This responsibility, for so long neglected,

⁷⁵ "Shabby Treatment," Montreal Gazette (18 July 1947). This editorial was originally produced by the Toronto Star.

⁷⁶ This is not say that there was no gain for these groups as a result of their war service. The franchise was finally granted in British Columbia to Chinese and Japanese veterans, but in a host of other ways they remained discriminated against, see Patricia E. Roy, "The Soldiers Canada Didn't Want: Her Chinese and Japanese Citizens," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 59, no. 3 (1978): 341-358), p. 356-57. On attitudes to Jews see, James W. St. G. Walker, "Race," Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies (Waterloo and Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press and the Osgoode Society, 1997), especially chapter 4, p. 182-245, Irving Abella and Harold Troper, None is Too Many: Canada and the Jew of Europe, 1933-38 (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1982), and Paula Jean Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties: Canadian Jewry, the King Government and the Refugee Dilemma," in Norman Hillmer *et al*, ed. On Guard For Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988): 151-177.

was dragged to the fore by the high-profile nature of Aboriginal support for the war effort: as was evident in the frequent association of the 'Indian-at-war' and the 'Indian victim' in the public discussions. For most Canadians, simply appointing the committee was not sufficient; this desire was made clear by the intense and continuous media scrutiny of the SJC's activities and reports. When combined with the burgeoning activism and politicisation of the First Nations, the result was a super-charged national environment for Indian policy reform.

What can be construed about the First Nations' sense of themselves from the diverse and disparate material they submitted to the SJC? In the first instance, the sheer range of cultures, economic prospects, political aspirations, degrees of organisation and even linguistic aptitude make it impossible to reconstruct any definitive Aboriginal image of themselves. Nevertheless, some broad commonalities emerged. These stood in sharp contrast to those evident in the dominant society's constructs of the 'Indian', even though Aboriginal people had to function, to some extent, within the dominant discourse. At the core of the disparity was the question of whether the First Nations ought to continue to exist as separate and distinct cultural and constitutional collectivities. Overwhelmingly, First Nations peoples declared their legitimate right to be, and expressed their desire to maintain their identity in the future. Though they had different and conflicting ideas on many issues, their desire to maintain their distinctive cultures cut through all else. It most certainly went against the grain of the assimilation doctrine that formed the public and official 'common sense' in the country. In this way, Aboriginal people brought a distinct and unique perspective to the SJC, and aired their grievances in an unprecedented fashion. Aboriginal people had their hearing at last; but the question remained, would they be heard?

CHAPTER 7
WHITHER THE 'INDIAN'? THE SPECIAL JOINT SENATE AND HOUSE OF COMMONS
COMMITTEE TO RECONSIDER THE INDIAN ACT, 1946-1948

J. Allison Glen, during the announcement of his motion to create the Special Joint Committee justified his actions saying that it was:

in the opinion of the government, highly desirable, one might almost say imperative, before revision of the Indian Act is undertaken, certainly before the revised act is submitted to the house, that existing legislation, together with amendments that may be deemed necessary, be carefully studied not only from the point of view of the government and the taxpayer, but also from the point of view of the Indian, and in light of his present-day needs.¹

In the course of his arguments, the Minister claimed that the country had reached a crossroads, where the government would either have to,

(1) purchase at public expense the additional lands and additional hunting and trapping rights for an Indian population of 128,000, increasing at a rate of 1,500 per year; or (2) decide on an educational and welfare program that will fit and equip the Indian to enter into competition with the white man not only in hunting and trapping but in agriculture and in the industrial life of the country ... I feel that we have here the crux of what is usually referred to as the Indian problem. I find it difficult to convince myself that an extending Indian reserve system, imposing controls and wardships and reducing Indian responsibility to a minimum, would be or could be in the interests of these people.²

So saying, Glen summarised much of the general feeling among English-Canadians, and received the support of all parties in the House for the proposed Special Joint Committee.

The twenty-two MPs and twelve Senators that would compose the membership for the next three sessions of Parliament met for the first time on the 28th of May 1946, and handed down its final report 22 June 1948.³ During the fall of 1946, while Parliament was in recess, several

¹ Canada. House of Commons, Debates, 13 May 1946: 1446.

² *ibid.*

³ These included MPs, Messrs. B. Arsenault, J.H. Blackmore, D.F. Brown, H.E. Brunelle,
(continued...)

members of the SJC were reconstituted as a special commission to tour reserves in eastern Quebec and the Maritimes to see for themselves conditions there. Not counting the results of the commission, the SJC, in the course of its investigations, held 128 meetings, heard 122 witnesses, collected 411 written briefs, and amassed a total of 3211 pages of evidence.⁴ Among the witnesses heard were a large number of Aboriginal representatives from bands and tribes across the country as well as various Native rights organisations. This marked the first occasion when the First Nations were asked to give their opinion about Canada's Indian policy and administration. The findings and recommendations in the committee's final report would form the foundation for a new Indian Act, although it would not be enacted until 1951.

Previous chapters have dealt with either the 'Public Indian' or the 'Administrative Indian' largely in isolation from each other, tracking changes within each discourse. The methodology in this chapter differs from that used thus far. The focus will be on the public sessions of SJC, the arena, as embodied in the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence. Before the appointed members of the Committee, these images strove for ascendancy, to see which would shape the future of Canada's relationship with the First Nations and be enshrined in legislation. The Parliamentarians

³(...continued)

W. Bryce, W.G. Case, G.H. Castleden, J.A. Charlton, T. Farquhar, W. Garipey, J.L. Gibson (Comox-Alberni), J.A. Glen, D.S. Harkness, W. Little, J.D. MacNicol, M. McLean, J.E. Matthews (Brandon), J.L. Raymond (Wright), T. Reid, C.T. Richard (Gloucester), F.T. Stanfield and Hon. G. Stirling. The Senate appointed as its representatives on the SJC: A. Blais, V. Dupuis, Iva C. Fallis, C.E. Ferland, R.B. Horner, G.B. Jones, J. F. Johnston, J.A. MacDonald (Cardigan), D. MacLennan, J. Nicol, N. Mcl. Patterson (who was replaced by J.J. Stevenson), and W.H. Taylor. Canada. Parliament, Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act (hereafter referred to as SJC, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence (No.1, 28 and 30 May 1946): ii. Over the three years of the committee, there were only minor changes in personnel beyond the replacement of Patterson, which were due to the retirement of MP G. Stirling and the death of Senator Johnston.

⁴ SJC, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence (No. 5, April -June, 1948): 186. The total number of pages is taken from John Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943-1963* (PhD. Dissertation, Carleton University, 1999), p. 177.

who made up the SJC did not emerge from a value-free vacuum, as each MP and Senator brought their own pet issues, preconceptions and cultural baggage to the table. Nonetheless, most took their task seriously and as a body they worked diligently to complete their review in order to expedite reforms. The result is a remarkably rich and extensive source, that has received surprisingly little attention from historians.

In considering the activities of the Committee, and the nature of the competition within that forum, a number of questions have guided the investigation. For instance, how were the various images, and their proponents treated by the SJC? Was it a level playing field for all those who came before the Committee? To what extent were Aboriginal representatives able to shape the agenda or discourse of the SJC? To what extent did factors like the memory of the war, or the international movement for the protection of human rights manifest themselves in the debate? Did one distinct 'Indian' win out in the end? Or did some new icon emerge, perhaps a hybrid of existing images? Why, and what can the result tell us about post-war English-Canada, their views of the 'Indian problem' and the nature of the relationship between the dominant society and the First Nations?

The stage was set for a contest to determine the future of the 'Indian' in Canada when the thirty-four parliamentarians named to the SJC sat for the first time 28 May 1946. They usually sat for two hour sessions, on occasion doing so up to three times a day in order to give witnesses a full hearing. They spent the 1946 session of Parliament deciding process and procedures and listening, with a few notable exceptions, to briefs from officials of the Indian Affairs Branch and other government agencies.⁵ With the close of the session, permission was obtained to set up a travelling

⁵ In the estimation of Ian Johnson, the Committee "spent almost as much time debating
(continued...)"

commission made up of numerous members of the SJC to visit reserves in the Maritimes and eastern Quebec to inquire into conditions there. This first hand experience was augmented by the individual members of the Committee visiting those Aboriginal bands living in or near their constituencies during the hiatus. During the 1947 session, attention was largely focussed on hearing representatives from Aboriginal bands and organisations from Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia. In addition, the SJC finished any remaining IAB briefs, heard from the various churches and several experts. Few witnesses appeared before the SJC during the 1948 sitting of Parliament, the majority of which was spent in unrecorded meetings reworking the Indian Act, and drafting the final report which appeared on 22 June.

The Special Joint Committee was in no way a level playing field for the diverse representations of the 'Indian' brought to the contest. Its members already held strong opinions on many matters pertaining to the 'Indian problem' and articulated an image of the 'Indian' that conformed with the dominant societal assumptions. These appeared early in the SJC's deliberations, while they were still struggling with the form and procedure of such difficult matters as Aboriginal representation before the Committee. The C.C.F. member for Yorkton, Saskatchewan, G.H. Castleden, argued that since "the amendment of the Act will establish for years to come the type of control which will determine the standards of life training - perhaps the very existence - of these subordinated human beings to whom democracy is denied ...," 'watching briefs' for five Aboriginal representatives ought to be provided.⁶ Aside from the very real, and

⁵(...continued)

form, process and other matters unrelated to Indian concerns as they did examining evidence and discussing substantive issues," in Helping Indians to Help Themselves - A Committee to Investigate Itself: The 1951 Indian Act Consultation Process (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, 1984), p. 17. This is a bit uncharitable; the SJC did spend a great deal of time on such procedural matters, but that was not uncommon in Parliamentary committees.

⁶ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 28 and 30 May 1946): 29.

probably insurmountable, problems of choosing five Aboriginal leaders who could legitimately represent all First Nations communities, committee members also mentioned other concerns with Castleden's scheme. Thomas Reid (Liberal, New Westminster) claimed to "know enough about Indians to know that they are a very suspicious people."⁷ J.H. Blackmore (Social Credit, Lethbridge) believed that "anyone who has sat with a group of Indians all through a long day and endeavoured to get them to come to a unanimity of view on one thing must realize the possible dangers."⁸ But more to the point, many SJC members did not want to see a bunch of "Indian representatives plus their papooses plus their squaws," "coming down here and camping in Ottawa."⁹ They would be merely wasting their time in Ottawa when the SJC was not sitting, and would be an unnecessary expense for the Committee. Instead, they decided to retain legal counsel, preferably someone of Aboriginal descent.¹⁰ This individual could act as a liaison with Aboriginal communities and delegations, a notion that Reid supported because he felt "there should be someone to control them."¹¹ The combination of unflattering and victimised representations of the 'Indian' mixed freely with those of the 'noble savage' and the 'Indian-at-war' in the opinions of committee members.

On a more general level, the membership of the committee appear to have overwhelmingly supported assimilation, at least at the beginning of the process. An interesting exchange on 11 June

⁷ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 28 and 30 May 1946): 44.

⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 28 and 30 May 1946): 52.

⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 28 and 30 May 1946): 45, 50. The first comment was provided by the co-chairman, D.F. Brown (Liberal, Essex West), and the second by J. A. Charleton (P.C., Brantford-Wentworth).

¹⁰ Though symbolically important as a gesture by the SJC towards Aboriginal participation in the process, Norman Lickers, the Six Nations barrister also asked questions of witnesses, helped the Committee when it came to reworking the Act for its final report and served as the 'Indian' opinion for Committee members, when other Aboriginal representatives were not present.

¹¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 28 and 30 May 1946): 40.

1946 encapsulated some of the collective 'common sense' about the purpose of Canadian Indian policy. J.L. Gibson (Independent, Comox-Alberni), speaking against continuing to segregate Aboriginal people on reserves, asked rhetorically, "what is the eventual objective of Indian administration in Canada? Are we trying to absorb the Indians eventually into our population?"¹² J.L. Raymond (Liberal, Wright) said that, in his opinion, the "objective is to make good Canadians out of them," to which Gibson, replied "Yes."¹³ The two concepts were indistinguishable, regardless of the order in which they appeared: to become useful productive citizens, or 'good Canadians', Aboriginal people had to be assimilated, and vice versa.

Beyond such broad assessments of the biases of the SJC, its members brought diverse interests, dedication, experience and ideas to their task. For instance, Reid proved one of the most active members, but his interventions were marked by his west coast experience with Japanese-Canadians, both before and during the war. He was intently concerned with blood fractions as a means of determining identity, because in British Columbia

our fear was that the mixture with the Japanese blood would lead to development along one line only. The progeny of a white and Japanese marriage were considered oriental. Our fear was that the Japanese would assimilate us and we would not assimilate them, due to the fact the blood stream was more pure, if I should use that word, mongolian.¹⁴

As a result he was constantly asking witnesses "how far out on the blood line are we going to go to designate a person an Indian."¹⁵ Other members carried their own torches: Senator Iva Fallis, the lone woman on the SJC, took it upon herself to champion the cause of Aboriginal women's issues; D.S. Harkness (P.C., Calgary East), a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, enquired into

¹² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 4, 11 June 1946): 153.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 29, 3 June 1947): 1538.

¹⁵ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 9, 28 March 1947): 422.

the treatment accorded to First Nations veterans; C.C.F. M.P.s, W. Bryce (Brandon) and Castleden, brought their party's ideological support for society's marginalised and downtrodden; and J.D. MacNicol (P.C., Davenport), an honorary chief of the Delawares, was a committed crusader for Indian policy reform who had visited dozens of reserves from the Mackenzie Delta to Ontario.¹⁶ Some of these particular agendas shaped the debates of the SJC to a marked degree.

Despite their wide range of personal viewpoints, a significant proportion of the committee appears to have been genuinely and even passionately interested in the work of the SJC. They took pains to avoid even the appearance of impropriety or inequity in their dealings, and responded heatedly when their integrity was challenged. This was perhaps best demonstrated in the treatment of Castleden's motion, mentioned above, and the reaction to press coverage generated after its defeat. Though usually remarkably free of partisan divisions, when Castleden and Bryce pushed for a recorded vote on the motion on 9 July 1946, it provoked a bitter exchange. MacNicol complained that "the impression is going out all over the country that Mr. Castleden alone is fighting the battle of the Indians."¹⁷ But Reid went further:

You want a recorded vote for the very purpose of putting us on the spot. Let us be frank about it. It is not putting me on the spot. I am fighting for the Indians just as much as you are. I want the Indians before this committee just as much as you or any other member does. Let that be clear. Do not let us have any threats of a recorded vote, because that is what you are wanting. Those two [Castleden and Bryce] want the impression to go out that they are the champions of the Indians and that the committee would not hear the Indians.

Mr. Castleden: I did not think that it had come down to that level. I have just finished saying that I am not questioning anybody's sincerity.

Mr. Reid: I am down to that level now.

Mr. Castleden: I did not think that jealousies would go that far.

¹⁶ Senator Fallis spoke about her desire to examine Aboriginal women's issues in SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No.3, 14 March 1947): 72. Reference to MacNicol's concern for the 'Indian question' can be found at, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 4, 18 March 1947): 134.

¹⁷ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 11, 9 July 1946): 490.

Mr. Reid: He does not need to accuse me of anything.
The Chairman [Brown]: That is enough of that.¹⁸

Though the Chairman, D.F. Brown (Liberal, Essex West) calmed the hot heads on this occasion, when the story of the defeat of the motion came out in the Toronto Star under the headline, "Defeat Move to Let Indians Give Opinion," he exhibited the depth of his concern for the Committee's credibility:

it is my humble opinion that any member of this committee or of any other committee of the Senate and House of Commons who for political purposes or political reasons is trying to pit one class against another or to create unrest among any class of persons in Canada is not being honest with himself, he is not being fair to the Senate or the House of Commons, and he is a traitor to his country.¹⁹

Clearly, the intense public desire to win the peace for the 'Indian' did not entirely exclude the realities of partisan politics. Nevertheless, in the wake of this donnybrook, party divisions faded to insignificance as the members of the Committee came to recognise a shared sense of commitment to their work, and more importantly a convergence of views on the principle matters at hand.

Throughout the tenure of the SJC, officials of the Indian Affairs Branch were given a privileged position and recognised as the voice of authority by most members of the Committee. A number of the senior officials managed to impress the SJC with their ability, intelligence and commitment, particularly R.A. Hoey, the Director of the IAB, who attended almost every session. This respect augmented the influence they already wielded through their experience in administering to the First Nations. Repeatedly, as the work of the Committee progressed, the views of IAB officials were sought as a means of 'clarifying' the testimony of Aboriginal delegates and other witnesses. On numerous occasions they offered the last word on contentious questions.

¹⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 11, 9 July 1946): 491.

¹⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 12, 11 July 1947): 511.

A good example of this occurred on the afternoon of 2 May 1947, with representatives of British Columbian Aboriginal groups in attendance. After listening to Aboriginal testimony in the morning, Reid felt it necessary to "check up on one statement ... with the department," which he believed to be inaccurate.²⁰ "You see, if those statements are allowed to stand, it might give a wrong impression to the public. I am suggesting to the committee it might, perhaps, be advisable to have Major MacKay [the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia] here later." When in fact, MacKay appeared some days later, he was clearly prepared to assume the mantle of authority, opening his presentation by saying "I do not propose to take a great deal of time this morning, but having listened to some of the representatives from British Columbia I feel there are one or two things which require clarification."²¹ He then presented the 'real' facts to members with confidence and certitude that he knew what he was talking about.

Importantly, however, the Branch was not held in awe by the SJC. A number of the members were sceptical of the abilities of the Indian Affairs Branch personnel and structure, and suspicious of their commitment to reform.²² The ambivalent nature of the Committee's relationship with the IAB, as well as that of Aboriginal representatives, can be glimpsed from an interesting exchange on 6 June 1947, during the presentation of the Manitoba delegation. While questioning Thomas Prince on the average income of inhabitants on the Fairford Reserve, J.E. Matthews (Liberal, Brandon) noted some inconsistencies between the veteran's testimony and that of two IAB officials, A.G. Hamilton, the Provincial Inspector of Indian Agencies, and Hugh Conn, Fur

²⁰ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 17, 2 May 1947): 807.

²¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 19, 8 May 1947): 922.

²² Castleden, MacNicol and J.E. Matthews (Liberal, Brandon) had been members of the Committee of Reconstruction and Reestablishment in 1944, when the uninspiring testimony of IAB personnel had led that special parliamentary committee to recommend a thorough review of Canadian Indian policy and administration.

Supervisor.

From what I have heard of the evidence given by some of the delegates, I prefer to accept the statement of the inspector rather than the statement of Mr. Prince. I do not want to prolong the discussion, but that is my candid impression of the whole thing. There is one thing I am sorry not to have cleared up a little better and that is the discrepancy in the remarks made by Mr. Prince with regards to permits for trapping and shooting and the facts as given by Mr. Conn. There is still a wide gap between the two. I think for the record that gap should be closed so we would know where we are.²³

Matthews, in his initial comment, referred to the difference between the estimates of the average family income on the Fairford Reserve, which Prince estimated at \$200 and Hamilton claimed was \$800. Not all members of the committee were prepared to accept the word of an IAB official as 'truth'. Bryce reacted by saying that "Mr. Matthews wants to take Mr. Hamilton's word for it that the income is \$800. I cannot give you any figures, Mr. Matthews or anything like that, but I have lived among the Indians. Where they earn \$800 I would not know." To this, J.H. Blackmore exclaimed, "Or even \$200." There was certainly a credibility gap between the official line and Aboriginal claims, but the IAB's view of the world was not unquestioned.

Even at the end of the long process the degree of unease in the relationship was evident. This broke out in open antagonism when the SJC was renewed in 1948, and several members expressed doubts as to whether the recommendations for administrative changes that had been made in their two interim reports had been acted upon by the Indian Affairs Branch. The pugnacious wording of a motion put forward by D.S. Harkness (P.C., Calgary East) suggests the tone of the Committee:

this present Joint Committee on the Indian Act forthwith call and examine Messrs. H.L. Keenleyside, C.W. Jackson, R.A. Hoey, and C.H. Bland, to ascertain the extent

²³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 31, 6 June 1947): 1658. The language used by Matthews is striking. He refers in the latter part of the quote to a discrepancy between the testimony of Prince and Conn, but whereas the information offered by the Aboriginal representative was termed "remarks", the Branch official had given the "facts."

to which the above or any other of our previous recommendations concerning administration and personnel in Indian Affairs have been implemented and, if not, why and by whom the said recommendations were frustrated and thwarted.²⁴

The questioning, particularly of Keenleyside and Hoey, was intensive and at times curt. For instance, on the question of whether the Branch had made any concrete moves to decentralise its administration, increase the power of field and regional personnel, and decrease the workload of Indian Agents (now called Indian Superintendents after the American practice), Harkness pressed Hoey accusing him of “getting around my question,” and complained after several minutes of debate that “we are still not getting at my essential point.”²⁵ In spite of the evidence given by government officials, Harkness remained unconvinced.

The whole point is that I have not been satisfied in my own mind, and I am not satisfied yet, that the recommendations we have made in previous years have been carried out. As a matter of fact, the evidence from Dr. Keenleyside indicated that in a considerable number of cases our recommendations have not been implemented; and it seems to me that the department is not taking the steps it should to carry out the recommendations of this committee. I can see no sense in the world of this committee spending months of its time accumulating thousands of pages of evidence on the basis of which we make recommendations if the department is going to set aside those recommendations and in their own wisdom say, “Well, if we like your recommendations we will carry them out, but if we do not, we will not pay attention to them.”²⁶

Not all members were so sceptical, but the tone of the debate clearly indicates that the IAB did not have things all its own way in the forum of the SJC.

Nevertheless, in some areas the official view of the ‘Indian’, the ‘Indian problem’ and its solution came to influence the SJC and its deliberations. Some of the assessments of Aboriginal

²⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 19 February 1948): 11. H.L. Keenleyside was the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources who was responsible for Indian Affairs. C.W. Jackson, was a senior ministerial aid, Hoey was of course the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and C.H. Bland was the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

²⁵ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 2, 2 and 4 March 1948): 59.

²⁶ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 4, 23 March, 6, 8 and 9 April 1948): 159.

people evident in the 'Administrative Indian', a lack of responsibility and initiative or improvidence for instance, generated some agreement from committee members.²⁷ More significantly, the SJC seems to have accepted the Branch's prescription of greater supervision and encouragement as the principle cure for the 'Indian problem'; accepting the opinion of Hoey, who asserted that "ours is about two-thirds an administrative problem and, perhaps, about one-third a legislative problem."²⁸ This had been drilled into the SJC in the testimony of all the major IAB personnel, but especially by the provincial inspectors of Indian Agencies.²⁹ During his questioning, W.S. Arneil, the Inspector for Ontario, argued that the answer to "our" difficulties "is supervision, more supervision and close supervision," and went further: he later claimed "the solution to the Indian problem, if I may refer to it as such, is supervision."³⁰ J.H. Blackmore (S.C., Lethbridge) replied "I would be inclined to think that there is much in your suggestion." Nor was he alone on the SJC in accepting the importance of supervision, 'encouragement' and 'instruction' in any solution to the 'Indian problem'.

The IAB's views were influential for two reasons. First, because their proposals represented the authoritative voice of experience, and, second, because there was overlap in a number of crucial aspects between the official discourse and the 'Public Indian' framework.

²⁷ In a debate over the lack of good roads built on Indian reserves, W.G. Case (P.C., Grey North) complained "if these people will develop a little initiative, they will build their roads as our grandparents did," SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 3, 14 March 1947): 79. For an example of a discussion about the spendthrift nature of the 'Indian' see, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 8, 24 June 1946): 378-380.

²⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 38, 24 June 1947): 1942.

²⁹ For instance see the testimony of D.M. MacKay, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 4, 11 June 1946): 124, or the testimony of G.H. Gooderham in SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 15, 25 and 28 April 1947): 747. Gooderham, however, was more willing to grant powers and responsibilities to Aboriginal people and communities than were many of his IAB colleagues, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 15, 25 and 28 April 1947): 748-49.

³⁰ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 8, 24 June 1946): 383.

Notions of the irresponsible or improvident 'Indian' and the 'common sense' goal of assimilation resonated with members of the SJC because they already existed in their own image of the 'Indian'. But perhaps most interestingly, the Committee was starting to see the First Nations and the 'Indian problem' through lenses like those of the IAB; they were suddenly faced with a similar vantage point, and wrestling with similar obstacles. However, the two perspectives were not precisely identical. Even though the Committee supported greater supervision by IAB personnel, they consistently argued against too much power and arbitrary control residing unchecked in these government officials. Nevertheless, all things considered, the IAB and the 'Administrative Indian' were in a favoured position in the forum of the SJC relative to other participants.

The Committee members were very keen to hear from First Nations' representatives during the course of their deliberations. Indeed, given the tenor of the public debate on the 'Indian problem', and the intellectual and cultural milieu of the immediate post-war years, it was unthinkable to conduct a review of the Indian Act except in consultation with Aboriginal people. The Committee was determined to avoid any impression that they were not giving the 'Indian' a fair hearing, but their attentive efforts to provide First Nations delegations adequate time went beyond maintaining appearances. There was no mistaking their genuine interest and desire to listen to Aboriginal grievances. Moreover, it seems clear that Aboriginal views and sense of identity did stimulate the debates of the SJC, and helped shape both its discourse and conclusions in important ways. Having said this, however, there were noticeable limitations on the degree of influence First Nations representations were able to exert and the type of issues in which they succeeded in winning support. Though the forum was open to the First Nations and their sense of self, the preconceptions and agenda of the SJC meant that Aboriginal views and identity were at a disadvantage relative to those of the IAB and other witnesses.

Whatever their expectations of the 'Indian' before the SJC was instituted, the Parliamentarians were impressed by the Aboriginal delegates that they interviewed. Many were very eloquent, forceful speakers. One of the outstanding examples was Matthew Lazare, spokesman for the Hereditary Chiefs and the elected Council of the Caughnawaga Mohawk. The brief he read demanded the abolition of the Indian Act and sovereignty for the Six Nations Confederacy, and drew a hostile response from a number of SJC members who branded it an "ultimatum", disagreed with its contents and challenged the right of the delegation to represent the Caughnawaga.³¹ At the end of the debate, however, the most aggressive of the inquisitors, W.G. Case (P.C., Grey North), conceded a grudging respect to Lazare, saying, "I should like to compliment this gentleman, as a rather able fellow. We have appreciated your evidence, even though we do not altogether agree with it. You have done a good job."³² In this instance, the Committee were forced to acknowledge competence even though the views expressed flew in the face of their own views and image of the 'Indian'.

However, more often the admiration expressed by Committee members reflected their delight at having their own views bolstered. In the case of Brigadier Oliver Martin, this respect was not only a product of the man's intelligence and views, but also because he represented the ideal 'Indian' for SJC members.³³ He had become enfranchised after returning from the Great War, left the reserve and 'made good' in the wider society as a Magistrate in Toronto and as a brigade commander during the Second World War. In effect he was the symbolic and shining example of what the SJC was trying to accomplish. If nothing else, the ability demonstrated by

³¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 33, 12 June 1947): 1706-12, 1756-72.

³² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 33, 12 June 1947): 1769.

³³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 17, 30 July 1946): 715 and also (No. 19, 6 August 1946): 744-66.

such Aboriginal spokesmen suggested to the SJC that the 'Indian' had the potential for 'advancement'. For instance, at the end of the sessions with the First Nations representatives from Saskatchewan, Castleden personally thanked them for their excellent brief and presentation. "I say that your delegation has impressed the committee with your high purpose, your natural ability, your tolerance and sincerity. I think if the committee had any doubts we have living proof here that the Indians of Canada can make a great contribution."³⁴ To this W. Gariepy (Liberal, Trois Rivières) added an enthusiastic "hear, hear," and W.G. Case agreed, "It certainly indicates they have made progress."³⁵ Arguably one of the most significant outcomes of having Aboriginal people testify before the SJC was that it confirmed in the minds of its members that the 'Indian' had great promise and fostered optimism about eventually solving the 'Indian problem'.

As a result of impressive written briefs and moving presentations, the First Nations were able to force some of their grievances into centre stage on the agenda of the SJC. Issues that were incorporated in the Committee's terms such as the first one, treaty rights and obligations, were raised to a higher salience by the passion and anger of Aboriginal testimony. At first the SJC members seem to have accepted the official line on treaties from IAB evidence, which portrayed them as obsolete remnants that had been surpassed by services and administration provided to Aboriginal bands far in excess of their terms.³⁶ The consistency of First Nations' indictments

³⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 20, 9 May 1947): 1056.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ The evidence supplied by Hugh Conn, General Supervisor of Fur Developments, was particularly noteworthy in this respect, as he argued that the treaties had been "almost legislated out of existence," SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 16, 25 July 1947): 685. Gooderham argued that the government was giving more than the treaties required, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 15, 25 and 28 April 1947): 748. MacKay and MacInnes similarly argued that the lack of treaties for Aboriginal people in B.C. made no difference because they were treated the same anyway, which further undermined the significance of treaties in the minds of the SJC membership, see SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 3, 6 June 1946): 86.

against the government for abrogating the terms of the treaties, and the obvious emotional significance of the treaties to them could not be ignored by the Committee. Increasingly, consideration was given to creation of a mechanism for airing grievances. After listening to William Zimmerman Jr., the Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the U.S., discussion revolved around establishing a claims commission similar to that created under the American Indian New Deal. In the SJC's interim report at the end of the 1947 session, the following recommendation was made: "a Commission, in the nature of a Claims Commission, be set up with the least possible delay to inquire into the terms of all Indian treaties."³⁷

One of the most remarkable indications that the First Nations' sense of self made an impact on the collective consciousness of SJC came on the issue of the federal franchise. For the majority of Aboriginal people, the vote carried with it connotations of enfranchisement under the Indian Act, and all the negative baggage associated with that hated section of the Act. Though the First Nations' briefs and representations to the Committee were split as to whether Aboriginal people would accept the vote if it were awarded, they were nearly unanimous in their determination to only accept the vote if their existing rights and status were not impinged. For members of the Committee, it was unpalatable to award the federal franchise, that potent symbol of citizenship, while allowing Aboriginal people to retain the benefits, protections and restrictions of Indian Status. They wrestled long over the issue of differentiated citizenship, having difficulty understanding why the 'Indian' would not want to shed the shackles of their status for the greater privileges of full citizenship. A good example occurred during the questioning of the Inspector of Indian Agencies for Ontario, W.S. Arneil, when he informed the SJC that even on the 'advanced' reserves in southern Ontario, the 'Indians' were strongly opposed to enfranchisement.

³⁷ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 41, 9 July 1947): 2004.

Mr. Reid: ... What do you find is one of the principal reasons given to you by the Indians for not wanting to be enfranchised?

Mr. Arneil: They answer my question by asking another one; why should I become enfranchised?

Mr. Gibson: To become a good Canadian citizen, I would think.

Mr. Reid: I would like to know from the point of view of the Indian why he is reluctant; is it because he would rather be under the state than entirely responsible for himself?

Mr. Arneil: He does not feel so much that he is under the state. He wishes to be left alone.

Mr. Richard: He does not see any advantage to him through it.

Mr. Arneil: That is it, he sees no advantage from it. The number who take enfranchisement in the province of Ontario is negligible.³⁸

Yet, the Committee was determined to grant the vote to 'Indians' because "many Indians have fought and died for the freedom of Canadians," and because they paid most of the taxes applicable to full citizens.³⁹ In the end they finally accepted that for Aboriginal people the franchise was a nebulous and finite 'reward' compared to the loss of identity, kinship ties and the security of Indian status. On 29 April 1948, after a brief debate over the form that the franchise should take, the SJC voted unanimously to support a motion recommending to the government that the 'Indian' be granted the Dominion franchise, "without reservation and with no strings."⁴⁰

In addition to bending the SJC's mandate to their own concerns, Aboriginal people succeeded in winning support from the members on issues not mentioned under the original terms of reference. A prime example of this was the First Nations' consistent agitation against the oppressive powers and excessive control of the Indian Agent and the Branch. This became one of the most significant issues for the Committee, emerging again and again in its cross examination of both Aboriginal delegates and Branch representatives. The MPs and Senators pursued the point

³⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 8, 24 June 1946): 377-78.

³⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 183.

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 181-184.

diligently once it was brought to their attention by Andrew Paull in 1946.⁴¹ However, this point reveals something of the limitations on the effectiveness of Aboriginal presentations; their views and sense of identity succeeded in gaining SJC support when they coincided with the beliefs of the Parliamentarians, or when they struck a chord. In this case, the Committee members were moved by the issue because the lack of avenues of appeal to the arbitrary powers of the Indian Agent and the Branch offended their democratic sensibilities. When matters did not mesh with SJC proclivities they ignored or shelved them, as in the case of control over band membership which concerned Aboriginal people intensely.

All these elements can be seen most clearly in the way that self-government initiatives appeared and were addressed by the SJC. Nothing in the terms of reference made mention of transferring responsibilities to band councils and chiefs; however, First Nations briefs and delegates hammered away at this point. Once again it was Paull, on behalf of the North American Indian Brotherhood, who first raised the matter:

the Indians should be given self-government; by that we mean self-government under you; we do not mean a rebellion; do you understand me clearly on that? We mean that there should be an Indian council which would meet, and there would be no Indian agent there when the council meets, and we believe there should be a provincial council, and that the provincial council should be responsible to a central board of governors in Ottawa who are not responsible to the government in power, but who are responsible to the Parliament of Canada.⁴²

It would subsequently occupy an increasing proportion of the debate, although, interestingly, it was the Aboriginal liaison and SJC counsel, Norman Lickers, who most consistently pressed the issue.⁴³ Nonetheless, several members were inspired by the concept to a certain extent, and the

⁴¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 9, 27 June 1946): 426, 450.

⁴² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 9, 27 June 1946): 427.

⁴³ For example, Lickers led the discussion of the issue with the Saskatchewan Delegation consisting of John Tootoosis, President of the Union of Saskatchewan Indians, Chief John

(continued...)

committee as a whole explored the idea of conferring more powers on the local councils. The first clear indication that they were inclined to do something along these lines came in a discussion with Caughnawaga nationalists on 12 June 1947, when the Chairman, D.F. Brown (Liberal, Essex West), assured the witnesses that "I think we are prepared to recommend in due course that you be given a greater degree of self-government."⁴⁴ On other occasions committee members pressed IAB officials about their views. On 25 April 1947, Castleden questioned Gooderham on the matter quite closely, with both agreeing that "greater autonomy" for Aboriginal band councils was "the only solution to the Indian problem."⁴⁵ Even Hoey, under examination by B.C. Conservative MP, Grote Stirling (Yale), agreed that in the expenditure of band funds and granting permits the control should devolve to the band.⁴⁶

It seems clear from such evidence that Aboriginal views wielded significant influence, but the SJC accepted self-government on its own terms, and shaped it for its own ends. Self-government appealed to Committee members in part because the tight constraints on the power of band councils and leaders did not sit well in a country that touted freedom, democracy and right to self-determination. In addition, they believed that the deficiencies they saw in the 'Indian', especially lack of responsibility, were the result of "too much paternalism" and control having been taken from Aboriginal people in the past.⁴⁷ This could be corrected by reversing the process in a

⁴³(...continued)

Gambler, Chief Joe Dreaver, and the Reverend Ahab Spence, an Aboriginal teacher. Committee members, MacNicol, Case and Blackmore joined the debate, see SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 20, 9 May 1947): 1061-65.

⁴⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 33, 12 June 1947): 1771.

⁴⁵ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 15, 25 and 28 April 1947): 748.

⁴⁶ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 38, 24 June 1947): 1951-52.

⁴⁷ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 15, 25 and 28 April 1947): 748. Castleden stated, "I think that there is general agreement that there has been too much paternalism." Thomas Reid used the same words several days earlier in the surprising comment, "In assimilation there is too
(continued...)

restricted and incremental fashion. Moreover, the Committee saw its mission as providing a new administrative and legislative structure to facilitate the 'advancement' of the 'Indian' to a point where they exercised the rights, and accepted the responsibilities, of citizenship.⁴⁸ Therefore, extending limited and graduated measures of self-government was an essential tool of instruction to that end. In no way did this vision accommodate the aspirations of Aboriginal communities for autonomy and a continuing existence as separate corporate and ethnic entities within the Canadian state and society. Overall, the Aboriginal representations to the SJC managed to influence the agenda in important, though constrained, ways, and even convey some of their sense of identity. But, for the most part, the Committee took what resonated with their own beliefs and purpose only, and overlooked or resisted that which did not fit. Thus, the Aboriginal sense of self was at a distinct disadvantage in the arena, relative to either the 'Administrative Indian' or the 'Public Indian' predilections of the Committee itself.

Throughout the three years of hearings, presentations, and meetings of committees and sub-committees, two prominent themes emerged that require specific attention. The first of the two was a buoyant level of hope among SJC members about the prospects of achieving a magna carta for the 'Indian'. This perhaps ought not to be surprising as traditionally each new wave of Canadians that turned their attention to the 'Indian problem', whether government officials or not, brought renewed faith that its solution was only a generation or two away. The Committee's confidence arose from a number of factors, not least the unparalleled status of academic experts

⁴⁷(...continued)

much paternalism," SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 13, 22 April 1947): 692. The term, 'paternalism' seems to have been a bad word for Committee members, symbolising all that had been wrong with Canada's Indian policy and administration in the past.

⁴⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 19, 6 August 1946): 744.

and the trust in social engineering characteristic of the period. The second phenomenon that permeated almost every debate during the SJC's tenure was the crucial question of what the goal of Canadian Indian policy should be: assimilation or a softer integration approach. The majority of Committee members came to the 'Indian problem' and their jobs with strongly assimilationist sentiments. However, as they learned more about Aboriginal people, there was some flirtation with what would come to be termed a policy of integration; the 'advancement' of the 'Indian' to equal status as a full citizen, while allowing them to retain vestiges of their culture, and even, in some cases, their distinct constitutional and treaty rights. Despite the ambiguity between these two options evident in the discourse of the SJC, the language of the Parliamentarians and their treatment of several key issues suggest that overall they still leaned towards assimilation as the appropriate solution to the 'Indian problem'. This combination of hope and assimilation / integration is arguably the defining characteristic of the SJC and would have a profound effect on its image of the 'Indian' and its final recommendations.

It is not difficult to imagine the reasons for the SJC's hope for the future of Canada's Aboriginal populations. In this regard the legislative anachronisms, bureaucratic inadequacies, meagre funding and abject neglect that had characterised Canadian Indian administration over the preceding decades were a boon. Virtually anything the SJC recommended was likely to lead to an improvement in the lives of the country's Aboriginal population. The Indian Act had not seen a major revision since its inception almost 70 years previously, and subsequent additions and amendments had created a labyrinthine statute full of many defunct, ambiguous and contradictory clauses. The almost desperate lack of personnel and infrastructure in the IAB was also immediately obvious to the SJC, and something they could correct. As for the matter of money, Hoey summarised the unique nature of the late 1940s with his comment that "we have reached a stage in public administration - how it will last I cannot say - where money means very little to us

...⁴⁹ And the Committee members were certainly attuned to the change in the public mood towards the 'Indian'. For instance, J.H. Blackmore, in defence of a motion he put forward in June 1947 to increase the forthcoming budget of the Indian Affairs Branch to at least \$15 million, argued that the "the psychological time" was upon them.

The Indians now have confidence we are really going to do something for them; the Canadian people as a whole are interested in the problem of the Indians; they have become aware that the country has been negligent in the matter of looking after the Indians and they are anxious to remedy the shortcomings. Parliament and the country are "human rights" conscious.⁵⁰

The time was ripe for a careful and profitable reassessment of the 'Indian', Indian administration and the 'Indian problem'.

The hopeful climate in which the SJC went about their business was reinforced by their own reactions to both the First Nations representatives and Branch officials with whom they came into contact. In the first instance, they construed the capabilities of Aboriginal delegates and the 'Indian-at-war' as evidence of their potential for 'advancement' and citizenship. But almost as important for SJC members, the senior officials of the Indian Affairs Branch impressed them both by their apparent ability and their dedication. Moreover, they viewed the changes in senior management, particularly the rise of Hoey to the Directorship, as having ushered in a new and more progressive regime. This was confirmed by the testimony of a number of prominent First Nations delegates, who had also noticed the change.⁵¹ To the SJC, this suggested that, in addition

⁴⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 38, 24 June 1947): 1941.

⁵⁰ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 32, 10 June 1947): 1673. This figure of fifteen million was taken from testimony of Hoey in 1946 that the appropriations for the Branch, in order to begin a worthwhile program for Indian advancement, would need approximately \$14 000 000 per year, see SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 28 and 30 May 1946): 27. This was approximately double the estimates for the fiscal year 1946-47.

⁵¹ For instance, Andrew Paull admitted that there had been a general improvement in relations with the Branch since Hoey took the reins of office, SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. (continued...))

to the social, cultural and economic environment, the timing was also favourable within the Aboriginal population and the bureaucracy that administered them.

Importantly, though, the SJC was more than just fortunate in its timing, it eagerly sought an active and forward-thinking plan for the new Indian Act. Central to any such program in the immediate post-war period was the input and direction of experts in medicine, the social sciences and education. At no time previously had Canadians seen more promise in the ability of the government to play an active role in shaping the country's society and economy, guided by the authoritative expertise of academics.⁵² This faith was evident in the discussions the SJC had with two expert witnesses, Dr. T. MacIlwraith, Chair of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, and Diamond Jenness, Dominion Ethnologist, Department of Mines and Resources.⁵³ Most significantly, academic and medical experts provided assurances of a means to come to grips with an 'Indian problem' that appeared, at first glance, to be a huge, amorphous monster.

Perhaps the best example of the importance of experts to the SJC came in its first session of 1947. The SJC greeted enthusiastically, and agreed to recommend government funding of, a project proposed by nutritionist, Dr. Frederick Tisdale, and anthropologist, Dr. Gordon Brown. They had already examined the bands of Norway House Agency in Northern Manitoba, and intended to study the diet, economy, society and psychology of two other "bush Indian" communities over the course of a full year. They hoped to discover "what makes him [the bush

⁵¹(...continued)

18, 5 and 6 May 1947): 892.

⁵² See J.L. Granatstein, The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins, 1935-57 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982) and Doug Owsram, The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

⁵³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 29, 3 June 1947): 1521-56. MacIlwraith's presentation to the SJC, and the subsequent debate are some of the most interesting pages in the entire Minutes and Proceedings of the Committee.

Indian] tick, what motivates him.”⁵⁴ Fundamentally, however, these two men offered a completely restructured view of the ‘Indian problem’, one less exceptional, compartmentalised and thus more tangible. Such deficiencies in the ‘Indian’ as indolence and a sluggish intellect were blamed by Dr. Tisdale on the fact that “the majority of Indians we saw, according to our present day medical standards were sick.”⁵⁵ The root of the problem was malnutrition, arising from a diet that drew eighty-five percent of its calories from white flour, sugar and lard. Therefore, better funding, a more complete diet and nutritional education were part of the solution to the ‘Indian problem’.

Similarly, Brown proposed to harness the knowledge of social anthropologists, “animocologists and fishery experts and agriculturists,” because changing a diet “involved the whole social structure of a people,” and it was essential “to find out what to them makes life worth living, and what are goals for which they strive; because any change again must be related to the particular striving which they have.”⁵⁶ Here again, the analysis struck at a finite, identifiable and curable aspect of the problem; previous Indian policy had not adequately taken account of the peculiar social psychology of the ‘Indian’. However, programs, based on a secure foundation of ‘scientific’ fact and tailored to match the peculiarities of the ‘Indian’ offered a brighter future. Tisdale argued that

from our studies of the Indian that he is fundamentally a good Canadian and his reactions to his conditions are no different from [what] our reactions would be if we were living under his conditions. If he is given proper surroundings, proper food, we can make him a good Canadian, an asset to the nation.⁵⁷

If the ‘Indian’ was reacting just like anyone else would under similar circumstances, then they could reasonably be considered a disadvantaged minority, little different from others in Canadian

⁵⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 5 and 6 March 1947): 7-25.

⁵⁵ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 1, 5 and 6 March 1947): 8.

⁵⁶ *ibid*, p. 16-17.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, p. 10.

society. Recasting the 'Indian' in this way simplified the 'Indian problem' to a tangible matter of providing improved services, something the government could successfully accomplish.

However, the questions remained: what exactly these services were supposed to accomplish, and what was the desired goal? SJC members entered the proceedings strongly favouring assimilation as the appropriate destination for the government, the taxpayer and the 'Indian'. However, the definition of the term was open to some diverse interpretations. At times it seemed to imply a social and cultural convergence, a process of acculturation. The heavy emphasis placed on education throughout the proceedings was aimed at this type of result. Moreover, the most encouraging aspect of Dr. T.F. MacIlwraith's presentation to the SJC, for some members, was his confirmation of their own beliefs in the inevitability of such assimilation. He stated that when he thought of the future:

rightly or wrongly I see no possibility whatsoever of different groups of Indians surviving in Canada or indeed of any other small groups anywhere else in the world surviving indefinitely without merging and mixing their traits and other characteristics. That cannot be in this atomic age. Sentimentally I regret, and perhaps otherwise, the fusing of Indian ways of life, but I think those ways are passing and are bound to pass.⁵⁸

Later in the day, during a debate about the difficulties of societal 'racism' towards Aboriginal people, the anthropologist offered the Committee a reassuring explanation of the root cause of this prejudice and its elimination, claiming, "that we do not have any inherent race prejudice. The race prejudice occurs where one group or another lives a different mode of life; but once the members of another group are living the same type of life and have the same attitudes you have no problem at all."⁵⁹ In essence, if the 'Indian' would just act, talk and think like everyone else the 'Indian problem' would vanish.

⁵⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 29, 3 June 1947): 1538.

⁵⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 29, 3 June 1947): 1548.

At other times, it was used in a way that suggested simply equalising the legal, constitutional and economic differences between Aboriginal people and their Canadian neighbours. For instance, the Chairman, D.F. Brown (Liberal, Essex West), in discussion with Brigadier Martin, stated that,

it is the purpose of this committee to recommend eventually some means whereby Indians have rights and obligations equal to those of all other Canadians. There should be no difference in my mind, or any body else's mind, as to what we are, because we are all Canadians.⁶⁰

The assumption seemed to be that if the legal distinctions were erased then the 'Indian problem' would be largely resolved. However, the Committee members recognised that the 'problem' they were addressing was much more complicated than merely constitutional status. Nonetheless, these distinctions in rights and duties were symbolically significant, and formed an important element of the doctrine of assimilation.

Most commonly the word assimilation referred to the absorption of the 'Indian race' into the larger 'white' population, a matter of blood and biology. Thomas Reid articulated this aspect of assimilation most clearly in an exchange on 20 May 1947, when he expressed doubts

as to whether the Indian should be confined and kept on his reserve ... keep him by himself and for the next hundred years or so and call him Indian? I am inclined to the view that these segregations [sic] cannot bring about a good influence for the country as a whole. I am inclined to the view that assimilation of the Indians in Canada would be a good thing ...

Mr. Matthews: When you speak of assimilation Mr. Reid you do not necessarily mean by way of marriage?

Mr. Reid: I am taking [sic] in the broadest sense. I cannot see how a person can be assimilated unless he becomes one of us. Over the years, say in two hundred years from now, perhaps the difference between the Indian and the White would never be noticed. I am not an anthropologist but when I speak of assimilation I speak of one race and one people which can only be achieved by marriage and intermarriage.⁶¹

It seems odd that Reid, who had expressed such fear at the prospect of Japanese-Canadians

⁶⁰ *SJC, Minutes and Proceedings* (No. 19, 6 August 1946): 744.

⁶¹ *SJC, Minutes and Proceedings* (No. 24, 20 May 1947): 1259.

assimilating 'white' British Columbians, could argue that it was the most benevolent and benign thing that could happen to the First Nations and not see the contradiction. It was this fundamental aspect of assimilationist sentiment that motivated the SJC against the continuing segregation of the 'Indian' on reserves and in schools. In practice, the SJC moved back and forth from one meaning of assimilation to another, sometimes combining them, and not always knowing what interpretation was being used at any one time.

This degree of confusion extended to the hazy distinction between assimilation and a different approach that would allow Aboriginal people to maintain some vestiges of their 'Indianness'. This was well demonstrated by the SJC's mixed reaction to the IAB's policy of centralising all Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia on two large reserves at Shubenacadie and Eskasoni.⁶² For instance, in July 1947, when the Committee was questioning Hoey about centralisation, CCF MP, William Bryce (Selkirk) was strongly opposed to what he viewed as driving the 'Indian' away from settled areas like a small reserve on the edge of Sydney that had been eliminated.

Mr. Bryce: We are trying to assimilate the Indian, why not give them a chance there?

Mr. Hoey: We cannot do that.

Mr. Bryce: That seems to be what is happening all along - you are driving the Indians farther back. We should be trying to bring them forward rather than driving them back.

The Chairman: What do you mean by assimilation?

Mr. Bryce: Bringing them in among the white people.

⁶² Under the centralisation scheme developed by the IAB in the early to mid-1940s, and instituted in the face of significant opposition from Aboriginal communities across the province, dozens of small scattered reserves were sold off, and their populations encouraged to move to two large central reserves. Technically, the residents of these smaller defunct reserves were not forced to move, but in effect they were deprived of government services unless they did so. The primary reason for the plan was administrative, as it had been costly and extremely difficult to adequately provide health, education and welfare services to so widely scattered a population. From the perspective of the SJC, it was merely encouraging 'Indians' to move back to the reserve in order to gain adequate services, what D.S. Harkness (P.C., Calgary East) called a "backward step," see *SJC, Minutes and Proceedings* (No. 38, 24 June 1947): 1954.

The Chairman: Do you mean have him marry and take his place in our society?

Mr. Bryce: Yes, take his part in society ...

The Chairman: We must try to assimilate the Indian, and I think your definition is correct; that is, to have them assimilated into our society we do not want them to lose their blood stream by any means, and we want them to assimilate into our society. We cannot assimilate them, as you suggest, by keeping them in the hinterland on reserves, we want to bring them out into the open, into the Canadian body politic.

Mr Bryce: Government regulations to-day are driving them back into the hinterlands.

The Chairman: The reserve should be a training ground for citizenship.

Mr. Bryce: They have been on the training ground for the last eighty years. Have they made a fair job of it?⁶³

One of the intriguing things about the comments of Bryce was that he had previously indicated his support for a more integrationist approach. After listening to Professor MacIlwraith, Bryce had expressed his enjoyment at the presentation and agreement with the MacIlwraith's views, especially on enfranchisement.

I think that we have to show the Indian that we are not trying to take something away from him but we are trying to give him something better than before. When all is said and done, he is only getting \$5 a year, and if he wants to hang onto it, let him do so. But we should be able to blend the Indians into the white man's life without making them give up everything that they ever had and of which they are proud as a race.⁶⁴

The diffuse understanding of assimilation, in the discourse of the SJC, combined with the permeable nature of the border between it and integration, makes it difficult to measure precisely how far the SJC moved towards accepting integration.

Despite the ambiguity, there is no doubt that the Committee moved this way to some degree, if only to accommodate the opposition of Aboriginal people to assimilation. The easiest tenet of assimilation to shed was cultural convergence. The SJC, as a result of listening to the

⁶³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 40, 2 July 1947): 1990.

⁶⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 29, 3 June 1947): 1549. Bryce's reference to five dollars per year alluded to the annual treaty payment payed out to some First Nations people under a number of treaties. His glib tone which dismissed the First Nations fervent faith in the importance of their treaties as a matter of five dollars, suggests that even a sympathetic individual like Bryce thought little of Aboriginal culture, and certainly perceived no threat in not demanding its abandonment.

presentations of Aboriginal representatives, the American Indian Affairs Bureau official, and the academic experts during the 1947 session, was willing to concede that it would be appropriate for the Aboriginal population to maintain its cultural connections for sentimental reasons if they so chose. It took longer before they were willing to surrender the legal element of assimilation, yet by the end of their review, even the desire to erase the symbolic distinctions in status between the 'Indian' and the average Canadian had gone by the board. The SJC recommended awarding Aboriginal people the dominion franchise, without any impingement on Indian status or treaty rights. Relative to the assumptions of the members at the outset of the review process, this was significantly integrationist.

However, these assumptions were not given up because the SJC had turned its back on the eventual assimilation of the 'Indian'. They could acquiesce to Aboriginal people maintaining a cultural identity and even their constitutional uniqueness because, deep down, the members of the Special Joint Committee believed that these were temporary conditions. The SJC could afford to relinquish these two pillars of assimilation because, in their minds, the crucial biological assimilation of the 'Indian' was inevitable. J.H. Blackmore (S.C., Lethbridge) expressed this assumption rhetorically: "would not the absorption occur just automatically and spontaneously ... by young people falling in love...."⁶⁵ If the 'Indian problem' was bound to disappear eventually then there was no danger in allowing the First Nations to maintain some elements of their culture. What is more, supporting integrationist policies like granting the federal vote, fostering self-government and ending segregation in 'Indian' schooling, far from being perceived as retrograde steps away from assimilation, were deemed constructive means to that end.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 4, 11 June 1946): 153.

⁶⁶ For instance, in the debate about awarding the dominion franchise to 'Indians', D. F. Brown. explained that part of the rationale for doing so was because, "we cannot instil in the
(continued...)

During the course of the SJC's sittings over more than three years, every existing image of the 'Indian' prevalent in the public and official discourses, along with the First Nations' diverse sense of identity, were aired in the forum. Each had an influence in different ways on the nature of the proceedings, the attitudes of the Committee members and the eventual recommendations. However, no single image gained a clear ascendancy over the others to provide a foundation for the SJC's final report and the future of Canada's Indian policy. A new image was needed to encapsulate the heady mixture of lofty ideals, hope and assimilation that drove the SJC's agenda and findings. It was this new image, the 'potential Indian citizen', that would inform and shape the revision of the Indian Act and the future of Canada's relationship with its indigenous peoples.

The Committee could not fall back on any of the four images of the 'Public Indian' with which they had set out at the beginning of their mandate. The 'Indian-at-war' demonstrated that Aboriginal people were deserving of better treatment, and had been used in the past as evidence of the 'Indian's capacity for future improvement, but it remained too closely tied to the past event to be applicable for the future. Similarly, the 'Indian-victim' was useful to explain the past nature of the 'Indian's association with Canada, and ideal for motivating sympathy in the present, but it could not accommodate the optimism for what lay ahead. Indeed, the 'Indian-victim' was what the SJC, and Canadians in general, hoped to banish from existence. The negative contemporary image, the 'drunken criminal', was simply too bleak and hopeless a case to be of any help to the SJC. Finally the 'noble savage' would always remain, both in its positive and trivial manifestations, a prominent element of the public discussions of the 'Indian'. However, neither the

⁶⁶(...continued)

Indians a knowledge of our democratic principles and forms of government unless we give them the privilege of participating ...," SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 183.

SJC nor anyone else really believed it was possible or useful for the First Nations to return to the way they were perceived to have been in their days of greatness. Without the core of the 'Public Indian' to aid them in determining the form and substance of a new Indian Act, the SJC members were forced to look elsewhere.

This left either the conceptualisation of the 'Indian' in use by the government officials who had the most contact with Aboriginal people, or the sense of identity expressed by the First Nations themselves as likely prospects for a new construct on which to build a better Indian policy. The legislators did draw from the 'Administrative Indian' to some degree, accepting the IAB's view that the 'Indian' was not yet ready to go it alone, and still needed guidance and protection. But the Committee, whose dealings with Aboriginal people had been largely congenial and constructive, rejected the antagonism inherent in the official discourse. More particularly, IAB personnel's scepticism about the prospects for assimilation simply did not fit with the hopeful tenor of the SJC and Canadian society as a whole. Nor could the Parliamentarians find an appropriate model in the complex representations made before them by Aboriginal delegations. Certainly their impressive performance before the SJC had an influence on the Committee, but their collective desire to maintain their communities and culture were fundamentally incompatible with the assimilationist leanings of the dominant society. Neither of these manifestations provided a sufficient way of conceptualising the 'Indian' that encapsulated the hope for the future and the bright prospects for achieving a gradual solution to the 'Indian problem'.

What emerged by the later stages of the SJC's activities was the 'potential Indian citizen', an image of Aboriginal people quite unlike any other existing constructs except for the characteristic ambivalence. This 'Indian' was presumed to have many fine qualities and be

mentally the equal to any Canadian.⁶⁷ On one occasion, D. S. Harkness (P.C., Calgary East) went even further mentioning an elder he had met on the Stony reserve, who he believed proved “that many of these Indians are at least the equal to the more intelligent of the white people.”⁶⁸ In a similar vein, Senator R.B. Horner, in complementing Chief Joe Dreaver and the other members of the Saskatchewan Aboriginal delegation for their fine presentation, was only sorry they did not recommend enfranchisement, “because I can picture some wonderful orators coming from their race.”⁶⁹ However, despite accepting the natural abilities of the indigenous population, the SJC members could not shake their doubts about the ‘Indian’s current limitations. Senator Norman Patterson best captured this uncertainty in his report about his visit to reserves around Kenora, Ontario. He stated confidently that “it will take time, but the Indian by sympathetic handling will be an increasingly useful citizen,” only to argue that in most cases the ‘Indian’ “is by no means capable of handling his own affairs at present.”⁷⁰ This seemingly contradictory assessment of the ‘potential Indian citizen’ would have an impact on the final recommendations of the Committee.

What really set the new image of the ‘Indian’ apart from past versions was its encapsulation of the hopeful aspirations for the future with the dominant society’s assimilationist ethos. Thomas Farquhar (Liberal, Algoma East), always a keen and sympathetic participant in the SJC, demonstrated this confidence in the ‘Indian’ in his glowing praise of seven of the reserves in his constituency whose occupants made their living by mixed farming, held their own fall fair and frequently bested local ‘white’ farmers in plowing competitions. He declared that these “Indians are

⁶⁷ For example see the debates with the delegates from the Catholic Church, during which J.A. Charleton (P.C., Brant- Wentworth) challenged them, saying “Would you not say that, if given the same opportunity the Indian child is just as capable as the white...,” SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 27, 27 May 1947): 1490.

⁶⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 4, 18 March 1947): 118.

⁶⁹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 20, 9 May 1947): 1056.

⁷⁰ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 3, 14 March 1947): 88.

an example of what Indians *will* do if given proper instruction, some encouragement and a little financial assistance.”⁷¹ More importantly, as C.T. Richard (Liberal, Gloucester) argued, the “Indians have a far better idea of good citizenship than a good many of our people.”⁷² This was certainly a novel impression of Aboriginal people’s civic capabilities, as previously most Canadians would have agreed with the thoughts expressed in the presentation of the Anglican Church, which still saw three barriers to ‘Indian’ enfranchisement:

- (1) Inability to comprehend the spirit of service which is at the root of democratic government.
- (2) Lack of a sense of responsibility.
- (3) Tendency towards indigency.⁷³

However, the trend in the discussions in the SJC was best summed up in a comment by Father J.O. Plourde, the Superintendent of Indian Welfare and Training for the Oblate Commission, a member of the Catholic delegation. He stated,

the Indian is not a lazy fellow by any means. He will work for his living. He is not a dissipated man either. He will behave properly if given a chance, police protection and so forth. He is not an immoral man. He is a family man. He likes his wife and children. In other words, he is what I would call, at least in prospect, a very good Canadian citizen...⁷⁴

This ‘potential Indian citizen’, then, was more than just worthy of the trappings of citizenship, he was a person who could be just like everyone else, given the opportunity. Essentially, the ‘potential Indian citizen’ had some current though correctable flaws, was a forward-looking, positive figure, deserving of aid, and readily assimilable. As such it would form the construct upon which the SJC would develop its program for a new Canadian Indian policy.

⁷¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 4, 18 March 1947): 125. Emphasis added.

⁷² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 17, 30 July 1946): 715.

⁷³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 9, 28 March 1947): 405.

⁷⁴ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 27, 27 May 1947): 1484.

The final recommendations of the SJC, submitted to Parliament on 22 June 1948 as their Fourth Report, constitute a remarkable, though hardly revolutionary document. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Committee's final report was the fact that, despite the high profile nature of Aboriginal participation in the process, their views and grievances had a negligible impact. It would be uncharitable to suggest that the SJC completely ignored all the concerns of Aboriginal people, but in most cases where they did acknowledge 'Indian' perspectives, the mostly English-Canadian Committee did so for reasons of their own. Significantly, on a number of issues of great importance to the First Nations the final report was silent. Overall, the final report in no way acknowledged the First Nations' clear ambition to maintain their distinct collective identities, and assimilation permeated the conclusions and suggestions of the Special Joint Committee.

The representations of the First Nations exerted some influence on the Committee's collective image of the 'Indian', but when it came to specific issues, their ability to sway the SJC was diminished. In three respects, the Parliamentarians clearly agreed with the wishes of Aboriginal delegates and briefs. The Committee advised setting up 'advisory committees' to provide the First Nations with an avenue of appeal to departmental and Indian Agent decisions. They also recommended that aged, blind and infirm 'Indians' should receive pensions as did all other Canadians, and respected the universal desire of Aboriginal bands to "prevent persons other than Indians from trespassing upon or frequenting Indian Reserves for improper purposes."⁷⁵ The final report recommended policies requested by many Aboriginal people: greater self-government and the federal vote without prejudice to their treaty and legal rights. However, the Committee had its own reasons for pushing these two initiatives. And in any event, the recommendation that "greater and more progressive measures of self-government of Reserve and Band affairs be granted

⁷⁵ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 188.

to Band Councils,” and the financial assistance “to enable them to undertake, under proper supervision, projects for the physical and economic betterment of the Band members,” was, in keeping with the SJC’s belief in the contemporary weaknesses of the ‘potential Indian citizen’, rather limited and vague.⁷⁶ Nor did the SJC self-government plan, which called for “such Reserves as are sufficiently advanced be then recommended for incorporation within the terms of the Municipal Acts of the province in which they are situated,” encompass the aspirations for local autonomy, let alone sovereignty, expressed in many First Nations submissions. These measures were intended to fit with the dominant society’s view of the ‘Indian’ and his place in society, not simply as altruistic concessions to Aboriginal peoples.

This was perhaps nowhere better seen than in the SJC’s recommendation on its first term of reference, ‘treaty rights and obligations’. In light of the extensive First Nations complaints about infringement of treaty rights, the Committee had already suggested in its 1947 interim report, that the government ought to set up a Claims Commission to investigate into Aboriginal grievances. However, the different wording of the similar recommendation in the final report revealed the underlying motivation.⁷⁷

Your Committee recommends that a Commission in the nature of a Claims Commission be set up, with the least possible delay, to inquire into the terms of all Indian treaties in order to discover and determine, *definitely* and *finally*, such rights and obligations as are therein involved and, further, to assess and settle *finally* and in a just and equitable manner all claims and grievances which have arisen thereunder.⁷⁸

The repetitive stress on the need for finality was the telling sign. Aboriginal people maintained a

⁷⁶ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 187.

⁷⁷ The wording of the recommendation in the 1947 interim report can be found on page 20 of this chapter.

⁷⁸ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 187. Emphasis added.

strong collective memory of the intent and spirit of the treaties their ancestors had signed with the crown representatives, an interpretation that conflicted with the strict legalistic reading of the agreements prevalent in the government.⁷⁹ The SJC seem to have accepted the view of the IAB that the treaties had become largely obsolete. But they had also witnessed evidence first hand of their importance to the First Nations, who, in many cases, construed their sense of identity and the foundation of their entire relationship with Canada from this vantage point. Allowing the 'Indians' to cling to these 'misconceptions' of their treaty rights was viewed as an impediment to their 'advancement' to citizenship. As such, it was essential that the issue be dealt with conclusively, the Aboriginal misapprehensions corrected, and the whole matter be closed as quickly as possible. Though this recommendation was responding to Aboriginal concerns, its rationale belonged to the dominant society.

On a host of other issues, the SJC virtually ignored the concerns of the First Nations when formulating its recommendations. For instance, the Committee decided that Aboriginal people should continue to pay all taxes except from land or income derived on the reserve. But perhaps the most glaring case was on the question of voluntary and compulsory enfranchisement. The sections of the Indian Act that dealt with compulsory enfranchisement were some of the most hated and feared by the First Nations, drawing almost universal and passionate attacks in their written briefs and presentations to the SJC. Yet, the final report contained only a single sentence under this heading advising that the revised act should "contain provisions to clarify the present rules and regulations regarding enfranchisement."⁸⁰ Given the potent feelings on the part of Aboriginal people, and the fact that the powers to force the enfranchisement of an Indian had not been

⁷⁹ This conflict between the letter and the spirit of the treaties continues at the end of the twentieth century in the nation's courts and in the media.

⁸⁰ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 188.

implemented in many years, it seems surprising that the Committee did not deal with this issue.

Similarly, the overwhelming majority of Aboriginal bands and organisations across the country had requested the right to control membership for their band or tribe. Under this heading, the SJC recommended a new definition of 'Indian' be instituted that was "more in accord with present conditions," and that the IAB undertake a revision of current band membership lists.⁸¹ The Committee believed that the combination of these with "the amendment of those sections of the Act dealing with Band membership will obviate many problems." At least part of the motivation for ignoring Aboriginal people's desire to have a say in who would, or would not, be a part of their communities, was economic. The report states that the government "annually votes moneys to promote the welfare of the Indians. This money should not be spent for the benefit of persons who are not legally members of the Indian Band." Whittling down the number of legal 'Indians' was the more important in light of the increased expenditures necessary to extend the welfare state to include all Aboriginal people.

The stated purpose of all the proposed revisions was "to make possible the gradual transition of Indians from wardship to citizenship and to help them advance themselves."⁸² Underlying many of the suggestions were democratic and liberal principles that sought to give the 'Indian' equality and provide opportunities, rather than hand-outs, for Aboriginal people to 'make good'. But the thread that tied all these policy recommendations together was assimilation. When the overall program is examined, in the context of the shifting image of the 'Indian' and the socio-cultural milieu of the immediate post-war years, the SJC provided Aboriginal people a hearing, but they were heard only selectively. It is this rationale that makes sense of the Committee's decision to press for a Claims Commission to attain closure on treaty rights and obligations. It also helps

⁸¹ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 187.

⁸² SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 187.

make comprehensible the final report's unwillingness to meet Aboriginal demands for tax exemption. Backing away from the status quo would merely have reinforced the exceptional nature of the 'Indian' and removed an instrument for teaching civic responsibility. Assimilation clearly emerges behind the SJC's muteness on enfranchisement and band membership. Glossing over such a contentious issue as compulsory enfranchisement only makes sense if these powers might be needed at some future date. This instrument went hand in hand with control over band membership, which was not only maintained in government hands, but strengthened. Inherent in making the 'Indian problem' go away was the power to determine, at some point, that those people were no longer 'Indians' in the legal, as well as cultural and 'racial' sense: in the words of the final report, "to facilitate the Indians to become, in every respect, citizens proud of Canada and the provinces in which they reside."⁸³ So saying, the Special Joint Committee appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act concluded its activities, confident that they had crafted a new Act and policy that would better the lives of the 'Indians', meet the desires of Canadians, improve the work of the Indian Affairs Branch, and propelled the 'Indian problem' closer to its final solution.

In the end, the Special Joint Committee wound up recommending the repeal or revision of virtually every section of the existing Indian Act. The program they developed largely, though not completely, ignored Aboriginal views and aspirations. Most significantly, Aboriginal desires for a continuing separate existence as distinct cultural entities and the maintenance of their treaty-based relationship with the crown were not acknowledged in the final report. On the testimony of academic and medical experts, the 'Indian problem' was reconstructed as a problem of a disadvantaged ethnic minority like any other. In this guise it became a solvable matter for the

⁸³ SJC, Minutes and Proceedings (No. 5, 13 April to 21 June 1948): 190.

government, requiring the adequate provision of social, health and educational services. The image of the 'Indian' was optimistically recast as the 'potential Indian citizen' during the course of the proceedings. Also critical, was the SJC flirtation with integration; the Committee members casually crossing over between it and assimilation as they mulled the future of Canadian Indian policy. But overall assimilation remained for most the proper end goal, and a final solution to the 'Indian problem' the overarching theme of the SJC's recommendations.

The activities of the SJC had ushered in a renovation of the Indian administration, and would lead to a remaking of the Indian Act and Indian policy, more generally. But most importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, the process was one of reconstructing the English-Canadian public image of the 'Indian' and rehabilitating the long-standing goal of assimilation. The dissemination of the Minutes and Proceedings, combined with the continuous media coverage, served to educate Canada about the First Nations, their views and their circumstances. This mass of material augmented the already prevalent desire among Canadians to 'do right by the Indian', both in appreciation for the actions of the 'Indian-at-war', and to atone for the negligent treatment that had characterised the country's past relations with Aboriginal people. The best reward that Canadians could imagine for the 'Indian', and the only way to expiate the collective sense of guilt was to encourage Aboriginal people to become like them. Thus, for Canadians, assimilation remained the 'common sense' solution to the 'Indian problem', for the 'Indian' as well as the taxpayer and the government.

EPILOGUE FROM SJC TO INDIAN ACT, 1948-1951

The end result of the Special Joint Committee's years of effort would provide the basis for a post-war Canadian Indian policy and administration that were functionally, but not conceptually, different from their precursors. The dominant society had reason to be pleased at the outcome, and from its perspective the future of the 'Indian' appeared bright. Canadians could feel satisfied that the errors of the past had been exposed and addressed, thereby both alleviating the immediate plight of the Aboriginal people and removing the roadblocks on the road to assimilation. The SJC had provided the country with a mechanism for expunging some of the collective sense of guilt, and forged a new optimism about the future.

Aboriginal people could take pride in the outcome of the SJC, even though they had not won all of the changes they had sought. They had for the first time found a place at the table where Indian policy was determined, and their spokesmen had acquitted themselves well. The proceedings and the evidence presented before the SJC had done more to circulate their views and grievances than anything previous, and afforded Aboriginal leaders and associations experience in handling the media and articulating their cause for the wider population. Perhaps more importantly for the future, the SJC had proved a catalyst for the political organisation of the First Nations, and encouraged the establishment of, if not a collective Aboriginal consciousness, at least a sense of shared experiences. Aboriginal people were quick to put the concessions they had acquired in the new Indian Act to their own use, regardless of the dominant society's rationale in awarding them. Self-government initiatives proved the most important of these, helping First Nations communities to maintain and foster their cultural identity, rather than providing the assimilation tool it was intended by the SJC. Overall, however, the greatest consequence of the public and governmental re-evaluation of the Indian Act and the 'Indian problem' for the Aboriginal population was that it

established as a precedent, their legitimate right to be involved in the development of Canadian Indian policy in the future. Finally, as the government repeatedly discovered to their chagrin, in the future it could no longer determine Canadian Indian policy without soliciting at least a modicum of Aboriginal participation.

For Indian Affairs Branch officials, the process had raised their profile, both within the government and the wider population, temporarily banishing the impression that they inhabited an isolated bureaucratic and political backwater. The agency that had previously been chronically under-funded now had more money than it could feasibly spend because of shortages of material and labour which continued to plague the country. Importantly, they had managed to weather the criticisms they faced during the review, successfully conveying their impressions of their charges, while enlightening the Committee on the ways they believed the 'Indian problem' ought to be solved. Despite the upheaval of these years, there is nothing to suggest that the IAB had altered its image of the 'Indian' as a result of Parliamentary and media scrutiny. The 'Administrative Indian' remained a very different construct than its publicly discussed counterpart, and the IAB noticeably out of step with the society on whose behalf they laboured.

In spite of the thorough nature of the review and the extensive recommendations produced, the process of formalising a new Indian Act would prove surprisingly drawn out and contentious. Administrative restructuring, personnel changes and political considerations arising from the Catholic Church's anger at proposals to change the provisions for denominational schooling forced Indian policy reform onto the back burner until after the federal election in 1949.¹ It was not until

¹ The Catholic Church was more wedded to maintaining denominational schooling than were any of the other churches involved in Aboriginal education. The SJC had been inclined to more secular instruction, preferably in day schools, and ideally with the Aboriginal children integrated into neighbouring provincial school systems. The staunch opposition that the Catholic Church was mounting made the Liberal government nervous about pressing the issue and
(continued...)

after a cabinet restructuring in 1949-1950 that the process gained any impetus.

The Indian Affairs Branch, now within the new Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, had yet another new minister, Walter Harris (Liberal, Grey Bruce), take the reins of responsibility. Under his guidance, Bill 267, the embryonic Indian Act, was prepared for submission to the House of Commons in the first half of 1950. John Leslie argues that the inexperienced Minister “was captured by his policy and legal advisors and by the superstructure of legislation, administrative practices and constitutional arrangements” that had guided Canadian Indian policy since the nineteenth century.² The resulting bill in many instances stepped back from some of the measures contained in the provisional draft of the Act prepared by the SJC, serving to entrench official views and authority. It denied the federal vote to Aboriginal people, and rejected the recommendations for a claims commission or regional advisory boards to provide an external check on Indian administration. Moreover, in some ways the proposed legislation increased the arbitrary powers of the Minister and IAB officials to interfere in the economic, social and moral lives of the First Nations. The bill was introduced on 7 June 1950, sparking an immediate flurry of criticism and political opposition, from the press, Aboriginal groups and bands, civil liberty associations, the Catholic Church, former members of the SJC, the C.C.F. and the Conservatives. In response to the opposition, Harris withdrew Bill 267 two weeks later, promising to resubmit it the following year after further consultation.

This consultation included a November 1950 meeting in Regina with Aboriginal leaders from western Canada. More important was the Indian Act Conference at the end of February the following year in Ottawa. Harris presented his substantially revised legislation, Bill 79, to

¹(...continued)
appearing anti-catholic before a federal election.

² John F. Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943-1963* (PhD. Dissertation, Carleton University, 1999), p. 211.

Aboriginal representatives for their input on 28 February, one day after submitting it to Parliament. Formal sessions continued until 3 March, with 19 official Aboriginal delegates presenting their perspectives on the provisions contained in the bill. How much influence this conference exerted over the final shape of the new Act is debatable, but it was another symbolic victory. This new rendition of the bill brought it more in line with the tenor of the SJC, containing a number of alterations reducing the powers of the Minister and his administrators, and reinstating the federal vote, though only if a waiver form was signed surrendering tax exemption status. Also, in place of a claims commission, the previous ban on First Nations use of the courts to pursue treaty and land rights issues was lifted, something legislators perceived as a civics lesson for the 'Indian'.³ After 2nd reading, a special Commons committee was struck to give the proposed legislation one more review. This process occupied much of April, and the new Act was not finally passed until 20 June 1951, almost three years after the SJC's final report.

Following the implementation of the Indian Act, 1951, the 'Indian question' receded from the minds of Canadians for several years. But the SJC was not the final word on the issue. Another Parliamentary committee was appointed between 1959 and 1961, with other reevaluations in subsequent years. In all these, the model established by the SJC was replicated. Aboriginal consultation was invited, an increasingly clear First Nations agenda largely glossed over, and the same liberal-democratic principles legitimised a redefined policy of assimilation. It was not until Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government produced its infamous White Paper in 1969 that the pattern was broken.

³ John F. Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination?* p. 232-33.

CONCLUSION

THE IMAGE OF THE 'INDIAN' IN ENGLISH-CANADA, 1930-1948

This dissertation has examined the image of the 'Indian' prevalent in English-Canada and the impact of the Second World War on the ways in which the dominant society constructed Aboriginal people between 1930 and 1948. The first chapter explored the image of the 'Indian' in both the administrative and public domains during the 1930s. The personnel of the Indian Affairs Branch and the larger public each demonstrated views about Aboriginal people which, though distinct and quite different, changed little during the course of the decade. The common corporate language of the IAB revealed a cohesive 'Administrative Indian' image that was infantilised and characterised by a cornucopia of negative traits: their charges were perceived as irresponsible, lazy, unintelligent and morally vulnerable to bad influences. More than simply negative, the administrative discourse was openly hostile, defining the 'Indian' as a delinquent in need of control, and construed the relationship between the IAB and the First Nations, perhaps accurately, in adversarial terms. In contrast, the image of Aboriginal people evident in the public forum was an ambivalent dichotomy. The dominant construction of the 'Indian', the 'noble savage', was a romanticised and usually positive figure that resided in the distant past. Sadly, Canadians believed this once-great 'race' was dying out, and the modern-day remnants, when they were talked about at all, were viewed mostly as 'drunken criminals'. The public and official images of the 'Indian' help to explain the IAB's custodial and at times oppressive administration, as well as the indifference of Canadians to the difficult circumstances of Aboriginal people during the Depression years.

Chapter 2 examined the 'Public Indian' during the early years of the Second World War. The first twenty-eight months of the war seem to have had a significant impact on the ways in which Canadians publicly discussed the 'Indian'. The pressures of the war combined with their

own fascination and need to know about Aboriginal people's contributions to the war effort forced a reevaluation of many of the stereotypes and assumptions that had for so long formed the 'common sense' knowledge of the 'Indian'. A new image, 'Indian-at-war', was needed to make sense of Aboriginal support for the war effort and to provide succour to Canadians' own anxieties about the war situation. The process came to a head around the fall of France, and continued through the next year. However, as pronounced as the impact of the war was on the 'Indian' discourse, it did not mark a paradigm shift. The old versions of the 'Public Indian' were not displaced or disavowed, instead the new characteristics were grafted onto the existing mental framework. The 'Public Indian' remained a contradictory and complex conglomeration of ideas, images and stereotypes.

In the third chapter, the impact of the war was tested through an analysis of IAB activities and correspondence relating to the voluntary enlistment and conscription of Aboriginal men for military service. Unlike the public discourse which had to adapt significantly in order to accommodate these unusual activities by First Nations people, the IAB was able to explain them without fundamentally altering their working image of their wards. Aboriginal military service, so symbolically significant to the general public, was viewed by IAB personnel simply as a pragmatic tool for assimilation. Conscription caused more strain to the existing official discourse, but by shielding itself behind a legal and administrative wall, the Branch managed to dodge the difficult questions it raised. In the end, the Indian Affairs Branch pursued contradictory policies, caught between its hope for what the 'Indians' might become, and its pessimistic assessment of their charges current capabilities.

The turbulent last twenty-eight months of the war, and the significant fluctuations in the 'Public Indian', form the subject of Chapter 4. The dominant image of the 'Indian' changed, but so too did the focus of public attentions. During the early years of the war, Canadians had

scrutinised their images of the 'Indian' in response to wartime pressures and Aboriginal support for the war effort. However, during the latter years of the war and particularly in light of anxieties about the post-war, focus turned inward on Canadian society itself, its relationship with the First Nations and the country's Indian administration. Of critical importance was making the new order Canadians hoped to build match the passionate rhetoric for which the country had sacrificed so much of its blood, spirit and treasure. The image of the 'Indian', buffeted by the dominant society's response to such potent stimuli, again proved most responsive to these external factors. The 'Indian-at-war' image declined inversely as the confidence in victory grew and the country's preoccupation with the post-war era intensified. So too, as concern about winning the peace seized Canadians' collective imagination, the public discourse reflected a newfound appreciation for the 'plight of the Redman', and a new 'Indian' image made its appearance in these discussions, a pitiable and powerless 'Indian victim'.

The impetus for reform of the country's Indian policy in the late stages of the Second World War owed much to the symbolic value of Aboriginal contributions to the war effort in the form of money, patriotic display and, in particular, the military service of their young men and women in the armed forces. This inescapable fact, coupled with the extensive media attention given to such efforts drew the thanks of the general public, which extended the debt of gratitude to all Aboriginal people. For Canadians, the 'Indian' had gone to war, not simply those who enlisted, but all First Nations people, and their sacrifices were appreciated. In return, the dominant society constructed a place for the 'Indian' in the 'new order', placing the 'Indian problem' within the larger national agenda of winning the peace. As such it benefited from the tremendous momentum and national will dedicated to this new crusade.

Chapter 5 provided the first look at the post-war years and the movement towards Indian policy reform in Canada. It focussed on a rich collection of internal correspondence between the

Minister of Mines and Resources and the field personnel of the IAB in early 1946. The subject of discussion was, in essence, the 'Indian problem' and changes thought necessary by the Indian Agents for the IAB to achieve its goals? The material in these letters provide a unique glimpse inside the intellectual and cultural 'common sense' of officials after the strains of war, and with the promise of peace ahead. For the first time, the disciplined adherence to corporate norms showed signs of fraying. Indian Agents demonstrated a willingness to look outside the traditional channels for ways to explain their difficulties with their charges. Despite this small degree of discontinuity, the distinguishing characteristic of the field staff's letters was their ongoing desire to maintain their authority over Aboriginal people. Overall, the 'Administrative Indian' remained largely intact, if slightly altered and less sharply defined than previously. Moreover, as it prepared to enter the parliamentary review of the nation's Indian policy, the Indian Affairs Branch continued to function somewhat segregated from the larger society.

The sixth chapter evaluated the other two interested parties in the country's collective post-war reexamination of the 'Indian' question in the forum of the Special Joint Committee to examine and reconsider the Indian Act. Of concern were the various images of Aboriginal people brought to the SJC's table for consideration, by the Canadian public and, for the first time in so open a fashion, by the First Nations themselves. Canadians demanded that measures be enacted quickly to relieve the perceived immediate needs of the First Nations, but more importantly they also wanted to see a long range plan developed to rid the country of the 'Indian problem' once and for all. Aboriginal briefs submitted to the SJC revealed no single indigenous discourse, but rather a tremendous diversity of views. Nevertheless, underneath the differences lay a distinct conceptualisation of themselves and their place in Canada, which unequivocally declared their desire to remain Indians. The wide ranges of alternate images presented to the SJC did nothing to simplify their challenging assignment.

The final chapter tracked the actual hearings and debates within the SJC; the forum where the country's numerous images of the 'Indian' strove for ascendancy. Out of this arena materialized a new image of the 'Indian' that encapsulated all the dominant society's hopes for the future - the 'potential Indian citizen'. Based on this optimistic reconstruction, the SJC formulated a forward-looking set of policies designed to solve the 'Indian problem' and attain closure. It was thus developed to fulfil the emotional and philosophical needs of Canadians, rather than recognise the aspirations of the First Nations, which were largely disregarded in the rationalisations of the SJC. Essentially, the 'Indian problem' remained a 'White man's burden'.

What can be concluded from the overall patterns in Canadians' image of the Indian as revealed in this study? First, the findings of this dissertation argue against any firm causal references to the impact of the Second World War on Canadian social and cultural attitudes, or on the relationship between the First Nations and Canadians. The 'Indian' and concepts like assimilation meant very different things to members of the dominant society in 1935 than they did in 1947. But having said that, core elements of the 'Indian' remained throughout the period, and assimilation still rested on the underlying assumption of Aboriginal inferiority. Certainly, the Second World War affected the country and its inhabitants in a multiplicity of ways, but through the upheaval continuity survived. These conclusions support the recent work of other historians on Canadian attitudes about 'race' and equality, which deny a paradigm shift during and after the war: though the form may have changed, the substance had not.¹ So too with Canadian Indian

¹ This conclusion is in line with the findings of James Walker and Kay Anderson through this same time period. See James W. St.G. Walker, "Race," Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies (Waterloo and Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press and the Osgoode Society, 1997), p. 309, and Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press,

(continued...)

policy, the day-to-day function of administration and reserve life may have differed from the prewar years, but the overarching structure and purpose continued. The SJC and the 1951 Indian Act marked not so much a new direction in the country's Indian policy as a rejection of the elements of coercive directed civilization, and a return to the cooperative intent of the original Indian Act of 1876.² Such complex and contradictory values, assumptions and intentions, driven initially by the need to win the war and finally by the need to win the peace, require careful and nuanced examination.

Beyond providing a cautionary tale, two dichotomous themes suggest themselves. The first notable aspect of the 'Indian' discourse was the variability and adaptability of its form and meaning. Even the seemingly static 'Administrative Indian' proved malleable, accommodating the strains produced by the war, Aboriginal support for the war effort and the reform of the post-war years. But this versatility was most obvious in the public discussions of the 'Indian', where Canadians revealed a remarkable degree of flexibility in their conceptualisations of Aboriginal people. The dual images with which they entered the Second World War proved highly elastic in their meaning and applicability. However, when they no longer sufficed to meet the dominant society's needs, Canadians demonstrated few qualms about crafting new images, what Elizabeth Vibert terms "inventive refashioning," to help them make sense of their rapidly changing world.³ In this process, external stimuli proved the most important, with major shifts in the public

¹(...continued)
1991).

² John Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian-Native Relations. Eds. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S Lussier. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983): 39-55.

³ Elizabeth Vibert, Trader's Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1797-1846 (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), p. 277.

discourse corresponding to prominent, emotional events that had little to do with Aboriginal people themselves. Having said this, the First Nations were able to exert some influence on the dominant society's construction of the 'Indian' at certain times. Their impact was most conspicuous in response to their support for the war during the crisis years of 1940-41 and then again following the war through their participation in the SJC. Previous studies on the Euro-Canadian constructions of the 'Indian' have missed the immediate responsiveness of a society's image of the 'other' to acute external and internal stresses.

The second important theme to emerge from this analysis is that of continuity. For instance, the gulf separating the 'Public Indian' from the 'Administrative Indian' remained a constant throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The increase in scrutiny of the 'Indian' and the issue of Indian policy and administration among the Canadian public did nothing to bridge the divide; if anything it widened it, as the previously positive public image of the IAB faded under a storm of criticism. Consistency also formed the hallmark of the working image of Aboriginal people articulated by Branch personnel. This persistence had a great deal to do with the disciplined nature of the IAB's corporate discourse, though the adherence to collective norms was weakening by war's end. Arguably, the Branch simply did not have the same room to manoeuvre, as did the public, within the mental framework it had constructed over decades of administering to Aboriginal people. Their *raison d'être* required an unequivocal sense of superiority to continue and give meaning to their duties on a day-to-day basis. Tampering with the pillars of 'racial' superiority that propped up the former could destabilise the entire structure. Thus the IAB really had little choice but to cling to their long-standing 'Indian' construct. With the completion of the SJC, and its reaffirmation of assimilation, the age-old mandate of the Indian Affairs Branch and Canadian Indian policy was renewed. Its effects would be seen through the subsequent decades.

The underlying foundation of the 'Public Indian' also remained fundamentally unchanged,

despite the gyrations in the public discourse during the 1930s and 1940s. The image of the 'other', the way the dominant society defined the 'other', and the characteristics with which the 'other' was endowed were all subject to alteration or addition in response to circumstances. But, the essential nature of the relationship between Canadians and the First Nations remained. At the base of this 'common sense' rested the deeply-rooted assumption that English-Canada's 'race', society and way of life were superior to that of the 'Indian'. However, to formulate and candidly champion assimilation on these grounds in the wake of the war was inconceivable. Such sentiments would have been grossly out of step with the international climate of concern for human rights and tolerance, and at home might have undermined the profound need to justify the reasons for which the war had been fought and honour the sacrifices it had required. Through the SJC, Canada found a way to win the peace for the 'Indian' - by fusing its ideals with a fundamental confidence in its own virtues. Assimilation, though still founded on a conviction of 'racial' superiority, was legitimised and renewed through liberal democratic principles, and confidence in the promise of 'scientific' social engineering by an interventionist government.

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