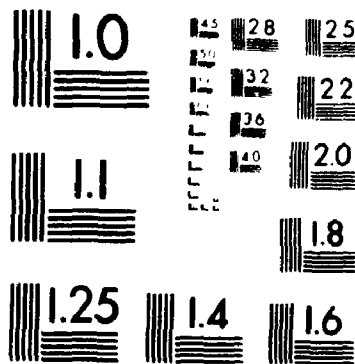




**PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET  
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT**



**PRECISION<sup>SM</sup> RESOLUTION TARGETS**

## NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

## AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

**St. Michael's Indian Residential School 1894-1926:  
A Study Within a Broader Historical and Ideological Framework**

by

**ARLENE ROBERTA GREYEVES**

A thesis submitted to  
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Social Work

School of Social Work

Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario

April 17, 1995

© copyright  
1995, A. Roberta Greyeyes

Acquisitions and  
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0N4

Direction des acquisitions et  
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa (Ontario)  
K1A 0N4

*Your file* *Votre référence*

*Our file* *Notre référence*

THE AUTHOR HAS GRANTED AN IRREVOCABLE NON-EXCLUSIVE LICENCE ALLOWING THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA TO REPRODUCE, LOAN, DISTRIBUTE OR SELL COPIES OF HIS/HER THESIS BY ANY MEANS AND IN ANY FORM OR FORMAT, MAKING THIS THESIS AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED PERSONS.

L'AUTEUR A ACCORDE UNE LICENCE IRREVOCABLE ET NON EXCLUSIVE PERMETTANT A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA DE REPRODUIRE, PRETER, DISTRIBUER OU VENDRE DES COPIES DE SA THESE DE QUELQUE MANIERE ET SOUS QUELQUE FORME QUE CE SOIT POUR METTRE DES EXEMPLAIRES DE CETTE THESE A LA DISPOSITION DES PERSONNE INTERESSEES.

THE AUTHOR RETAINS OWNERSHIP OF THE COPYRIGHT IN HIS/HER THESIS. NEITHER THE THESIS NOR SUBSTANTIAL EXTRACTS FROM IT MAY BE PRINTED OR OTHERWISE REPRODUCED WITHOUT HIS/HER PERMISSION.

L'AUTEUR CONSERVE LA PROPRIETE DU DROIT D'AUTEUR QUI PROTEGE SA THESE. NI LA THESE NI DES EXTRAITS SUBSTANTIELS DE CELLE-CI NE DOIVENT ETRE IMPRIMES OU AUTREMENT REPRODUITS SANS SON AUTORISATION.

ISBN 0-612-03049-0

Canada

Name Arlene Roberta Greyeyes

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

Social Sciences

0334

U-M-I

SUBJECT TERM

SUBJECT CODE

**Subject Categories**

**THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS**

Architecture 0729  
 Art History 0377  
 Cinema 0900  
 Dance 0378  
 Fine Arts 0357  
 Information Science 0723  
 Journalism 0391  
 Library Science 0399  
 Mass Communications 0708  
 Music 0413  
 Speech Communication 0459  
 Theater 0465

**EDUCATION**

General 0515  
 Administration 0514  
 Adult and Continuing 0516  
 Agricultural 0517  
 Art 0273  
 Bilingual and Multicultural 0282  
 Business 0688  
 Community College 0275  
 Curriculum and Instruction 0727  
 Early Childhood 0518  
 Elementary 0524  
 Finance 0277  
 Guidance and Counseling 0519  
 Health 0680  
 Higher 0745  
 History of 0520  
 Home Economics 0278  
 Industrial 0521  
 Language and Literature 0279  
 Mathematics 0280  
 Music 0522  
 Philosophy of 0998  
 Physical 0523

Psychology 0525  
 Reading 0535  
 Religious 0527  
 Sciences 0714  
 Secondary 0533  
 Social Sciences 0534  
 Sociology of 0340  
 Special 0529  
 Teacher Training 0530  
 Technology 0710  
 Tests and Measurements 0288  
 Vocational 0747

**LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS**

Language  
 General 0679  
 Ancient 0289  
 Linguistics 0290  
 Modern 0291  
 Literature  
 General 0401  
 Classical 0294  
 Comparative 0295  
 Medieval 0297  
 Modern 0298  
 African 0316  
 American 0591  
 Asian 0305  
 Canadian (English) 0352  
 Canadian (French) 0355  
 English 0593  
 Germanic 0311  
 Latin American 0312  
 Middle Eastern 0315  
 Romance 0313  
 Slavic and East European 0314

**PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY**

Philosophy 0422  
 Religion  
 General 0318  
 Biblical Studies 0321  
 Clergy 0319  
 History of 0320  
 Philosophy of 0322  
 Theology 0469

**SOCIAL SCIENCES**

American Studies 0323  
 Anthropology  
 Archaeology 0324  
 Cultural 0326  
 Physical 0327  
 Business Administration  
 General 0310  
 Accounting 0272  
 Banking 0770  
 Management 0454  
 Marketing 0338  
 Canadian Studies 0385  
 Economics  
 General 0501  
 Agricultural 0503  
 Commerce Business 0505  
 Finance 0508  
 History 0509  
 Labor 0510  
 Theory 0511  
 Folklore 0358  
 Geography 0366  
 Gerontology 0351  
 History  
 General 0578

Ancient 0579  
 Medieval 0581  
 Modern 0582  
 Black 0328  
 African 0331  
 Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332  
 Canadian 0334  
 European 0335  
 Latin American 0336  
 Middle Eastern 0333  
 United States 0337  
 History of Science 0585  
 Law 0398  
 Political Science  
 General 0615  
 International Law and Relations 0616  
 Public Administration 0617  
 Recreation 0814  
 Social Work 0452  
 Sociology  
 General 0626  
 Criminology and Penology 0627  
 Demography 0938  
 Ethnic and Racial Studies 0631  
 Individual and Family Studies 0628  
 Industrial and Labor Relations 0629  
 Public and Social Welfare 0630  
 Social Structure and Development 0700  
 Theory and Methods 0344  
 Transportation 0709  
 Urban and Regional Planning 0999  
 Women's Studies 0453

**THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING**

**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

Agriculture  
 General 0473  
 Agronomy 0285  
 Animal Culture and Nutrition 0475  
 Animal Pathology 0476  
 Food Science and Technology 0359  
 Forestry and Wildlife 0478  
 Plant Culture 0479  
 Plant Pathology 0480  
 Plant Physiology 0817  
 Range Management 0777  
 Wood Technology 0746  
 Biology  
 General 0306  
 Anatomy 0307  
 Biostatistics 0308  
 Botany 0309  
 Cell 0379  
 Ecology 0329  
 Entomology 0353  
 Genetics 0369  
 Limnology 0793  
 Microbiology 0410  
 Molecular 0307  
 Neuroscience 0317  
 Oceanography 0416  
 Physiology 0433  
 Radiation 0821  
 Veterinary Science 0778  
 Zoology 0472  
 Biophysics  
 General 0786  
 Medical 0760  
 EARTH SCIENCES  
 Biogeochemistry 0425  
 Geochemistry 0996

Geodesy 0370  
 Geology 0372  
 Geophysics 0370  
 Hydrology 0388  
 Mineralogy 0411  
 Paleobotany 0345  
 Paleocology 0426  
 Paleontology 0418  
 Paleozoology 0985  
 Palynology 0427  
 Physical Geography 0368  
 Physical Oceanography 0415

**HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

Environmental Sciences 0768  
 Health Sciences  
 General 0566  
 Audiology 0300  
 Chemotherapy 0992  
 Dentistry 0567  
 Education 0350  
 Hospital Management 0769  
 Human Development 0758  
 Immunology 0982  
 Medicine and Surgery 0564  
 Mental Health 0347  
 Nursing 0569  
 Nutrition 0570  
 Obstetrics and Gynecology 0380  
 Occupational Health and Therapy 0354  
 Ophthalmology 0381  
 Pathology 0571  
 Pharmacology 0419  
 Pharmacy 0572  
 Physical Therapy 0382  
 Public Health 0573  
 Radiology 0574  
 Recreation 0575

Speech Pathology 0460  
 Toxicology 0383  
 Home Economics 0386

**PHYSICAL SCIENCES**

Pure Sciences  
 Chemistry  
 General 0485  
 Agricultural 0749  
 Analytical 0486  
 Biochemistry 0487  
 Inorganic 0488  
 Nuclear 0738  
 Organic 0490  
 Pharmaceutical 0491  
 Physical 0494  
 Polymer 0495  
 Radiation 0754  
 Mathematics 0405  
 Physics  
 General 0605  
 Acoustics 0986  
 Astronomy and Astrophysics 0606  
 Atmospheric Science 0608  
 Atomic 0748  
 Electronics and Electricity 0607  
 Elementary Particles and High Energy 0798  
 Fluid and Plasma 0759  
 Molecular 0609  
 Nuclear 0610  
 Optics 0752  
 Radiation 0756  
 Solid State 0611  
 Statistics 0463  
 Applied Sciences  
 Applied Mechanics 0346  
 Computer Science 0984

Engineering  
 General 0537  
 Aerospace 0530  
 Agricultural 0539  
 Automotive 0540  
 Biomedical 0541  
 Chemical 0542  
 Civil 0543  
 Electronics and Electrical 0544  
 Heat and Thermodynamics 0348  
 Hydraulic 0545  
 Industrial 0546  
 Marine 0547  
 Materials Science 0794  
 Mechanical 0548  
 Metallurgy 0743  
 Mining 0551  
 Nuclear 0552  
 Packaging 0549  
 Petroleum 0765  
 Sanitary and Municipal 0554  
 System Science 0790  
 Geotechnology 0428  
 Operations Research 0796  
 Plastics Technology 0795  
 Textile Technology 0994

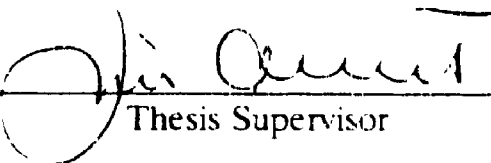
PSYCHOLOGY  
 General 0621  
 Behavioral 0384  
 Clinical 0622  
 Developmental 0620  
 Experimental 0623  
 Industrial 0624  
 Personality 0625  
 Physiological 0989  
 Psychobiology 0349  
 Psychometrics 0632  
 Social 0451




The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
and Research acceptance of the thesis

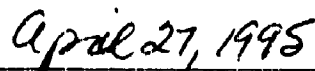
**St. Michael's Indian Residential School 1894-1926:  
A Study Within a Broader Historical and Ideological Framework**

submitted by Arlene Roberta Greyeyes  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Social Work

  
Thesis Supervisor

  
Director, School of Social Work

Carleton University



(date)

## ABSTRACT

The historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations provides the analytical framework for examining St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan during the period 1894-1926. Using primary and secondary sources, this study examines the doctrines of racial superiority implicit within the ideology of "Christianizing" and "civilizing" Indian people through education. From the perspective of "an Aboriginal way of knowing", this study examines the history of Indian-white relations on the Prairies, Indian education, and Indian residential school life to give voice to the struggle by Indian people against European domination. "An Aboriginal way of knowing" means bringing the mind and heart together to find the Indian experiences hidden within much of the documentation on Indian-white relations. This study examines the concepts of assimilation, Indian education, and Indian residential schools to expose the domination, coercion, and the Indian resistance obscured within these euphemized descriptions of Indian-white relations.

## DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the often forgotten Indian children who lost their lives in the name of "Christianity" and "civilization", a doctrine of racial superiority still euphemistically called Indian education even today. In particular, this paper is dedicated to the memory of one little girl who died of consumption on 12 January 1896 at St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. We must never forget the real costs of Indian education. This little Indian girl was not just another statistic. She was someone's *awâsis* (child), *nitanis* (daughter), and *nôsisim* (grandchild) who never returned from residential school, not even to be buried among her people.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take full responsibility for the views and conclusions about Indian-white relations, Indian education, and Indian residential schools expressed in this paper. These represent neither the views nor the conclusions of the former students of St. Michael's School, nor of the general Aboriginal population on these issues.

I gratefully acknowledge and thank the members of my Thesis Committee: Jim Albert, Therese Jennissen, and Derek Smith for their understanding, patience, and practical advice as I tried to make sense out of this personal, and often painful past, from "an Aboriginal way of knowing". I would also like to thank Kerry Abel for taking the time to comment on my paper. None of these people are responsible for my errors or omissions, nor do they necessarily agree with the interpretations and conclusions expressed in this paper.

This exciting, yet disturbing journey, would not have been possible without the unconditional love and strength provided by my family: Dan, Maureen, and Brad. I would also like to thank John for his support and my Mom (Kokum) for showing me the way home. I also thank the members of my Aboriginal circles for the precious gift of listening with their hearts. I am grateful for the medicines which cleansed and healed me and I thank the Great Spirit for helping me to make the long journey between mind and heart. *Kitatamihinâwâw*. Thank you all.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Dedication .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Appendices .....	vii
<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction and Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Prologue .....	1
1.1 General Approaches to Indian-White Relations .....	7
1.2 Current Analytical Approaches to Indian-White Relations .....	13
<b>Chapter 2 - Research Objectives and Approach .....</b>	<b>21</b>
2.0 Overall Purpose, Research Parameters, and Methodology .....	21
2.1 Research Limitations and Considerations .....	25
2.2 Statement of the Problem .....	27
2.3 Research Approach, Objectives, and Questions .....	30
<b>Chapter 3 - Historical and Ideological Framework .....</b>	<b>33</b>
3.0 That Which Lurks Beneath the Surface .....	33
3.1 The Inseparability of the Historical from the Ideological .....	37
3.2 Eastern Indian-White Relations Pave the Way .....	41
3.3 Laying the Policy Framework for Indian Education .....	44
<b>Chapter 4 - Indian Education and Indian Children .....</b>	<b>51</b>
4.0 Preparing the Way for Indian Education in the West .....	51
4.1 The Missionaries and Indian People .....	53
4.2 The Financial and Human Costs of Indian Education .....	59
4.3 The Indian Act and Indian Education .....	68

<b>Chapter 5 - A History of Resistance and Struggle on the Prairies</b> .....	<b>73</b>
5.0 Broadening the Scope of Submission and Resistance .....	73
5.1 The Prairie Fire Called "Christianity" and "Civilization" .....	79
5.2 Treaty 6: Benevolence or Divide and Conquer Tactics? .....	85
5.3 When Buffalo and Rations Become Weapons .....	90
5.4 Indian Education: Another Broken Promise? .....	94
<b>Chapter 6 - St. Michael's Indian Residential School</b> .....	<b>98</b>
6.0 The Oblate's Honour Roll .....	98
6.1 The Oblates Secure Approval for an Indian Industrial School ..	102
6.2 A Trying But Jubilant First Year for the Oblates .....	107
6.3 A Peek Behind the Walls of St. Michael's School .....	114
6.4 The Hidden Link Between Christianity and Indian Education ..	119
6.5 Indian People Struggle Against St. Michael's School .....	122
<b>Chapter 7 - Conclusions and Next Steps</b> .....	<b>148</b>
7.0 Conclusions .....	148
7.1 Next Steps .....	157
Bibliography .....	159
Primary Sources .....	169
Finding Aids .....	171

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Description	Page
A.1	Translation: Melasippe Paquette to D.H. Macdowall, 5 January 1895	172
A.2	<u>Statutes of Canada</u> , 1894, Chapter 32, Section 11, Subsections 137-138	173

### Note to the Reader: Documentation of Sources

*This paper uses footnotes to identify primary sources and parenthetical documentation for secondary sources. All primary sources, including any supplementary information, are referenced by means of numbered footnotes. To aid in further research, footnotes also include the primary sources cited by other researchers. Parenthetical documentation including (author year: page) has been used for the secondary literature sources listed in the bibliography.*

## Chapter 1 - Introduction and Background

*Indians look to the past with sorrow and anger, yet with pride; sorrow because their ancestors endured too much; with pride because, when they look at Indian accomplishments and regard the galaxy of great men, and regard the merit of the race, they can look at the present with understanding and to the future with confidence and hope (Johnson 1974: 141).*

### **1.0 Prologue**

On one hand, this research paper examines St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan within the broader historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations. On the other, using James Scott's (1990) analysis of domination and resistance, I have tried to find my people within this history, not as victims, but as people of courage and worth who struggled against the interference of church and state in their lives. This research is based on "an Aboriginal way of knowing" which simply means bringing not only the mind, but the *heart* to the study of Indian-white relations. Given the personal and often painful nature of this history, Aboriginal healing and learning circles formed the spiritual and emotional foundation for this research process.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, to centre this research firmly within the concept of "an Aboriginal way of knowing", I relied heavily on Indian writers, such as Basil Johnson above, to help me to understand Indian-white relations through their lived experiences.

---

<sup>1</sup> I thank Jim Albert for the concept of "an Aboriginal way of knowing" and Gordon Bruyere, Gale Cyr, and Jim for the Aboriginal circles which formed the foundation for this study.

In one short paragraph, Basil Johnson (1974: 141) has captured the interconnectedness of the past, present, and future which represents the circle of life for many Indian people. When Indian residential schools are analyzed within this context, it soon becomes apparent that these institutions cannot be examined solely as a misguided phenomenon of a distant past. Yet, this is exactly what continues to happen. To this day, most of the research on Indian residential schools narrowly addresses only those experiences related to the students who actually attended these institutions. Often, the inter-generational impact of residential schools on Indian families and communities diminishes in significance when we are reminded once again, as Lascelles (1992: 8) recently did, that:

Historically, most native students never went to residential schools....All told, roughly 100,000, perhaps less than one in six, were educated in residential schools, either exclusively or for a specific period.

Numbers alone can be misleading. Indian residential schools represent the one issue that has touched the lives of virtually every Indian person in Canada today. Without question, the impact of these institutions on its survivors should never be forgotten, nor underestimated. While some survivors can recall positive experiences, many more are still struggling to put their lives and their family relationships back together again. Even now, two to three generations later, some Indian residential school survivors cannot share their experiences because the pain is still too much to bear. Others, like Johnson (1988), have somehow managed to wring laughter out of these less than humorous situations. Phil Fontaine (1993: 53) explained the apparent contradiction in this Indian humour when he stated:

My mother can laugh about many of the things that happened to them, even the sad things. What that tells me and should tell others is not that these incidents were funny but that it is often a way of saving face and making light of something that is really sad.

Humour, like the absolute number of Indian children who attended residential schools, does not begin to capture the complex nature of this issue. We must never forget the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Indian people who died as a result of this "civilizing" experiment. When it comes to residential schools, most Indian people know without question what Basil Johnson (1974: 141) meant when he wrote "Indians look to the past with sorrow and anger". Today, does anyone know how many Indian children died at these schools in the name of "Christianity"? Has anyone bothered to count just how many graves lie tucked away behind these monuments to "civilization" called Indian residential schools? At Battleford alone, there are approximately 70-80 graves behind the Indian industrial school founded in the early 1880s (Barnett and Dyer 1983: 144).

Dr. Peter Bryce (1907: 18), Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Indian Affairs, exposed the devastating correlation between Indian residential schools and premature deaths due primarily to tuberculosis, when he reported:

... it appears that of 1,537 pupils [whose reports were] returned from 15 schools which have been in operation on an average of fourteen years, 7 per cent are sick or in poor health and 24 per cent are reported dead. But a close analysis of some of the returns reveals an intimate relationship between the health of the pupils while in the school and that of their early death subsequent to discharge.

The death rate reported by Dr. Bryce (1907: 19) at the File Hills ex-pupil colony, founded in 1901, was even more astounding at sixty-nine percent. D.C.

Scott (1914b: 615), Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, later tried to dissipate the blame and managed to evade the real issue of the scandalous *death rates* due to Indian residential schools when he wrote:

... Insufficient care was exercised in the admission of children to the schools. The well-known predisposition of Indians to tuberculosis resulted in a very large percentage of deaths among the pupils. They were housed in buildings not carefully designed for the school purposes, and these buildings became infected and dangerous to the inmates. It is quite within the mark to say that fifty per cent of the children who passed through these schools did not live to benefit from the education which they had received therein.

Regardless of who was to blame, Indian people suffered untold losses due to residential schools. Many of their children either died while at school, or were released from school just to come home and die. For example in 1897, Father Melasippe Paquette, the first Principal at St. Michael's School, reported five deaths and explained that "not having an infirmary or a spare room where the sick could be kept apart from the rest, these children died at home...."<sup>2</sup> Three years after Dr. Bryce's report, the Duck Lake Indian Agent cautioned his superiors:

The Department should realize that under the present circumstances about one-half of the children who are sent to the Duck Lake Boarding school [St. Michael's] die before the age of 18, or very shortly afterwards, and that, because they are kept in a building whose every seam and crevice is, doubtless, burdened with the Tuberculosis Baccilli [sic].<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Dominion of Canada. (1898) "North-West Territories St Michael's Boarding School". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 1897. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, (pp. 252). (Hereafter Department of Indian Affairs cited as DIA.)

<sup>3</sup> Memo, J. Macarthur to the Secretary, DIA, 27 December 1910. National Archives of Canada, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1. (Hereafter National Archives of Canada cited as NAC.)



Unfortunately this analysis, while rightfully concerning the shocking death rates at Indian residential schools and the problems confronting its survivors, still relegates the problem to a fraction of the Indian people involved. Another group of Indian people were also affected by Indian residential schools. These include people like myself, who although spared the first-hand experiences of our family members, still feel the crushing impact of these so called Indian "educational" institutions on our lives. We are the by-products of an Indian educational *system* which tried to eradicate our "Indianness", just as surely as it tore our families from their homes and tried to obliterate their cultural ties. Who today believes our sense of loss, our feelings of infinite sadness, or even acknowledges our anger as we struggle to reclaim our languages, culture, and to rebuild damaged family ties? Often, it is only after we have searched the past for answers to Indian residential schools that we are able to "look at the present with [real] understanding" (Johnson 1974: 141).<sup>4</sup> By the same token, if Indian people ever expect "to look to the future with confidence and hope" (Johnson 1974: 141), Indian residential schools cannot be examined solely as a misguided historical phenomenon.

Indian people must question the "ideology", defined by Larrain (1979: 17) as "the intellectual legitimation of social domination" which turned Indian residential schools into "an experiment in social engineering" (Miller 1991b: 196). Unless the "ideology" of *white*-Indian relations is challenged and changed

---

<sup>4</sup> See Ing's (1991) article entitled, "The Effects of Residential Schools on Native Child-Rearing Practices" for further information on the long term impact of Indian residential schools.

substantially, Indian residential schools are destined to live forever. It is not only naive, but foolhardy to believe that the ideology of racial superiority changed when "the last of the federal residential schools closed in 1988" (Dickason 1992: 337). Obviously, Olive Dickason (1992: 33) recognized the inherent limitations in this new policy direction when she added:

As to be expected, the influence of the old regime carries over, even as the new regime copes with such problems as the reluctance of Indian Affairs to allow a level of funding for band-operated schools comparable to that of provincially operated schools. Another problem is the transfer of authority: that of Indians is still limited except in the case of special agreements, as in Manitoba. In other words, old attitudes have not been eliminated...

Consequently, if "old attitudes have not been eliminated" (Dickason 1992: 33), the buildings called Indian residential schools were *not* the societal structures which held the concept of Indian "education" together. It was the *ideology* of racial superiority, the infrastructure of Indian-white relations, which gave life and longevity to the "resocialization" (Teevan 1992: 582) system known as Indian "education" which was at one time implemented through Indian residential schools. The sad reality is that this ideology of racial superiority has yet to change. Until it does, Indian residential schools will not just fade into oblivion along with the buildings of yesteryear. The ideology of racial superiority will continue to rear its ugly head in the more politically correct and obscure disguises often called Indian self-determination by the government of Canada today.

Due to the wide impact of Indian residential schools, Indian people past, present, and future formed the focus for this study of Indian education within the

broader context of Indian-white relations. Using "an Aboriginal way of knowing" as the basis for analysis, this study examines the historical and ideological foundation of Indian education and Indian residential schools. This paper looks beyond "Christianity" and "civilization" in explaining Indian residential schools, and examines the racial doctrines hidden beneath these concepts. More specifically, this study examines what was done to Indian people in the name of "Christianity" and "civilization", and how Indian people responded to this situation. This paper dispels the common perception that Indian people were just passive victims of this history, and documents their views on education and their struggle against Indian residential schools. The struggle by Indian people against domination forms the focus of this paper. This research is meant to put Indians back into this history.

### **1.1 General Approaches to Indian-White Relations**

In 1990, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs drew national attention to the history of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at Indian residential schools when he appeared on television and disclosed his own story. Despite the media attention, little is still known about Indian residential schools. To the general public, this issue is still shrouded in the mystery of an Indian bureaucracy which they know little of, and care even less about. Others prefer to cling to the dogged belief that "western education" was the necessary panacea for an antiquated Indian culture doomed to obsolescence along with buffalo, buckskin, and beads. Still others today, under contract with the Department of Indian Affairs, have tried to prove that Indian residential schools were really no worse

than similar non-Indian educational institutions of its day (Daniels 1992).

A number of attitudes and myths quickly come to the forefront in the examination of the history of Indian-white relations, Indian education, and Indian residential schools. First, the myth persists that Canadian Indians should be eternally grateful that they were only "assimilated" and not "exterminated" like some of their American kin. Secondly, it was "Christianity" and "civilization", and not any hidden racist beliefs, which provided the impetus for Indian residential schools. Thirdly, Indian people should be grateful that church and state saw fit to save their children by removing them from their pagan and savage surroundings in order to educate them in the "European" concepts of thrift and industry. In line with this we are told "... had native people not been educated in the ways of the white majority, their chances of survival would have been quite tenuous" (Lascelles 1992: 7). Fourthly, Indian residential schools were designed to ensure that Indian children were taught the "3Rs", religion, plus some useful skills in farming and the trades. Lastly, as Indian people were just passive victims of history, they must have been equally acquiescent when it came to Indian residential schools.

This paper will dispel each of these myths and will dig beneath the "euphemized" descriptions of *white*-Indian relations called "assimilation", Indian "education", and Indian residential "schools" to find the Indian experiences within.<sup>5</sup> As James Scott (1990: 54) stated, "so long as this euphemistic description

---

<sup>5</sup> The term "euphemized" is borrowed from Bourdieu's (1977) Outline of a Theory of Practice and Scott's (1990) Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts.

is left to stand, it remains the public description". Therefore, if alternate views are to be considered, these dominant euphemistic descriptions of *white*-Indian relations must be challenged. Robert Mullaly (1993: 153) makes this point when he argues about the need for a "structural approach" to social work, and acknowledges the relevance of ideology in public descriptions as follows:

The ultimate goal of structural social work is to contribute to the transformation of society. To accomplish this goal social work must operationalize an ideology within a society where another ideology dominates.

This study argues that Indian residential schools developed within the context of an ideology of European racial superiority. This ideology must be challenged before society as a whole can be transformed. Moreover, as long as these dominant descriptions of Indian-white relations remain unchallenged, Canadians will continue to question why Indian people are still so ungrateful for the western education they received in Indian residential schools.

Numerous Indian people have already challenged the euphemism called Indian "education". Some Indian people have laid their souls bare in the hope that others would come to understand the fallacy of Indian residential school *education* through their lived experiences. Conversely, some Indian people have defended the outcome called "Indian education" as necessary for survival in today's world. The latter testimonials tend to be the ones that Canadians cling to whenever the harsh realities of Indian residential schools threatens to obscure the benevolent picture of *white*-Indian relations. Certainly, while not all residential schools were uniformly bad, maybe some of these accolades are nothing more

than the echoes of the indoctrination system called Indian education.

Manuel and Posluns (1974: 67) captured the *other* side of Indian residential schooling when they wrote, "After a year spent learning to see and hear only what the priests and brothers wanted you to see and hear, even the people we loved came to look ugly." In reality, while Indian residential schools professed to educate Indian children, they provided a far greater service in inculcating them in the norms and mores of the European culture. In this respect, Manuel and Posluns (1974: 63) were absolutely correct when they stated that "residential schools were the laboratory and the production line of the colonial system". Manuel and Posluns (1974: 59) also argued that Indian residential schools represented an indispensable tool in the colonial process because:

For colonialism to be fully effective it is necessary that the leaders who propagate the myths about those whom they have conquered must not only convince themselves of what they say - it need hardly be said that they must convince their followers down to the humblest peasant and foot soldier - *they must also convince the conquered.*  
[my emphasis]

When the colonizers used residential schools for assimilationist purposes they took the cowardly route by targeting the most vulnerable members of Indian society. While the missionaries first attempted to assimilate entire Indian communities, they soon realized the difficulties in altering adult patterns of behaviour. Consequently, Indian children became the prime target of change as residential school settings offered better prospects for success. The cowardice, therefore, lies not in what little education the children may have received in these schools, but in the despicable processes used to inculcate them in the concepts of

their own inferiority, and which severed their ties to culture and kin. The tragedy of residential schools is that the losses to Indian people far outweigh the paltry gains made in real academic learning. In reality, Indian culture and family ties did not have to be sacrificed to Indian education. The former had the unique ability to strengthen the Indian child's concept of self-worth which could have only aided the learning process. But this understanding has not always been present in some of the research on Indian education.

Over the years a variety of research has been conducted on Indians, Indian education, and Indian residential schools. Some of this research rightfully deals with the pain Indian people suffered, and have continued to endure, because of Indian residential schools. While this acknowledgement, however belated, is an integral part of the healing process, the tendency has been to portray Indians as victims in all facets of Indian-white relations. With a few notable exceptions such as Haig-Brown, (1987), Titley (1992), and Gresko (1979) this trend seems to have become the accepted norm, particularly with respect to Indian residential schools. While there can be little doubt that some Indian people suffered incredibly within these institutions, and that their pain has inadvertently flowed down through the generations like tainted blood, there is ample evidence that Indian people also struggled against this situation.

To move beyond this stifling analysis of Indian-white relations we must start by unravelling the historical and ideological framework which turned the concept of Indian residential schools into a reality. As a starting point, we must examine

this history from the perspective of those Indian people who were on the receiving end of Indian education and Indian residential schools. We must question the racial connotations inherent within the concepts of "Christianity" and "civilization" which are often used to defend the requirement for Indian residential schools. We must also question the role that the church played in Indian residential schools, and the part played by an all too miserly state in ensuring that these schools changed from institutions of learning to places of child labour. We must acknowledge that there were three players in any historical interaction around Indian education and Indian residential schools: the missionaries who operated these schools, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the case of St. Michael's School; the state as represented by the Department of Indian Affairs;<sup>6</sup> and Indian people whose lives were altered either directly, or indirectly, by Indian residential schools. Finally, and most importantly, we must uncover the historical evidence which demonstrates that Indian people had their own views on education, and that they struggled collectively and individually against the residential school system.

This research is therefore guided by three principles: the history of Indian-white relations must be re-examined, this examination must include both an historical and ideological analysis, and Indian people have the right not only to an accurate, but an affirming record of their own history.

---

<sup>6</sup> The Department of Indian Affairs was set up as a separate department in 1880, but the Minister of the Interior continued to assume the role of the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. Responsibility for Indian affairs was transferred to the Department of Mines and Resources in 1936, and then onto the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in 1949. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, now known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, only came into existence in 1966.



## **1.2 Current Analytical Approaches to Indian-White Relations**

According to Frideres (1993: 466) "an historical perspective is essential when examining intergroup behaviour so that the changing relationships between the structural components of society can be understood". While an historical analysis represents the first key to understanding Indian-white relations, the second lies in examining the underlying *ideology* which provided the attitudinal framework for change.

Traditionally, the analysis of Indian-white relations has swung between two polar opposites: the analysis of its *intent*, or of the eventual *outcome* of this relationship on Indian people. Those historians who have attempted to ascribe an intent, hidden or otherwise, behind the course of Indian-white relations have often fallen between two extremes. While some writers like Frideres (1993), Miller (1991b), and Chamberlin (1975) describe the underpinnings as decidedly racist in its origins, others like Grant (1984) and Gresko (1992; 1986) tend more often to point to the benevolent intentions of church and state towards its less fortunate red brethren. Often meaningful analysis into how Indians might have fallen into this unfortunate state is bypassed in the rush to define the long term benevolent outcomes called "Christianity" or "Indian education".

The notion that Canadian Indian-white relations may have been racist in their origins is not a popular one even today. While a number of writers have acknowledged racism as a factor in this relationship many of these are also quick to move onto other safer issues. This kind of hit and run approach tends to

confine racism in Indian-white relations to a misguided past. Those Indian writers, such as Manuel and Cardinal, who have dared to push this issue so far as to question the fundamental concept of Indian education are often singled out for failing to research, or to fully comprehend their own situations. Quotes from two articles from Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy (Barman et al. 1986a), a commonly referenced document on Indian education, are worth noting in this regard. Jacqueline Gresko (1986: 88) opened her comparative analysis of two Indian residential schools in western Canada by stating:

According to the interpretation of Indian educational history sketched by Harold Cardinal and George Manuel, the residential schools established by the nineteenth-century missionaries in Western Canada uniformly oppressed young Indians and attempted to wipe out their languages and cultures. From these schools they barely escaped with their lives....Yet a study of two Catholic Indian Schools active during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ... show[s] that neither the missionary educational efforts nor the Native responses were this simplistic.

While Manuel and Cardinal may be accused of making generalizations, alternatively, there is a danger of making the exception the rule. Certainly, some students had positive experiences, and there were decent school administrators. The fact remains that Indian residential schools took far more away from Indian people than they gave in return. While Father Hugonnard can be applauded for teaching Sioux and Cree at the Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School, his "Native language catechism classes" (Gresko 1986: 94) also cut deeply into a belief system that many Indian people held dear. The issue has less to do with whether Indian people were uniformly oppressed, but in questioning how the concepts of enforced

outings, arranged marriages, colonies, cultural repression, and the destruction of family ties came to be accepted as "Indian education". Often Indian people's sweeping anger is directed not at *education* per se, but in how the underlying objective of Indian residential schools was "the extinction of the Indians *as Indians*" (Harper 1945: 127). Much along the same vein as Gresko's opening statement, J. Donald Wilson (1986: 64) also launched his analysis of a much earlier period of Indian education in eastern Canada by stating:

Popular studies by Howard Adams and Harold Cardinal condemn the deleterious effects of White man's education on Indian people over a century and a half but make no effort to document the true nature of that education. However dismal the record of church-run Indian schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it remains a fact that most of today's Indian-rights leaders are products of those very schools.

While the latter may be true, perhaps these Aboriginal people's success has less to do with the *education* they received in residential schools, and more to do with the tenacity of the Indian spirit in the face of almost insurmountable odds. Moreover, while Wilson's statement not only leaves the impression that "the end somehow justifies the means" both of these quotes also effectively place *objective* academic research over the lived experiences of Indian people. Similar approaches are exposed by black feminist writers such as Bell Hooks (1988: 35-41) who states that "racism" and "elitism" are often reinforced whenever academic theory is given greater credence than the lived experiences and writings of oppressed peoples. When these academic divisions are drawn in reference to residential schools they serve only to reinforce the underlying principle that Indian

people needed western education, and that this remains the lofty goal.

Perhaps, unintentionally, Wilson's statement also diminishes the role played in history by the older generation of Indian leaders, who fought just as tenaciously as today's western educated Indians to ensure the survival of their people.

Ironically, it was the so called "uneducated" Indian leaders of yesterday who laid the groundwork for the Indian rights fight which was taken over by today's *graduates* of Indian residential schools. Lack of a formal education did not prevent the Indian leaders who negotiated Treaty 6 from securing the best deal that they could for the future generations. David Mills, the Minister of the Interior, made it quite clear that the Plains Indians had somehow managed to convince the Treaty Commissioners to include safeguards in Treaty 6 which had not been authorized by the government. In his Annual Report for 1876, he reported that Treaty 6 was similar to Treaty 5 with the exception that:

... there is inserted in this treaty a provision in reference to aid promised to Indians in case of famine or pestilence, which is wholly new, and which I greatly regret should have been agreed to by the Commissioners, as it may cause the Indians to rely upon the Government instead of upon their own exertions for sustenance, especially as their natural means of subsistence are likely to diminish with the settlement of the country; the conditions also in reference to agricultural implements, tools and cattle, and other minor matters, are somewhat more onerous than those of previous treaties.<sup>7</sup>

It appears, therefore, that it was not government benevolence but the successful negotiations on the part of Indian people which resulted in the inclusion

---

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Interior. (1877) "Report of the Minister of the Interior". Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 30 June 1876. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger and Company. (pp. xi).

of these extra provisions, and the often-controversial medicine chest clause in Treaty 6, 1876. The concept of benevolent intentions has also not been left far behind in describing the church's role in Indian-white relations. This is undeniably evident in the synopsis to Grant's (1984) book, Moon of Wintertime, which states:

... Indians, almost all of whom became at least nominally Christian, were touched by Christianity during their moon of wintertime, when ancestral spirits had ceased to perform their expected functions satisfactorily and angel choirs promised to fill a spiritual vacuum.

Certainly, if one believes in the fallibility of Indian ancestral spirits, there can be no greater definition of benevolence than "Christianity" itself. Often in the rush to capture the vision of angel choirs we neglect to consider how this "spiritual vacuum" might have occurred in the first place, if indeed it ever existed, and what part the missionaries may have played in this. Perhaps the real issue has less to do with disappearing ancestral spirits, and more to do with what was done here on earth, by act or omission, to bring the Indians to their knees. Unquestionably, the missionaries took decided action in suppressing competition from ancestral spirits when they pressured the government to outlaw the potlatch and the sun dance.

Grant also acknowledged that the missionaries did little to protect the buffalo because the hunting lifestyle of the Plains Indians threatened their evangelical efforts. Jean-Baptiste Thibault, a Roman Catholic Priest, was not unique in stating, "When the last buffalo is dead, it will be possible to attempt something on the Prairies" (cited in Grant 1984: 157). Sir John A. Macdonald later echoed similar sentiments in the House of Commons. George McDougall, a Methodist missionary, also revealed the link between Indian self-sufficiency and

Christianity when he stated, "... they are fast passing away. Nor are they ignorant of it. Many of them are now ripe for the Gospel" (cited in Grant 1984: 245).

It is unfair, however, to single out Grant's (1984) book since the role of the missionaries is often tied to benevolent intentions, particularly by those who were not on the receiving end of their single-minded dedication. Under the banner of benevolence, the missionaries are often given the credit for intervening on behalf of Indian people with an uncaring state, and with instilling the wonders of western education in the hearts and minds of Indian children. Similarly, the missionaries are often applauded for instilling the concepts of thrift and industry in Indian children, something which European society deemed to be sadly lacking in their pagan and savage parents.

Missionaries and their benevolent intentions towards Indian people have therefore become intricately linked with the concept of Christianity. According to Grant (1984: 9), Christianity "offered salvation to everyone regardless of accidents of birth and culture". Thus, it was not only benevolence, but Christian duty which compelled the missionaries to save the Indians from the clutches of their inferior pagan beliefs and lifestyles. The state, on the other hand, has not benefitted from this same perception of benevolence, except perhaps by its own account.

With some exceptions, such as Taylor (1991), Dempsey (1984), and Tobias (1983) the state's benevolent intentions towards Indian people have almost always been linked to the treaty-making process. Through the treaties we are led to believe that the state generously took possession of vast tracts of Indian lands so it

could move destitute Indians onto reserves to protect them from the less desirable elements of colonial society. According to Upton (1973: 54), the early Europeans appeased their guilt over the deteriorating conditions among Indian people by blaming others, namely the "riff-raff white settlers on the frontier". Therefore, "protection" presented as the state's benevolent intentions towards its Indian wards, is often placed as the forerunner to the policy of "civilizing" and "assimilating" Indian people.

As with the analysis of *intent*, there appears to be a divergence of views on whether the *outcome* of Indian-white relations was ultimately good for Indian people. For some writers the outcome of Indian education, while certainly not justifying the suffering, has often been portrayed as somehow making up for it. This case is often made in reference to today's Indian leadership. Given the conditions on Indian reserves today many people, Indian and non-Indian alike, feel the outcome of Indian-white relations can only be described as destructive. Writers, such as Ponting and Gibbons (1980: 18) and Satzewich and Wotherspoon (1993: 28) have also cautiously identified "cultural genocide" as one of the possible outcomes of Indian-white relations. Others, such as Lascelles (1992: 11) feel this term does not give credit to the Catholics for the work they did in preserving the Indian languages. Obviously, cultural genocide sharply contradicts the "greater good theory" commonly perpetuated by those who may be willing to acknowledge the darker side of the benevolent intentions of church and state, but still cling to the notion that Indians had to change.

In the end, neither "outright racism" nor "benevolence" may fully describe the intent of Indian-white relations nor may it be possible to draw straight lines between these and the outcomes of "cultural genocide" and "Indian education". Nonetheless, these four concepts are all part of the same puzzle. While Indian education *may* have been benevolent in its intent the outcome, if not cultural genocide, was at the very least extremely destructive to Indian families and cultural cohesion. While Indian-white relations cannot be analyzed solely on the basis of its racist intent, it is obvious that concepts of racial superiority permeated the benevolence of Indian education and residential schools.

In summary, this paper examines the history of Indian-white relations which lead to the concept of Indian education and to the establishment of St. Michael's School in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan in 1894. Chapter two outlines the research objectives and the methodology used in this paper, while Chapter three traces the historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations. Chapter four examines Indian education and the implications of Indian residential schools, while the concept of resistance and struggle by Indian people against European domination are dealt with in Chapter five. Chapter six then examines St. Michael's School within the context of the framework developed in the previous chapters. Finally, Chapter seven closes with conclusions and a few suggestions for future research.



## Chapter 2 - Research Objectives and Approach

*At the very least, an assessment of power relations read directly off the public transcript between the powerful and the weak may portray a deference and consent that are only possibly a tactic. Second, to the degree that the dominant suspect that the public transcript may be "only" a performance, they will discount its authenticity. It is but a short step from such scepticism to the view, common among many dominant groups, that those beneath them are deceitful, shamming, and lying by nature (Scott 1990: 3).*

### **2.0 Overall Purpose, Research Parameters, and Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to examine the historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations which led to the concept of Indian education in Canada, and to the establishment of St. Michael's School in Saskatchewan. Based on the premise that Indians were not just passive victims of history, this study examines *what* Indian people struggled for and against, and *how* they struggled within the broader context of Indian-white relations. Using Scott's (1990) analysis of domination and resistance, this paper probes both the "public transcripts" and the "hidden transcripts" of church, state, and Indian people. James Scott (1990: 2) defined "*public transcript[s]* as a short hand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate". Within the triangular concept of Indian-white relations, the public transcripts of church and state can be found within their correspondence which reveals how they ultimately defended their role. This correspondence also reveals how church and state defined Indian resistance not as the outcome of domination, but as evidence "that those beneath them are

deceitful, shamming, and lying by nature" (Scott 1990: 3). Given the nature of this documentary evidence, the struggle by Indian people can be discerned, not so much in what they actually said or did, but in how church and state responded, or labelled their resistance. According to Scott (1990: xii) "public transcripts" represents only one part of any analysis of domination and resistance because:

Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed.

Many examples of the hidden transcripts of Indian people and the struggle by Indian children against domination in residential schools can be found in Johnson's (1988) Indian School Days and in Haig Brown's (1987) Resistance and Renewal: Surviving Indian Residential Schools. The primary documentation at the National Archives provides many examples of the hidden transcripts of church and state. These hidden transcripts generally expose how the European's claim to racial superiority was used to justify the right of church and state to interfere so blatantly in the lives of Indian people. Consequently, both the hidden and the public transcripts of Indian-white relations must be examined in order to find the voices of Indian people within this history.

This research has been structured on two complimentary levels of inquiry using primary and secondary sources. The first level involved a broad review of secondary literature to establish the historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations. The time frame for this research ranged from the early 1800s to

the 1920s, plus a brief look at the earlier history of Indian-white relations. This first step included a review of literature on Indian-white relations, the history of the Prairies, Treaty 6 negotiations, racism, Indian education, residential schools, and concepts of resistance and struggle. This first phase established the overall historical context of Indian education and Indian residential schools.

A second stage examined the ideological context of Indian-white relations which ultimately dictated the superiority of European culture and religion over traditional Indian lifestyles and beliefs. James Teevan (1992: 578) defined ideology as "a statement of beliefs and objectives that can be used to justify patterns of conduct". More precisely he added that "an ideology often identifies 'wrongs' in a society and offers a remedy for correcting them." In the nineteenth century, the ideology of European racial superiority labelled Indians as inferior and set out to remedy this situation by "Christianizing" and "civilizing" Indian children through education. This concept of racial superiority found "scientific" (Rose 1973; Stepan 1982) credibility in the mid nineteenth century with the emerging evolutionary theories. The Indian Act was later used as the primary instrument for imposing these racial beliefs on reluctant Indian people. This second level of inquiry also included an examination of St. Michael's School within the broader historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations. In particular, this study examined how Indian people responded to the assimilationist policies thrust upon them at St. Michael's Indian Residential School.

The majority of the primary documentation on St. Michael's School can be

found at the National Archives under the Indian Affairs "School Files" and "Black [Western] Series" records. This documentation consists of the correspondence between Indian Affairs and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who operated St. Michael's School. Indian Affairs in Ottawa also holds over twenty volumes of documentation on this school. This information was not used in this study as it did not pertain to the period under review.<sup>8</sup> The Deschâtelets Archives in Ottawa also holds some primary documentation on St. Michael's School.<sup>9</sup> A small booklet prepared by Jules Le Chevallier (1944) to commemorate this school's golden jubilee is also available through the latter source. More pertinent to this study, Father Le Chevallier used at least some of the primary documentation now located at the National Archives to prepare his fiftieth anniversary booklet because the Oblates did not have any records for this period. In 1928, the Principal of St. Michael's School asked Indian Affairs for permission to use their files stating "Old diary for that period is missing (or perhaps was never kept)".<sup>10</sup> The Saskatoon District Tribal Council who now own St. Michael's School will publish a second booklet on this school in 1995. More documentation on St. Michael's School can also be found at the Glenbow Museum Archives and at the

---

<sup>8</sup> Indian Affairs files on St. Michael's School start in 1952. A request under the Access to Information Act must be sent to Indian Affairs to access these files. Under the Privacy Act all personal information will be removed unless disclosure is permitted under section 8.

<sup>9</sup> See page 171 for the "Finding Aid" Deschâtelets Archives, Ottawa.

<sup>10</sup> Personal memo, H. Delmas to D.C. Scott, 25 January 1928. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1. Access to DIA files granted, D.C. Scott to H. Delmas, 31 January 1928, Ibid.

Provincial Archives in Alberta.<sup>11</sup> Regrettably, the latter two sources were inaccessible due to distance. The majority of the Oblate records located at the Provincial Archives in Alberta are also in French.

## **2.1 Research Limitations and Considerations**

Father Le Chevallier's booklet proved to be a useful reference tool in examining the history of St. Michael's School. This booklet, however, was not without its limitations because it was written to extol this school's "unparalleled success" in civilizing Indian children (Le Chevallier 1944: 61). Consequently, Indians are quite unabashedly referred to as pagans, savages, and heathens. The voices of Indian people are brought forward only when they serve to confirm the Oblate's good work at this school. Yet, this is hardly surprising. According to Carr (1987: 11), "The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context".

Whatever its shortcomings, Father Le Chevallier's booklet was at least legible. The same could not always be said of the primary documentation which is still available on St. Michael's School. These documents were often incomplete, of poor quality, unreadable in places if they were handwritten, had missing dates, and sometimes the positions if not the names of the correspondents were absent. Indian Affairs translated these letters as often the French and English versions are available at the National Archives. This raises the question of the quality of these translations not only for their use historically, but in terms of their accuracy

---

<sup>11</sup> See page 171 for the "Finding Aid" Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Edmonton.

because the English duplicates were used for this research. This documentation also represents the written history of only two of the three parties involved in St. Michael's School. This does not mean that the voices of Indian people cannot be heard within this exchange of correspondence between church and state.

A combination of anthropology and history called "ethnohistory" offers one way of finding the voices of Indian people within this history. Ethnohistory refers to a group of methods which combines anthropological theory and fieldwork procedures with historical documentary research techniques. This approach "requires looking through the explicit words of European records for the implicit native experience embedded in them" (Miller 1990: 7). This technique is not unique to ethnohistory. Historians also use this approach when examining records pertaining to any non-dominant group such as women and non-literate peoples.

Jim Albert of Carleton University calls this approach "an Aboriginal way of knowing" which moves us, through Indian ceremonies, beyond intellectualizing to making the long journey between head and heart to find the Indian experiences. This is not an easy process. This approach not only "involves our beginning to think in a new way" (Wacquant 1992: preface),<sup>12</sup> but requires sifting through a

---

<sup>12</sup> Because this quote captures the difficulty in developing a new way of thinking it is quoted here in its entirety. "Getting hold of the difficulty *deep down* is what is hard. Because it is grasped near the surface it simply remains the difficulty it was. It has to be pulled out by the roots; and that involves our beginning to think in a new way. The change is as decisive as, for example, that from the alchemical to the chemical way of thinking. The new way is what is so hard to establish. Once the new way of thinking has been established, the old problems vanish; indeed, they become hard to recapture. For they go with our way of expressing ourselves and, if we clothe ourselves in a new form of expression, the old problems are discarded along with the old garment." Ludwig Wittgenstein, Vermischte Bemerkungen, as cited by Wacquant (1992: preface).

multitude of racial slurs to find the Indian voices within the remaining written remnants of history. While the latter can be extremely disheartening, the former is perhaps hardest to acquire because we have been schooled to think within the context of "*white*-Indian" relations, and to view Indian people as the powerless and voiceless victims of this relationship.

Therefore, given the reality of how Indian people are often portrayed in the primary documentation, a note about the race and gender biases inherent in this kind of research is in order. First, there can be little doubt that "Christianity" and "civilization" are grounded in the concept of European racial superiority. In much of the primary documentation on Indian-white relations, Indians are often reduced to the lowest possible common denominator described only as pagans, savages, heathens, ignorant, child-like, dirty and lazy. Consequently, as Indians did not rate as people equal to the Europeans, they were concomitantly reduced to a *sexless* homogeneous race defined only by their "ascribed status" (Teevan 1992: 573). Gender only came into play where Indian children, particularly girls, were taught to perform the proper Victorian tasks suitable to their sex. In other words, in the history of *white*-Indian relations, race nullified gender as a consideration.

## **2.2 Statement of the Problem**

Until quite recently, it has often been assumed that the voices of Indian people could not possibly be heard from within the remaining written remnants of the history of Indian-white relations. As Kennedy (1970: 4-5) rightfully pointed out in her study on the Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School in Saskatchewan:

... [the] letters, reports, petitions, etc., [were] written by those who were trying to direct change among the Indian peoples....There is little documentary evidence as to how the latter, the objects of change, viewed the process.

It is now becoming increasingly apparent that our perception of what this primary documentation can tell us has changed significantly since Jacqueline Kennedy (1970) completed her research. Despite the fact that church and state were primarily responsible for leaving behind this documentary evidence, from Tobias (1983) and Taylor's (1991) research, for example, it is still possible to hear the voices of Indian people and to see how they resisted European domination. Perhaps the belief that Indian history must be oral has kept us from seeing the Indian experiences within these sources. Unfortunately, what this primary documentation can tell researchers represents only one part of the problem. A related question must be asked. Are the conclusions drawn from these primary sources little more than the outcome of personal and cultural biases, whether intentional or not? Stanley (1983: 1) captured this dilemma as follows:

Anyone embarking on a discussion of Indian-white relations in Canada is faced, from the outset, with a virtually insoluble dilemma. Since every man is the product of the culture into which he is born and in which he is nurtured and educated, of necessity his thinking will follow certain well-defined lines....When I undertake to comment on the interaction of two cultures, Indian and European, I must, inevitably, adopt a viewpoint within my own tradition.

The problem, therefore, is twofold. The first lies in finding the Indian voices hidden within this primary documentation and the other in questioning the secondary interpretations drawn from these sources. In this there are no easy solutions, neither for the Aboriginal nor the non-Aboriginal researcher examining



the complexities of Indian-white relations. For both, no matter how professional, still hopes to find a small piece of themselves in the written history of their ancestors. The difference is as decisive as Le Chevallier's (1944) history of St. Michael's School where Indians are pagans and savages, and this present attempt to find *my people* within this history. The Oblates rightfully hold centre court in Le Chevallier's history. Indian people will become the focus in mine.

The potential for cultural bias is just one of the many problems confronting researchers of Indian-white relations. Another difficulty concerns the reliability of the sources used, both oral and written. In response to the question of who can lay claim to historical truth, George Stanley (1983: 2) also had this to add:

I am not prepared to argue whether written or oral history, law or tradition, is more reliable. Certainly, men's memories are frequently faulty; but documents may be incomplete or ambiguous, or, at the worst, forgeries or outright lies. Who, then, has the whole truth and nothing but the truth? The Indian with his memory, or the white man with his documents? Perhaps both are struggling in the darkness of the past.

Perhaps the only answer lies in the responsible use of both written and oral sources. Unfortunately, it is not always responsible research to pursue both avenues, particularly on sensitive issues like Indian residential schools. While greater understanding of residential schools may be gained through interviews with key informants, this approach has invariably represented a double edged sword for Indian people. First, when it comes to residential schools, painful memories often far outweigh happy ones. Secondly, sometimes these painful memories are cruelly diminished by an uninformed public. One example is the Ottawa Citizen's

response to Breaking the Silence (1994), the report prepared by the Assembly of First Nations on residential schools.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, any research which lays open the possibility of inflicting pain on its subjects, however unintentional, must make provisions for adequate culturally appropriate follow-up. In fact, direct interactive research on Indian residential schools requires a level of skill and experience which I do not as yet possess. While this paper will be missing the first-hand accounts of Indian people, I cannot pursue a research process which runs the risk of inflicting more pain on people who have obviously suffered enough.

### **2.3 Research Approach, Objectives, and Questions**

In his article entitled, "Researching the History of Indian Residential Schools" Miller (1990: 7) asked, "If one is demented enough to want to study residential schools, how does one go about it?" Not knowing what direction to take on such a vast issue, this research started out with only an audience, an approach, and an overall purpose. First, Indian people formed the audience for this study due to the wide impact of Indian residential schools, and because sometimes this research was just too painful to carry alone. While this research is based on "an Aboriginal way of knowing", academically this approach is probably closest to Miller's (1990: 7) description of "ethnohistory".

More precisely, "an Aboriginal way of knowing" means honouring our emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical selves. It also means bringing the heart

---

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, William. (1944) "Ideological overkill fuelling myth of Indian residential schools". Ottawa Citizen. 20 August 1994.

and mind closer together by learning and practising the Sacred Ways. The irony of this approach will not escape those who are willing to acknowledge that one of the primary objectives of Indian residential schools was to obliterate these practices and beliefs. Yet, without this grounding in who I am as an Indian person, where I came from and why this kind of research is important, I would not have survived the painful reality of this subject matter.

The purpose of this paper is to find the place of Indian people within this history, not as victims, but as people of courage who struggled against "centuries of systematic imperialism" (Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate 1992: 260), and in particular against the assimilationist policies imposed on them by St.

Michael's School. The primary objectives of this study are:

- to examine the historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations which led to the instigation of Indian education on the Prairies and to the establishment of St. Michael's School in 1894;
- to examine the ideological underpinnings of "Christianity" and "civilization", and to examine why and how these concepts led to the economic relationship between church and state;
- to examine the history of St. Michael's School within the broader historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations; and
- to examine the role that Indian people played in the history of Indian education on the Prairies, and their activities in response to St. Michael's School during the period of 1894-1926.

This paper focuses on the examination of Indian-white relations within the broader context of the social structures of Canadian society. While good and bad

individuals obviously played a part in this history, this study concentrates on the deeper seated societal attitudes which altered the structural relationship of Indian-white relations. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (1992: 259-260) recognized the relevance of this underlying belief structure in the long history of *white*-Indian relations, when they stated:

We apologize for the part we played in the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious imperialism that was part of the mentality with which the peoples of Europe first met the Aboriginal peoples and which consistently has lurked behind the way the Native peoples of Canada have been treated by civil governments and the churches.

In summary, this study examines the historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations which led to the concept of Indian education and Indian residential schools in Canada. As a final step, this study also examines St. Michael's School within the context of this overall framework to determine:

- to what extent the racial doctrines of the late nineteenth century provided the ethical justification for the application of the concepts of "civilization" and "Christianity" in relation to this school, and to what extent these concepts advanced the economic relationship between Indian Affairs and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at St. Michael's School during the period 1894-1926; and
- to what extent the historical records support the belief that Indian people were active participants in Indian education issues, and to determine what evidence exists that Indian people and their children struggled against the assimilation policies imposed on them by St. Michael's School.

### **Chapter 3 - Historical and Ideological Framework**

*Whenever one encounters euphemism in language it is a nearly infallible sign that one has stumbled on a delicate subject....The imposition of euphemisms on the public transcript ... mask[s] the many nasty facts of domination and give[s] them a harmless or sanitized aspect. In particular, they are designed to obscure the use of coercion (Scott 1990: 53).*

#### **3.0 That Which Lurks Beneath the Surface**

Chapter one examined some of the current analytical approaches to Indian-white relations. The analysis of this relationship must extend far beyond whether the intent was racist or benevolent, or if the outcome was ultimately good or bad for Indian people. To parallel Scott's (1990: 53) analysis, we must challenge the "euphemisms" called *assimilation*, *Indian education*, and *residential schools* which often "mask the many nasty facts of domination and give [these terms] a harmless or sanitized aspect", and which also tend to "obscure the use of coercion". We must ask ourselves how assimilation was different from extermination, if Indian education was merely schooling, and whether residential schools were just places where Indian children lived while they learned some useful skills. Unless we dig beneath these "public transcripts" to find the Indian reality, we will never understand why Indian people remain so angry. We will never see what they see.

In the analysis of Indian-white relations we are often presented with two historical alternatives: the extermination of Indians or their assimilation into European society. Within this diametrically opposed framework, assimilation is

often raised to the level of Canadian Christian philanthropy, as extermination is unilaterally dismissed as a sad testament to the harsh reality of *white-Indian* relations south of the border. Yet, there can be no mistake. Canadians did enter into a policy of extermination -- *the extermination of Indianness*.<sup>14</sup> This policy still euphemistically called "assimilation" was in fact just as insidious as the outright extermination of Indians because through its education strategy, it attacked the most vulnerable members of Indian society -- its children. Therefore, given the choice between "extermination" and "assimilation" Canadians are expected to feel magnanimous, and Indians somehow grateful, that "assimilation" meant only the *extermination of Indianness* and not the Indians themselves! Sheehan quoted by Chamberlin (1975: 162) captured the contradictory reality of assimilation when he stated, "For ultimately, ... the white man's sympathy was more deadly than his animosity. Philanthropy had in mind, the disappearance of the entire race".

While Indian education and Indian residential schools also appear to be straightforward concepts, hidden beneath these are the more coercive measures called "aggressive civilization" (Davin 1879: 1) by the Americans and "benevolent aggression" (Furniss 1992: 53 n.4) by the Canadians.<sup>15</sup> Le Chevallier (1944: 8) inadvertently captured the benevolent aggression behind Indian residential schools when he thanked the nuns for their contribution at St. Michael's School as follows:

---

<sup>14</sup> For the purpose of this paper "Indianness" is defined as language, culture, beliefs, ceremonies, and family ties - the very same things which Indian residential schools set out to destroy.

<sup>15</sup> Smart, James. "Report of the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs" in Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ending June 30, 1898. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1898), xxvi, as cited by Furniss (1992: 53 n.4).

To the Faithful Companions of Jesus who during nine years after foundation devoted all their energies to the arduous task of transforming the pagan soul of the child to a thing of light and beauty, by tearing away the rough wrapper as it [sic] were the chrysalis, to them we express our profound thanks, our sincerest admiration.

Random House (1992: 243) defines chrysalis as "the hard-shelled pupa of a moth or butterfly". To this day, the wounds of many of these Indian children continue to bleed. Others simply failed to survive this procedure still euphemistically called assimilation. The alternative definition for chrysalis which is "a protected stage of development" obviously did not apply in this case.

In fact, residential schooling extended far beyond an "experiment in social engineering" (Miller 1991b: 196) to what can only be described as *the systematic extermination of Indianness* because this experiment did not end with graduation. The systematic extermination of Indianness extended to state sanctioned "outings" to further *civilize* the older Indian students, arranged marriages, and the establishment of at least one colony at File Hills where all ties to kin and culture were finally severed. A report prepared for Indian Affairs euphemistically labelled these outings the "beginning of [a] policy of 'placement service' for ex-pupils" (Abt 1993: A-2). In describing this continuum in another way, Gresko (1979: 91) stated that the Principal at the Qu'Appelle Industrial School saw an Indian child's "baptism, confirmation, communion, and marriage as stages in a novitiate, paralleling their apprenticeship in civilization". What we often fail to question is where "outings" and "arranged marriages" fit into Indian *education* which is still commonly defined as the 3Rs, religion, and some vocational training.

From Bishop Prud'homme's obvious pleasure in the match-making capabilities of St. Michael's fourth principal, arranging marriages had obviously become an accepted part of Indian "education". In 1923, he advised Indian Affairs:

When I questioned Father Delmas on the moral result of the pupils this was his answer: 'Since 1912, forty marriages were performed, thirty-two at the school and eight on the surrounding reserves....Is there another school of the kind with a better record?'<sup>16</sup>

The travesty of Indian education is that many of us still fail to comprehend the lengths that church and state went to in order to *systematically eradicate all traces of Indianness*. The greatest tragedy is that we have forgotten that these "experiments" in civilization were perpetuated on the most vulnerable members of Indian society. Indian people rightfully have much to be angry about when it comes to Indian education. Not only were their lives in residential schools foreign, unyielding, and often harsh. There was no reprieve. When Indian education was extended to arranged marriages and colonies, Social Darwinism was pushed to the extreme of eugenics. By arranging marriages, church and state tried to propagate a new human species from whom they hoped they had finally eradicated all traces of Indianness. D.C. Scott (1914b: 622-623) corroborated this when he stated:

The happiest future for the Indian race is absorption into the general population, and this is the object of the policy of our government....The great forces of intermarriage and education will finally overcome the lingering traces of native custom and tradition.

Scott also added that Indians in the West should not be denied "the same destiny".

---

<sup>16</sup> Memo, Bishop Prud'homme to D.C. Scott. 8 November 1923. Deschâtelets Archives, Ottawa, HR 6671.C73R 30.



### 3.1 The Inseparability of the Historical from the Ideological

It is obvious that the historical course of Indian-white relations cannot be easily separated from its ideological foundations. While the early Europeans may have questioned their ability to survive in the new land, few of them doubted their superiority over the "untamed" inhabitants of the New World. Later, these racist beliefs spilled over into Indian-white relations on the Prairies, and eventually led to the establishment of Indian residential schools in the West. Although it is tempting to start any analysis of Indian education with Davin who prepared the much touted Report on Indian Industrial Schools in 1879, events on the Prairies were shaped by a much longer history of Indian-white relations in eastern Canada.

In the East, 1830 marked a pivotal point in Indian-white relations as Indians lost their usefulness as military allies and trading partners, and responsibility for Indians moved from military to civilian authorities (Upton 1973; Miller 1991b). Spending on Indians also fell under greater scrutiny as the Indian's "annual presents" came to be seen as an unnecessary burden. In the late 1600s, the British gave annual presents of blankets, tobacco, gunpowder, and shot to the Indians to maintain their allegiance and to keep them in their traditional lifestyles, while they were needed for military and trading purposes (Upton 1973: 55). More ominous to the new civil administrators was the threat that this "gift giving" was leading to a dependency on the public coffers. The time had come for Indians to change. Thus the policy of "civilizing" Indians began to take shape as the reserve system was inaugurated in Upper Canada. This change in administration signalled

more than a simple realignment of financial priorities. It signalled the advent of an Indian bureaucracy which took its direction, not from the Indian people it was meant to serve, but from those who controlled the flow of resources. Unlike their military predecessors, the lives of these new bureaucrats did not depend upon cultivating the goodwill of the Indian tribes. Their careers depended upon demonstrating their ingenuity in solving the "Indian problem" (Elliott and Fleras 1992: 169) while carefully guarding the public purse. This Indian problem also represented a moral issue to the newcomers, one tinged with guilt over the dire impact of a *superior* culture on an inferior one. According to Upton (1973: 54):

Guilt never led to any thought that the whites might leave others alone to go their own way. There was never any thought of stopping the flow of emigration, which could only increase as the century progressed. Guilt had to be atoned for by accepting responsibility for the protection and civilization of inferior and perverse people, for if the natives were debauched by white contact it was partly their own fault. Hence they must be made over into white men.

Therefore, assimilation was born out of the racist ideals that the newcomers had a moral obligation to save the Indians by remoulding them in their image. Indeed, Indian-white relations cannot be examined as a mere consequence of a changing economic situation. In the nineteenth century, the emerging *scientific* answers regarding the origins of the species, biological differences, and inherited characteristics provided all the proof that the early Europeans needed to explain their own superiority. "Scientific racism" had come of age. While this may appear a contradiction in terms, Larrain (1979: 211) stated that "the difference between ideology and science does not preclude the fact, ... that ideology may dress itself

up as a science". Later, these racist notions moved one step further into Social Darwinism "a 19th-century doctrine that the social order is a product of natural selection of those persons best suited to existing living conditions" (Random House 1992: 1270).<sup>17</sup> The proof of "the survival of the fittest" lay in the New World where Europeans thrived, while Indians societies fell into disarray.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever guilt may have existed over these deteriorating conditions did little to stop the continuing deluge of European settlement. The answer to the "Indian problem" lay in instilling the superior concepts of "Christianity" and "civilization" within the *inferior* Indian mind. In other words, Indians had to be made over into brown Europeans. Education the great cure-all for most social problems in the nineteenth century provided the necessary means to this end.

While the task of "Christianity", "civilization", and Indian education of sorts had always fallen to the missionaries who trudged along behind the explorers and traders, the new civil administrators had also found a new meaning in life. They had become public servants. Their job now included saving the Indians through education. Through education they would drag the Indians, forcibly if need be, up the evolutionary ladder to civilize and train them to perform those societal functions befitting their inferior station in life. According to Barman (1986: 115),

---

<sup>17</sup> Miller (1991b: 97), Frideres (1993: 466), Kellough (1980: 360), Stanley (1983: 13) and Grant (1984: 188) identified "Social Darwinism" as one of the possible factors in Indian-white relations.

<sup>18</sup> The concept of Social Darwinism is not as antiquated as it seems. According to the Treaties and Historical Research Centre (1978:105), in 1906 Frank Pedley, the Deputy-Superintendent General of Indian Affairs questioned, "whether or not the time has arrived for leaving...(the Indians) to the operation of the natural law which tends toward the survival of the fittest".

assimilation never implied eventual equality with the Europeans because:

A second critical assumption of the nineteenth century held that status at birth was decisive in determining status in adulthood. A principal function of education lay in preparing each individual for his place in the socio-economic order as foretold by his conditions of birth.

In fact, the government took decided action whenever Indians exceeded expectations and breached the socio-economic order. Sarah Carter (1991) describes the introduction of the "peasant farming policy" and the "permit system" in the West, when Indians began to successfully compete for profits with local farmers. The concept of Indian industrial schools also fell under greater scrutiny as Indians used their skills and began to vie for jobs with the Europeans. Despite this measure of success, Clifford Sifton, the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, doubted that Indians were capable of taking advantage of the education they were receiving. According to Hall (1983: 126), in 1904 Sifton confessed:

I have no hesitation in saying – we may as well be frank – that the Indian cannot go out from school, making his own way and compete with the white man....He has not the physical, mental or moral get-up to enable him to compete. He cannot do it.<sup>19</sup>

In the eyes of the Europeans, there was obviously no way that Indians could win. Indians were damned if they used their education to compete for jobs, and damned once again when they failed to meet the European's expectations.

Additionally, then as now, Indian Affairs was not prepared to work itself out of a job. As Upton (1973: 57) correctly stated, "The Department knew that if

---

<sup>19</sup> Debates, 1904, cols. 6946-56, 18 July 1904; see also 1903, cols. 7260-61, 23 July 1903, as cited by Hall (1983: 126).

'civilization' ever succeeded they would be the first victims of its success". The "Indian problem" also represented a career in itself. When Sifton assumed his new duties in 1896, he found "there were nearly as many officials as Indians [because] Indian Affairs had for years been a splendid source of patronage and sinecures for the Conservative party faithful" (Hall 1983: 120,122). While Sifton made some swift cuts, over time his reforms amounted to little more than just replacing the old guard with Liberals. More often, Indian services bore the brunt of his cost cutting measures. This bureaucratic tradition of cost effectiveness at someone else's expense also marked the churches, who already worked among Indians, as the most economical option for Indian education. The missionaries were not unwilling partners. Like the state, they also believed that Indians had to change. The missionaries also recognized that Indian residential schools offered the most effective means of "civilizing" and "Christianizing" Indian people.

### **3.2 Eastern Indian-White Relations Pave the Way**

From their early experiences the missionaries knew that the prospect of "civilizing" and "Christianizing" Indians were greatly increased where Indians were either sedentary by nature, or were convinced to be by other circumstances. As a result, the missionaries either concentrated their efforts on settled tribes, or tried to convince the nomadic Indians to settle. Virtually from the beginning, they also saw education tied to agriculture as the necessary means for preparing Indians for what was to come.

The Indians in the East also recognized the implications of their changing

circumstances. Some of the eastern Indians asked the missionaries to teach their children and some bands even agreed to pay for this service out of their annuities. Consequently, both day and residential schools sprang up where Indians were amenable to the idea. This did not mean that all eastern Indians happily sent their children off to residential schools. As early as the 1870s, Reverend Wilson "advocated compulsory attendance" (Wilson 1986: 78) when Indian children failed to return to the Shingwauk Industrial Home near Saulte Ste. Marie, Ontario.

The early missionaries also learned that despite their best efforts conversion could be a fleeting thing. It was essential, therefore, to keep their fledgling converts isolated from the retrogressive influences of their *pagan* lifestyles. As a result the concept of "reductions", pioneered by the Jesuits in Paraguay, found its application in the New World to the North. These model communities, where missionaries controlled the lives of their converts, offered better prospects for success. Reductions also precluded competition from the local medicine man or woman. While these model communities kept converts isolated, this method did not guarantee a lasting commitment to conversion. An Oblate missionary later carried this concept of total control one step further into the "Durieu system" (Miller 1991b: 148-149). Under this system selected Indian "watchmen", and not the missionary, guarded against infractions of the rules and doled out the punishments in order to keep converts moving forward "in the total inward transformation for which it was designed" (Grant 1984: 126,127). Under the Durieu system the outward manifestations of change were no longer enough.

According to Gresko (1986: 94), "In the North West Territories by contrast reductions were never promoted to any great extent". While this may be true, residential schools likely replaced reductions in the West when Indian education presented the missionaries with greater opportunities for lasting success. In fact, both the rigid system of discipline, and the concept of total control synonymous with reductions, were duplicated within Indian residential school settings. For example, St. Michael's School was more than a residential school. It was model community. This school was a showpiece of civilization where the still brown, but thoroughly "Christianized" and "civilized" Indian children, could be shown off to Governor Generals, Departmental officials, a Prime Minister, and even a Papal delegate (Le Chevallier 1944) along with the buildings and the livestock. From Father Le Chevallier's (1944: 16-17) description, the Inspector for Indian Affairs obviously considered St. Michael's School nothing less than a model community:

What a marvellous change in the space of eighteen months! Every where buildings have appeared as if by magic. The main building ... forms a solid structure, capable of housing seventy-five children and the complete staff....out-houses have been built: a model dairy, clean and well aired, a laundry, a carpenter's shop, a shoe-maker's shop, a wood-house for the reserve supply....there are stables for the horses and the cattle ... pent-houses for the swine-herd and the chickens, also sheds for the wagons and farm implements....All these houses, great or small are lined up in an orderly manner, carefully attended to, and uniformly painted in a pleasing shade of red. A high palisade, closing in around all gives the compound a very pleasing aspect.

Fifty years of history had yet to unfold before St. Michael's School became a reality. In 1842, the Bagot Commission cleared the way for residential schooling by establishing "a new thrust in Indian education" (Miller 1991b: 105).

### 3.3 Laying the Policy Framework for Indian Education

Among other things, the Bagot Commission recommended that the colonial government fund the churches to take over the responsibility for Indian education. Most importantly, the Bagot Commission endorsed a change from day to manual labour residential schools where Indian children could be more effectively removed from the *negative* influences of their homes. In 1847, Egerton Ryerson the Chief Superintendent of Education in Upper Canada added the weight of his office when he supported this new direction in Indian education as follows:

There is, therefore, but one course left, which has been pointed out—to endeavour to raise them to the level of the whites. To this there appears to be no insurmountable impediment. It is the universal testimony, that there is nothing in the character of the Indian race which is opposed to such a result. They ... are sensible of the superiority of the whites, and of the disadvantages under which they themselves labour, from their want of knowledge, and the converted Indians are generally anxious for the education of their children (Prentice and Houston 1975: 219-220).

Ryerson also recommended that the colonial government fund as many Indian industrial schools as their resources would permit, in addition to the day schools already in operation. Significantly, Ryerson's recommendations probably carried a lot more weight than just the influence of his office. Egerton Ryerson had also worked as a missionary among the Credit River Indians. This field experience, along with his command of an Indian language, probably implied a greater understanding than most people of what was best for Indians. The "civilizing" experiment among the New Credit Indians was also set up as a model community. The basic difference between these model communities and the



residential school concept for Indian education now lay in the fact that children, and not entire Indian communities, had become the prime target for change.

The thrust behind Indian education became somewhat clearer in 1857 with the passage of the Gradual Civilization Act, followed closely by the Gradual Enfranchisement Act in 1869. Civilizing Indians through a Christian education now signalled the prospect of solving the "Indian problem" through a process known as enfranchisement. Enfranchisement stripped Indian people of their legal status as "Indians". By giving itself the power to decide who was an Indian person, the government had come full circle in applying its racist beliefs to Indian people. No one can explain this quite as eloquently as D.C. Scott finally did in 1920:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone....That has been the whole purpose of Indian education and advancement since the earliest times. One of the very earliest enactments was to provide for the enfranchisement of the Indian. So it is written in our law that the Indian was eventually to become enfranchised....Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill (Treaties and Historical Research Centre 1978: 114).<sup>20</sup>

By the time the British North America Act of 1867 granted the federal government legislative authority over "Indians and lands reserved for Indians", Indian people in the East represented only one part of the problem to the land hungry newcomers. The Plains Indians who roamed the Prairies now took their

---

<sup>20</sup> Evidence of D.C. Scott to the Special Committee of the House of Commons examining the Indian Act amendments of 1920, pp. 55 (L-3) and 63 (N-3). PAC, RG 10, volume 6810, file 470-2-3 volume 7, as cited by the Treaties and Historical Research Centre (1978: 114).

turn as the "Indian problem". These Indians also stood in the way of Sir John A. Macdonald's "national dream" to populate the West with white settlers, and to link the eastern and western shores by rail and telegraph. The answer to this new "Indian problem" lay in either forcibly moving the Plains Indians out of the path of progress, or alternatively in assimilating them into the *superior* European culture.

Once again, the extermination of Indians was ruled out as a viable option. First, the situation south of the border was aptly demonstrating the high cost of waging Indian wars. The Canadian government just did not have these kind of resources at its disposal. Secondly, nineteenth-century North Americans believed that, "Other races were not inferior to the whites for any immutable physical cause; their inferiority was cultural and could be remedied by training in civilized ways" (Upton 1973: 55). Thus, like their eastern kin, the Plains Indians were destined to be saved through "assimilation". Judged by the racial yardstick of their limited contact with the European newcomers, the Prairie Indian tribes, however, were deemed:

... not sufficiently advanced for the government to impose the eastern model immediately. [Accordingly], ... the government began by concluding a series of land cession treaties, including the now normal schedule of reserves, and then concentrated on assaulting tribal customs and traditions (Surin 1988: 89).

Ironically, while the Plains Indians were deemed too inferior to immediately *benefit* from the Indian Act, their condition was not so problematic as to prevent the signing of the treaties and the transfer of vast tracts of Indian land. Alexander Morris, one of the Commissioners who negotiated Treaties 4, 5 and 6 reflected the

views of his day when he negotiated with the Plains Indians, not as men, but as the Queen's children. Alexander Morris did not hold out high expectations for Indian people. He also did not assume that education would prepare Indian children to eventually take their place as equals alongside the Europeans. In the final chapter of his book regarding the need for the proper administration of the treaties, and with particular reference to schooling and "the future of these interesting aboriginal races", Alexander Morris (1880: 285,292) added:

The new generation can be trained in the habits and ways of civilized life—prepared to encounter the difficulties with which they will be surrounded, by the influx of settlers, and fitted for maintaining themselves as tillers of the soil.

While this statement appears to separate the concept of "civilization" from "Christianity", this certainly was not the case. Alexander Morris saw the churches as having a definite duty to fulfil with respect to both Christianizing and civilizing the Indian tribes in the West. Morris (1880: 296) openly acknowledged the role of the missionaries when he closed his final chapter on the treaties with:

Let us have Christianity and civilization to leaven the mass of heathenism and paganism among the Indian tribes,..."

Thus, with the signing of the treaties, the government's assimilation policy began to take shape in the West. This policy framework included demands for schools on-reserve, both on the recommendation of the government officials and at the request of the Christian Indians who negotiated the treaties. It is also obvious that church and state, and certainly some of the Christian Indians believed that schooling would include some level of missionary involvement.

By the time Davin made his recommendations on Indian industrial schools in 1879, the policy framework for Indian education had basically already taken shape in eastern Canada, and on the Prairies. All Davin really did was to consolidate this information, ignore the on-reserve schooling provisions included in the treaties, and add the American experience which he either misinterpreted or chose to ignore. According to Chamberlin (1975: 72), the Canadian government:

adopted a scheme for educating the Indians in the West in church-run industrial boarding schools, ... just as the Americans were recognizing its limitations and going-off at full speed in the opposite direction.

Davin (1879: 1,2) also placed far greater emphasis on the concept of "aggressive civilization" than on the ominous statement made by the American Commissioner of Indian Affairs that he was "not in favour of 'the contract system, because the children at schools under contract do not, as a rule, get a sufficient quantity of food". What Davin undoubtedly recognized was that the Canadian government was not prepared to splurge on Indian education, and consequently they needed to off load some of these costs onto someone else. The missionaries, who already operated mission schools at their own expense, were the most likely candidates. In his recommendations, Davin (1879: 15) did not hesitate to add, "The advantage of calling in the aid of religion is, that there is a chance of getting an enthusiastic person, with, therefore, a motive beyond anything pecuniary remuneration could supply."

The advantages did not stop here. Later, the Canadian state and its bureaucratic officials carefully looked the other way as the missionaries took most

of the heat regarding the cruel realities of Indian residential schools. In fact, the Canadian government has yet to fully own up to the part it played in destroying Indian families and culture. What the bureaucracy still fears most is the financial implications of any admission of guilt and the costs of restitution.

In the beginning, however, the missionaries were not unwilling partners in the concept of Indian residential schooling. They needed access to the Indian Affairs funding as the contributions from their own organizations dwindled and fell away. The most striking aspect in Davin's (1879) report is not the role he recommended for the missionaries in Indian education. Davin's report is most remarkable in how it exemplifies the racial ideology which turned Indian residential schools into a reality.

Consistent with the racial ideology of his day, Nicholas Davin held Indians in extremely low regard. He saw "the race [as] in its childhood" and "the Indian himself [as] a noble type of man, in a very early stage of development" (Davin 1879: 10). It is also obvious that Davin (1879: 10) considered the "mixed-bloods" to be far more advanced than Indian people, whom he described as having "the suspicion, distrust, fault-finding tendency, the insincerity and flattery, produced in all subject races". Consistent with James Scott's (1990: 35) analysis of domination and resistance, Davin obviously chose to:

...attribute such behaviour ... not to the effect of arbitrary power but rather to the inborn characteristics of the subordinate group itself.

Moreover, while Davin (1879: 9) was impressed by the principal men of the five civilized nations in the United States who had apparently benefited from

industrial schools, he could not help but add, "But I am bound to say there was not one of them of pure Indian blood". The fact that Indian people were even included in his recommendations probably had more to do with the mandate of the Canadian government, and less to do with Nicholas Davin's personal preferences on the matter.

A careful reading of Davin's report shows that he was clearly a man of his time. Nicholas Davin, a journalist by trade, was first and foremost well versed in the racial ideology of his day. He also knew only too well how far the government was prepared to go in meeting its financial obligations for Indian education. Davin supported a role for the missionaries in Indian education because he believed in the dual concepts of "Christianity" and "civilization" and the missionaries were also the cheapest option by far.

These were the circumstances that existed in July 1890 when Bishop Vital-Justin Grandin received a commitment from the Department of Indian Affairs to build an industrial school for the Catholic Indians in his diocese. St. Michael's Indian Residential School at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, then part of the North-West Territories, was about to enter the realm of history in the field of Indian education.

## **Chapter 4 - Indian Education and Indian Children**

*Despite its well-recognized weaknesses, Indian education should not be judged solely on the basis of occasional horror stories. Most missionaries retained their faith in the method, seeing the desperate state into which many Indian bands had fallen and finding no ready alternative....The Indians themselves, despite their discontents, could not afford to ignore the benefits obtained only from boarding and industrial schools....Despite its shortcomings, the residential school evidently met a need (Grant 1984: 183).*

### **4.0 Preparing the Way for Indian Education in the West**

Grant's preference to point out the merits of Indian education, as defined by the missionaries or the newcomers, is not unique. These kind of statements are classic in taking credit for rescuing Indian people from havoc and despair, while taking little responsibility for creating these same conditions. This statement also assumes that residential schools, whether boarding or industrial, were places of learning instead of institutions designed for the *extermination of Indianness*. More importantly, these kinds of statements presuppose that Indian people could not have managed to get along without the Europeans, and all they had to offer.

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Indians had no need for Christianity, civilization, nor western education. That this did not represent a void in their lives is undeniable. It was soon defined as such by those incapable of seeing the world through another's eyes and destined to change that which did not fit their natural order. Consequently, the concepts of "Christianity" and "civilization" moved east to west following in the wake of the explorers, traders, and missionaries.

Thirty Year's Missionary Experience (Hines 1915) provides one example of a missionary's life, on the Prairies, before the economic union of church and state around Indian education. If the early missionaries such as Reverend Hines hoped to avoid martyrdom, they soon learned to tread carefully and to cultivate the goodwill of the Indian tribes. Basic survival skills included showing no fear, relying on converts to bridge communication gaps, cultivating the goodwill of the most influential Chiefs, and learning the Indian languages as quickly as possible. Later, many of these life skills fell by the wayside as the missionaries came to realize the economic benefits of kowtowing to the state. Left to their own devices, however, the early missionaries knew better than to push the Indians too hard.

Not pushing too hard often meant learning the Indian languages. This skill was needed to convert Indian people, and was also extremely useful in edging out the competition from rival denominations. For example, on the way down to his new posting in the Saskatchewan district of the North-West Territories, Reverend Hines learned to say the Lord's Prayer in Cree. However accommodating this simple act may appear, this symbolized nothing more than another missionary bent on changing traditional Indian beliefs. While Reverend Hines (1915: 108) was prepared to concede that Indians had some sort of religious beliefs, he was unable to see beyond what he assumed Indian spirituality lacked in comparison with "true Christian knowledge". Although the Indians in this area may have only sought his help to school their children, or to learn a different lifestyle themselves, Reverend Hines's (1915: 108) foremost objective was conversion itself:



It is true they admitted in their prayers that Ke-che-Mun-ne-tō was also a great Father, and spoke of Him as such, but to them he was only Father by creation and not by redemption, for what could they know about redemption, not having heard 'redemption's story'? ... therefore the need for enlightenment and the work of the Christian missionary is obvious, namely, to teach them the story of redemption: ... and that the heathen should know this, it becomes the duty of every Christian to take part in proclaiming the good news to them! And although much of my work at the first may appear to be of a purely secular character, it was only a means to an end, and that was to bring the Indians within the sound of the Gospel ...

In the absence of reserves and any compulsory schooling requirements, Reverend Hines (1915: 88) was reduced to "present[ing] each family with a field as an inducement for them to settle". In this way, Reverend Hines eventually cultivated the favour of two of the most influential Chiefs in the Fort Carleton area. This missionary's influence on Big Child and Star Blanket changed the course of the Treaty 6 negotiations in 1876. This event, which eventually led to the concept of Indian education in the West, was still many years in the future.

#### **4.1 The Missionaries and Indian People**

The primary thrust behind the government's policy towards Indian people has always been to change them into brown Europeans, but at the least possible cost. Davin's (1879) recommendations clearly demonstrated that Indian education would not be an exception. The state's obsession with economy also made the missionaries the most likely choice to assume the responsibility for Indian education. First, the government could capitalize on the work of the missionaries who had already established a number of Indian schools at their own expense. Secondly, a missionary's calling in life, which included educating Indian people in

the ways of *civilization*, held out better prospects for economy than the salaries which would be required for a similar number of lay teachers. Also, the belief that "civilization" and "Christianity" could not be separated had not changed since Egerton Ryerson pointed out in 1847:

... that the North American Indian cannot be civilized or preserved in a state of civilization (including habits of industry and sobriety) except in connection with, if not by the influence of, not only religious instruction and sentiment but of religious feelings.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, the missionaries already lived among the Indians and many had learned their languages. These personal contacts, and the ability to speak the Indian languages, had already served the missionaries well in convincing reluctant Indian parents about the merits of sending their children to mission schools.

Some missionaries, such as Reverend Hines, learned the Indian languages as they opened up missions. Others were trained to do so before leaving the seminary. The Roman Catholic missionaries had the greatest advantage in this regard. Not only did they have access to the information gathered by the Sulpicians at Oka, but while at Oka they also received instruction in the Iroquois and Algonquian languages. Learning the Indian languages had little, if anything, to do with their trying to understand traditional Indian ways, culture, or beliefs. For the missionaries, learning the Indian languages represented nothing more than a useful skill in imposing their religious beliefs on Indian people. For example, the children at St. Michael's School were taught to sing hymns in Cree. While this

---

<sup>21</sup> Ryerson, E. Indian Welfare and Training Oblate Commission. Toronto: Memo to George Vardon, Assistant Superintendent General, Indian Affairs, 26 May 1847, (pp. 1). (Deschâtelets Archives. Ottawa, HR 6503.C73R 4)

may sound like a magnanimous gesture, it translated into little more than the quickest means to religious indoctrination. The nuns at this school inadvertently captured how this little privilege probably hurt, as much as relieved, some of the children's pain of separation and loneliness, when they wrote:

The Indians have a natural taste for singing and music. Yet like all conquered nations there is a mournful tone throughout their airs.<sup>22</sup>

Father Charlebois, the second principal at St. Michael's School, also taught the younger children to say their prayers in Cree. Again, while this may appear commendable, there is a huge difference between religious indoctrination and using Cree to facilitate the academic learning process at Indian residential schools.

Furthermore, often way too much importance is placed on how the Roman Catholics learned the Indian languages (Grant 1984: 111), or in how they prepared "dictionaries, grammars, legends, stories, Gospels, and prayer books in nearly thirty different native languages" (Lascelles 1992: 11; Carrière 1979: 14-16). These academic tools would not have been necessary if missionaries, in general, had not been part of the leading edge of disaster which served to destroy so many Indian languages. A language is the key to any culture. It is the bond which ties parents to children, and their children to the ancestors and the traditions which they all hold sacred. A language is not only something to be recorded in books for posterity. This understanding was not beyond the grasp of church and state which took decided measures to destroy these precious bonds.

---

<sup>22</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np, (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

While the missionaries lived among the Indians primarily to convert them to Christianity, at first their impact was relatively constrained as they had no real authority to exert their will over the Indian tribes. This probably had more to do with the fact that "the missionaries were few in number relative to the Indians, [therefore] they could not have had much effect on Indian societies in general" (Miller 1991b: 58). Until their role in Indian education was formalized, the missionaries also did not have the omnipotent power of state behind them. They had to rely on their own persuasive powers with Indian people which often included discrediting the opposition, both pagan and Christian alike, and instilling the fear of retrogression in their converts. The Catholic missionaries were also often ready with graphic pictures of hell to keep their converts in line (Grant 1984: 123-124). Louise Moine (1975: n. pag) described how this tactic later found its application at the Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School. She wrote:

There was a horrible picture in our playroom which showed a dying man being pulled into hellfire by the devils while the angels turned away.

These pictures transcended the need for fluency in any Indian language. For the early missionaries, however, the time to really push their beliefs on Indian people came later when the state, in the form of the Department of Indian Affairs, chose to stand behind their activities for its own purposes. "Christianity" and "civilization", the cornerstones of the government's policy to assimilate Indian people, tied nicely into the missionaries' belief that they knew *exactly* what was best for Indians. It is obvious that notions of racial superiority also lay hidden

beneath the cloak of Christianity. The missionaries did not hesitate to capitalize on these notions to gain access to the Indian education funding. In defending his right for a Catholic Indian industrial school Father Paquette, the first Principal at St. Michael's School, did not mince words when it came to defending the social transformation deemed possible only through residential school settings:

Le Département devrait comprendre qu'il ne civilisera jamais les Sauvages a moins qu'il enlève les enfants des parents, et qu'il ferme toutes les petites écoles des réserves, ces écoles ne sont bonnes rien qu'au debut. Si le gouvernement ne veut pas que mon école soit Industrielle, qu'il la laisse Boarding school [sic] mais qu'il me permette de recevoir au moins 100 enfants, il y a trop de petits Sauvages qui courent les loges et le bois comme des petites bêtes, tandis qu'ils feraient des gens honnêtes et intelligents s'ils étaient élevés dans une école.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the missionaries did not necessarily see themselves as equals when it came to Indian people. Many justified their often questionable actions by unilaterally placing themselves in the position of the protector of Indian people. In doing so, they deemed themselves superior both in recognizing the situation and in being able to do something about it. This sense of self-righteous superiority is aptly captured in Father Lacombe's exasperation, "Poor miserable creatures! So stupid and ignorant of what is for their good" (Titley 1992: 97), when he couldn't even bribe Indian parents to leave their children in school.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, Indian people had become more than the missionary's flock. They had

---

<sup>23</sup> Memo, M. Paquette to H. Macdowall, 5 January 1895. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1. (See Appendix A.1 for translation.)

<sup>24</sup> Provincial Archives of Alberta, Lettres du Père A. Lacombe provenant de l'Institut Glenbow (1884-85). A. Lacombe to the Indian Commissioner, 9 March 1885 and 24 March 1885, as cited by Titley (1992: 97).

somehow become their *inferior* children. In the early 1900s, when the government approved the church's role in Indian education, they also gave the missionaries the authority to engage in "directed cultural change" defined by Miller (1991b: 96) as:

the assertion of the ideas and values of the more dominant party in the relationship over the dependent one; it involved deliberate and systematic attempts by the dominant to change the culture of the weaker; and it subjected the more vulnerable of the two parties not just to the rules and sanctions of their own society but also to the taboos and requirements of the more powerful group.

For the missionaries, Indian education provided the means for formally indoctrinating Indian people into the *superior* European culture. In no uncertain terms, education also provided the justification for eradicating Indian languages, beliefs, and customs in a systematic way. As described by Gresko (1979: 86):

In a controlled milieu set apart from camp life and white communities, young Indians would be transformed by the skills and attitudes appropriate to the white world. At the optimum point of assimilation, they would be released to their reserves as exemplars to others, or to circulate in white society at a level proper to their station in life, and perhaps even enter communities which would be separated but autonomous units within Canadian society.

Indian education also held out the prospect for grooming Indian missionaries who could spread the word more effectively among their own people. This was perhaps more true of the Protestant churches, who had worked along side Indian missionaries for years, than for the Catholics who preferred to have "white priests" (Grant 1984: 174) at the helm. The Catholics, however, worked doubly hard to ensure that a sufficient number of Indian girls entered their auxiliaries. By the time St. Michael's School celebrated its golden jubilee, "The Sacred Heart [had] royally rewarded their [student's] generosity by choosing

among them the first religious vocation of the school" (Le Chevallier 1944: 63).

Indian nuns represented the rewards the missionaries drew from Indian education.

With the approval of the church's role in Indian education, Christianity also took on a greater urgency because baptizing the "pagan" preceded educating the savage. For the various religious denominations, baptism offered the means of staking out a claim to a certain group of Indians in order to justify their fair share of the Indian education funding. Thus, under the banner of Indian education "a symbiotic relationship emerged between [the] various churches and the state" (Frideres 1993: 4). As the administrative arm of the state, the role of the Department of Indian Affairs was to impartially distribute the Indian education funding among the various churches, while carefully guarding the public purse.

#### **4.2 The Financial and Human Costs of Indian Education**

In the late 1800s the funding of day schools on-reserves represented the cheapest option by far. While Indians preferred to have their children schooled on-reserves, neither church nor state approved of day schools as they did not fit the "civilizing" task by removing children from their homes. Furthermore, other than the missionaries, few teachers wanted to work in the unfamiliar setting of a reserve, particularly for the pittance Indian Affairs was willing to pay. Even those willing to work for \$300 a year soon found their wages reduced to a quarterly per capita rate of \$3 if student attendance fell below twenty-five (Bryce 1907: 9).

On the Prairies, it became increasingly difficult to maintain mission schools as the focal point of "civilization" and "Christianity" when the Plains Indians

refused to give up their traditional pursuits and took their children on the hunt. It is obvious that Indians did not see schools as replacing their role as parents, nor as altering their responsibilities to educate their children in the ways of their ancestors. As Indian parents often sent their children to school only to learn a skill, attendance rose and fell depending on other community activities. With no other recourse, teachers did the best they could to keep their schools filled, or they simply quit. Missionaries for the most part hung on. In 1884, they were rewarded for their efforts when the federal government finally acted on Davin's (1879) recommendations to build Indian industrial schools in the West.

Indian industrial schools which provided specialized training in the trades represented a swing from one extreme to another. Where day schools floundered because of state parsimony, by comparison industrial schools basked in the glory of a relatively open-ended funding policy until 1892. Indian Affairs generally bought the land, built the schools, and funded the entire operation of the school. As a result, four industrial schools appeared on the Prairies at Qu'Appelle, High River, Battleford, and later at Regina. At first, the government willingly footed the bill for Indian industrial schools which represented the supreme "civilizing" instrument. At industrial schools, Indian children were stripped of their identities, inculcated in the concepts of thrift and industry, and readied for enfranchisement as "civilized" and "Christianized" Indians. Consequently, Indian industrial schools were built in centres of civilization as far away as possible from the reserves.

Before the advent of compulsory education missionaries were often at the



mercy of those Indians who refused to cooperate in this "civilizing" experiment. If given the choice, Indian parents preferred to keep their children in day schools, or to send them to boarding schools located much closer to the reserves. For the churches, however, boarding schools lacked many of the qualities which drew them to industrial schools. Although also residential in nature, boarding schools provided only a general education. Consequently, they did not receive the same level of funding as industrial schools. Moreover, economies of scale were harder to realize at boarding schools where enrolments were kept smaller and the per-capita rate only increased to \$72 per annum in 1892 (Titley 1992: 102). In his fight to gain industrial school status for St. Michael's School, Father Paquette explained the cold realities of the boarding school per-capita rates as follows:

To sum up, I beg to tell you that \$72 for each child will not pay half the expense. If I had from 100 to 200 children I might, perhaps on that number get back what I pay out, but thirty children only are the cause of considerable expense to me, as they require the same attention as 200 would.<sup>25</sup>

Father Paquette had written to the Postmaster-General to ask for his support when his member of Parliament raised the question of industrial school status for St. Michael's School in the House of Commons. Secondly, boarding schools lacked the prestige of industrial schools which as the classic showpieces of "social engineering" (Miller 1991b: 196) drew welcome visits from Prime Ministers and Governor Generals. This political patronage became increasingly important

---

<sup>25</sup> Memo, M. Paquette to Adolphe Caron, 12 December 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

as expenditures often exceeded the level of funding provided by Indians Affairs. Moreover, while the per-capita rates for boarding schools were held constant, the rates for industrial schools fluctuated. In July 1893, when industrial schools came under the per-capita system Qu'Appelle received \$115, Regina \$120, High River \$130, and Battleford the highest per-capita rate of \$140 (Bryce 1907: 12). While these higher per-capita rates were extremely important to church and state, Indian parents had more pressing concerns regarding their children's "education".

The children they sent to school were not the same ones who came back. Quite apart from the external changes, such as different clothes and shorter hair, their children were no longer the same deep down inside where it counts. Goodwill and Sluman (1984: 93) sharply contradicted Davin's (1879: 5) prediction of "happy results" due to Indian residential schools, when they wrote:

Two groups of Cree children had by now been processed through the schools at Duck Lake [St. Michael's] and Delmas....But the experiment had, so far, been a disaster and there was little to say that was good about the treatment given to the homesick and bewildered children. The first two groups had returned home so traumatized by their years away that the other Crees called them 'the crazy schoolers'. They had forgotten how to function, behave or even speak like Crees. Although they had acquired some rudimentary educational skills they had received far more religious indoctrination. It had been firmly impressed upon them that everything Indian was backward, useless and evil.

But, these were the lucky ones! They had survived the child labour called "industrial school training" which increased in proportion with the decreases in Indian Affairs funding. An inordinate number of Indian children never came home at all. For many children the "civilizing" experiment did not end with

school. Their *education* continued for many years afterward on "outings", a form of cheap labour where Indian boys worked as farm hands and girls as servants within the "white" community. With the approval of Indian Affairs, the principals of residential schools became match makers and arranged the marriages of their students. Some Indian residential school graduates were also sent off to a colony experiment at File Hills, where they remained under close supervision of state and church. Some students ran away from school only to die in the process, while others took their lives at school (Furniss 1992). Countless numbers of Indian children died while at school and never returned home. This is the *other* side of Indian education. The side which does not even touch on the sexual impropriety which is only hinted at in the following, when according to Titley (1992: 107):

In April 1914, Henri Grandin, OMI, the Oblate Provincial in Alberta, accused Nordmann of extravagance and carelessness in his management and for finding lots of time "*pour jouer avec des petites filles dans votre chambre, ou pour lire les magazines*". [sic]<sup>26</sup>

The disturbing reality of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse cannot be as easily overlooked in Todd Phillip's (1993) article entitled "Confronting the Pain", and by similar revelations in Breaking the Silence (AFN 1994). While Indian parents had every right to expect their children to learn the 3Rs, religion, farming, or even some trades at school, this pain was often all they had to show for their children's education. There is no way that any of this can be regarded as just those "occasional horror stories" (Grant 1984: 183) of Indian residential schools.

---

<sup>26</sup> Provincial Archives of Alberta, OMI, Dunbow, Boîte 1, Correspondance 1914, H. Grandin to Père Nordmann, 4 April 1914, as cited by Titley (1992: 107). (Translation... "*to play with little girls in your bedroom, or to read magazines*".)

Furthermore, at Indian residential schools, principals also often renamed Indian children because they either had *pagan* names, or they had already been baptized and named by a rival denomination. While this may sound trivial, according to the Assembly of First Nations (1994: 35):

Naming--something that is done in words--announces that a child is someone, that he or she belongs to a particular family as well as to a particular world. A priest naming a child with a Christian name announces that the child belongs to that world.

Often this renaming was done not so much to replace unpronounceable "pagan" names, but quite purposely to strip Indian children of their identity.<sup>27</sup> This new name was given only to be taken away and replaced by a number. Like all "inmates" in similar institutions, *numbers* and not names defined the totality of an Indian child's life at residential school. Jack Funk (1993: 72) described this dehumanizing process at the Delmas Boarding School in Saskatchewan as follows:

Each student was given a number which they retained during their years at Delmas. Their number determined the order in which they lined up for anything, and they lined up for everything: classes, prayers, food, dismissal, bedtime, toilets, and washing in the mornings, noon and night. Often the students were called by number rather than by name.

To this day, even the oldest survivors of Indian residential schools can tell you their numbers without hesitation. Moreover, this renaming of Indian children also carried long lasting implications. Years later, residential school survivors often had to use the legal system to prove their identity to qualify for old age

---

<sup>27</sup> Note the change in names over time where Mistihai'muskwa was merely translated into Big Bear and the biblical names which later became the norm with baptism and residential schooling. For example, Wikaskokiseyin [Sweet Grass] apparently used the name Abraham after he was converted by Father Lacombe in 1865 (Dickason 1992: 493 n.21).

pension because they were registered under two different Christian names.

This stripping of Indian identity did not stop with renaming and the assigning of numbers. It extended to Indian children being forbidden to speak their native languages, except under special circumstances, and to the often misunderstood process of cutting the Indian children's hair. Short hair, like school uniforms, are often seen as just part and parcel of Indian residential school life. However, the cutting of hair signified a lot more than just conformity to school requirements, or emulating the look of the Europeans. It meant cutting into an Indian belief system where hair worn in a particular fashion held great meaning.

In the 1880s, when Father Lacombe was desperately trying to prevent his students from leaving Dunbow, he did not cut the Indian boys' hair because he was afraid they would leave (Titley 1992: 98). Without the power of state behind him, Father Lacombe had to bend a little to get Dunbow off the ground. The missionaries demanded this concession whenever they could because they knew what long hair meant to Indian people. The first order of nuns at St. Michael's School described the significance behind this practice of cutting hair as follows:

By the side of the Holy oils was laid a pair of scissors, as the Fathers made it obligatory for Pagan men to have their long hair cut off before Baptism. It is one of their superstitions that the Spirits they worship dwell in these locks, which they never cut off but wear plaited with copper wire and dyed red and yellow. This is one of the greatest sacrifices they have to make and on their refusal depends whether they will be Christians or not.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np, (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

Later, as Indian residential schools swung into full operation, only the "pagans" on the reserves had any choice about cutting their hair. Indian children had no choice, as they were pushed and prodded into conformity through a process which started with a vigorous scrubbing with disinfectant, followed by a shearing, and ended with a uniform and a number. One Indian boy described his reaction to this mandatory shearing in Gresko's (1992: 79) article entitled, "Everyday Life at Qu'Appelle Industrial School" as follows:

In keeping with the promise to civilize the little pagan, they went to work and cut off my braids, which, incidentally, according to the Assiniboine traditional custom, was a token of mourning--the closer the relative, the closer the cut. After my haircut, I wondered in silence if my mother had died, as they had cut my hair close to the scalp.

Quite obviously, the cutting of hair was not as painless as is often assumed. These procedures were all part of the indoctrination process which ensured that "the residential school was geared for a total impact on the child" (Grant 1984: 178). This harsh introduction to Indian residential school life also represented the often overlooked "symbolic violence" of Indian residential schools, a practice which Pierre Bourdieu (1977: 196) defined as "the gentle, hidden form which violence takes when overt violence is impossible". Other than the vigorous scrubbing with disinfectant which offended as well as burned, none of the other procedures such as the cutting of hair, assigning clothes and numbers, separating family members, and learning a new language can be defined as necessarily violent unto themselves. Yet, according to Smith (1993: 44) who examined a similar kind of dehumanizing practice called the Eskimo Disk List System in the North:

They are violent, because of their role in the creation and maintenance of social inequality, sometimes of an intense form; symbolic because they are embedded in overtly just, acceptable, well-intentioned, and benign (euphemized) practices.

Unless we are prepared to dig beneath the euphemism called Indian "education" and to critically examine all the supposedly "benign practices" this indoctrination system entailed, we will always question why Indian people remain so angry about residential schools. James Scott (1990: 188) rightfully stated, "Virtually every instance of personal domination is intimately connected with a process of appropriation". To this, Scott (1990: x) added:

In the cases of slavery, serfdom, and caste subordination ... [e]ach represents an institutionalized arrangement for appropriating labour, goods, and services from a subordinate population.

Indian residential schools were no different in this respect. Indian education represented an *institutionalized* arrangement which appropriated Indian children's labour, family ties, culture, language, respect, and their sense of self-worth. In trying to understand Indian residential schools from "an Aboriginal way of knowing", I finally found the heart of this issue when Scott (1990: xi) stated:

Given the choice of structures explored..., it is apparent that I privilege the issues of dignity and autonomy, which have typically been seen as secondary to material exploitation.

"Dignity" and "autonomy" are the bottom line issues often called basic human rights. Unless Indian residential schools are examined within this context, we will fail to comprehend the travesty still called *Indian education*. Moreover, to fully understand the reality of Indian residential schools, the legalized coercive measures of church and state tied into Indian education must also be examined.

### 4.3 The Indian Act and Indian Education

Of all historical documents, the Indian Act is perhaps the best example of colonialism and coercion at work. Each time Indians successfully resisted the newcomer's efforts to "civilize" or "Christianize" them, a new provision appeared in the Indian Act to counteract their *inexplicable* desire not to assimilate. The first reference to education under the Indian Act appears in 1880 (Venne 1981: 75). Section 74(1) stipulated that subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, Chiefs could make regulations regarding the religious denomination of their teacher.<sup>29</sup> In reality, Chiefs had no real say because their teacher had to belong to the religious denomination of the majority of the Band members. Significantly, this section also referred to "on-reserve" schooling. Obviously, there was also no room for the education of *pagan* children under the Indian Act, as these schooling provisions were tied to membership in the Christian denominations.

In 1884, the Indian Act specified "the attendance at school of children between six and fifteen" (Venne 1981: 97).<sup>30</sup> This revision also coincides with the approval of Davin's (1879) recommendations on Indian industrial schools. Two years later, three new sections appeared in the Indian Act (Venne 1981: 164-165)<sup>31</sup> which removed whatever little authority Bands may have had regarding

---

<sup>29</sup> Statutes of Canada, 1880, chapter 28, section 74(1), as cited by Venne (1981: 75).

<sup>30</sup> Statutes of Canada, 1884, chapter 27, section 10, amending section 74(7), as cited by Venne (1981: 97).

<sup>31</sup> Revised Statutes of Canada, 1886, chapter 43, new sections 137-139, as cited by Venne (1981: 164-165). (See Appendix A.2 for complete text of these three new sections.)



schooling on-reserve. The Governor in Council, and not Chiefs and Councils, now had the authority to make regulations having the full force of law regarding: the designation or establishment of industrial or boarding schools, compulsory attendance until the age of eighteen, the arrest and detention by an Indian Agent of truant children under sixteen, penalties for parents and guardians who wilfully withheld their children from school, and the application of children's annuities towards their care at school, or to the costs of maintaining the school.

In 1894, these three sections were incorporated under section eleven of the Indian Act (Venne 1981: 164-165).<sup>32</sup> According to the Treaties and Historical Research Centre (1978: 98), this new amendment:

... implemented Hayter Reed's efforts since 1892 for compulsory school attendance [sic] of Indian children... Voluntary attendance at school, particularly in the North-West, had been minimal and the new legislation enabled the Department to educate Indian children without either their consent or their parents. The Governor-General did not hesitate to implement these new provisions. An Order-in-Council of November 1894 proclaimed regulations concerning industrial schools, compulsory attendance and support of Indian children.<sup>33</sup>

More important to this paper, this means that St. Michael's School opened just a few months prior to the enactment of the compulsory attendance regulations in 1894. Concurrently, Indian Affairs also established an independent School

---

<sup>32</sup> Statutes of Canada, chapter thirty-two, section eleven, as cited by Venne (1981: 164-165).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Statutes of Canada (57-58 Vic, cap. 32), ss. 137-139 under the 11th clause, pp. 232-33 and *Ibid.* (58-59 Vic, 1895), Orders-in-council, Canada, pp. liv-lvii: O.C. of 10 Nov. 1894, vide *Canada Gazette*, vol. xvii, p. 832, as cited by the Treaties and Historical Research Centre (1978: 98).

Branch to support their educational activities. In 1897, the School Branch was dropped when the Department was reorganized into three branches.

In 1920, the compulsory attendance regulations were finally incorporated under chapter 50 of the Indian Act (Treaties and Historical Research Centre 1978: 115). Despite these measures, Indians continued to undermine church and state's concept of Indian "education" by withholding their children from school. In response to D.C. Scott's request for guidance on implementing these new regulations, the Oblates advised Indian Affairs of the need for better enforcement mechanisms. The Oblates also took the opportunity to express their "sentiments" regarding parental interference in Indian education. Father Guy wrote:

I would be highly interested to know if the Department has the intention to enforce the law of compulsory education for the Indians. What a relief it would be for me to learn one day of the appointment of a special officer with full authority. It is really provoking to see people of so inferior a condition as the Indians, who, for the most part are ignorant of the first word about education, dictate laws to us and raise all possible difficulties when they have to place their children at school....I am of the opinion that a Police Officer or Constable would be the only proper man to uphold the authority of the law and have it respected. By such a nomination the success of educational and religious efforts would be secured and it would be for us a real pleasure to send the Indians with their foolish and unreasonable complaints to an independent tribunal.<sup>34</sup>

Father Guy added that this letter "voices the sentiments of all the Principals which [sic] whom I have treated educational problems".<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Memo, Joseph Guy to D.C. Scott, 14 March 1921. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8153, Volume 6041, File 160-5.

<sup>35</sup> Memo, Joseph Guy to D.C. Scott, 14 March 1921. Ibid.

With the 1920 amendments to the Indian Act, day schools took their place as approved Indian educational institutions along side the residential boarding and industrial schools. Indian Affairs also undertook to pay for the Indian children's transportation to and from residential schools, including their travel costs for annual vacations. Given these new financial implications, Indian Affairs also stipulated that Indian children must be placed in the nearest available school of their religious denomination. The old isolationist policy of removing Indian children as far away as possible from home went out the door when the Department had to pay for their transportation costs. With the 1920 amendment to the Indian Act, the ages for compulsory attendance at school also dropped to between seven and fifteen years.

As the missionaries and Indian Affairs continued to solidify their position around the concept of Indian education, it is obvious that Indian people bore the brunt of the united power of church and state. As Jaine (1993: viii) aptly stated:

Resisting the 'Christianizing and civilizing' influences of the church and state was an onerous task. The government had the force of law behind it; the church had God.

Despite these odds, Indian people continued to fight for day schools on their reserves and for more control over their children's education. But it was an uphill battle every step of the way. Indian people fought against a deeply entrenched ideology which decreed that their status as Indians stripped them of the right to make decisions regarding their children's schooling. The belief that the missionaries knew exactly what was best for Indian people is exemplified in

Titley's (1992) article entitled, "Dunbow Indian Industrial School: An Oblate Experiment in Education". Titley (1992: 113) concluded his analysis of this Indian industrial school by stating:

Almost until the very end the Oblates persisted in their belief in Dunbow. Again and again they touted its advantages over day and boarding schools: complete isolation from undesirable parental influence. Although they made heroic efforts, they never overcame Native opposition nor growing government scepticism. Even when they finally admitted defeat it was not because they had lost faith in the experiment. *There was no soul-searching, no fundamental questioning of the premise that education should drive a wedge between young and old, and that it should alienate children from their parents and everything they stood for.* [my emphasis]

This kind of soul searching about the real and tragic costs of Indian education has quite often been absent in the analysis of Indian residential school issues.

## Chapter 5 - A History of Resistance and Struggle on the Prairies

*I sit  
on a  
man's back  
choking him  
and making  
him carry  
me and yet assure myself and  
others that I am sorry for him  
and wish to lighten his load by  
all possible means – except by  
getting off his back (Tolstoy 1886).<sup>36</sup>*

### 5.0 Broadening the Scope of Submission and Resistance

Leo Tolstoy's poem appropriately entitled, "What Then Must We Do?" symbolizes the history of Indian-white relations and the on-going struggle by Indian people against European domination. This poem encapsulates the ideology of racial superiority, which purports to want to help Indian people, yet strangles their initiative instead. Tolstoy's (1886) poem also captures the reality of an institutionalized system which dictates that if Indians can no longer live as noble savages of yesterday, then they must be taught to live in the "white man's world". Therefore, while Indian societies are portrayed as strong and vibrant in their own time, their demise is often marked by the arrival of the Europeans. This view of Indian people as experiencing the brunt of an "advanced technology" (Grant 1984:

---

<sup>36</sup> The Mayo Indian Band from the Yukon quoted Tolstoy's poem in a submission to a Special Committee of Parliament examining Indian self-government (House of Commons 1983: 2).

46) overlooks the human factor, while condemning Indians to the status of victims in desperate need of European intervention. Historians have now proven that Indians were neither submissive, nor simply victims. Using primary sources, historians such as Miller (1991b: ix-x) have demonstrated that Indian people:

... had in fact been active agents of commercial, diplomatic, and military relations with the European newcomers and their Euro-Canadian descendants....Even after Indians became numerically inferior to, and economically dependent upon, Euro-Canadians, they continued to assert themselves in their relations with governments, churches, and the ordinary population.

These refreshing new interpretations clearly demonstrate how Indians resisted the European's efforts to impose their will on them. Examples of their resistance can be found on the Prairies where Indians signed Treaty 6, but pressed for contiguous reserves to amass their strength. Leading Chiefs such as Big Bear also refused to sign Treaty 6 and tried to negotiate better terms. These decisions were not taken lightly. In 1879, after the buffalo disappeared, Edgar Dewdney the Indian Commissioner for the North-West Territories "announced that rations were to be provided only to Indians who had taken treaty" (Tobias 1983: 526). Despite the measures taken by Indian Affairs and the North-West Mounted Police, the Plains Indians also continued to hold thirst dances to discuss their treaty grievances. Later, the Plains Indians also defied the assimilationist policies of church and state by withholding their children from school. History has proven that their resistance was met with increasingly coercive measures by the state. These measures were later enshrined in Canadian legislation as the pass system, the ban on traditional Indian dances, and compulsory schooling regulations.

In Loïc Wacquant's (1992) discussion of Bourdieu's sociology, there is more to the analysis of dominated cultures than the simple distinction between submission and these more conspicuous and recognizable examples of outright resistance. Bourdieu argues that the concepts of "submission" and "resistance" may not be as clear cut, nor as oppositional as they seem. Often what is defined as submission may upon closer examination be resistance, or vice versa. In trying to make this distinction clearer Wacquant (1992: 23-24) posed two questions:

If, to resist, I have no means other than to make mine and to claim aloud the very properties that mark me as dominated (according to the paradigm "black is beautiful"), ... is that resistance? If on the other hand, I work to efface everything that is likely to reveal my origins, or to trap me in my social position (an accent, physical composure, family relations), should we then speak of submission?

These questions of what constitutes submission or resistance are critical in trying to uncover the hidden dynamics of Indian residential schools. Often, what is not visible is equally as important as what we do see. In the Breaking the Silence (AFN 1994), one man who shared his story about Indian residential school life simply stated, "I survived by being quiet and submissive" (AFN 1994: 54). Was this submission, or had James Scott (1990: 193) accurately analyzed the hidden dynamics of domination when he stated:

... most subordinates conform and obey *not* because they have internalized the norms of the dominant, but because a structure of surveillance, reward, and punishment makes it prudent for them to comply.

Goodwill and Sluman (1984: 99) addressed the need for the appearance of submission at Indian residential schools when they stated, "There were so many

rules, regulations and punishable offenses that the children soon learned that veiled eyes, poker faces and silence were the only effective method of keeping out of trouble". According to James Scott (1990: 34), these outward signs of compliance are all part of the "hidden transcripts" of resistance, because:

What may look from above like the extraction of a required performance can easily look from below like the artful manipulation of deference and flattery to achieve its own end.

Along the same lines, Basil Johnson (1988: 11) shared his residential school experiences by choosing to write about "the incidents that brought a little cheer and relief to a bleak existence" instead of "recalling the dark and dismal". Why is the former often seen as a subtle form of submission and readily accepted by the general public, while the "dark and the dismal" is rejected, but remains the only proof of resistance? The Ottawa Citizen dismissed the dark and dismal realities of Breaking the Silence (AFN 1994) as "ideological rant", yet applauded Basil Johnson's (1988) book Indian School Days as "a full, vivid and mature account ... because Johnson spares no detail of the hardship he endured, and yet never loses his sense of perspective, nor even his sense of humour."<sup>37</sup> Bourdieu is right. Submission and resistance are not always what they seem. Furthermore, their acceptance, as one or the other, is often tied into what we want to believe about situations such as Indian residential schools.

In fact, Indian School Days (Johnson 1988) is all about the various types of

---

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, William. "Ideological overkill fuelling myth of Indian residential schools". Ottawa Citizen. 20 August 1994.



hidden resistance which were commonplace at Indian residential schools. On one hand, Johnson clearly demonstrates how some Indian children openly resisted their situation, while others merely learned to cultivate angelic personas of compliance. Concealed beneath the humour in Johnson's book are vivid examples of the "low-profile forms of resistance" which Scott (1990: 19) called "infrapolitics". Examples of this passive resistance to authority included: pretending not to hear the wake up bell when it was loud enough to wake the dead, waiting to be tossed out of bed and then getting up slowly enough to raise the ire of the Priest but not so slow as to risk bodily harm, using the anonymity of a crowded room to challenge a staff member's authority, playing into the "dumb Indian" stereotype, pilfering food and dawdling being the most common form of passive resistance.

These Indian children learned who to push and exactly how far. They constantly pushed the edges of authority with actions, not so innocuous as to be missed as resistance, but not so conspicuous as to risk an open confrontation either. When the children pushed too hard the Indian residential school authorities restored "the symbolic status quo" (Scott 1990: 57) by making an example out of someone, or by punishing everyone. Evidence of this kind of subtle resistance is virtually invisible within the primary documentation on Indian residential schools. This is why, according to James Scott (1990: xii):

... that even close readings of historical and archival evidence tends to favor a hegemonic account of power relations. Short of actual rebellion, powerless groups have..., a self-interest in conspiring to reinforce hegemonic appearances.

Conspiring to reinforce "hegemonic appearances" cannot be considered the

same as submission. Indian people struggled against their situation. Within the primary documentation, the evidence of their resistance is visible not so much by what they said or did, although this is also there, but in how the dominant responded. The evidence of their struggle is often hidden beneath the moralistic and ethnocentric views of church and state, which defines Indian resistance as signs of maladjustment or deviance. The latter, of course, serves to justify the need for more coercive measures. For example, there is no need for compulsory attendance legislation if Indian people willingly send their children to school. Therefore, the symbol of Indian people's resistance is evidenced by the need for a law to ensure that they comply with the demands of church and state. Grant (1984: 250) also recognized that some kind of resistance may have been a factor in the acceptance of Christianity by some Indian people when he stated:

Still another possibility, although seldom raised directly, is suggested by frequent hints in missionary records. It is conceivable that for many and perhaps even for most Indians the profession of Christianity was a subtle but effective way of rejecting it? Such a possibility lurks behind Le Caron's summary of Huron response: 'They will believe all you please, or, at least, will not contradict you; and they will let you, too, believe what you will.'

The history of the Prairies provides many examples of how Indian people resisted the dual forces of "Christianity" and "civilization". This struggle started as the newcomers claimed the home of the Plains Indians as their own and reached a peak with the divide and conquer tactics employed by church and state at the Treaty 6 negotiations. The struggle culminated in an insidious process which moved the goal of directed change from community to children, as church and

state joined forces under the banner of Indian education. Indian education was preceded by three decades of rapid change for the Plains Indians. This period also witnessed many forms of resistance by Indian people against church and state.

### **5.1 The Prairie Fire Called "Christianity" and "Civilization"**

According to Friesen (1987), 1860 to the 1880s heralded drastic changes in the lives of the Plains Indians as self-sufficiency gave way to starvation, and Indian residential schools became a reality on the Prairies. As the government eyed the West for its possibilities, the Plains Indians rapidly replaced their eastern kin as the "Indian problem". The ideas for solving this Indian problem which originated in the East also filtered westward. Once again the missionaries followed in the wake of the traders. While some missionaries followed the Plains Indians who lived by the hunt and others worked in settlements, their battle cry never wavered. The missionaries had come to "Christianize" and "civilize" the unenlightened Indians of the Plains. Indeed, the Plains Indians were judged far more needy than their eastern kin. Not only were the Plains Indians nomadic, a great detriment to missionary work, but their limited contact with the "white man" marked them as the true savages. This did not free the government to just take their land.

First, the Royal Proclamation prevented such unilateral action. Secondly, the Plains Indians represented a powerful military force who ruled the Prairies numerically. In the 1870s, there were approximately 25-35,000 Indians in the western interior, but less than 2,000 Europeans (Friesen 1987: 137). The fact that Sitting Bull had crossed the "medicine line" after taking care of Custer's bravado

at Little Big Horn was probably reminder enough that these Indians could not be underestimated. The government had little choice but to negotiate with the Plains Indians, a process which had already successfully produced five treaty agreements. The government was not completely at the mercy of the Plains Indians. The missionaries who began arriving on the Prairies, by the mid-nineteenth century, had already started paving the way for change.

The Red Indians of the Plains (Hines 1915) provides one example of how the early missionaries set up missions, induced the Indians to settle, taught them the rudiments of farming, schooled their children, and then watched their hard work disappear as the Indians set off on the hunt once again taking their children with them. The missionaries really had no choice in the matter. Without the power of state behind them, the missionaries had to rely on their persuasive powers to keep their Indian converts by their side. The nomadic lifestyle of the Plains Indians was not the only cause for consternation. Another problem was the constant threat of losing their flock to a rival denomination.

Certainly, the Plains Indians were not adverse to switching Christian alliances if they did not get what they wanted from the missionaries. In 1874, Reverend Hines succeeded in setting up his mission because one of the leading Chiefs in the Fort Carleton area asked for his help. Chief Star Blanket wanted to prepare for the upcoming changes due to the dwindling buffalo herds. He had also grown tired of waiting for the Catholic priest who had been promised for over a decade, but never came. While the missionaries may have resented rivalry from

the other Christian denominations, competition with "paganism" was another story.

In his book, The Red Indians of the Plains, Reverend Hines (1915: 297) told the story of an old Indian man who although baptized still "practised all the rites and ceremonies of the heathen". With the other Christian denominations barking at the door, Reverend Hines was in no position to push for a quick resolution. By 1899, he finally succeeded in convincing this old Indian man to demonstrate his commitment to Christianity by giving up his sacred medicine bundle. To reinforce the symbolism, Reverend Hines (1915: 300) included a picture of this old man "burn[ing] his idols outside the mission church" while the Christian Indians sang *Rings the Bells of Heaven* in Cree. He (1915: 299) added:

The poor old fellow joined in singing the hymn as best he could, but his emotions would get the better of him, and he lost control of his voice. We finished the hymn with the old man leaning upon my shoulder weeping, and catching at a word or two of the hymn when he could control his feelings.

In his blind faith in Christianity, Reverend Hines never even stops to consider the possibility that this old man may have been overwhelmed *not* by his gain, but by his loss. This old Indian man had just opened the door to losing his language, culture, and his relationship with the Great Spirit. One day soon he would also lose his grandchildren to Indian residential schools where the missionaries would try and turn them into brown replicas of themselves. This missionary's unshakable faith in Christianity, and the beliefs we still hold today about the relevance of traditional Indian beliefs, all combine in preventing us from seeing this Indian man as anything but happy. What if the picture was reversed

and a missionary stood before the fire with his "idols" in his hands. Would anyone have to explain to us why he may be crying? This is the essence of "an Aboriginal way of knowing". This little scenario is a symbol of the assumptions we often hold about *white*-Indian relations and the struggle by Indian people to be understood.

In spite of these successes, the missionaries did not necessarily have an easy time in converting Indians to Christianity. In his book, Moon of Wintertime, Grant (1984) acknowledged that Indian people were not just empty spiritual vessels waiting to be fulfilled with Christianity. Grant provided an example of how one Indian man took drastic measures to thwart the onslaught of Christianity and to remind his people of their own traditional beliefs. Grant (1984: 117) wrote:

In 1859 a young Chipewyan, identified in the records only as the son of a chief named Bear Foot, called on the people of Ile-à-la-Crosse to abandon Roman Catholic practices and accept the authenticity of his visions. He beat up Grandin, the Oblate missionary there, and threatened violence on a visit to Stanley later that spring.

This must have been a traumatic experience for a young Oblate missionary bent on "Christianizing" and "civilizing" Indian people. One wonders what impact this incident might have had on this man, who was destined to become a Bishop, and to influence the lives of so many Indian people. That time arrived soon enough. In 1890, Bishop Grandin secured approval from Indian Affairs to build an industrial school for the Catholic Indians in his diocese. Before this could happen, however, the missionaries had to ensure that the Plains Indians signed Treaty 6 and moved onto reserves where they had a better chance of success.

In 1875, Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris asked George McDougall,

a Methodist missionary, to advise the Plains Indians to prepare for the Treaty 6 negotiations to be held at Fort Carleton and Fort Pitt the following summer. Ironically, this was the same missionary who had removed the "Iron Stone", the revered protector of the buffalo and Indian people from its sacred resting place, knowing full well that the Plains Indians prophesied "that sickness, war, and decrease of buffalo would follow this sacrilege" (Dempsey 1984: 38).

Despite the overwhelming accuracy of this prediction, the Plains Indians were by no means prepared to just accept whatever the Queen's representatives had to offer when it came to Treaty 6. Certainly, the Plains Indians recognized the gravity of their situation as the buffalo began to disappear from the Prairies. Through the "moccasin telegraph" they also knew the provisions contained in the other treaties, and the Plains Indians were determined to do better. James McKay, one of the Treaty 6 Commissioners, acknowledged their resolve when he wrote that the Plains Indians "seemed quite indifferent on the matter, unless they received better terms than has been given to the other Indians" (Dempsey 1984: 66-67).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, when Star Blanket and Big Child stopped the laying of telegraph wires through their territory, they made it quite clear that the Plains Indians were not prepared to let the government proceed without a treaty. Church and state were probably quite taken aback by their actions as these two Chiefs were also Christians Indians who had already taken up a farming.

---

<sup>38</sup> James McKay to A. Morris, 28 March 1877, NAC, RG 10, volume 3636, file 6694-2, as cited by Dempsey (1984: 66-67).

The government also recognized what it stood to gain by signing a treaty with the Plains Indians. The Canadian government knew the Americans had their eye on the Prairies. Alexander Morris (1880: 168) confirmed this when he wrote that the treaties were "essential to the peace, if not the actual retention, of the country". Morris (1880: 288) also recognized that the Canadian system of reserves had the "tendency to diminish the offensive strength of the Indian tribes". This was not a minor consideration because the Plains Indians still far outnumbered the newcomers. Little did Alexander Morris anticipate that the Plains Indians would try to use the reserve system to amass their strength on contiguous reserves.

Not all the Plains Indians wanted the same guarantees out of the Treaty 6 negotiations. The "settlement Indians" (Goodwill and Sluman 1984: 13) who leaned towards preparing for the future by learning an alternative lifestyle wanted farm equipment and instructors. Conversely, the Indians who still lived by the hunt wanted to ensure their self-sufficiency by negotiating assistance in controlling the depletion of the buffalo herds. Big Bear, a non-Christian Indian who lived exclusively by the hunt, was not overly impressed by the government's sudden generosity in sending George McDougall with presents to smooth the way for the treaty negotiations. Big Bear clearly expressed his misgivings when he declared:

We want none of the Queen's presents! When we set a fox trap we scatter pieces of meat all around but when the fox gets into the trap we knock him on the head. We want no baits! Let your Chiefs come like men and talk to us (Dempsey 1984: 63).<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> George McDougall to Alexander Morris, 23 October 1875, Morris Papers, MG12/B1/1136, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, as cited by Dempsey (1984: 63).



In using a fox analogy, Big Bear quite obviously was not prepared to underestimate "the superior cunning of the white man", a trait which Davin (1879: 11) later bragged about in his recommendations on Indian industrial schools. Big Bear's scepticism did not stand him in good stead with George McDougall. The Treaty 6 negotiations had not yet even started and already Big Bear and his non-Christian followers had been labelled as "mischief-makers" and mere "conjurers" (Morris 1880: 174). Big Bear's hopes of preserving his hunting lifestyle sharply contradicted with the government's plan to move the Plains Indians onto reserves out of the way of settlement. The government knew that the buffalo, or the lack thereof, represented the real key to successful settlement on the Prairies. Thus, the struggle by the buffalo hunters to preserve a lifestyle, which had sustained them for generations, began in real earnest with the Treaty 6 negotiations. But the cards were stacked against the buffalo hunters who rejected the government's benevolence in wanting to turn them into good Christian farmers.

## **5.2 Treaty 6: Benevolence or Divide and Conquer Tactics?**

Based on his examination of the manuscripts prepared by Alexander Morris and Sir John A. Macdonald, Taylor (1991: 208) has questioned the interpretation that Canada was "deliberate, wise, and benevolent" in its treaty negotiations. Taylor's examination shows that it was the Indians who successfully negotiated the extras such as farming equipment into the treaties. Taylor suggests that the government's wisdom is best relegated only to their plan to keep costs down while still concluding the treaty negotiations. Dempsey's (1984) and Tobias's (1983)

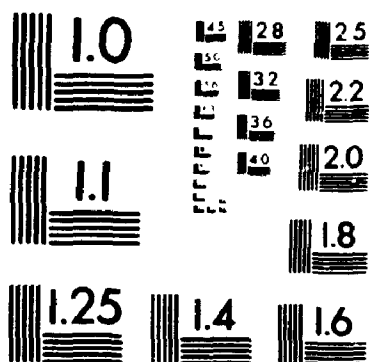
research on Treaty 6 supports the interpretation that Indians were active players in the treaty negotiations. While the Plains Indians were under great pressure to negotiate a treaty, they also struggled to secure the best deal they could. In the Treaty 6 area, not all the Plains Indians held similar views on what was needed to ensure their survival and that of the future generations.

With the exception of Chief Beardy's people, the Fort Carleton Indians did not depend on the buffalo for survival. Although Fort Carleton represented the first stop in the Treaty 6 negotiations, Chief Beardy's people were not present. A spiritual vision told Beardy that the treaty negotiations should be held at Duck Lake, a short distance from Fort Carleton. Alexander Morris refused his request. Therefore, these negotiations were held primarily with the Plains Indians who had already taken up farming, or were prepared to move in that direction. Among these settlement Indians, Star Blanket and Big Child were not only the two leading Chiefs, but Christians under the influence of Reverend Hines. The missionaries, like Reverend Hines, who had swarmed to the Treaty 6 negotiations were not about to let whatever influence they had on the Christian Indians go to waste. While Grant (1984: 154) seems to believe that "the presence of Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic representatives at the signing of Treaty Number 6 in 1876 lent dignity to the proceedings", Dempsey (1984: 73) was probably closer to assessing the true impact of their presence when he stated:

One result of the missionary involvement was of course, the feelings and concerns of the non-Christian buffalo hunters were not expressed.

2 of /de 2

PM-1 3 1/2"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET  
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT



PRECISION<sup>SM</sup> RESOLUTION TARGETS

Moreover, it was probably an undignified process with the missionaries jealously guarding their flock against encroachment, while trying to ensure that their hopes for the future of Indian people became part of the treaty negotiations. While the missionaries no doubt cared about their flock, they needed the Plains Indians to settle if their goals of "Christianity" and "civilization" were ever to take hold. Their best chance lay in convincing the Plains Indians to sign Treaty 6 and to move onto reserves. Not all the Fort Carleton Indians, however, were delighted at the prospect of negotiating for small pieces of the land which had sustained them for generations. The sheer audacity of the Treaty 6 negotiations irritated Poundmaker who, according to Dempsey (1984: 69) interjected:

The governor mentions how much land is to be given to us. He says 649 acres, one mile square for each family, he will give us. This is our land. It isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It is ours and we will take what we want.

Poundmaker was not a leading chief. The final decisions regarding Treaty 6 were left to Star Blanket and Big Child who shouldered the burden of preparing their people for the drastic changes to come. Under the threat of impending doom, the Fort Carleton Indians did the best they could to ensure the future of their people and signed Treaty 6. By the time Alexander Morris proceeded to Chief Beardy's camp, the Treaty 6 die had already been cast. Chief Beardy was only able to comment on the inadequacy of some of the terms, and to extract some vague promises about protecting the buffalo, before he too signed Treaty 6. If Alexander Morris had begun the Fort Carleton negotiations with Chief Beardy, the outcome of Treaty 6 might have been very different. Indeed, the Treaty 6

Commissioners intentionally gravitated towards the leading Christian Chiefs. The missionaries also did their best to affect the outcome of these negotiations. While the Anglicans exerted the most influence on the two leading Chiefs at Fort Carleton, the Catholics had their eye on the Fort Pitt negotiations.

Bishop Grandin sent Father Scollen to attend the Treaty 6 negotiations. On his way, Father Scollen found out that Sweet Grass, a leading Chief and a Catholic convert, was away hunting and would miss the Fort Pitt negotiations. Father Scollen immediately advised Alexander Morris "that he was of [the] opinion that his absence would be a great obstruction to a treaty" (Morris 1880: 183). Morris did not hesitate long in sending a messenger to inform Sweet Grass of the treaty negotiations. The same courtesy was not extended to Big Bear who was also out hunting. By the time Big Bear found out about the negotiations and had come in to speak for the Crees and the Stonies, the negotiations had already been concluded with Sweet Grass. With the support of the missionaries, the Christian Indians had once again dominated the negotiations. According to John McKay, a Presbyterian missionary who was present at the Treaty 6 negotiations:

It was very gratifying to notice that the influence of the Christian Indians, although a small minority with regard to numbers, seemed to preponderate in the deliberations of the whole body (Dempsey 1984: 72).<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, the missionaries interfered as best they could to ensure that the leading Christian Chiefs were present at the Treaty 6 negotiations. Bishop

---

<sup>40</sup> James McKay to A. Morris, 28 March 1877, NAC, RG 10, volume 3636, file 6694-2, as cited by Dempsey (1984: 72).

Grandin also travelled from Edmonton to Fort Pitt, a considerable distance in those days, just to reassure the Treaty Commissioners of his "good will" (Morris 1880: 179). For the missionaries, Treaty 6 held out the prospect of no longer having to chase after the Plains Indians and no more Christianity on the run. The life of the pioneer missionary and the threat of martyrdom were about to end.

The Commissioners were also not above using divide and conquer tactics at the Treaty 6 negotiations. They knew, as did the missionaries, that the numbers of Christian Indians did not really matter as long as the leading Christian Chiefs were on side. Significantly, while the Treaty Commissioners were prepared to give due respect to the Christian Chiefs, they did not extend the same courtesy to Chief Beardy who dared to believe that a mere pagan vision would warrant changing the location of the treaty negotiations. Big Bear a non-Christian Indian who merely wanted to preserve his way of life was also intentionally left out of the Fort Pitt negotiations. It is hardly surprising that Big Bear refused to sign Treaty 6 when he finally reached Fort Pitt on 13 September 1876.

Three year later, when Big Bear still refused to sign this treaty, Edgar Dewdney who had assumed Alexander Morris's duties "announced that he would adopt an old Hudson's Bay Company practice of recognizing any adult male Cree as chief of a new band if he could induce 100 or more persons to recognize him as leader" (Tobias 1983: 526). In his way, Edgar Dewdney circumvented Big Bear's opposition and appointed new Chiefs who took Big Bear's followers into treaty. Big Bear held out for three more years and finally signed Treaty 6 in 1882.

### **5.3 When Buffalo and Rations Become Weapons**

In trying to fathom what the Plains Indians struggled against, it is all too easy to simply focus our attention on the underhanded tactics used by church and state to conclude the Treaty 6 negotiations. While this divisive approach represented part of the struggle, it is important not to overlook the broader issue of how the hunting lifestyle of the Plains Indians stood in the way of missionary activity and settlement in the West.

George McDougall who started preaching among the Plains Indians in the 1860s knew the buffalo stood in the way of the "Christianity" and "civilization" on the Prairies. Even before the Treaty 6 negotiations, he gave Reverend Hines little hope for the success of his Indian mission stating that the Plains Indians would not settle down "so long as there was a single buffalo to be hunted" (Hines 1915: 130). Later, as Canadian government laid plans to populate the West with settlers, almost everyone knew there was little hope of clearing a path for immigration as long as the buffalo sustained the Indians in their nomadic lifestyle.

The Plains Indians also knew that the buffalo represented the key to their future. When Sweet Grass signed Treaty 6 he did not forget what the buffalo mean to those Plains Indians, such as Big Bear, who wanted to maintain their freedom on the Prairies. Before signing Treaty 6, he told Morris (1880: 236):

I have pity on all those who have to live by the buffalo. If I am spared until this time next year I want this my brother [the Treaty Commissioners] to commence to act for me, thinking thereby that the buffalo may be protected. It is for this reason that I give you my hand.

Despite the pleading of Sweet Grass and the promises made to Beardy and Big Bear, the government had already acted way too slowly and ineffectively to save the buffalo. By 1879, the buffalo disappeared from the Prairies and many of the Plains Indians faced starvation. The following speech made in the House of Commons by Sir John A. Macdonald illustrates just how expendable the buffalo were to progress called settlement on the Prairies:

Formerly the Indians in the North-West ... subsisted on buffalo. Buffalo was their bread, wine, and meat, and that supply utterly and totally failed. I am not at all sorry, as I have said before, that this happened. So long as there was a hope that buffalo would come into the country, there was no means of inducing the Indians to settle down on their reserves. The total of the buffalo the year before last, and last year, caused the Indians to be thrown on the mercy of the Government in the North-West. We could not, as Christians and men, allow them to starve, and we were obliged, no matter what the cost might be, to furnish them with food. It was better to feed them than to fight them. (Funk and Lobe 1991: 5).<sup>41</sup>

These conditions of extreme privation also gave Edgar Dewdney the weapon he needed to force the recalcitrant Plains Indians into signing Treaty 6 and moving onto reserves. Civilized practice, however, demanded that rations and not guns had become Canada's weapon of choice. Dewdney's practice of withholding rations was cheaper too and bound not to offend the profoundly cost-conscious Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa.

In his article entitled, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree" Tobias (1983) exposes the increasingly coercive tactics used by Edgar Dewdney to force

---

<sup>41</sup> Sir John A. Macdonald, Commons Debates, 9 May 1880, (pp. 108.), as cited by Funk and Lobe (1991: 5).



the Plains Indians into signing Treaty 6. Tobias also provides vivid examples of how the Plains Indians struggled against these coercive measures which carried the full powers of state behind them. While Dewdney's heavy-handed policies only increased the misery of the Plains Indians, it won him the respect of his superiors. In 1881, the government added Lieutenant-Governor to his title of Indian Commissioner, a promotion which gave him "complete control over Indian Affairs in the North-West Territories" (Tobias 1983: 537). In 1888, Dewdney finally reached the top and became the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs.

As Dewdney ascended the bureaucratic ladder, the Plains Indians continued to slide into a deeper state of misery. The winters of 1883-84 were particularly hard, and the Indians were literally starving to death on the Prairies. When the Indians started taking desperate measures, the government officials responded by carefully guarding its warehouses against theft. These conditions also alarmed Superintendent Crozier of the North-West Mounted Police. In 1884, he wrote to Ottawa with his own rendition of the "feed or fight them" scenario trumpeted in the House of Commons by Sir John A. Macdonald just a few years earlier:

Considering all that is at stake, it is poor, yes, false economy to cut down the expenditure so closely in connection with the feeding of the Indians that it would seem as if there was a wish to see upon how little a man can work or exist....My firm conviction is if some such policy as I have outlined is not carried out, then there is only one other and that is to fight them (Goodwill and Sluman 1984: 34).<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Crozier to Comptroller White, 1884. NWMP, volume 2, (pp. 67), as cited by Goodwill and Sluman (1984: 34).

As the situation continued to deteriorate and the expense of providing rations rose accordingly, Sir John A. Macdonald's Christian charity of a few years earlier also began to wear thin. When questioned in the House of Commons on the quality of the food the Plains Indians were receiving he countered:

The honourable gentleman says there is a fraud on the Indians because the food is imperfect. It cannot be considered a fraud on the Indians because they have no right to that food. They are simply living on the benevolence and charity of the Canadian Parliament, and, as the old adage says, beggars should not be choosers....Even in Ontario, the honourable gentleman has seen and heard of contractors sending in inferior articles, which were afterwards condemned. Up there, they are sent to a distant post, they cannot be condemned, they have to be used. I do not think there has been any unwholesome food given, although it has not, perhaps come up to standard (Chamberlin 1975: 175).<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps this endless struggle just to get enough to eat explains why Indian people may have been more willing, at least initially, to entrust their children to the missionaries or to send them to residential schools. On the Poundmaker Reserve in Saskatchewan, Father Cochin recognized only too well the link between hunger and Indian children's desire for schooling when he wrote:

I saw the gaunt children dying of hunger come to my place to be instructed. Although it was minus 30 to 40 degrees their bodies were scarcely covered with torn rags. These poor children came to catechism and to school. It was a pity to see them. The hope of having a little morsel of good dry cake was the incentive which drove them to this cruel exposure each day more no doubt than the desire of educating themselves. This privation made many die (Goodwill and Sluman 1984: 33).<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Sir John A. Macdonald. Commons Debates, 15 April 1886, (pp. 738), as cited by Chamberlin (1975: 175).

<sup>44</sup> Father Louis Cochin, C.N.W.H. Society, volume 1, as cited by Goodwill and Sluman (1984: 33).

Not even a decade had passed since Treaty 6 was signed and already self-sufficiency eluded many of the Plains Indians. Hadn't Alexander Morris told Red Pheasant who dared to demand more out of the Treaty 6 negotiations "that what was offered was a gift as they still had their old mode of life" (Morris 1880: 186)? Somewhere along the line, the lives of the Plains Indians had been turned upside down. Those promises which Morris (1880: 202) had said would "last as long as that sun shines and yonder river flows" had long since disappeared. The very thing which Alexander Morris had also tried to prevent had happened, and "but a few suns [had] pass[ed]" and already the Plains Indians were "melt[ing] away like snow before the sun in spring-time" (Morris 1880: 223). Moreover, it was a slow and painful death. Now, all the Plains Indians had to fight with were the words included in Treaty 6. One of these promises was schooling for their children.

#### **5.4 Indian Education: Another Broken Promise?**

In much of the historical literature it is easy to come away with the impression that the government finally responded to its Indian educational commitments by sending Davin on his fact-finding mission to the United States. In reality, they could have saved Davin the trip if they had taken the time to read the following clause in Treaty 6 (Morris 1880: 353) which states:

And further, Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves hereby made, as to Her Government of the Dominion of Canada may seem advisable, whenever the Indians of the reserve shall desire it.

It appears quite clear that the government had already agreed to provide schools on-reserve, whenever the Indians were ready for them. While on-reserve

schooling may have been promised, day schools did little in the way of changing the lifestyles of Indian people. At day schools Indian children learned to read and write, and then went home again to continue with the cultural learning, which was the responsibility of their parents and the community. Day schools were not the "experiment[s] in social engineering" (Miller 1989: 196) which had already been tried with some success in the East. The latter was what the government was hoping for when it sent Davin to visit the Americans and to meet with those "leading men, clerical and lay, who could speak with authority" (Davin 1879: 9) on Indians. Davin also did not hesitate to pass on his own superior knowledge about Indians. Davin (1879: 11) chided the government for allowing the Indians to think they might even have some say in the education of their children. He wrote:

Guaranteeing schools as one of the considerations for surrendering the title to land was, in my opinion, trifling with a great duty and placing the Government in no dignified attitude....Such a guarantee, moreover, betrays a want of knowledge of the Indian character. It might easily have been realized, (it is at least thinkable), that one of the results would be to make the Chiefs believe they had some right to a voice regarding the character and management of the schools as well as regarding the initiatory step in their establishment.

Davin also recognized that, despite their desperate circumstances, not all Indian parents would willingly send their children to industrial schools far away from home. To counteract this possibility, Davin (1879: 15) recommended that:

Some distinction should be made between the treatment of parents who send their children regularly to the day-school, and those who are either careless whether their children go to school or not, or who are wholly opposed to their children attending school, as some are. To the first, an additional ration of tea and sugar might be given.

This is perhaps the most clever recommendation in Davin's report because

it is framed around the principle of rewards and not punishment. In time of the Indians' greatest need, Indian parents were to be given extra rations, tea and sugar no less, if they willingly sent their children to school. Even the worst cynic would have trouble labelling this recommendation as anything more than just a bit of "benevolent aggression". Davin's recommendation denies, by omission, that rations could also be withheld if Indian parents refused to send their children to school. It is doubtful, however, if any of the Treaty 6 Indians were taken in by Davin's benevolent recommendation. Under Edgar Dewdney's *kind* tutelage, the Plains Indians already knew what happened to their rations when they did not comply with the government's wishes. It did not have to be spelled out for them. More recently, Dickason (1992: 334) contradicted the notion that rations were only used as a system of rewards for school attendance when she wrote:

At first, education was not compulsory; however, agents could and did apply pressure on parents, usually in the form of withholding rations, to persuade them to part with their children....school attendance was not made compulsory until 1894 when Hayter Reed had the Indian Act amended to that effect.

Titley (1986a: 78) supported Dickason's contention that rations were used as a weapon against Indian parents for schooling purposes when he also wrote:

Education was not compulsory for Indians when the industrial schools were first established, and securing a regular supply of pupils remained a persistent difficulty. Indian Agents played a role in the selection of prospective candidates, and they were permitted to employ pressure, such as withholding rations, on recalcitrant parents to persuade them to part with their children.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> PAC RG10, vol.3597, file 1350, J.P. Wright (agent, File Hills) to Commissioner H. Reed, 23 December 1890, as cited by Titley (1986a: 78).

Once again, this demonstrates the power of state to continuously exert its will on Indian people. Chamberlin (1975: 8-9) also recognized not only the omnipotent powers of the governmental state, which he describes as "one of the most misunderstood of the engines of progress", but what Indian people have been struggling against for years. More specifically, Chamberlin (1975: 8-9) stated:

The idea of a usufructuary right ... was obliterated not so much by treaties, though they were a crucial factor in the process, as by one of the most misunderstood of the engines of progress – the modern governmental state, with its righteous conviction and inordinate power to do anything at all, to anybody, if it is convinced or convinces itself that this is the common good. Such a sinister machine was the product of the political thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries....It was for the common good that the western lands were opened up for settlement, even as the eastern lands had been settled; it was for the common good that treaties were signed, and often broken ... it was for the common good that the Indians were herded like cattle, treated like children, swatted like flies and quarantined like animals suspected of having rabies.

Although on a different subject matter, this same philosophy was also captured by Tolstoy (1886) in a few short words at the beginning of this chapter. The struggle by Indian people has always been to try and throw the well meaning "other" off their backs. For generations Indians have struggled for the "dignity" and the basic human right to be allowed to be Indian people, as defined by their own cultural norms. In fighting for some level of "autonomy", Indian people have also struggled against the combined powers of church and state and the institutionalized arrangements designed to change them into brown Europeans. Indian residential schools represented perhaps one of the most powerful institutionalized instruments of change Indian people struggled against.

## Chapter 6 - St. Michael's Indian Residential School

*On the occasion of this jubilee, 'we who reap in joy, what others have sown in tears' we, I say, feel it our bounden duty to recall a heroic past, lest it might be too soon forgotten (Le Chevallier 1944: 8).*

### **6.0 The Oblate's Honour Roll**

The "heroic past" of St. Michael's School has already been documented. In 1944, Jules Le Chevallier O.M.I. prepared a fifty year anniversary booklet on St. Michael's School which he "dedicated to my Indian friends". This booklet, however, is not about Indian people. Nor is this booklet about the "454 boys and 480 girls" (Le Chevallier 1944: 61) from the One Arrow's, Beardy's and Okemasis, Mistowasis, Muskeg Lake, Sturgeon Lake, Sandy Lake, and the Fort-à-la-Corne Indian Reserves who attended this school. Father Le Chevallier prepared this little history solely to honour the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who took their place at St. Michael's School and to commemorate this school's "unparalleled success" (Le Chevallier 1944: 61) in *civilizing* and *Christianizing* Indian children. The heroes in Father Le Chevallier's little history book include:

... Mgr. Vital-Justin Grandin, O.M.I. who prepared the way, Mgr. Albert Pascal, O.M.I. who realized the plans of his predecessor; ... Father Melasippe-Joseph Paquette the valiant pioneer who placed the foundation of St. Michael's on a solid basis, despite the apathy of a population still steeped in 'heathen darkness'; ... the saintly Father Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I. who instilled piety in the hearts, order in business matters; [and] the kind Father Delmas who transformed the school into a home, that all love, and that the absent regret;....

Later, it will become apparent why Father Le Chevallier failed to heap any accolades at all on Victorin Gabillon, the third Principal at St. Michael's School. For now, it is important only to set the record straight on the main characters who helped to shape the history of St. Michael's School. Bishop Albert Pascal replaced Monseigneur Vital-Justin Grandin in 1891 when the Vicariate of Saskatchewan was created from the diocese of Saint Albert. Consequently, Bishop Pascal became the driving force behind getting Indian Affairs to honour its commitment to Bishop Grandin to build an Indian industrial school for the Indians claimed by the Catholic church in the Duck Lake area of Saskatchewan.

The first four principals at St. Michael's School included Melasippe Paquette (1894-1903), Ovide Charlebois (1903-1910), the unsung Victorin Gabillon who served from September 1910 to June 1911, and Henri Delmas (1911-1939). Father Le Chevallier who wrote the history of St. Michael's School was appointed acting principal in 1925 when Father Delmas took ill. To complete the picture, the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus arrived in 1895 and were replaced by the Sisters of Presentation of Mary in 1903.

By all accounts, the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus took an active role in St. Michael's School. Three of the nuns assumed the kitchen and laundry duties while the fourth became the first matron and teacher in the girls' classroom. These nuns were recalled in 1900 when St. Michael's School "got nothing but reproaches and mean insinuations from the official inspector of the Department in his annual report" (Le Chevallier 1944: 19). Although Father Le



Chevallier did not elaborate any further, the Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs help to clear up the mystery of why these nuns were recalled.

In 1899, the Inspector of Indian Agencies apparently questioned the kind of *education* the children were receiving at St. Michael's School when he wrote in his Annual Report that "while the pupils throughout the three divisions are receiving a thorough training in manners and morals, ... the results of the class-work are disappointing".<sup>46</sup> This concern that children were receiving far more instruction in personal habits than in the "3Rs" at Indian residential schools was not uncommon. In 1903, another School Inspector expressed similar reservations which were also being voiced by Indian parents when he wrote:

The Indians do not appreciate the instruction in religion and manners their children receive at these schools. What would impress them would be a practical education that would fit them to earn their own living and assist them to better their condition. That they do not receive such an education is generally admitted (Hall 1983: 128).<sup>47</sup>

No matter how valid the concern, the School Inspector's gentle rebuke did not sit well with the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus who were "baffled to see that their efforts, their devotedness, their uncontested success in many things, were not recognized by the Government (Le Chevallier 1944: 19). Father Paquette convinced the Reverend Mother to allow her nuns to remain at St.

---

<sup>46</sup> Dominion of Canada. (1900) "North-West Territories, Battleford Inspectorate". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1899. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, (pp. 364).

<sup>47</sup> PAC, RG10, vol. 3920, file 116751-A, Benson to the deputy superintendent general, 23 June 1903, as cited by Hall (1983: 128).

Michael's School until they were finally replaced by the Sisters of Presentation of Mary in 1903. Father Le Chevallier also did not forget to thank these nuns for their contribution at St. Michael's School. In his booklet, he (1944:8) wrote:

Our gratitude extends also to the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary who during the past forty-one years have labored with such unrelenting zeal in the Master's vineyard that we might surmise their chosen motto to be: 'Ever onward'.

In line with James Scott's analysis of domination and resistance, Father Le Chevallier's booklet represents one part of the "public transcript" of the Oblates and its auxiliaries at St. Michael's School. According to Scott (1990: 18):

The public transcript is, to put it crudely, the *self*-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen....It is designed to be impressive, to affirm and naturalize the power of dominant elites, and to conceal or euphemize the dirty linen of their rule.

Consistent with Scott's analysis of "public transcripts", the "*self*-portrait" of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at St. Michael's School elevates their work to the status of a "godly mission" (Le Chevallier 1944: 61), while either obscuring or discrediting Indian resistance. Furthermore, according to Scott (1990: 18), "If ... this flattering self-portrait is to have any rhetorical force among subordinates, it necessarily involves some concessions to their presumed interests." Obviously, Father Le Chevallier could not have dedicated this booklet "to my Indian friends", nor taken credit for almost every Indian accomplishment during St. Michael's fifty year history if the latter presumption did not apply. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to examine the "public transcripts" of church and state to see what lies hidden beneath.

### 6.1 The Oblates Secure Approval for an Indian Industrial School

By all accounts, the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Department of Indian Affairs was a tenuous one, at the best of times. As in all things, most chasms can be bridged if one knows the right people in the right places. This was certainly the case in July 1890 when Bishop Grandin:

made a personal visit to Ottawa with the direct objective of pleading the cause of Indian schools for the Catholics of his vast diocese, and of claiming his share of the funds allocated by the Government for school purposes (Le Chevallier 1944: 9).

Bishop Grandin's idea of his fair share of the Indian education funding translated into nothing less than the Department's most expensive industrial school option. Bishop Grandin met with Edgar Dewdney who by this time had reached the position of the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. Grandin and Dewdney were both powerful men who had risen through their respective ranks by *helping* the Plains Indians to grasp the concepts of "Christianity" and "civilization". Bishop Grandin arrived on the Prairies in 1854 as part of the first wave of missionaries to set up Indian missions in the West. Edgar Dewdney, a former member of Parliament, was appointed the Indian Commissioner for the North-West Territories in 1879. Bishop Grandin could not have picked a better ally. If any senior bureaucratic official in Ottawa knew, without asking, what was best for the Plains Indians, it was Edgar Dewdney! Bishop Grandin did not have to strive hard to convince this man of the merits of Indian industrial schools.

In his 1884 report as Indian Commissioner, Edgar Dewdney clearly outlined his support for industrial schools as the "principal feature in the civilization of the

Indian mind" (Wasylow 1972: 45). Dewdney also believed that industrial schools, with their primary emphasis on farming and trades would remedy the "inherited aversion to labour" (Wasylow 1972: 45) which he felt was characteristic of the nomadic Indians.<sup>48</sup> He also endorsed the idea of separating Indian children from the negative influences of their homes. Industrial schools more than fit the bill.

In September 1890, Dewdney sent Bishop Grandin a letter confirming that he would be recommending the establishment of an Indian "industrial" school at Duck Lake, in the Saskatchewan district of the North-West Territories. The railroad had recently reached Duck Lake qualifying it as a centre of civilization suitable for an industrial school. Bishop Grandin had every reason to be elated. He had secured approval for the most coveted "civilizing" instrument of his day. Moreover, Indian Affairs still funded Indian industrial schools under a fairly loose financial arrangement. Bishop Grandin's success was short lived.

During the time that it took the Catholics to create the new Vicariate of Saskatchewan and to appoint Bishop Pascal, Indian Affairs had begun to seriously question its more costly Indian industrial school option. This set the stage for an on-going battle between the Catholics and Indian Affairs over the designation and funding of St. Michael's School as a "boarding school". While this battle was about Indians and Indian education, Indian people themselves were not involved. Indian education, at least the big-ticket items like residential schools, were the sole

---

<sup>48</sup> Report of Edgar Dewdney, Commissioner, Sessional Papers, 1884, (pp. 103-104), as cited by Wasylow (1972: 45).

purview of church and state. Thus, the protracted negotiations over St. Michael's School coincided with that period in history when "[the] native 'existed on a plane of inequality', his destiny largely shaped by whites" (Friesen 1987: 23).

Consequently, the ideology of *racial superiority* and the reality of *interdenominational rivalry* and *bureaucratic cost containment* all came together to form the "hidden transcripts" behind the establishment of St. Michael's School. Immediately upon his arrival in 1891, Bishop Pascal bought into this system when he reminded Indian Affairs of its commitment to build an industrial school for the Catholic Indians in his diocese. In defending his demand for an industrial school, Bishop Pascal also laid claim to approximately one hundred Catholic children in the Duck Lake area. Much to the Bishop's surprise, Indian Affairs reneged on its promise stating "it is thought that the commodious buildings already erected in various parts of the country should be sufficient for the present".<sup>49</sup> Indian Affairs was prepared to begin in a small way by approving a "boarding" school for the Catholics. Father Le Chevallier (1944: 9-11) captured their indignation when he wrote, "What? A mere boarding-school! Was the Government giving us the slip?"

If the approval of a "mere boarding-school" was not enough of an insult, the meagre grant of \$2,000 offered by Indian Affairs to finance the construction and operation of this institution was totally unacceptable. Indian Affairs certainly knew what it was doing when it approved a boarding school for the Catholics. In

---

<sup>49</sup> Incomplete reference, memo no signature page but addressed to My Lord (A. Pascal), 18 January 1892. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

1884, it had cost them \$12,420 just to build the Dunbow industrial school (Titley 1992: 96). Bishop Pascal was not through being insulted by Indian Affairs. The land chosen by the Department for his school was equally unacceptable. In his booklet, *Le Chevallier* (1944: 11) stated, "As it always happens whenever a railway is built, all the vacant lands were quickly in the hands of prospective settlers and greedy speculators." Although not prepared to give up on the fight for industrial school status, Bishop Pascal asked Indian Affairs to consider another location for his school near Prince Albert. Anticipating some resistance Bishop Pascal wrote:

Your Honour will perhaps object that I should be too near the English Church School at Emmanuel College. I can assure you, Honourable Sir, that this need not be any object. These gentlemen have to occupy themselves only with their own flock and we with ours. Our Churches are near at Prince Albert and we live in perfect harmony. Our united efforts will not be too great to draw from barbarism and infidelity all the savages that surround us and to aid the Government efficaciously in the noble work of civilizing the Indians.<sup>50</sup>

Despite Bishop Pascal's eloquent plea and assurances, Hayter Reed the Indian Commissioner for the North-West Territories was far from convinced that the churches were capable of working in perfect harmony. He advised his superiors of the problems he was experiencing in preventing interdenominational rivalry in this area. As the Department was already incurring heavy expenses for Indian education, he recommended that Indian Affairs enlarge the existing schools instead of building new ones. In late 1892, Edgar Dewdney was relieved of the

---

<sup>50</sup> Memo, Albert Pascal to E. Dewdney, 1 October 1892. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

can of worms he had opened when he was replaced as Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs by T. Mayne Daly.

In a twenty-two page letter, Lawrence Vankoughnet who had been the Deputy Superintendent-General since 1874, apprised his new superior of the situation and recommended the Catholics receive \$2,000 to build a "boarding" school, \$1,000 for the maintenance and tuition of fourteen children, and \$1,000 for furnishings. He informed the Superintendent-General, whether advisable or not:

... the fact should not be lost sight of that the Roman Catholic authorities have been led to hope that at least a Boarding school would be established.<sup>51</sup>

In the typical bureaucratic fashion, Vankoughnet's recommendation was twice what Bishop Pascal assumed he would be receiving in the first place, but significantly less than the \$7,000 the Catholics said they needed to operate an Indian school of this nature. In recommending this funding, Vankoughnet had also effectively overruled Hayter Reed's objections. Later, when Indian Affairs started receiving a number of protests regarding the approval of a new school for the Catholics, Hayter Reed wrote a rather peevish "private" letter to Daly stating:

In this connection I might say that from the first I was averse to anybody having a like Institution at Duck Lake as we have not as yet got our larger Institutions filled, but the promise having been made by Mr. Dewdney, I suppose it has to be carried into effect.<sup>52</sup>

On the more delicate subject regarding the final location of St. Michael's

---

<sup>51</sup> Memo, L. Vankoughnet to T. Mayne Daly, 16 December 1892. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>52</sup> Private memo, Hayter Reed to T. Mayne Daly, 6 June 1893. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

School, Father Le Chevallier wrote that Bishop Pascal and Father Lacombe met with senior officials in Ottawa who were adamant that the Catholics could not build their school at Prince Albert. Father Le Chevallier (1944: 12) added:

... their force was admitted by His Lordship, who agreed that the school should be built near Duck Lake requesting however that it be placed on the Roman Catholic property there.

While Bishop Pascal's offer was extremely generous, it is important to remember that Indian Affairs had been unable to find a suitable location for their school near Duck Lake because "greedy speculators" (Le Chevallier 1944: 11) had already grabbed up all the good land. What a coincidence that the Catholic Church just happened to have excess land to give up in this area!

With the funding and location for St. Michael's School finally approved, the Catholics had won the first part of the battle. After almost four years, they had convinced Indian Affairs to build them an Indian school at Duck Lake. If Indian Affairs thought the Catholics would just go away and carry out their mission of "Christianity" and "civilization" in a mere boarding school, they were dead wrong.

## **6.2 A Trying But Jubilant First Year for the Oblates**

In May 1894, construction started on St. Michael's School a short distance from the Oblate mission at Duck Lake. Bishop Pascal chose Father Blais as St. Michael's first Principal because his "experience and knowledge of Government's men and things seemed to qualify him above all for the position" (Le Chevallier 1944: 13). This statement is consistent with Grant's (1984: 162) analysis that the churches now leaned toward "diplomatic administrators capable of working closely



with government agents and farm instructors". As Father Blais was unavailable, the job went to Melasippe Paquette, the missionary from the nearby Muskeg Lake Reserve. Father Paquette also had his own qualifications. First, he spoke Cree and could convince Indian parents, in their own language, about the merits of sending their children to St. Michael's School. Second, as he later acknowledged:

I could have more than two hundred young Indians in my school. Having been a missionary in the midst of these tribes for more than twenty years, I am known by all and all wish to entrust their children to me.<sup>53</sup>

On 10 August 1894, Father Paquette arrived at Duck Lake with seven boys and ten girls from the Muskeg Lake, Mistowasis, and Sandy Lake Reserves (Le Chevallier 1944: 14). True to his word, the majority of these children came from his former mission. His new recruits ranged in age from six to seventeen years and over half were under ten years old. At sixteen, my great uncle was one of the oldest. Notably, Father Paquette had already recruited three more "inmates" (Le Chevallier 1944: 12) than were authorized by Indian Affairs. This practice soon became the norm. These children had to live in tents because the school was still under construction. With little regard for these Indian children's trauma at being uprooted from their families, Father Le Chevallier (1944: 14) wrote:

This was nothing new to them however, and made them feel at home. When the cold weather came, the church basement gave them shelter.

While the latter may sound kind, basements were often nothing more than

---

<sup>53</sup> Memo, M. Paquette to Adolphe Caron, 12 December 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

just earth cellars in the late 1800s. Even if the church basement was made out of stone, it was likely dark, horribly damp, and probably already had its fair share of *other* inhabitants. These children also had little in the way of clothing. As soon as he could, Father Paquette made a plea to his long time benefactress to secure clothing donations through the Catholic News. These conditions persisted for three months. Lack of accommodation was just one of the many inconveniences faced by these children. Indian Affairs had made no provision in their budget for either "privies" or an adequate water supply for the school. Within days of his arrival, Father Paquette indignantly advised the Indian Commissioner in Regina:

I have the honour to inform you that I am arrived at Duck Lake since only six days and there is no water already in the Mission well. We will be obliged to go to the town and make more than one mile to have a pail of water.<sup>54</sup>

This situation was finally rectified one month after the children arrived. One can only imagine how the lack of water, toilets, and the dark suffocating atmosphere of the church basement might have been contributed "to the great prejudice of discipline, study and health" noted by Le Chevallier (1944: 15) in his booklet. This unhealthy start may explain why these children were called the "crazy schoolers" (Goodwill and Sluman 1984: 93) when they finally returned home from St. Michael's School. Father Paquette, obviously, could have at least waited until his school was closer to completion before beginning his recruitment efforts. Indian Affairs, on the other hand, was not blameless. The Oblates should not

---

<sup>54</sup> Memo, M. Paquette to the Indian Commissioner in Regina, 15 August 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-5.

have had to fight for basic necessities like water and outhouses for their new school. The Assistant Indian Commissioner in Regina who bore the brunt of the Department's penny pinching policies in Indian education advised his superiors:

Bishop Pascal and the Rev. Father Paquette are still assailing this office with letters making requisitions for the various things for their Boarding school at Duck Lake, which I have resisted on the grounds of lack of funds. I am glad, however, to see that the Department has seen its way to authorize the building of water closets and the digging of a well.<sup>55</sup>

This set the tone for the on-going battle between Indian Affairs and the Oblates regarding who should absorb the costs for St. Michael's School. By all accounts, this school was poorly funded right from the start. As a boarding school, St. Michael's School received a per-capita grant of \$72 per annum for each of its fourteen authorized students. These funds covered the children's expenses, plus salaries for Father Paquette, two teachers, a farmer, and a housekeeper.

Obviously, Indian Affairs had paid careful attention to Davin's (1879) recommendations on the cost benefits of using the churches in Indian education. Certainly, Father Paquette had all the fervour required to "Christianize" and "civilize" Indian children, but few of the resources. Father Paquette might even be accused of being a bit over-enthusiastic about Indian education. Within two months, he had taken in twenty children. Using this excess enrolment as the back door approach in defending their right for industrial school status, Bishop Pascal told Indian Affairs they had also turned away seventy-five children. He explained:

---

<sup>55</sup> Memo, A.E. Forget to H. Reed, 14 September 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-5.

As you understand: here, it is not necessary to press the Indians to give up their children, we displease them in refusing to take them for want of accommodation.<sup>56</sup>

Even though St. Michael's School was built to hold only fourteen children, lack of accommodation very seldom prevented Father Paquette from exceeding the authorized enrolment at St. Michael's School. Addressing this shortfall in funding and accommodation was where Bishop Pascal came in. While Father Paquette recruited students, Bishop Pascal battled Indian Affairs for industrial school status. Only the larger per-capita grants provided to industrial schools would provide St. Michael's School with the financial stability it needed. Almost as soon as St. Michael's School opened, Bishop Pascal advised Indian Affairs that they needed a larger grant of \$125 to operate effectively, but he was prepared to accept the lower sum of \$100. Knowing the Department would plead lack of resources, he recommended that Indian Affairs close some of the day schools in the Duck Lake area, and reallocate these funds to St. Michael's School. He did not hesitate to remind Indian Affairs of the superiority of residential schooling:

That experience shows us, more clearly every day, that the small Day Schools attached to the Reserves, are but a feeble and inefficacious means of improving and forming the Indian child. It is absolutely necessary that they should be separated from their families, in order to bring them up as we desire.<sup>57</sup>

By coincidence, the salary which could be saved by closing down just one day school was equal to the deficit projected by Father Paquette for St. Michael's

---

<sup>56</sup> Memo. A. Pascal to Thomas Daly, 25 September 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>57</sup> Memo. A. Pascal to Thomas Daly, 25 September 1894. Ibid.

School. Bishop Pascal also reminded Indian Affairs of the excellent land they had given up to build St. Michael's School. This transfer was not as charitable as it sounds. In return for ceding a 100 acres of land to build St. Michael's School, the Catholics received 320 acres of land worth approximately \$960.<sup>58</sup> Bishop Pascal's letter to Indian Affairs was also "cordially and warmly" endorsed by a Supreme Court Judge and four Members of Parliament.<sup>59</sup> Indian Affairs could not miss the implications that the Catholics had friends in high places.

In October 1894, Indian Affairs responded favourably by increasing the number of grant-earners at St. Michael's School to thirty. Contrary to Treaty 6, Indian Affairs closed the day schools on the One Arrow, Beardy's and Okemasis, and the Muskeg Lake Reserves to support St. Michael's School. Bishop Pascal was still no further ahead. He had not succeeded in gaining industrial school status for St. Michael's School. In desperation, he wrote to the Postmaster-General requesting his support when Mr. Macdowall, his member of Parliament, raised the question of industrial school status for St. Michael's School in the House of Commons. In this letter, Bishop Pascal did not even try to intimate the more lofty goals of "Christianity" and "civilization". This letter was about the pure economics of his situation. Always the diplomat who knew how to gently apply pressure, he did not forget to reiterate the government's objectives by concluding:

---

<sup>58</sup> Memo to File, "Duck Lake Indian Residential School", 24 January 1924 regarding P.C. No. 345 dated 22 February 1897. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>59</sup> Memo, A. Pascal to Thomas Daly, 25 September 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

... I am confident that you will do all you can to obtain this end for the great good of the Indians and the honour of the Government.<sup>60</sup>

From the primary correspondence, it is obvious that Indian Affairs was not amused by these pressure tactics. Indian Affairs sent a letter to the Postmaster-General advising him that his interference was not warranted. They advised him that the Department was already seeking authority to increase the enrolment at St. Michael's School to fifty. Furthermore, they had also requested \$1,900 to enlarge the school. In defending their right not to award industrial school status to St. Michael's School, Indian Affairs also switched tactics. Instead of pleading lack of resources, they blamed the Indians. The Superintendent-General wrote:

The superiority of Industrial Schools is recognized, but only a proportion of Indian children manifest ability to take such advantage of the training given by them as would justify their cost.<sup>61</sup>

One year after it opened, the enrolment at St. Michael's School stood at sixty pupils (Le Chevallier 1944: 16). With this four-fold increase in grant-earners, St. Michael's School had managed to realize some economies of scale. With the funding provided by Indian Affairs, the Oblates also enlarged St. Michael's School. Despite all this, St. Michael's School was still "a mere boarding school". Although a tremulous first year for the Oblates, Le Chevallier (1944: 16) jubilantly wrote, "All is for the best. St. Michael has certainly taken things in hand all for the greater Glory of God". But, what about the Indian children who took their place

---

<sup>60</sup> Memo, M. Paquette to Adolphe Caron, 12 December 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>61</sup> Memo sent for Minister's signature (T.M. Daly) to A.P. Caron, 27 December 1894. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

at this school. The diary prepared by the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus allows us to take a small peek behind the walls of St. Michael's School.

### **6.3 A Peek Behind the Walls of St. Michael's School**

While St. Michael's School got off to a rocky start, the second year was obviously not much better. When the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus arrived in the summer of 1895, St. Michael's School had already been in operation for one year. Father Paquette's plea for clothing had been answered and the cupboards were filled to the brim. The nuns immediately set to work altering this cast-off clothing, so they could be worn by the Indian children.

Within two weeks of their arrival, almost all the children at St. Michael's School came down with chicken-pox. With the exception of two children, whose eyes were affected by the disease, the children all rose for 6 o'clock mass and attended classes. The nuns provided a touching account of how these Indian children comforted each other, despite their own suffering. The nuns wrote:

When the light was unbearable they would arrange their shawls on the benches, in the shadiest part of the room, and tuck them in and arrange them comfortably until the bell rang for meals. Then they would lead them to their places with the greatest of care and back until bed time.<sup>62</sup>

When the outbreak finally abated, the nuns decided to give the children baths. From the nun's description of their fear, it is obvious that the children had not received many baths at St. Michael's School. One little girl of four, far too

---

<sup>62</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np, (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

young to be in school, had apparently worn the same underwear for months. One of the nuns "found it was covered with vermin".<sup>63</sup> When the nuns asked one of the older girls to throw the "vermin" into the fire, she threw the clothes in as well. The nuns found this quite comical and explained, "Many such anecdotes could be related on account of their not knowing English. Two or three of the boys understood pretty well, but the others did not know a word".<sup>64</sup> By the time Sir Mackenzie Bowell and T.M. Daly visited St. Michael's School, this communication gap had apparently been resolved. With some pleasure, the nuns reported:

An address in English was read by one of the Indian girls in which several requests were made, one being that their little brothers and sisters might share in the same happiness which they enjoyed in the school and be admitted amongst them.<sup>65</sup>

This touching plea, in English no less, had the desired impact. The Prime Minister was so impressed that "since then he has proved a friend to the house and granted nearly all that was asked."<sup>66</sup> This kind of show and tell in "Christianity" and "civilization", which included rehearsed testimonials by Indian children all dutifully dressed in European clothing, were not an uncommon occurrence at Indian residential schools. John Tootosis (Goodwill and Sluman 1984: 100) provided an Indian student's account of these public testimonials when he stated:

---

<sup>63</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np, (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

<sup>64</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. Ibid.



At least once a year, school superintendents would come to see what was going on. Goodness knows what the head of the school told them, there was no way for us to know. For example, we were taught to read one thing and when the superintendent came, this is what we were asked to read. We did well, after all we had practised hundreds of times! The superintendent of course was impressed, just as though we knew everything so well.

These testimonials were more than just the means of acquiring political support for financially strapped residential schools. They were also part of the game which church and state played to prove their benevolence towards Indian people. These little masquerades, where Indian children were taught to play their part, reinforced the concepts of racial superiority. They also alienated Indian children from their parents' lifestyles as they were indoctrinated, not in the 3Rs, but in the "superior" norms and values of the Europeans. More repugnant, these performances served to "create the appearance of unanimity among the ruling groups and the appearance of consent among subordinates" (Scott 1990: 55).

Indian children also stood to lose a lot from these pretences, particularly when used by school authorities to deceive School Inspectors. Using humour, Johnson told the story of two inspectors who came to his school to check out the food situation. Johnson (1988: 141) described their miraculous effect on dinner

They occupied the same places as at noon. Just as unexpectedly, instead of lard, there were pats of butter on a tin plate, and the soup was thicker than usual, with more meat and vegetables – almost like stew. A few of the boys searched their memories to discover therein the cause of this good fortune. The women ate heartily, frequently observing how good and wholesome the bread was, how full of body and vigour the stew, and how smooth and mellow the butter ... writing notes in their journals and making entries on graphs.

Basil Johnson also related how deceived the Indian children felt were when the report was finally posted. Their complaints about the quality of food had been dismissed. The Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus also did not fail to mention the food situation at St. Michael's School. The nuns provided sumptuous examples of the kinds of wholesome food the Indian children ate at this school. They wrote:

Three times a day they are served plentifully with meat and potatoes and the bread is made of the best white flour. The Sister bakes at the rate of fifty loaves a day, and as they have all excellent appetites a sheep does not suffice for more than three days and an ox for ten days.<sup>67</sup>

The children's diet at St. Michael's School was either a complete departure from the standard fare at other Indian residential schools, or the nuns had somehow managed to mix up their menu with that of the children. In his Annual Report to Indian Affairs for the same year, Father Paquette reported:

Here the children do justice to what is placed before them, and as a vegetable diet is considered more healthy for Indian children, potatoes are served three times a day.<sup>68</sup>

Perhaps Father Paquette had just neglected to mention the oxen and sheep which had been sacrificed to supplement the children's "vegetable diet" at St. Michael's School. Certainly, the nuns felt this diet heavily laced with meat, which they so carefully described, helped to contribute to the children's unwillingness to

---

<sup>67</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np. (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

<sup>68</sup> Dominion of Canada. (1897) "Duck Lake Boarding School". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1896. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, (pp. 331).

run away from this school. The nuns wrote, "As proof not one attempt of running way has ever taken place and the Father trusts his boys anywhere."<sup>69</sup> The proof may not have been in the children's lack of desire to run away, but in the added obstacles barring their escape from St. Michael's Indian Residential School.

By September 1895, Father Paquette convinced Indian Affairs to pay for fencing to enclose St. Michael's School. According to Le Chevallier (1944: 18) "the entire premises were surrounded by a close fence nearly a mile long". In his Annual Report, the Inspector of Indian Agencies confirmed the appropriateness of the term "close" when he reported, "The yards as well as the girls' play-ground are fenced with tongued and grooved flooring, built high".<sup>70</sup> This high fencing probably helped to deter, at least the younger children, from running away. To save on costs, the older boys at St. Michael's School built their own prison walls.

Keeping the children from running away from St. Michael's School was just one of the problems confronting Father Paquette. The other was ensuring he had access to a steady stream of new recruits. To some extent, the latter problem was resolved by the Duck Lake Indian Agent who took a keen interest in ensuring that Indian children attended school. More surprisingly, Father Paquette's recruitment concerns were also alleviated by the Indians from the One Arrow's Reserve who had their own reasons for wanting their children to attend St. Michael's School.

---

<sup>69</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np, (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

<sup>70</sup> Dominion of Canada. (1897) "Report of Chief Inspector Wadsworth of Indian Schools in Manitoba and the North-West Territories". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1896. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, (pp. 362).

#### 6.4 The Hidden Link Between Christianity and Indian Education

In 1896, the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus wrote that Father Paquette was called to One Arrow's to convert nearly a whole reserve of pagans. The Indians claimed to have lost faith in their Protestant ministers. Father Paquette was overjoyed because among these Indians "were some grey-haired men, who had been for too many years obstinate in their Protestant and Pagan belief".<sup>71</sup> The joys of stealing another's flock was probably surpassed only by the prospects this held for increasing the number of grant-earners at St. Michael's School. Upon his return, Father Paquette advised the Indian Agent that he had baptized twenty-two children on the One Arrow's Reserve. He added:

All the adults requested to be baptized too, but I judged it necessary to make them wait until they should receive some instruction.<sup>72</sup>

Father Paquette also informed the Indian Agent that when he was about to leave this reserve, the Indians had asked him to take sixteen of their children back to St. Michael's School. Father Paquette refused because his school was full. Full meant he had reached his quota. There was always room for new grant-earners at St. Michael's School. Consequently, Father Paquette asked the Indian Agent to seek approval to increase the authorized enrolment at St. Michael's School. The Indian Agent's letter clears up why these Indians asked to be converted, and why they insisted that Father Paquette take their children back to St. Michael's School.

---

<sup>71</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np, (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

<sup>72</sup> Memo, M. Paquette to the Indian Agent, Duck Lake, 24 October 1895. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

In carrying out Father Paquette's request, the Duck Lake Indian Agent advised his superiors that he had previously visited this band of Indians:

... with a view to inducing them to allow their children to be sent to the Industrial or Boarding Schools. They refused, so I let them know that if they would not let them go willingly that in all probability the Department would take them by force and send them to whatever school was thought best. The consequence was that when paying Treaty there on the 22nd inst. [sic] the Indians offered me all their children if I would place them in the Duck Lake Boarding School.<sup>73</sup>

The Indian Agent's visit occurred two days prior to Father Paquette's call to the One Arrow's Reserve. Given the implications of the Agent's threat, these Indians were obviously trying to guarantee their children a spot at St. Michael's School which was closer to their reserve. The only real way they could do this was to convert to Catholicism. These Indians told Father Paquette they wanted to be converted because their Protestant Ministers "were only bribing them for their own ends."<sup>74</sup> Father Paquette was not about to object as he clearly considered Protestantism almost as bad as paganism. Consistent with Miller's (1992: 155) analysis, interdenominational rivalry "gave parents who were disgruntled with the school of a particular denomination a means of gaining relief or punishing the offending denomination by sending their children to a rival school." Certainly, the decision by the One Arrow's Indians substantially reduced the grant-earning capacity of the Protestant schools their children were already attending.

---

<sup>73</sup> Memo, R.S. McKenzie to the Indian Commissioner in Regina, 30 October 1895. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>74</sup> Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1876) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np, (n. pag). (Number M1395, File 10)

In response to the Indian Agent's letter, the Indian Commissioner in Regina seemed unconcerned about whether or not St. Michael's School could accommodate any more students. The Indian Commissioner did, however, take exception with the methods used and handwrote the following in the margin:

The Agent is being advised that herein he exceeded his instructions which were that in the event of force being used parents must be allowed to choose the school for their children.<sup>75</sup>

Significantly, the Indian Agent was reprimanded not for using force, which is consistent with the provisions contained within the 1894 compulsory attendance regulations, but in demanding that parents send their children to a particular school. While the Indian Agent and Father Paquette joined forces to increase the number of grant-earners at St. Michael's School, Bishop Pascal continued to battle Indian Affairs for industrial school status. When his volley of letters failed to pay off, Bishop Pascal tried a petition instead. He demanded that the Catholics be treated on the same basis as the other denominations. He advised Indian Affairs that the Catholics had already spent \$10,000 on St. Michael's School believing it would be awarded industrial school status. He ended his petition by stating:

If the Government is not willing to transform the school of Duck Lake into an Industrial school, well, be it so; but then let the Government give us, without further delay, an Industrial School, either at Battleford or elsewhere. Protestants having two, by all means we must have at least one, otherwise we will never cease to complain and to cry injustice.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Memo, F.S. McKenzie to the Indian Commissioner in Regina, 30 October 1895. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>76</sup> Memo, A. Pascal to C. Sifton, date stamped March 1898. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

Injustice or not, Indian Affairs did not relent. In 1898, Bishop Pascal tried once again to force the issue through a motion in the House of Commons. Indian Affairs held firm. Father Le Chevallier (1944: 17) wrote, "In time however, he understood that the decision of the Government was final and that it was useless to insist". With industrial school status laid to rest, St. Michael's School entered a new phase in its history. Father Paquette was also replaced by Ovide Charlebois.

#### **6.5 Indian People Struggle Against St. Michael's School**

When Father Charlebois replaced Melasippe Paquette as the second Principal at St. Michael's School in 1903, "Nothing could he see but misery and desolation. On all sides paganism held an undisputed sway" (Le Chevallier 1944: 24). On the One Arrow's Reserve, where the Indians had all asked to be converted, only twenty adults could still recite their prayers eight years later. Conditions were no better on the other reserves in the Duck Lake area. The Oblates sadly acknowledged "the Pagans become more and more obstinate" (Le Chevallier 1944: 24). When he returned to his former mission at Muskeg Lake to recuperate, Father Paquette found equally dismal conditions on many of the other reserves. On 20 September 1903, he wrote to his benefactress stating:

I have just visited an extensive part of my reserves, you have not the faintest idea of the miserable condition of these people, spiritually and temporally. Something must be done for all these Indians but especially for the children leaving our school of Duck Lake. The careful training given them till they reach their eighteenth year will be of no avail if they are allowed to return immediately to the hovel of their parents, and adopt their mode of living (Le Chevallier 1944:21).

With all the self-righteousness inherent in knowing exactly what is best for

others, Father Paquette's answer to this problem lay in driving Indian people into a deeper state of despair, by preventing their children from returning home after graduation. His answer was not unique. A colony of Indian residential school graduates was already in operation at File Hills, Saskatchewan.

For Father Charlebois, the answer to this deplorable state of affairs lay in establishing a similar colony, where he could permanently segregate *his* graduate students from the negative influences of their reserves where "indolence, vice and paganism were still rampant" (Le Chevallier 1944: 27). When Indian Affairs responded with hearty congratulations, but no land for his proposed colony, Father Charlebois came up with a different plan. He asked Indian Affairs for permission to hire out his older students to work for good families in the town of Duck Lake. These "outings" were to be the final step in the *civilizing* process at St. Michael's School. Father Charlebois was not presenting Indian Affairs with a new idea, however, as these kinds of "outings" were already the norm at other Indian residential schools. Perhaps because Father Charlebois's request did not involve a demand for any more funding, Indian Affairs responded favourably. "Consequently, a few days later, two older girls were placed as servants in two of the best families of Duck Lake" (Le Chevallier 1944: 28). With this statement, this issue is also closed as far as Father Le Chevallier's little booklet is concerned.

From the primary documentation at the National Archives, it is easy to see why Father Le Chevallier chose not to elaborate on this little piece of history in his "public transcript" on St. Michael's School. Not only does this documentation



show that Indian parents strenuously objected to the placement of their children in service, but obviously there was a serious breakdown in the marriage of church and state at the local level. Therefore, contrary to established procedures, Father Charlebois bypassed the Duck Lake Indian Agent, who was responsible for St. Michael's School, and sent a personal letter directly to D.C. Scott, the Superintendent of Education, requesting:

... consideration of a plan whereby pupils, both boys and girls, of the Duck Lake Boarding School may during their last year be sent out to service in the homes of the neighbouring *white* [my emphasis] people. The Principal's object is to give them a more practical training in conditions more nearly approaching those under which they will have to work when they leave the school.<sup>77</sup>

From the last statement in this letter, it is also clear that Father Charlebois did not expect his graduate students to return to their reserves to work one day. These "outings" were meant to service the "white" community, both immediately as quasi-training assignments and later by ensuring a steady supply of cheap labourers. Furthermore, Father Charlebois was not prepared to forfeit the school's per-capita grants for these students. He asked Indian Affairs for either half these student's per-capita grants while they were still under his supervision, or for permission to substitute other grant-earners in their place. Indian Affairs agreed to the latter. Indian Affairs also made St. Michael's School responsible for banking these girls' earnings, except for a small portion which Father Charlebois could withhold for their personal expenses.

---

<sup>77</sup> Memorandum for File", Superintendent of Indian Education, 5 November 1909. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

The primary documentation at the National Archives confirms that two Indian girls *Numbers 55 and 46* were placed in good homes in Duck Lake doing cooking, washing, and sewing at the rate of \$6 a month.<sup>78</sup> Father Charlebois's lofty goals diminish somewhat when this documentation shows that he was also playing a somewhat underhanded game of personal patronage. These girls were placed as servants with the school's physician, a married man with young children, and with his widowed sister-in-law who had three children. In his letter, Father Charlebois stated:

I took the liberty of engaging these girls before sending you my report as these persons have been waiting long ago [sic] for servants and would have been annoyed had they not had them at the beginning of this month.<sup>79</sup>

It appears the good doctor and his sister-in-law may have required servants much more urgently than these two Indian girls needed to refine their skills in housework. In his letter, Father Charlebois also included a handwritten post-script stating this "experiment" would terminate in five months when these two girls were due for discharge. Within two months, the school's physician was so pleased with his new servant that he asked Father Charlebois to extend the experiment for another year. Once again, Father Charlebois wrote directly to Indian Affairs in Ottawa requesting authorization. In doing so, he happily reported on the success

---

<sup>78</sup> To protect the privacy of the Indian people who attended St. Michael's School, any references to specific cases will be identified only by the student's "number". This is fitting not only as these numbers were an indelible part of each student's history at St. Michael's School, but these numbers are also an accurate reflection of their dehumanized status within these institutions.

<sup>79</sup> Memo, O. Charlebois to the Secretary of DIA, 1 December 1909. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

of his little "outing" experiment stating "both girls have given satisfaction so far".<sup>80</sup> He also reminded Indian Affairs that these girls were due for discharge in a few months. He expressed his fears that their parents would come and take them home and ruin his "outing" experiment. Father Charlebois pleaded his altruistic intentions and asked Indian Affairs to support his already expanding experiment in further civilizing Indian girls. He implored Indian Affairs:

So for their greater benefit I ask you to maintain my full control for one year more over these two girls and over two others [*Numbers 38 and 74*] who have to be discharged also in April....My only aim is to protect our pupils against the influence of their old parents.<sup>81</sup>

In this letter, Father Charlebois asked Indian Affairs to instruct their Indian Agent to inform these girls' parents that he must have control over their daughters for another year. In defending the success of his "outing" experiment so far, Father Charlebois duly reported:

*[Number 55]* specially would deserve a first class maid certificate if she was not so slow and timid. That's the only reproach can be given her....*[Number 46]* deserves about the same testimony, only she is much slower and more timid and this keeps her of being as agreeable to her mistress as her companion; but she is willing to work and is obedient. She likes her position fairly well too, *although she suffers sometimes when she does not succeed to be agreeable on the points mentioned* [my emphasis].<sup>82</sup>

From this, it appears that these Indian girls may have been using a bit of

---

<sup>80</sup> Memo, Principal, Duck Lake Boarding School to the Secretary, DIA, 22 February 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>81</sup> Memo, Principal, Duck Lake Boarding School to the Secretary, DIA, 22 February 1910. Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Memo, Principal, Duck Lake Boarding School to the Secretary, DIA, 22 February 1910. Ibid.

passive resistance to undermine the effectiveness of their assignments. As a result *Number 46* may have also suffered the wrath of her "mistress". The latter did not seem of any concern Indian Affairs who readily agreed with Father Charlebois's request, provided these girls continued as servants and did not marry while they were "in service". Father Charlebois received permission to place two other Indian girls in service who were also ready for discharge in April. As requested, Indian Affairs advised their Indian Agent of these new arrangements.

In April 1910, when these four Indian girls were ready for discharge, Father Charlebois's "outing" experiment started to crumble. At this time, it also became clearer why he had bypassed the Duck Lake Indian Agent. More importantly, Father Charlebois quite obviously had the makings of an Indian uprising on his hands. Although he had successfully placed two more Indian girls in service, at a lower rate of \$5 per month, the parents of the first two now had the *audacity* to question his motives, and to *demand* the release of their daughters. Father Charlebois plaintively explained his situation to Indian Affairs:

The trouble now is that their parents claim them and want them home. Because the usual time for their discharge has come ... They think that my object in keeping their children at service is my own interest I am seeking, and not theirs.<sup>83</sup>

Father Charlebois confirmed that the Indian Agent was unwilling to assist him in convincing these, quite obviously ungrateful Indian parents, to leave their daughters in service. Although, it would be a "draw back for these girls" he was

---

<sup>83</sup> Memo. O. Charlebois to the Secretary, DIA, 12 April 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

prepared to release them from service.<sup>84</sup> If the Department deemed it necessary to continue with the experiment, Father Charlebois asked for a letter from Indian Affairs "in which you will clearly oblige me (not only authorise) to keep them [sic]."<sup>85</sup> In the absence of the Indian Agent's support, Father Charlebois was not about to face these angry Indian parents without the backing of the senior Indian Affairs bureaucrats in Ottawa.

Once again, Indian Affairs fell in line behind the second Principal of St. Michael's School. They confirmed that Father Charlebois could keep these girls in service and under his control for another year. Indian Affairs also pushed the bounds of this experiment a little farther and advised Father Charlebois "the Department would be pleased if arrangements could be made to have these girls married to reliable ex-pupils or other Indians on the Reserve."<sup>86</sup> Caught up in their own concepts of racial superiority, church and state had quite clearly lost sight of the concept of *education*. The Duck Lake Indian Agent was once again given his marching orders by his superiors. Indian Affairs reminded him that the Department was only looking after "the best interests of these girls".<sup>87</sup> His job was to advise the Indian parents of the Department's good intentions.

---

<sup>84</sup> Memo, O. Charlebois to the Secretary, DIA, 12 April 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>85</sup> Memo, O. Charlebois to the Secretary, DIA, 12 April 1910. Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Memo, J.D. McLean to Rev. O. Charlebois, 22 April 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>87</sup> Memo, J.D. McLean to J. Macarthur, 22 April 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

On 20 May 1910, the Indian people from the Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve took action to extricate their children from the death grip euphemistically called *Indian education* at St. Michael's School. They met with the Indian Agent and asked him to file a complaint with his superiors. The Indian Agent wrote:

... they claim that they can take as good care of their own children as the Principal can, and that it was neither fair nor right to keep them against their own and their parents' wishes. They all object to children who are in their last year at school, being sent out to work, saying that they are not sent there to work for others, and that if they are through with school they should be allowed to return home.\*\*

In reiterating their role as parents and the customary parameters for education they had agreed to, the Beardy's and Okemasis Indians used a tactic which my Mother often called "fighting fire with fire". These Indian parents had chosen to fight church and state on the basis of its "public transcript" called Indian "education". Using the irrefutable common understanding that education meant schooling, they questioned what "working for others" had to do with their children's education. These parents knew as James Scott (1990: 105) did, that:

Every publicly given justification for inequality thus marks out a kind of symbolic Achilles heel where the elite is especially vulnerable....One reason they are particularly hard to deflect is simply because they begin by adopting the ideological terms of reference of the elite.

Despite the validity of their case, the doctrines of racial superiority were too firmly entrenched. Indian Affairs refused to go back on its word to Father

---

\*\* Memo, J. Macarthur to J.D. McLean, 30 May 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

Charlebois. Two weeks later, the Indian Agent reported that he had been unable to convince the Indians to cooperate. Although he had tried to stay neutral, he now felt compelled to share his views on these "outings". The Indian Agent wrote:

It should not be forgotten that these girls have been at school for 12 years; they know how and can do household work just as good as white girls of their age; ... Indeed, in all this, as far as knowledge of work, they are ahead of the average white girl. Now, this being so, what further object can be gained by placing them with strangers to work for a wage against their willing consent? To my mind it is akin to slavery. If twelve years of careful training has failed to make them competent to take up their life's work, a few months of compelled service will not mend matters.<sup>89</sup>

The Indian Agent stated that despite the careful training they received, these girls almost always went back to their old ways as soon as they returned home. He added, "But to expect that in one generation you can turn this class of girl into anything approaching a white girl is as absurd as to expect to make a 'silk purse out of a sow's lug'".<sup>90</sup> In pressing the case for the return of the two first girls placed in service whose parents were demanding their release, he added:

Two of the Indians have specially asked me to again write the Department regarding their daughters. One, [*Number 55's father*], says he wants his girl home, she has been away twelve years. He had in the past other two girls at this school, both of whom, while there, became mothers. He does not want this to happen to the third, and claims that he is just as able to look after her as the Principal is, and that it is altogether wrong to keep the girl away from him.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Memo, J. Macarthur to the Secretary, DIA, 28 June 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>90</sup> Memo, J. Macarthur to the Secretary, DIA, 28 June 1910. Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Memo, J. Macarthur to the Secretary, DIA, 28 June 1910. Ibid.

Whether it was the possibility of scandal regarding the two unexplained pregnancies at St. Michael's School, or the mention of the word "slavery", the Indian Agent's letter received a quick response. Within ten days, Indian Affairs instructed Father Charlebois to recall these girls and to discharge those students who had reached eighteen years of age. In their defence, Indian Affairs stated:

In view of the attitude of the Indians of your district generally towards residential schools it is not considered politic to place their girls in service against their wishes, nor to retain them in the school beyond the age of 18 years....The greatest care must be taken not to antagonize the Indians, as all efforts to recruit will prove futile.<sup>92</sup>

Always willing to give a little something in return, Indian Affairs gave Father Charlebois the option of deciding whether these girls deserved honourable discharge certificates. In addition to finally authorizing the release of these girls from their state of bondage, the Department's letter to Father Charlebois also pointed out the fact that Indian people were already resisting residential school *education*. More significant, perhaps, Indian Affairs recognized it had to operate within its educational guidelines, or risk further resistance from Indian people.

What remains unclear, however, is whether the Indian Agent had merely played on Ottawa's low expectations for Indians, or if he believed what he wrote. The Indian Agent's closing argument that one of these girls had an invalid mother who needed her, and his statement that he "sympathized with the girls and their

---

<sup>92</sup> Memo, J.D. McLean to O. Charlebois, 7 July 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.



parents", seems to point to the former.<sup>93</sup> Much to the Oblate's chagrin, the Duck Lake Indian Agent continued to support Indian people in their protests against St. Michael's School. Father Charlebois, however, did not have to put up with this situation much longer. His valiant efforts to better the condition of Indian people, with or without their consent, had not gone unnoticed by his superiors. Father Charlebois was subsequently named Bishop of the new Vicariate of Keewatin.

While the Catholics were still in the process of creating this new Vicariate, St. Michael's School got wind of disquieting rumours that the Beardy's and Okemasis Indians wanted a day school on their reserve. The dire implications did not escape the Oblates. The Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve is virtually next door to St. Michael's School. If these particular Indians refused to send their children to St. Michael's School, it was bound to reflect badly on the Oblates. When the Indian Agent once again refused to cooperate, by confirming the validity of these rumours, the Oblates turned to Ottawa for answers. The Oblates at St. Michael's School were quite obviously taken aback when Indian Affairs replied:

I beg to say that the Department is advised that these Indians wish to establish a day-school, but no direct application has yet been made. In this connection, I beg to state that in the treaty made with them, the following clause appears: 'And further, Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves made, as to Her Government in Canada may seem advisable, whenever the Indians of the reserve desire it.' From the above stipulation you will see that obligation exists to maintain schools in reserves where deemed advisable (Le Chevallier 1944: 34).

---

<sup>93</sup> Memo, J. Macarthur to the Secretary, DIA, 28 June 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

Confirmation that Indian Affairs was actually thinking about honouring its treaty promises, after more than thirty years, sent fear into the hearts of the Oblate Fathers. As accurately summed up by Father Le Chevallier (1944: 35):

Should the Indians of Batoche, Lake Muskeg and the other adjacent reserves take a fancy to imitate the example of their neighbours at Beardy's ... St. Michael's School would soon have no reason to exist.

The Oblates had every reason to be concerned about the potential spill over effects to the other reserves. The moccasin telegraph was bound to spread the word that the Duck Lake Indians were displeased with St. Michael's School and were demanding their own school. Father Charlebois had evidently sown the seeds of discontent among these Indians when he decided to place their children in service, without their consent. The Beardy's and Okemasis Indians responded by withholding some of their children from school. Later, when Father Charlebois complained that he needed these children to keep St. Michael's School open, the Indian Agent wrote, "That is all very well but the young men will not send them there and they must go to some school."<sup>94</sup> As a result, Indian Affairs advised the Duck Lake Indian Agent that they were prepared to consider a formal application for a day school on the Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve. They also asked the Indian Agent to include a report, with the petition, on the number of children expected to attend this day school and the probability of this school's success.

Given the seriousness of these new developments, Bishop Pascal once again

---

<sup>94</sup> Incomplete reference entitled: "Extract from letter from J. Macarthur Indian Agent Duck Lake, 10 February 1910". NAC, Indian Affairs Black [Western] Series, RG 10, Reel C-10163, Volume 3929, File 117056-1.

intervened with Indian Affairs in Ottawa. He confirmed that the majority of the students from St. Michael's School now came from the Beardy's and Okemasis, One Arrow's, and the Muskeg Lake Reserves. The approval of a day school, on even one of these reserves, was bound to impact on St. Michael's School. In pleading the Oblate's cause, he reminded Indian Affairs of the large financial investment they both had made in this school. In case this proved insufficient in bringing the Department back to its senses, he dutifully reminded them:

The Department ought to know that the children who frequent day schools do not learn any English to speak off [sic] and that they keep all the habits of carelessness and filth which we try to destroy in our Boarding Schools.<sup>95</sup>

Bishop Pascal's passionate distaste for day schools had not changed in sixteen years. In 1894, he used almost the same argument to convince Indian Affairs to close down the day schools in the Duck Lake area and to divert these funds to St. Michael's School. In the meantime, the Indians from the Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve made their move. They held a meeting with their Indian Agent to prepare a formal petition to demand a day school on their reserve. The issue was of such critical importance that, with the exception of a small number of Indians who did not have children, this meeting was attended by everyone. The petition received unanimous consent. In their petition, the Indians stated there was no need for their children to attend a boarding school, as they no longer went off the reserve to hunt. In pleading for compassion, they also did not hesitate to

---

<sup>95</sup> Memo, A. Pascal to J.D. McLean, 12 April 1910. NAC. Indian Affairs Black [Western] Series, RG-10, Reel C-10163, Volume 3929, File 117056-1.

restate the Department's "civilization" criteria to defend their right to take care of their own children. With all the hopes of someone pleading with others to look within to try and understand their pain of separation, the Indians wrote:

[We] obtain our living by farming and stock raising and in our mode of living our agent tells us that we compare favourably with our white neighbours we think we are capable of training our own children when not at school...The white man loves his children and likes to have them round him in the evenings and on the days in which school is not open. We also love our children with just as much warm and affection as the white man and we want to keep them around us.\*

As requested, the Indian Agent also included a report confirming there were thirty children from the Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve enrolled at St. Michael's School. Although ten more were of school age, these children were being withheld by their parents. Due in part to these numbers, the Indian Agent reported that a day school on this reserve stood a good chance at success. These numbers also spelled disaster for St. Michael's School "because the per capita system tied funding to enrolment" (Miller 1992: 145). The Oblates were not only losing control over the Indians, they had already lost access to ten per-capita grants. If a day school was approved on the Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve, the permanent loss of the forty grants would financially cripple St. Michael's School.

According to Father Le Chevallier (1944: 34), "Bishop Pascal, noticing the unfriendly attitude towards St. Michael's School, wrote himself to the Department of Indian Affairs requesting them to deal with this situation." Documentation at

---

\* Memo, J. Macarthur to the Superintendent General, 20 May 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs Black [Western] Series, RG-10, Reel C-10163, Volume 3929, File 117056-1

the National Archives indicates that Bishop Pascal was hardly as conciliatory as this statement implies. In a five page letter, Bishop Pascal outlined twenty-four points why Indian Affairs should not approve a day school on the Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve. By point twelve, Bishop Pascal had already dispensed with many of the niceties regarding the "public transcripts" of church and state around the issue of Indian education. From this point on, his arguments had less to do with the benefits of education for Indian people and more to do with what the Oblates and Indian Affairs stood to lose if St. Michael's School closed. Bishop Pascal's airing of the "hidden transcripts" of Indian education, when it appears that Indian Affairs is no longer willing to play by the same rules, are quite instructive.

Bishop Pascal starts his attack by hitting Indian Affairs in its always vulnerable pocket book. He reminds the Department they will be stuck with a "white elephant" if the Oblates are forced to close St. Michael's School due to lack of enrolment.<sup>97</sup> He then switches tactics and pleads for compassion for the missionaries who have devoted their lives to helping Indian people, stating:

Furthermore, after such great outlay of energy as well as of their means, it would be an injustice, a downright cruelty, to persons who have devoted the better part of their lives to this work if aught were done to hamper them, not to speak of ousting them as would happen if the Duck Lake boarding school is closed.<sup>98</sup>

That the missionaries should be left with no home, when they already have one at St. Michael's School, filled with children they are prevented from having, is

---

<sup>97</sup> Memo, A. Pascal to J.D. McLean, 28 May 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs Black [Western] Series, RG-10, Reel C-10163, Volume 3929, File 117056-1.

<sup>98</sup> Memo, A. Pascal to J.D. McLean, 28 May 1910. Ibid.

unthinkable! Bishop Pascal failed to mention that he was more than prepared to inflict this same cruelty on Indian people whose homes had been robbed for years just to fill St. Michael's School. Obviously, knowing that compassion is not always the strongest motivator, Bishop Pascal threatened Indian Affairs. He pointedly reminded the Department of the dire implications of public debate:

Finally, should the Government accede to the demands of these Indians, contrary to our expectation, some explanation of the closing of this school would be due to the public and the blame put where it belongs. This would necessarily oblige us to give the facts of the case as we see them, with all the circumstances leading up thereto, particularly to make public the hostility of the parties opposed to our as well as the Indians' interests. This, we foresee, would naturally lead to acrimonious debate and religious animosities which on our part, we would much rather avoid. In the exigency, our duty leaves us but one course to pursue.<sup>99</sup>

In case Indian Affairs still failed to comprehend what was required of them, Bishop Pascal pressed his "duty" one step further. In no uncertain terms, he laid his cards on the table and bluntly told Indian Affairs:

... you will take no heed of the demands of the Indians of the Duck Lake Agency Reserves.... However, should this not suffice, we are prepared to go further and appeal to the public at large, regardless of the consequences to either the Government or to any private party whatsoever.<sup>100</sup>

Indian Affairs, for its part, certainly had not failed to miss the full implications of Bishop's Pascal's threatening letter. As this matter required such careful attention, they informed the Oblates that D.C. Scott the Superintendent of

---

<sup>99</sup> Memo, A. Pascal to J.D. McLean, 28 May 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs Black [Western] Series. RG-10, Reel C-10163, Volume 3929, File 117056-1.

<sup>100</sup> Memo, A. Pascal to J.D. McLean, 28 May 1910. Ibid.

Education would personally look into this situation.

Shortly thereafter, in September 1910, Father Gabillon became St. Michael's third Principal and thus inherited this "far from encouraging" (Le Chevallier 1944: 35) situation from Father Charlebois. Father Gabillon was no sooner installed in his new duties when D.C. Scott called the churches together to discuss the new Indian education regulations. As Bishop Pascal was unable to attend, Father Gabillon was sent to represent the Oblates' concerns in his place.

In the meantime, the Duck Lake Indian Agent continued to stir up trouble for the Oblates at St. Michael's School. In December 1910, he reported that the death rate at this school was "again returning to its high mark, two of the inmates having died during the year and two others dying".<sup>101</sup> Consistent with Dr. Bryce's (1907) findings, he blamed the buildings which housed the children at St. Michael's School as the source of the problem. In his letter, the Indian Agent also included findings of a ten-year study comparing the death rate at St. Michael's School with that of the other day schools in the area. He reported that nine of the nineteen Indian children from the One Arrow's Reserve who attended St. Michael's School had already died. By comparison, only six of the thirty-seven children who attended the two day schools at Fort-à-la-Corne (James Smith) died during the same period. Probably knowing that his superiors in Ottawa would try and find some plausible reason for these findings, the Indian Agent added:

---

<sup>101</sup> Memo, J. Macarthur to the Secretary, DIA, 27 December 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

It may be thought that the James Smith's people are, on the whole, more healthy than the One Arrow's people, but I find that during the past 10 years the average duration of life on the James Smith's was 25 years, while on the One Arrow's reserve it is a fraction over 27 years notwithstanding the heavy toll taken by the Duck Lake Boarding school.<sup>102</sup>

The Indian Agent confirmed that these alarming death rates were one of the reasons why the Indians were fighting for day schools on their reserves. In early January 1911, Indian Affairs asked their Inspector of Indian Agencies to give the Indian Agent's letter his personal attention. However caring this may sound, the reasons had less to do with the magnitude of the report. As a result of Father Gabillon's meeting with D.C. Scott, the Oblates were considering becoming "the proprietors and land-owners of the school in Duck Lake" (Le Chevallier 1944: 35). If this happened, the Oblates would assume full responsibility for any future renovations required to make this school less of a health hazard to its students. A tidy sum of money was involved. According to Father Le Chevallier (1944: 35), "The repairs alone must amount to fourteen or fifteen thousand dollars."

The Oblates were not wrong in assuming that St. Michael's School required substantial repairs. The School Inspector reported that the school needed a new basement, better water works and sewage disposal facilities. He added that:

The outside closets, which on account of their unavoidable proximity to the school and for other reasons are a serious menace to the health of the pupils.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Memo, J. Macarthur to the Secretary, DIA, 27 December 1910. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>103</sup> Memo, W. Chisholm to J.D. McLean, 26 January 1911. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.



With respect to the condition of St. Michael's School itself, the Inspector of Indian Agencies stated:

The building is a plain and inexpensive one, but not on the whole an unsanitary structure, (apart from the basement and the want of waterworks), except for the fact that it has now for 16 or 17 years been occupied by pupils a number of whom are known to have suffered for months from tuberculosis.<sup>104</sup>

The Inspector also confirmed that the Indian Agent's findings on the death rate at St. Michael's School were accurately based on the school's certified quarterly returns. He indicated that better screening of pupils including "an inquiry into the health record of their parents and other near relatives" may have alleviated some of the problem caused by admitting infected children.<sup>105</sup> While the Inspector cannot be faulted for identifying the need for substantial repairs, "selecting healthier students" (Hall 1983: 133) would not have addressed the health risks posed by the overall unhealthy surroundings at St. Michael's School. That these unhealthy conditions continued to persist four years after Dr. Bryce (1907) released his findings is unconscionable. It is little wonder that Indian people felt compelled either to withhold their children from St. Michael's School or to demand day schools on their reserves. The latter demand was also quickly becoming the norm in response to the conditions at St. Michael's School.

As predicted by the Oblates, the One Arrow's and the Muskeg Lake Reserves followed Beardy's lead and demanded day schools on their reserves.

---

<sup>104</sup> Memo, W. Chisholm to J.D. McLean, 26 January 1911. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>105</sup> Memo, W. Chisholm to J.D. McLean, 26 January 1911. Ibid.

Unbeknownst to these Indians, this also gave the Oblates the leverage needed to bring Indian Affairs back in line. Three reserves were now demanding day schools which implied increased expenditures for the Department. On the other hand, Indian Affairs also wanted to dump St. Michael's School which needed major repairs. In the end, the Oblates agreed to buy St. Michael's School, but they needed some assurances that they would have a steady clientele. Father Henri Grandin, the Oblate Provincial, advised Indian Affairs:

Before undertaking the improvements on our school at Duck Lake, I shall wait your answer about the day schools, and your promise to give instructions to your agents that they should tell the Indians that the boarding-school is sufficient for their needs (Le Chevallier 1944: 36).

Contrary to Treaty 6, Indian Affairs denied the petition for a day school from the Beardy's and Okemasis Reserve. They decided this reserve was too close to St. Michael's to warrant its own school. A similar application from the Muskeg Lake Reserve was also refused. The Oblates had only won part of the battle. Indian Affairs held the One Arrow's request in abeyance and advised the Oblates they were still prepared to consider other applications due to Treaty 6.

At this tenuous time in their history, "Fr. Grandin deemed it advisable to appoint a new principal of strong and energetic mind, of determined character, able to carry on the struggle till final success be achieved" (Le Chevallier 1944: 37). Father Gabillon was summarily relieved of this duties. Father Grandin considered him much too weak to manage the discipline of the older students at St. Michael's School. More important perhaps, given the circumstances, the

Oblates "fear[ed] that he would not be able to resist the rising fanaticism [sic] and the hypocritical underhand dealing of the Agent and of the Indians" (Le Chevallier 1944: 37). Indian resistance was taking its toll on St. Michael's School. With the Oblates about to assume financial responsibility for this school, they could no longer afford to lose control to the Indians. Consequently, within nine months, "the interregnum of Father Gabillon" (Le Chevallier 1944: 34-37) was over.

Father Le Chevallier's choice of words is important because interregnum means "an interval of time between the close of a sovereign's reign and the accession of the normal or legitimate successor" (Random House 1992: 705-706). Indeed, Father Gabillon was replaced by the formidable Henri Delmas, an authoritarian who like Father Charlebois knew what was best for Indian people without asking them. Contrary to established procedures, the Oblates waited over two months before asking Indian Affairs to approve Father Delmas's appointment in September 1911. The Oblates were finally back in command at St. Michael's School. As openly acknowledged by Father Grandin, "Under Bishop Charlebois no one would have dared to resist his authority and I am convinced that with Fr. Delmas none will be even tempted to do so" (Le Chevallier 1944: 37). Father Delmas was, of course, the same "kind" man whom Father Le Chevallier (1944: 7) had credited with transforming St. Michael's School into a home. Consistent with his times, Father Delmas was indeed the lord and master of his own house. St. Michael's School just happened to be his home!

With everything falling back into place, the Oblates signed an agreement to

take over St. Michael's School in January 1912. Significantly, the Indian Agent who had caused them so much trouble was no longer at Duck Lake by the time this agreement was signed. With the changeover in administration, St. Michael's School received a new enrolment quota of one hundred pupils, at the new per-capita rate of \$125. The children were allowed one month for holidays, but Indian Affairs assumed none of these transportation costs. The Oblates also agreed to provide religious instruction to their students. The boys were to receive industrial training consisting of gardening, farming, and the care of stock, while the girls were to be taught cooking, laundry work, needlework, general housewifery, and dairy work. Significantly, the requirement for schooling in the ordinary branches of an English education was listed last. The Oblates agreed not to enrol any child under seven years of age and to discharge children when they reached eighteen. To qualify for first-class school status, the Oblates installed a water and sewage system and built an isolation area for infectious diseases, at the cost of \$20,000. This huge outlay of money did not necessarily turn St. Michael's School into a first-class school. As poetically described by Father Le Chevallier (1994: 38):

Unfortunately these expensive ameliorations did not convert the old school into a new one, and St. Michael's showed evident signs of age and decline; a new frill does not make a new bonnet and good wine thrives not in old bottles.

Given these conditions, Father Delmas was forced to begin the long process of negotiating with Indian Affairs to replace St. Michael's School. In defending the need for a more modern, and certainly an all around safer schooling establishment, Father Delmas advised Indian Affairs:

The construction of our school dates back to 1894. According to the customs of the times it was built of wood, with no foundation whatever. You can easily imagine in what state it is presently. When I tell you that it is actually falling to pieces, you must take me verbatim. Through the cracks in the floor you can get a glimpse of the rooms beneath. We almost expect, at any moment, to crash down into the cellar. All visitors are astonished to find the buildings in such an irreparable state of ruin (Le Chevallier 1944: 38).

An inspector confirmed Father Delmas's complaints about St. Michael's School. He wrote "the danger of fire, in my estimation, should be sufficient for condemning it" (Le Chevallier 1944: 36). There was no money for new schools. St. Michael's School just had to make do with what it had. In 1916, the Indian children took matters into their own hands. In the spring, rumours circulated that some boys were planning to burn down St. Michael's School. By the fall, some little boys were caught setting fires and were severely punished. While the latter quelled the danger for awhile, it did not last long. By late August 1917, another fire was discovered and the Oblates were forced to evacuate the school. The fire was quickly put out. In September, Father Delmas advised the Indian Agent of the situation and told the Agent he had not taken action earlier as he was absent due to poor health. In explaining his predicament, Father Delmas added:

Among Indian children as among white there are characters who are not subdued, even by severe correction. Of the boys who attempted to set the fire in 1916, one alone did not repent, and he is the most guilty. Today I dread him and it is for him alone that I would beg the Department to decide his case and prosecute as soon as possible.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Memo, H. Delmas to E. Pant. Schmidt, 5 September 1917. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

While Father Delmas's request for disciplinary action was under review within the bureaucracy, a hay stack mysteriously burnt down at St. Michael's School. Five days later, a fire was set in the small boys' recreation room. No one was caught. The children at St. Michael's School had placed Father Delmas in a perilous position. He knew his school was a fire trap. He also could not afford just to expel the Indian boy who refused to admit his guilt. He feared others would follow his lead just to be set free from St. Michael's School. Father Delmas needed to make an example out of this boy. According to James Scott (1990: 57):

Patterns of domination can, in fact, accommodate a reasonably high level of practical resistance so long as that resistance is not publicly or unambiguously acknowledged. Once it is, however, it requires a public reply if the symbolic status quo is to be restored.

Indian Affairs also recognized the need to restore the status quo at St. Michael's School. They also knew only too well as Grant (1984: 179) stated, "Resistance to enrolment was widespread, and school burnings were more common than mere accident would explain." Consequently, D.C. Scott advised the Oblates to seek prosecution under the Criminal Code as "these boys must be given a salutary lesson".<sup>107</sup> The case was subsequently tried at St. Michael's School under the Juvenile Delinquent's Act. A young Indian boy, fourteen years of age, from the One Arrow's Reserve pleaded guilty. In his defense, he stated that he had tried to burn down St. Michael's School because he "was sad (lonesome)".<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Memo, D.C. Scott to H. Grandin, 22 September 1917. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

<sup>108</sup> Memo, P. Schmidt to the Secretary, DIA, 23 November 1917. NAC, Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Volume 6305, File 652-1.

In his own mind, burning down St. Michael's School was probably the only way he could see of escaping this place, which had become his prison. Although an unquestionably dangerous act, it is important to remind ourselves that for these Indian children, who were alienated from the support of their families, and who were so completely and utterly controlled:

Each step out of line was an important one in self-definition. In a society determined by the powers of the priests and nuns the students' self produced sub-culture was an even more important and fundamental aspect of survival (Haig-Brown 1987: 95).

This sub-culture of resistance often represented the children's only means of emotional and spiritual survival in the alien and often harsh environment called Indian residential schools, which tried so desperately to destroy their Indianness. In analyzing this particular situation, there can be no doubt that trying to burn down St. Michael's School was a serious offense. Given the condition of the school, any fire no matter how small, had the real potential for catastrophic consequences for everyone. However, as far as Father Delmas was concerned this Indian boy's most grievous offense was that he would not repent. He would not allow the status quo to be restored at St. Michael's School. No matter how severely punished, this young Indian boy would not be dominated by anyone.

This boy's "crime" laid bare three issues about the relationship between domination and resistance. First, Indian Affairs almost immediately questioned the quality of discipline at St. Michael's School and, consequently, the Oblate's ability to do their job as the other member of the dominant elite. Second, Father Delmas had been specifically appointed as the Principal of St. Michael's School

because "his commanding appearance and his great strength will certainly overawe the children, even the oldest" (Le Chevallier 1944: 37). This obviously had not happened. In the eyes of his superiors, Father Delmas's own effectiveness was also in question. Third, while the trial at St. Michael's School restored law and order, this public forum was far more effective in demonstrating the omnipotent power of church and state. Finally, the extraction of the public admission of guilt from this Indian boy was also important because as Scott (1990:57) stated:

The subordinate, who has publicly violated the norms of domination, announces by way of a public apology that he disassociates himself from the offense and reaffirms the rule in question. He publicly accepts, in other words, the judgement of his superior that this is an offense and thus, implicitly, the censure or punishment that follows from it. The point has little to do with the sincerity of the retraction and disavowal, since what the apology repairs is the public transcript of apparent compliance.

Therefore, with this Indian boy thoroughly chastised and sentenced to reform school, the Oblates were unquestionably back in command. Nine years later, Indian Affairs finally replaced the old dilapidated and disease ridden structure called St. Michael's School. After the new school was completed, Father Delmas went to France to rest. According to Father Le Chevallier (1944: 42):

During his absence, the forsaken old school was soon to disappear. On May 3rd, 1926, it was entirely destroyed by fire. In less than an hour it was naught but a heap of ashes.

The Indian children at St. Michael's School had finally got their wish. After thirty-two years the old school was no longer a visible painful reminder of their lives within this institution. Only the graves of the Indian children remained to mark the spot where this monument to "Christianity" and "civilization" once stood.



## Chapter 7 - Conclusions and Next Steps

*It was not the fur trader or even the soldier who worked the most damage on Canada's Indians; it was the missionary, the school-teacher, and the bureaucrat who thought they knew better than the indigenous peoples what was good for them (Miller 1991b: 96).*

### **7.0 Conclusions**

Two primary objectives formed the basis for this study. The first objective was to examine the historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations to provide a framework for the analysis of St. Michael's Indian Residential School. Second, from the perspective of "an Aboriginal way of knowing" and using James Scott's (1990) analysis of domination and resistance, I hoped to find the place of my people within this history and to determine their role in Indian education.

Although the historical course of Indian-white relations cannot be easily separated from its ideological underpinnings, the latter obviously impacted on the former. Since the 1500s, virtually everyone who landed on the shores of what is now Canada had some idea of what to do about the Indians. In the end, however, it was not just "the missionary, the school-teacher, and the bureaucrat who worked the most damage on Canada's Indians" (Miller 1991b: 96). The course of Indian-white relations was altered not just by the actions of these three groups, but by the overall effect of the emergence of "scientific racism" (Miller 1991b: 96) which provided the legitimacy and authority for their actions. In other words, concepts

of racial superiority were a decisive factor in the history of Indian-white relations.

Certainly, concepts of racial superiority lurk beneath the "euphemized" descriptions of Indian-white relations called assimilation and Indian education, and are embodied in the structure of Indian residential schools. That the early Europeans chose assimilation over the outright extermination of Indian people is hardly the issue. The real issue rests in the acknowledgement that, the *choice* itself, is rooted in the concept of racial superiority. Furthermore, while the extermination of Indians may not have been a policy initiative, assimilation as embodied in the concept of Indian residential schools translated into nothing less than the complete *extermination of Indianness*. One choice was not necessarily more humane than the other. Assimilation, at its root, was just as destructive as extermination because it attacked the most vulnerable members of Indian society.

The concepts of "Christianizing" and "civilizing" Indians through education are also embedded in the belief that Indians are inferior and must be raised to the level of the Europeans. Indian residential schools merely represented the most effective means of achieving this end. Moreover, by accepting the euphemism called Indian "education" at face value, we neglect to consider that "residential schooling ... was still an experiment in social engineering" (Miller 1991b: 196). In

Domination and the Arts of Resistance, James Scott (1990: 53) stated:

At every occasion on which the official euphemism is allowed to prevail over the other, dissonant versions, the dominant monopoly over public knowledge is publicly conceded by subordinates. They may, of course, have little choice in the matter, but so long as the monopoly is not publicly contested, it never has to "explain itself", it has nothing to "answer for".

The official euphemism called "education" commonly used to describe Indian residential schools has served to limit the accountability of church and state for their actions. This "dominant monopoly over public knowledge" described by Scott (1990: 53) also discredits Indian anger because it establishes a world view that defines "education" as something quite unlike the reality experienced by Indian people. Church and state are held accountable only for the cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse which they tend to minimize in both scope and responsibility. The concept of "Indian education" remains untouched. Also, by acknowledging only the overt forms of violence, no voice is given to the "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu 1977: 196) of stripping Indian children of their Indianness. When church and state are finally held accountable for explaining where *outings*, *arranged marriages*, and *colonies* fit into the concept of Indian "education", only then will we begin to understand Indian anger. Only then will we understand just how little we really know about the reality called "Indian education".

Just as the historical and ideological cannot be separated, neither can Indian education be examined solely within the context of what transpired within any one residential school. Although this paper only scratches the surface, the policy framework for Indian education was initiated in the East and not with Davin's (1879) recommendations on industrial schools. Indian education while always associated with "Christianizing" and "civilizing" Indians, took on a harder edge as the Europeans increased in numbers and Indians blocked the path of immigration and progress by tenaciously holding onto their traditional ways.

By the 1840s, these conditions paved the way for a new policy direction which gave the churches a formal role in Indian education and witnessed a shift towards residential schooling. Given these changing conditions, some of the eastern tribes started sending their children to school and some even paid for this service out of their annuities. This did not necessarily mean that Indians and missionaries held similar views on schooling. Indian people wanted their children to be taught certain skills. More often than not, the missionaries saw schooling as the opportunity for indoctrinating Indian children in the ways of the Europeans. As a result, Indian people started withholding their children from school and the first cries for compulsory schooling can be heard in the East.

On the Prairies, the missionaries also opened up the first schools among the Plains Indians who wanted to prepare for the possible demise of the buffalo by learning how to farm. This advance guard of missionary activity changed the course of the Treaty 6 negotiations of 1876. With the support of the missionaries, Alexander Morris negotiated Treaty 6 primarily with the leading Christian Chiefs who among other things asked for schooling on-reserve. Not all the Plains Indians had even agreed to sign Treaty 6 by the time Davin, at the request of the Minister of the Interior, made his recommendations on Indian industrial schooling in 1879. Four years later, Indian Affairs acted on these recommendations and built the first four Indian industrial schools in western Canada.

Industrial schools which were based on the American policy of "aggressive civilization" (Davin 1879: 1) quickly fell out of favour with Indian people. In 1894,

Indian Affairs moved to counteract Indian resistance to residential schooling by amending the Indian Act to enforce compulsory attendance at both industrial and boarding schools. The ideology of racial superiority and its concomitant policy of compulsion had not bypassed the Prairies. Compulsory schooling was just one of many pieces of legislation enacted to try and break down tribal customs and to turn Indians, primarily Indian children, into brown Europeans.

In essence, therefore, the historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations did not change significantly from east to west. While the Indians in the East had more time to confront their changing circumstances, the Plains Indians saw their way of life disappear within the span of a few decades. Evidence of Indian resistance to European domination can also be found throughout this history. Although faint at times, the voices of Indian people can also be heard.

The work completed by Morris (1880), Dempsey (1984), and Tobias (1983) on the Treaty 6 negotiations helped me to find my people within this history, to hear their voices, and to see their resistance. Although angered and pained at the ideological underpinnings of this history, when I pursued "an Aboriginal way of knowing" I was able to bring the heart and mind closer together to find myself within this research. Reaching out, even through the medium of primary and secondary sources was never an easy process. I would never have survived the painful reality of this research had it not been for Aboriginal healing and learning circles. My journey into my own past helped me to understand Linda Bull's (1991: 3) feelings about her research on Indian residential schools, when she wrote:

The more research I did the more Indianized I became. I felt that someone had to begin promoting the values that are inherent in Indian traditional cultures, to reeducate both Native and non-Native societies about the reality of the Indian situation. I also found that there needs to be a great deal of healing within Indian communities. Having the elders tell their stories from their perspective is one way to begin that process.

Unlike Linda Bull, I did not complete any interviews for this research. I do know, however, that this study will never be complete without the direct voices of many other Indian people. Someday, I hope to do these interviews not just to finish this research, but to complete my own journey. In the meantime, I have tried to bridge this gap in my research process by getting the most out of the primary and secondary sources available on Indian residential schools.

James Scott's (1990) analysis of "public transcripts" and "hidden transcripts" helped me not only to find, but to understand the many facets of domination and resistance. Often the struggle by Indian children against domination, particularly in the highly controlled environment of Indian residential schools goes beyond what is commonly defined as "resistance". While cases of runaways and incidents of arson are visible signs of resistance, Johnson (1988) and Haig-Brown (1987) reveal the passive resistance inherent within innocuous acts such as dawdling and silence. This kind of resistance is virtually invisible within the primary and secondary documentation on St. Michael's School. This broader understanding of resistance also helped me to see the passive resistance hidden beneath many of the so-called *funny* stories I heard as a child about Indian residential school life.

Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) analysis of "euphemisms" allowed me to

re-examine some of the concepts such as "assimilation" and Indian "education" which are often mistakenly defined as just the benevolent *intentions* or *outcome* of *white-Indian* relations. Bourdieu's (1977) analysis of "symbolic violence" also helped me to recognize the violence inherent within the litany of supposedly innocuous procedures which actually stripped children of their Indianness at Indian residential schools. This hidden "symbolic violence", in combination with the reality of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse makes for an even uglier picture of Indian residential school life. Once recognized, however, we can no longer question why Indian people remain so angry about Indian education.

From the limited perspective of using primary and secondary sources, I feel that I have succeeded, to some extent, in unravelling a few of the broader historical and ideological implications of Indian-white relations. This research served as the backdrop for answering the following two questions regarding St. Michael's School in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan:

- to what extent did the racial doctrines of the late nineteenth century provide the ethical justification for the application of the concepts of "civilization" and "Christianity" in relation to this school, and to what extent did these advance the economic relationship between Indian Affairs and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at St. Michael's School during the period 1894-1926; and
- to what extent do the historical records support the belief that Indian people were active participants in Indian educational issues, and what evidence exists that Indian people and their children struggled against the assimilation policies imposed upon them by St. Michael's School.

In response to the first question, the ideology of racial superiority played a

significant role in both the establishment and on-going operation of St. Michael's School. Although not defined in such crass terms, the primary documentation leaves little doubt that church and state knew exactly where they stood on the evolutionary ladder in comparison to the Indians they purported to serve as public servants and missionaries. Certainly, their actions speak as loud as their words. In all fairness, there is documentary evidence of some exceptions at the local level.

Like many other residential schools, St. Michael's School was founded on the racist belief that Indian people needed to be "Christianized" and "civilized" through an indoctrination process still euphemistically called Indian "education". While certainly not a marriage made in heaven, the economic union of church and state was founded on the belief that residential schools provided the most effective means of changing Indian children into brown Europeans. The Oblates often used the concepts of "Christianity" and "civilization" to try and force Indian Affairs into carrying its fair share of the financial burden of operating St. Michael's School. When the Department refused, as it often did, the children at St. Michael's School made up the financial short-fall through their labour often disguised as industrial training. In other words, the Indian children's "education" in farming, gardening, and sewing increased in proportion to the decreases in the Indian Affairs funding.

In response to the second question, there can be little doubt that church and state saw absolutely no role for Indian people in educational issues. Indians were expected only to ensure that their children dutifully attended school. Other than the part Indians played in securing the on-reserve schooling commitment in



Treaty 6, Indian people had no role in making Indian educational policy. Indian people had to fight tooth and nail just to have a minor say in their children's schooling at St. Michael's School. Despite the strenuous efforts made by church and state to shut them out, Indian people struggled against this oppressive form of Indian education. The Beardsy's and Okemasis Reserve closed down the Oblate's "outing" experiment which turned their children into servants in "white" homes. Two other reserves also fought for day schools and did not win. But, their efforts also caused church and state a great deal of aggravation. Indian children also fought back by trying to burn down St. Michael's School. While undoubtedly a dangerous act, desperate situations sometimes call for equally desperate measures.

Reflecting back on this research, three final points come to mind. First, Indian residential schools provided far more indoctrination than education. This education was far from free. Indian children paid for their "education" through their annuities, their labour called industrial training, and often with their lives. Second, while this "material exploitation" is abhorrent, we must never forget the issues of "dignity" and "autonomy" (Scott 1990: 23) which were so sadly lacking in the concept of Indian education and Indian residential schools. Unless Indians are granted the same rights to dignity and autonomy as the Euro-Canadians, Indian-white relations will never change, despite the most heartfelt apologies. Finally, for real change to occur the "ideology of racial superiority" must be critically examined within its historical context. Moreover, we must be prepared to acknowledge that this racial ideology still permeates *white*-Indian relations today.

## 7.1 Next Steps

This research on St. Michael's School within the broader historical and ideological context of Indian-white relations cannot be considered complete. For one thing, a wealth of primary documentation has yet to be uncovered. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Provincial Archives in Alberta both hold records on this school which were not used as part of this study. The Glenbow Museum Archives, the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, and the Sisters of Presentation of Mary also represent potential sources for further information.

More importantly, any future research must move beyond documentary evidence to making contact with the Indian people whose lives were altered, either directly or indirectly, by St. Michael's School. Given the sensitive nature of these issues, extreme care must be exercised to maintain the highest ethical standards. Therefore, Indian people on a broader scale must be consulted about the best way of doing this kind of interactive research. Cultural approaches will also have to be carefully considered and provisions made for appropriate western and traditional follow-up procedures. Moreover, language will be a factor as the participants will likely speak Cree while the remaining Oblate documents are mostly in French.

The research approach itself could vary from delving deeper into the subject matter explored in this study, or consideration could be given to expanding the duration to assess any significant changes over time. The approach will depend upon the number of Indian people who are available and willing to talk about their experiences at St. Michael's Indian Residential School.

In conclusion, while I have opened the door to future research, this paper itself cannot be laid to rest until the voices of Indian people are brought back into the circle. It is appropriate from "an Aboriginal way of knowing" to close this research and this circle by centering myself in what I have learned so far. In this, I turn once again to Basil Johnson (1974: 140-141) who captured the unbreakable spirit of Indian people in the long history of Indian-white relations, when he wrote:

In the suffering and testing of the Indians there is ample testimony that the Indian people possessed an abundance of courage, perseverance and fortitude. That they continued to live on in spite of all these sorrows is proof of their capacity of endurance.

Moreover, in this same article entitled, Bread Before Books or Books Before Bread, Basil Johnson (1974) also helped me to find the words to describe the part of me that has emerged through the Aboriginal healing and learning circles which formed an integral part of this research process. I now know that when the mind and heart are brought closer together through an "Aboriginal way of knowing".....

Gradually we hear the voice of the Indian, somewhat uncertain, somewhat angry, but assuredly growing stronger and more confident and more insistent.... (Johnson 1974: 141).

### Bibliography

- Abt Associates of Canada. (1993) A Summary of Findings from Departmental Files and Selected Secondary Sources Related to Indian Residential School Policy. Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.
- Adams, Howard. (1989) Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View. Saskatoon: Fifth House, revised edition.
- Assembly of First Nations (AFN). (1994) Breaking the Silence: An Interpretive Study of Residential School Impact and Healing as Illustrated by the Stories of First Nations Individuals. Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations.
- Barman, Jean. (1986) "Separate and Unequal: Indian and White Girls at All Hallows School: 1884-1920". Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill, eds., Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. (pp. 110-131).
- Barman, Jean, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill, eds.. (1986a) Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy. Vancouver: University of B.C. Press.
- (1986b) "The Legacy of the Past: An Overview". Jean Barman, et al., eds. Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, (pp. 1-22).
- Barnett, Don C. and Aldrich J. Dyer. (1983) Research Related to Native Peoples at the University of Saskatchewan. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan.
- Bell, Rosa. (1993) "Journeys". Linda Jaine, ed., Residential Schools: The Stolen Years. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, (pp. 8-16).
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1977) Outline of a Theory of Practice. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Brass, Eleanor. (1987) I Walk in Two Worlds. Calgary: Glenbow.
- Brown, Dee. (1970) Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An American History of the American West. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc.
- Brown, George and Ron Macguire. (1979) Indian Treaties in Historical Perspective. Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.
- Bryce, Peter Henderson. (1907) Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the North-West Territories. Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau.
- (1922) The Story of a National Crime: Being a Record of the Health Conditions of the Indians of Canada from 1904 to 1921. Ottawa: James Hope and Sons, Limited.
- Bull, L. (1991) "Indian Residential Schooling: The Native Perspective". Canadian Journal of Native Education. Vol. 18, Supplement, (pp. 1-64).
- Carrière, Gaston. (1979) "The Early Efforts of the Oblate Missionaries in Western Canada". Prairie Forum, Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring, (pp. 1-25).
- Cardinal, Harold. (1969) The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians. Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig Ltd.
- Carr, Edward H. (1987) "The Historian and His Facts". What is History?. 2nd edition. London: Penguin Books, (pp. 7-30).
- Carter Sarah. (1991) "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant' Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-1897". J. R. Miller, ed., Sweet Promises: A Reader in Indian-White Relations in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (pp. 353-377).
- Chamberlin, J.E. (1975) The Harrowing of Eden: White Attitudes Toward Native Americans. New York: The Seabury Press.
- Daniels, E.R. (1992) How Similar? How Different?: The Patterns of Education for Indian and Non-Indian Students in Canada. Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, unpublished paper.

- Davin, Nicholas Flood. (1879) Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds. Ottawa: Confidential report to the Minister of the Interior, 14 March 1879.
- Dempsey, Hugh A. (1984) Big Bear: The End of Freedom. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd.
- Dickason, Olive Patricia. (1992) Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding People from Earliest Times. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Elliott, Jean Leonard, and Augie Fleras. (1992) Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.
- Elton, G.R. (1967) The Practice of History. London: Sydney University Press.
- Fontaine, Phil. (1993) "We Are All Born Innocent". Linda Jaine, ed., Residential Schools: The Stolen Years. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, (pp. 51-68).
- Frideres, James S. (1993) Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., fourth edition.
- Friesen, Gerald. (1987) The Canadian Prairies: A History. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Funk, Jack. (1993) "Une Main Criminelle". Linda Jaine, ed., Residential Schools: The Stolen Years. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, (pp. 69-90).
- Funk, Jack and Gordon Lobe, eds. (1991) "... And They Told Us Their Stories": A Book of Indian Stories. Saskatoon: Saskatoon District Tribal Council.
- Furniss, Elizabeth. (1992) Victims of Benevolence: Discipline and Death at the Williams Lake Indian Residential School, 1891-1920. Williams Lake: Cariboo Tribal Council.
- Goodwill, J. and J. Sluman. (1984) John Tootoosis. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 2nd edition.

- Grant, J. W. (1984) Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gresko, Jacqueline. (1979) "White 'Rites' and Indian 'Rites': Indian Education and Native Responses in the West, 1870 - 1910". D.C. Jones, N.M. Sheehan and R.M. Stamp, eds., Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, (pp. 84-106).
- (1986) "Creating Little Dominions Within the Dominion: Early Catholic Indian Schools in Saskatchewan and British Columbia". Jean Barman, et al., eds. Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, (pp. 88-109).
- (1992) "Everyday Life at Qu'Appelle Industrial School". Raymond Huel, ed., Western Oblate Studies 2. Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, (pp. 71-94).
- Haig-Brown, Celia. (1987) Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School. Vancouver: Tillacum Library.
- Hall, D.J. (1983) "Clifford Sifton and Canadian Indian Administration 1896-1905". A.L. Getty and A.S. Lussier, eds. As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, (pp. 120-144).
- Harper, Allan G. (1945) "Canada's Indian Administration: Basic Concepts and Objectives". America Indigena, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 1945, (pp.119-132).
- Hines, Rev. J. (1915) The Red Indians of the Plains: Thirty Year's Missionary Experience in Saskatchewan. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Hooks, Bell. (1988) Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- House of Commons. (1983) Indian Self-Government in Canada: Report of the Special Committee on Indian Self-Government. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

- Ing, N. Rosalyn. (1991) "The Effects of Residential Schools on Native Child-Rearing Practices". Canadian Journal of Native Education, Vol. 18, Supplement, (pp. 65-118).
- Jaine, Linda. ed., (1993) Residential Schools: The Stolen Years. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan.
- Johnson, Basil. (1974) "Bread Before Books or Books Before Bread". Waubageshig The Only Good Indian: Essays by Canadian Indians edited by Waubageshig. Don Mills: New Press, revised edition, (pp. 126-141).
- (1988) Indian School Days. Toronto: Key Porter Books.
- Kellough, Gail. (1980) "From Colonialism to Economic Imperialism: The Experience of the Canadian Indian". John Harp and John R. Hofley, eds. Structured Inequality in Canada. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, (pp. 343-377).
- Kennedy, Jacqueline Judith. (1970) "Qu'Appelle Industrial School: White 'Rites' for the Indians of the Old North-West". Unpublished Masters Thesis, Carleton University.
- Larrain, Jorge. (1979) The Concept of Ideology. London: Hutchinson and Company Ltd.
- Lascelles, Thomas A., O.M.I. (1992) "Indian Residential Schools". Canadian Catholic Review, Vol. 10, (pp. 6-13).
- Le Chevallier, Jules, O.M.I. (1944) St. Michael's School at Duck Lake: Trials and Progress of an Indian School Over Half a Century, 1894 - 1944. Edmonton: La Survivance Ltd. (Deschâtelets Archives, Ottawa, HR 6673.C73R, Doc. 1)
- Leighton, Douglas. (1983) "A Victorian Civil Servant at Work: Lawrence Vankoughnet and the Canadian Indian Department, 1874-1893". A.L. Getty and A.S. Lussier, eds. As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press. (pp. 104-119).
- Manuel, George and Michael Posluns. (1974) The Fourth World: An Indian Reality. Don Mills: Collier Macmillan Canada, Ltd.



- Miller, Jim. (1987) "The Irony of Residential Schooling". Canadian Journal of Native Education, Vol. XIV, No. 4, (pp. 3-14).
- (1990) "Researching the History of Indian Residential Schools: Difficulties and Benefits". Canadian Review of Social Policy, Vol. 26, (pp. 2-6).
- (1991a) "Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy". J. R. Miller, ed., Sweet Promises: A Reader in Indian-White Relations in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (pp. 325-352).
- (1991b) Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian White Relations in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, revised edition.
- (1992) "Denominational Rivalry in Indian Residential Education". Raymond Huel, ed., Western Oblate Studies 2. Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, (pp. 139-155).
- Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. (1992) "Apology Statement: An Apology to the First Nations of Canada by the Oblate Conference of Canada". Raymond Huel, ed., Western Oblate Studies 2. Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, (pp. 259-262).
- Moine, Louise. (1975) My Life in a Residential School. Provincial Chapter I.O.D.E., Saskatchewan.
- Morris, Alexander. (1880) The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories including The Negotiations on which they were based. First published in 1880. Reprinted in 1991, Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers.
- Moss, Wendy and Elaine Gardner-O'Toole. (1991) Aboriginal People: History of Discriminatory Laws, (Background Paper). Ottawa: Library of Parliament Research Branch.
- Mullaly, Robert. (1993) Structural Social Work: Ideology, Theory and Practice. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited.
- New Catholic Encyclopedia. (1967) Oblates of Mary Immaculate. New York: McGraw-Hill, Vol. X, (pp. 611-612).

- Oblate Fathers in Canada. (1958) Residential Education for Indian Acculturation: Workshop I General Principles. Ottawa: Indian and Eskimo Welfare Commission.
- Petrone, Penny. (1983) First People, First Voices: Historical Collection of Indian Writing. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Phillips, Todd. (1993) "Confronting the Pain: A Wounded Generation Begins to Heal". Article Circle, Fall/Winter, (pp. 20-29).
- Ponting, J. Rick. (1986) Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization. McClelland and Stewart Ltd.
- Ponting, J. Rick and Rogers Gibbons. (1980) Out of Irrelevance: A Socio-Political Introduction to Indian Affairs in Canada. Scarborough: Butterworth and Company (Canada) Limited.
- Prentice, Alison. (1977) The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited.
- Prentice, Alison and Susan E. Houston. (1975) Family, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century Canada. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Prucha, Francis Paul. (1979) The Churches and the Indian Schools 1888-1912. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Random House. (1992) Random House Webster's College Dictionary. New York: Random House Inc.
- Rose, Steven, John Hambley and Jeff Haywood. (1973) "Science, Racism and Ideology". The Socialist Register 1973, (pp. 235-260).
- Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College. (1977) "Schools - Duck Lake". Documents Relating to Indian Education in Saskatchewan, 1870-1950. Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, unpublished paper, (pp. 271-281).
- Satzewich, Vic and Terry Wotherspoon. (1993) First Nations: Race, Class and Gender Relations. Scarborough: Nelson Canada.

- Scott, Duncan C. (1914a) "Indian Affairs, 1840-1867" Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, eds. Canada and Its Provinces: A History of the Canadian People and Their Institutions by One Hundred Associates, Vol. V. Toronto: Glasgow, Brook and Company, (pp. 331-362).
- (1914b) "Indian Affairs, 1867-1912". Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, eds. Canada and Its Provinces: A History of the Canadian People and Their Institutions by One Hundred Associates, Vol. VII. Toronto: Glasgow, Brook and Company, (pp. 593-626).
- (1931) The Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada. Toronto: The Canadian Institute of International Affairs.
- Scott, James. (1990) Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts. London: Yale University Press.
- Smith, Derek G. (1993) "The Emergence of 'Eskimo Status': An Examination of the Eskimo Disk List System and its Social Consequences, 1925-1970". Noel Dyck and James B. Waldram Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada. Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, (pp. 41-74).
- Stanley, George F.G. (1983) "As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: An Historical Comment". A.L. Getty and A.S. Lussier, eds. As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, (pp. 1-26).
- Stepan, Nancy. (1982) The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960. London: Macmillan Press.
- Stuart, Paul. (1988) "Historical Research". Richard M. Grinnell, ed., Social Work Research and Evaluation. Itasca: Peacock, (pp. 316-332).
- Surtees, Robert J. (1988) "Canadian Indian Policies" William C. Sturtevant Handbook of North American Indians. Vol. 4. History of Indian White Relations. Washington: Smithsonian Institute, (pp. 81-95).
- Taylor, John Leonard. (1991) "Canada's North-West Indian Policy in the 1870s: Traditional Premises and Necessary Innovations". J.R. Miller, ed., Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (pp. 207-211).

- Teevan, James J. (1992) Introduction to Sociology: A Canadian Focus, Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., fourth edition.
- Titley, Brian. (1984) "Duncan Campbell Scott and Indian Education Policy". J.D. Wilson ed., An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History. Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, University of British Columbia, (pp. 141-153).
- , (1986a) "Schooling and Civilization". E.B. Titley A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, (pp. 75-93).
- , (1986b) "Indian Industrial Schools in Western Canada". N. Sheehan, D.C. Jones and J.D. Wilson, eds., Schools in the West: Essays on Canadian Education History. Calgary: Detselig, (pp. 133-153).
- , (1992) "Dunbow Indian Industrial School: An Oblate Experiment in Education". Raymond Huel, ed., Western Oblate Studies 2. Queenston: The Edwin Mellon Press, (pp. 95-113).
- Tobias, John. (1983) "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885". Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 64, No. 4, December, (pp. 519-548).
- , (1991) "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy". J. R. Miller, ed., Sweet Promises: A Reader in Indian-White Relations in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (127-144).
- Treaties and Historical Research Centre. (1978) The Historical Development of the Indian Act. Ottawa: P.R.E. Group, Indian and Northern Affairs.
- Upton, L.S.F. (1973) "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy". Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 8, No. 4, November. (pp. 51-61).
- Wacquant, Loïc J.D. (1992) "Toward a Social Praxeology: The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology". Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, (pp. 1-60).

- Walker, James W. St. G. (1983) "The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing, 1972-1982". A.L. Getty and A.S. Lussier, eds. As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, (pp. 340-361).
- Wasylow, Walter Julian. (1972) "History of Battleford Indian Industrial School for Indians". Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Saskatchewan.
- Wilson, J. Donald. (1986) "No Blanket to be Worn in School: The Education of Indians in Nineteenth Century Ontario". Jean Barman, et al., eds., Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, (pp. 64-87).
- Wright, Ronald. (1992) Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes. Toronto: Penguin Books.
- Venne, Sharon Helen. (1981) Indian Acts and Amendments 1868-1975: An Indexed Collection. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan.
- York, Geoffry. (1989) The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada. Toronto: Lester.

### Primary Sources

Department of Indian Affairs. (1908) Regulations Relating to the Education of Indian Children. Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, (DIA, rare book E96.2 R44)

----- (1916) Regulations Relating to the Education of Indian Children. Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau. (DIA, rare book E96.2 R44)

Department of the Interior. (1877) "Report of the Minister of the Interior" Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 30 June 1876. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger and Company.

Deschâtelets Archives. Duck Lake Indian Residential School. (HR 6671.C73R, HR 6672.C73R, and HR 6673.C73R)

Dominion of Canada. (1897) "Duck Lake Boarding School". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1896. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson.

----- (1897) "Report of Chief Inspector Wadsworth of Indian Schools in Manitoba and the North-West Territories". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1896. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson.

----- (1898) "North-West Territories St. Michael's Boarding School". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1897. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson.

----- (1900) "North-West Territories, Battleford Inspectorate". Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1899. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson.

Johnson, William. (1994) "Ideological overkill fuelling myth of Indian residential schools". Ottawa Citizen. 20 August 1994.

Morris, Alexander. (1880) The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories including The Negotiations on which they were based. First published in 1880. Reprinted in 1991, Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers.

National Archives of Canada. "Duck Lake Agency - Duck Lake Residential School - Establishment - Building - Maintenance - Supplies - Accounts, 1894". Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Vol. 6305, File 652-5.

----- "Duck Lake Agency - Duck Lake Residential School - General Administration, 1892-1898 and 1901-1929". Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8682, Vol. 6305, File 652-1.

----- "Duck Lake Agency - General Correspondence Relating to Schools, 1894-1910". Indian Affairs Black [Western] Series, RG-10, Reel C-10163, Vol. 3929, File 117056-1.

----- "Headquarters - General Education Policy - Roman Catholic Church, 1905-1934". Indian Affairs School Files, RG-10, Reel C-8153, Vol. 6041, File 160-5.

Ryerson, E. (1847) Indian Welfare and Training Oblate Commission. Toronto: Memo to George Vardon, Assistant Superintendent General, Indian Affairs, 26 May 1847. (Deschâtelets Archives HR 6503.C73R 4)

Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus. (1896) "Duck Lake". Annals. Glenbow Museum Archives, np. (No. M1395, File 10)

**Finding Aids**

Lascelles, Thomas A., O.M.I. (1991) Indian Residential Schools: Survey of Documents at Deschâtelets Archives. Ottawa: Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Owens, Brian M. and Claude M. Roberto. (1989) A Guide to the Archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Edmonton: The Missionary Oblates.



**Appendix A.1****Translation: Melasippe Paquette to D.H. Macdowall, 5 January 1895**

The Department must understand that it will never civilize the Savages unless the children are removed from their parents, and they close the small reserve schools, these schools are of no value. If the government does not want my school to be Industrial, let it be a Boarding school but allow me to receive at least 100 children, as there are many little Savages who run through the woods like animals, whereas if they were raised in school they would become honest and intelligent.

Appendix A.2

Statutes of Canada, 1894, Chapter 32, Section 11, Subsections 137-138

<p>New sections added.</p>	<p><b>11.</b> <i>The Indian Act</i> is hereby amended by adding the following sections thereto :-</p>
<p>Powers of Governor in Council as to regulations for attendance at school.</p>	<p>"137. The Governor in Council may make regulations, either general or affecting the Indians of any province or of any named band, to secure the compulsory attendance of children at school.</p> <p>"2. Such regulations, in addition to any other provisions deemed expedient, may provide for the arrest and conveyance to school, and detention there, of truant children and of children who are prevented by their parents or guardians from attending: and such regulations may provide for the punishment, upon summary conviction, by fine or imprisonment, or both, of parents and guardians, or persons having the charge of children, who fail, refuse or neglect to cause such children to attend school."</p>
<p>Powers as to establishment of industrial or boarding schools.</p>	<p>"138. The Governor in Council may establish an industrial school or a boarding school for Indians, or may declare any existing Indian school to be such industrial school or boarding school for the purposes of this section.</p>
<p>Regulations.</p>	<p>"2. The Governor in Council may make regulations, which shall have the force of law, for the committal by justices or Indian agents of children of Indian blood under the age of sixteen years, to such industrial school or boarding school, there to be kept, cared for and educated for a period not extending beyond the time at which such children shall reach the age of eighteen years.</p>
<p>Powers as to application of annuities.</p>	<p>"3. Such regulations may provide, in such manner as to the Governor in Council seems best, for the application of the annuities and interest moneys of children committed to such industrial school or boarding school, to the maintenance of such schools respectively, or to the maintenance of the children themselves."</p>

[Note: For reference purposes only. Verbatim but not an exact duplicate]

**END**

**1 7 - 1 | 1 - 9 | 5**

**FIN**

As the situation continued to deteriorate and the expense of providing rations rose accordingly, Sir John A. Macdonald's Christian charity of a few years earlier also began to wear thin. When questioned in the House of Commons on the quality of the food the Plains Indians were receiving he countered:

The honourable gentleman says there is a fraud on the Indians because the food is imperfect. It cannot be considered a fraud on the Indians because they have no right to that food. They are simply living on the benevolence and charity of the Canadian Parliament, and, as the old adage says, beggars should not be choosers....Even in Ontario, the honourable gentleman has seen and heard of contractors sending in inferior articles, which were afterwards condemned. Up there, they are sent to a distant post, they cannot be condemned, they have to be used. I do not think there has been any unwholesome food given, although it has not, perhaps come up to standard (Chamberlin 1975: 175).<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps this endless struggle just to get enough to eat explains why Indian people may have been more willing, at least initially, to entrust their children to the missionaries or to send them to residential schools. On the Poundmaker Reserve in Saskatchewan, Father Cochin recognized only too well the link between hunger and Indian children's desire for schooling when he wrote:

I saw the gaunt children dying of hunger come to my place to be instructed. Although it was minus 30 to 40 degrees their bodies were scarcely covered with torn rags. These poor children came to catechism and to school. It was a pity to see them. The hope of having a little morsel of good dry cake was the incentive which drove them to this cruel exposure each day more no doubt than the desire of educating themselves. This privation made many die (Goodwill and Sluman 1984: 33).<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Sir John A. Macdonald. Commons Debates, 15 April 1886, (pp. 738), as cited by Chamberlin (1975: 175).

<sup>44</sup> Father Louis Cochin, C.N.W.H. Society, volume 1, as cited by Goodwill and Sluman (1984: 33).