

CANADIAN NATIVE EDUCATION POLICY:
A CASE STUDY OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL AT SHUBENACADIE, NOVA SCOTIA

by
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ABSTRACT

Early educational policies for Canada's Indians were assimilative; residential schools established throughout Canada were intended to remove Indian children from home influences and to raise them in the culture and values of the Whiteman. The only such school built in the Maritime Provinces was the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia, which operated under the auspices of the Catholic Church. This study considers the governmental policies for Indian education as exemplified by this one school.

The Annual Reports of Indian Affairs were used to prepare a brief overview of the history of native education in Canada, with an emphasis on the evolution of the residential school ideal. Records from the Public Archives of Canada were studied extensively to provide an accurate history of the Shubenacadie school from its inception in 1930 to its close in 1967. Consideration was given to the rationale for this type of educational institution in the Maritimes, and to the government's policies for admission, health care, vacation, and discharge. Truancy records and correspondence files provided a view of the school from the point of view of the students and their parents. To try to understand the entire residential school experience, recent media accounts of the school were reviewed, and this information was augmented by interviews with some of the former students.

This history illustrates the basic cultural differences which divided the Indian children from the school administrators, and contributed decisively to the ultimate failure of the residential school system. A look at such alternatives as integrated provincial schools and segregated band-controlled reserve schools, suggests that Indian educational problems are still far from their solution.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

When the residential school for the Micmac Indians of the Maritimes was constructed at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, in 1928-29, it was one of a series of seventy-eight co-educational residential schools established in Canada by the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa.¹ It was the only such institution east of Ontario, and the only federally-sponsored residential school ever in existence in the Maritime Provinces. In this institution, it was intended to "consolidate Indian educational work in the Maritimes" and planned to "mould the lives of the young aborigines and aid them in their search towards the goal of complete Canadian citizenship."² Duncan C. Scott was the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs in that year, and he stated the object and desire of the department in the establishment of this new school was that its graduates should become self-supporting and "not return to their old environment and habits."³

The history of the residential school at Shubenacadie is not a long one; though the building stood for fifty-seven years until destroyed by a 1986 fire, it operated as a school only from February 1930 to June 1967.⁴ Its story spans only thirty-seven years; even so, there are discrepancies between the objective and the result, gaps in the available information, and a gulf between the official record and the tales told out of school. It is a story not easily assembled in full.

There are three viewpoints to be interwoven in this history: that of the government which advocated and established the school with remnant colonial attitudes; that of the Oblate Fathers and Sisters of Charity who administered and taught in the school with humanitarian

intentions; and that of the Micmac parents and children whose lives were touched and changed by the school but who had no input into, or control over, its operation.

Part of the rationale for this study is to attempt to understand, if not reconcile, these three separate and disparate viewpoints. In addition, this thesis will briefly trace the history of Indian education in Canada, with emphasis on the evolution of the residential school movement from the early educational philosophies which shaped it, after 1867, to its ultimate failure one hundred years later. It is intended that this history of one residential school should serve as more than an isolated case, but rather give an insight into the experience of residential schools generally, for "to the Indian child it must seem that once you have lived in one residential school you have lived in them all."⁵ This examination further endeavours to provide insight into the broader educational obligation to match the perceptions and values of educators to those of their students.

The Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie has not previously been examined in depth or with an attempt at considering the roles the government and church played in its operation. Several accounts from the point of view of the Micmac people have been published by the popular media, but without attempting to balance these accounts with a consideration of the administrative point of view.

Twelve years passed after the closing of the school before a series of articles in the Micmac News⁶ sought to publicize the residential school experience as recalled by its former students. The CBC ran a radio essay on the school in October 1986 after its destruction by fire brought it to the public's attention,⁷ and from this, the same journalist wrote a special report for Atlantic Insight

magazine in February 1988.⁸ The school, then, has been the subject of several popular press accounts, but has not previously attracted the attention of historians or educators, although at the present time, a Micmac woman and former student of the school is writing a book on the school, which should on completion be a comprehensive account.⁹

The earliest educators in Canada were missionaries, beginning as early as 1616 when the Recollet Fathers conducted schools for Indian children in New France, and continuing through the 1700s when the Jesuits were involved in education. For almost 200 years these schools, which concentrated on religious teachings, were conducted with "little financial assistance being given by the legislatures."¹⁰ It should be mentioned that education for white children was also wanting, and one of the first schools in Upper Canada (1784) was opened for the Mohawk Indians.¹¹ In addition to the work of the Jesuits, the New England Company brought Protestant zeal to the New Brunswick Indians in the late 1700s, where they met with "fierce parental resistance to the use of any type of discipline with their children."¹² Later, Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were involved in Indian education in the 19th Century.¹³ Prior to Confederation, in Lower Canada there were a few day schools, a farm school at a seminary, and experiments in taking Indian boys into residence and training them in classroom and farm work. Grants were provided for these endeavours by Lower Canada. In Upper Canada, only two day schools of forty established before 1867 received government grants. A community training centre for the education of both young and old was established by the government in Upper Canada in 1836, but was abandoned twenty years later "as it did not appeal to the Indian temperament."¹⁴ In Nova Scotia a request for a school at Eskasoni was successful in 1845, but it remained open only

a year as funds were lacking. During the 1850s and 60s, repeated efforts by the Eskasoni Indians to have the school reopened were of no avail, and during the same period, "attempts to have two Micmac boys educated at Pictou Academy, and a young man named Michael Christmas trained as a teacher for the Indians came to nothing."¹⁵ The colonial government did sponsor two Micmac boys in the newly-founded Saint Mary's Seminary in 1843; their tuition was to be free but board was to cost sixty-six pounds annually for the two of them. However, the following year the expense was considered too high to warrant their continuation at the school.¹⁶

There was a scattering of schools elsewhere in Canada, all owing to the efforts of Roman Catholic, Church of England, and Methodist missionaries. These efforts on behalf of the Indian children included foster homes in New Brunswick, a boarding school on the Red River as early as 1822, an agricultural school in Manitoba in 1833, and day schools in western Canada. At the time of confederation, then, Indian schools were largely supported by missionaries, with little government assistance.¹⁷ At that time in the Maritime Provinces there were a few literate Indians, "but in more than two hundred fifty years, no formal educational tradition of any kind had been created."¹⁸

Although legislation prior to 1867 laid the basis for the development of provincial responsibility for Indian Affairs, in 1868, directly after Confederation, a series of acts was passed which established Indian Affairs as a federal trust.¹⁹ This new Indian Affairs office, administered by a branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, accepted responsibility for one residential school and forty nine day schools, all in Ontario and Quebec (though there

were several missionary Indian schools in operation which did not make reports to the government).²⁰ There were no schools expressly for native children at that time in Nova Scotia.

Five years after Confederation, Joseph Howe as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs noted in 1872 in his first annual report the contrast between the Indians of Upper and Lower Canada with those of his native Nova Scotia. The Indian gentleman of the Canadas he described as "courteous, intelligent and reasonable...well educated, well dressed, as careful in their habits and as courteous in their manners as are the highest class of white men." The Micmacs, however, he considered had been reduced to shameful conditions "by the neglect of the Government and the indifference of the whites," and he saw that the small government grants to the Micmacs were mere alms which could not "encourage industry, thrift, and social elevation." Unfortunately, ill health allowed Howe only two years in the service of the Nova Scotia Indians, educating some of their children "without reward or the hope of it...to set an example of devotion," but his more important contribution was in bringing about changes which led the system of government administration of Indian Affairs in Nova Scotia toward equality with that in the Canadas.²¹

The first day school in Nova Scotia mentioned in the statistics of the Annual Reports of Indian Affairs was near Bear River in 1872, and though it had a reported enrollment of forty-seven, the following year's report lamented that the school "seems to have been discontinued." The reporter was "unable to ascribe this to apathy on the part of the local agents,"²² though he failed to state where he felt the blame should have been placed.

On the Shubenacadie reserve, where this study concentrates, the

first day school was requested in 1880 by the Indian Agent, James Gass, on behalf of the parents:

Another matter in which they seem greatly interested is a school which they say they must have, as they do not want their children to grow up in ignorance, as they have done. They have among them one of their own tribe, named Joseph Cope, who is capable of teaching their children, having got an education in a neighboring city, and they begged me to ask you to assist them in this matter at once.²³

He reiterated his request in the following year, "The one great want...is a school, as they are very ignorant and say they do not wish their children to grow up as they have done."²⁴

The school became a reality only fourteen years later, in September 1894, when Gass reported he was taking steps to obtain a teacher; however, Joseph Cope did not fill the vacancy.²⁵ Robert J. Logan was hired at \$240 annually, to teach 25 children, though average daily attendance was only 12.²⁶ Two years later the Indian Affairs report read that all students in this new school "now can converse in English, many are capable of reading it, a few can write it, and the youths are getting a thorough elementary education from a very competent teacher."²⁷ Attendance, however, remained a problem, even though Mr. Logan was referred to in the reports as a "much-loved" and "patient" teacher, "who not only spends school hours with the children, but devotes much of his spare hours to the little ones, telling them about white men's ways."²⁸

These children were reported to be apt pupils, "proficient in their studies...in many cases in advance of white children of the same age who attend public schools," and able to "remember well what they have acquired at school even though absent for a long time."²⁸ For although the parents had urged the opening of the school, and did

"acknowledge the institution to be good,"³⁰ the agent reported in 1903 that they did not have the interest to encourage attendance. Of 17 pupils that year, the daily average attendance was only six. Average daily attendance declined each year, until it stood at only two, and the school was closed on June 30, 1906. Robert Logan had taught there for twelve years.³¹

In his annual report for 1911, Duncan C. Scott, the Superintendent of Indian Education wrote at length about the general situation of Indians in Nova Scotia:

Although the province of Nova Scotia has been settled and cultivated for very many years, the condition of the Indians in many districts is that of nomads. They have failed after all the years of their association with white people to reside permanently upon their reserves and make their living by agriculture. They are prone to wander about from place to place, selling their baskets or squatting in the vicinity of towns and doing odd jobs for the residents. These habits render it somewhat difficult to give all their children the benefits of day school education, but on several of the reserves successful day schools have been established...and where active and interested teachers are in control there is no doubt that many of the difficulties which now seem insurmountable may be overcome. The actual poverty of the Indians is also a detrimental factor. The children are often without proper clothing to protect them from the inclemency of the winter weather, and in the future in deserving cases a quantity of clothing will be given sufficient to enable the children to attend school regularly.³²

He reported the following year that this suggestion regarding clothing was acted upon, with the result that "the average attendance of the schools was considerably increased and the health and comfort of the children promoted thereby."²³

March 12 that year the day school at Shubenacadie was reopened, there being deemed by the local agent to be sufficient children of

school age, numbering 32. Mr. Thomas Grumley was appointed teacher to those who enrolled, but the school remained open only until the summer. Wallace reported:

For a time the attendance was fairly good, but before the summer was concluded, the school had again to be abandoned on account of poor attendance. There is only a small proportion of the Indians of Hants County residing on the reserve, and few children have the advantage of a continuous residence near the school. However, those who have been kept at school have been taught such rudiments of education as reading in English, mathematics, grammar, history, geography, etc. They seem to soon tire of all educational work, and do not have much encouragement from their parents to persist in it. Hence to close the school seemed the only thing to do in the circumstances.²⁴

A new school was reported opened in January, 1913, with Miss Mary Ahern as teacher. Miss Mary Short succeeded her the following year, and remained as teacher for eight years. Miss Ruby Anthony taught the next year, and Mrs. Andrew King (possibly the same person as 'Miss Anthony') for the next eight years. From the re-opening in 1913, an average number of seven children attended the school daily, until February 28, 1930, when it was closed owing to the opening of the residential school.³⁵

It was this pattern of poor attendance, noted in all Indian day schools, that urged government's strong advocacy of industrial and residential schools. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, these schools were perceived as necessary to promote attendance and were being put forward as the resolution to the problem of the hitherto unsuccessful attempts at Indian education. The problem, however, was also tied to the paternalism of the government, who saw the Indian only as "grossly ignorant," "inherently superstitious," with "infantile minds," having been "nurtured from birth in illusions."³⁶ This perception of the

Indian as inferior to white man was manifested also in the educational policies of the religious missionaries, who "inculcated the Indians with foreign cultures and values, and saw fit to suppress native religions, languages, tastes, manners, and ideas."³⁷ Between them, the early government and churches attempted to pass the message to the Indian people that their culture was inferior and irrelevant. This belief, however, has been belied by the persistence of Indian culture throughout the almost four hundred years since the first schools of the Recollet Fathers opened in 1616. As McGee has asked,

Why is it that although the native peoples of Atlantic Canada have been in extensive contact with European peoples for centuries, they have been able to maintain ethnic integrity throughout this period even when tremendous pressures have been placed upon them to assimilate?³⁸

In 1920 compulsory education of Indian children between the ages of seven and sixteen was provided by statute, though it was the usual practice to encourage residential students to remain in school and away from reserve influence until seventeen or eighteen.³⁹ That the residential school was superior to the day school, especially in its provision of vocational instruction and manual training, remained a running theme through the annual reports to the 1940s. Neither did the aims of Indian schooling change from the 1800s: even as late as 1969, it was stated in the Annual Report of Indian Affairs that "the task of education is to assist acculturation... ." ⁴⁰

Chapter 2 will show how the residential schools evolved and how the government's Indian education philosophies persisted. In Chapter 3 the outline of the establishment of the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, and the curriculum it followed, is gleaned from the school files available from the Public Archives of Canada. This same

sketchy record is used in Chapter 4 to try to decipher the rules and realities of admission, vacation, and discharge procedures, and in Chapter 5 to discover details of health problems, school accidents and deaths. Chapter 6 looks into the question of truancy, and Chapter 7 draws largely upon the popular media, supplemented by personal communication with former students, in an attempt to see the school from their point of view. In conclusion, the intent and ultimate failure of the residential school system is analyzed in Chapter 8, along with a discussion of the recent alternatives in Canadian Indian education.

Chapter 1 - Notes and References

1. The Halifax-Chronicle, Wednesday, June 26, 1929, pg. 9. When the construction of the Shubenacadie Residential School was completed, the newspaper solicited information from the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. Duncan C. Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General, supplied the newspaper with a 2-page report.
2. Ibid.
3. The relevant correspondence is PAC RG10 Vol. 6052 File 260-5 Pt. 2, Duncan C. Scott to The Halifax Chronicle, April 4, 1929.
4. Correspondence Fr. Mackey, Principal of the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, Ottawa, Jan 30/39. Although it is stated that the school opened in February 1930, the first attendance statistics available in the Annual Reports to Parliament are for the year ending 1931.
5. Canadian Welfare Council, Indian Residential Schools: a research study of the child care programs of nine residential schools in Saskatchewan, January 31, 1967, under the direction of George Caldwell, p. 93.
6. Micmac News ran a three-part article on "The Shubenacadie Indian Residential School," written by Conrad W. Paul, in August, September, and November 1978. The October issue also contains a memory by Rita Joe entitled "As I Saw It: Shubie," and the November issue contains a letter to the editor written by Gilbert Oskaboose, who wrote of his similar experiences in an Ontario residential school.
7. This radio essay, entitled "When School Becomes Prison," was broadcast on CBCs "Maritime Magazine" program, 9:30 a.m., October 12, 1986. The reporter was Heather Laskey. Noel Knockwood, one of the informants on the program, kindly lent me a tape of the program to transcribe.
8. "Hard to Erase Bitter Memories of School Days Filled with Fear," by Heather Laskey, Atlantic Insight, February 1988, pp. 21-24.
9. Isabel Shay has been researching the school over the past few years, and hopes to have her book published in the near future.
10. Relevant correspondence is in the Sessional Papers, Annual Report of Indian Affairs, (SPAR) 1926-1927, Duncan C. Scott to J.L. Ilsley, House of Commons, Ottawa, March 1, 1929. Letter is in response to Mr. Ilsley's request for information on the new residential school at Shubenacadie, and includes "a brief review of Indian education in Canada which will suggest the Department's general program and will indicate the purposes and aims of the boarding school for Indian children in the east."

11. Duncan C. Scott, report on the history of Indian education in Canada prior to 1867 (SPAR, 1926-1927, p. 12, 13). It should be pointed out that although Scott refers to this school as "the first," the Jesuits had a mission in St. Marie near Midland, Ontario, prior to 1648 (when it was wiped out by Iroquois), and presumably they were engaged at least in informal education there.
12. Hamilton, W.D., The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes, Fredericton, N.B.: The Micmac-Maliseet Institute, University of New Brunswick, 161 pp., 1986 (p. 4).
13. Scott, SPAR 1926-1927, Ibid.
14. Scott, Ibid.
15. Hamilton, 1986, Ibid. (p. 8).
16. Quoted from JHA, App. 1, 1843:10, on pg. 485, in Helen Ralston's comprehensive history of Micmac education: "Religion, Public Policy, and the Education of Micmac Indians, 1605-1872," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology. 18 (4) 1981, 470-497.
17. Scott, SPAR 1926-27, Ibid.
18. Hamilton, 1986, Ibid. (p. 8).
19. Davey, R.F. "The Establishment and Growth of Indian School Administration," The Canadian Superintendent 1965, p. 1-3.
20. Scott, SPAR 1926-1927, Ibid.
21. SPAR 1873, Joseph's Howe's report to the House of Commons for the year ending 30 June 1872.
22. SPAR 1874, report of William Spragge, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, March 18, 1874.
23. Relevant correspondence is SPAR 1881, James Gass, Indian Agent of Shubenacadie to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, September 28, 1880.
24. SPAR 1882, letter of James Gass to Indian Affairs, October 14, 1881.
25. In fact, Joseph Cope applied again ten years later, in 1904, to teach on the Afton Reserve, but again was not hired by the government (Hamilton, 1986, p. 15, Ibid.).
26. SPAR 1896, letter of James Gass to Indian Affairs, August 30, 1895.
27. SPAR 1898, letter of Alonzo Wallace, Indian Agent for Shubenacadie to Indian Affairs, September 1, 1897.

28. SPAR 1901, letter of Alonzo Wallace to Indian Affairs, August 10, 1900, and 1908, Wallace to Indian Affairs, October 8, 1904.
29. Ibid.
30. SPAR 1903, letter of Alonzo Wallace to Indian Affairs, August 30, 1902.
31. SPAR 1906-1907, letter of Alonzo Wallace to Indian Affairs, July 10, 1906.
32. SPAR 1911, report from Duncan C. Scott, Superintendent of Indian Education to Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs.
33. SPAR 1912.
34. SPAR 1914, report of Alonzo Wallace to Indian Affairs.
35. SPAR 1913-1930.
36. SPAR 1888, report on education by Thomas White, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.
37. Friederes, J.S. Canada's Indians: Contemporary Conflicts, Prentice-Hall, Scarborough, 1974, p. 31, 55.
38. McGee, H.F. The Native Peoples of Atlantic Canada: a history of ethnic interaction. The Carleton Library No. 72, McClelland & Stewart Limited, Toronto.
39. SPAR 1932, report by Duncan C. Scott.
40. SPAR 1958-59, report of H.M. Jones, Director, Indian Affairs.

CHAPTER 2 - THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL CONCEPT

Residential schooling for Canadian Indians had its beginnings long before Confederation; its history can be retraced to New France in the 1600s, when an industrial school for Indians was conducted by the Sulpician religious order in Montreal.¹ Also in that century, French missionaries took Canadian Indian children of both sexes to board in schools in France, but this was a short-lived experiment. It was a costly venture meant to produce native teachers; however, few returned to assist the mission, and some of those who did return found themselves to be cultural misfits. Even so, the early Jesuits determined that the Indian youths had "minds as good as those of our Europeans."²

The churches were heavily involved in Indian education in both Lower and Upper Canada by the 1840s. In 1837 the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society offered to provide board and education should the government establish schools in Upper Canada for Indians, and this proposal was supported in a government report in 1845.³

In western Canada a Church of England chaplain conducted an Indian boarding school on the Red River as early as 1822, and in 1833 a Roman Catholic priest managed an agricultural school for Indians in what is now St. Eustache, Manitoba. In British Columbia a New England Company school which began early in the 19th century eventually developed into an Indian Residential School,⁴ and in 1863 a manual labour boarding school was established by the Oblate Fathers to teach Indians religion, English literacy, and farming.⁵

Ground rules were laid in 1847 for the operation of Indian industrial schools by the Superintendent of Education in Upper Canada,

Egerton Ryerson. The aim of the schools was to "give a plain English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic" which was to include gardening and make-and-mend techniques for farming implements. Students were to live together, their domestic and religious education was to be provided for, and it was strongly recommended by Ryerson that the schools be jointly operated by the government and churches, for he felt that religion was necessary to "improve and elevate" the Indian's character. The government would formulate the school regulations, and provide inspections and supporting funds, while the churches would administer the schools, assist with the costs, and of course, offer spiritual guidance to the pupils.⁶

Ryerson further recommended that during the summers students in the industrial schools should labour daily for eight to twelve hours and study for two to four hours, and that during the winter there should be less labour and more study. He proposed that school-leavers with records of good conduct should be paid at a rate of a penny a day for the work they had done while in the school,⁷ a suggestion that was apparently never implemented.

Within four years of Ryerson's report, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was operating two boarding schools for Indians, the Alnwich and the Mount Elgin Industrial Institutions, established to teach Indian children useful trades and domestic skills, and to "inculcate habits of industry and frugality."⁸ The schools were allotted land for farming, which would provide food and cash crops, and were additionally supported by the government on a per capita basis. This fact Duncan C. Scott was pleased to recall in his brief 1927 account of Indian educational history:

...right at the outset of governmental association with Indian educational activity, we find two of the outstanding characteristics of the present system--church co-operation in the work and per capita grant payments to residential schools.⁹

After the new federal Indian Affairs branch assumed control of Indian education, it took over the administration of only one of the existing Indian residential schools, the Wesleyan Mt. Elgin school in Upper Canada.¹⁰

In 1879 the federal government commissioned an investigation into the system of Indian industrial boarding schools in the United States. They were generally found to be administered by Indian agents, or by churches using government contributions made on a per-capita basis. In addition to academic subjects, boys in these schools learned agriculture and trades, and girls learned domestic arts.¹¹ The investigator was particularly impressed by the schools for the Cherokee, which "promoted agricultural self-support, Indian administration of education, and Indian local government."¹² However, he recommended the institution of denominational industrial schools in Canada, and the first three were built in the west, two in Saskatchewan, and one in Alberta in 1883-84.¹³ By the end of 1890, sixteen more industrial schools for Indians had been established.¹⁴

As early as 1885 the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, John A. MacDonald, was reporting that already-established boarding schools had proven their superiority over day schools. Irregular attendance at Indian day schools was "the greatest obstacle to the successful education of Indian children,"¹⁴ and it resulted from the neglect of their nomadic parents to oblige attendance. However, in commending the multi-purpose education which was available to the pupils of industrial boarding institutions, his main reason for praise

was neatly and centrally placed: besides being instructed in the usual branches of education, he said, the children would be "lodged, fed, clothed, kept separate from home influences, taught trades, and instructed in agriculture."¹⁵

The necessity of separation from the home environment was to remain a predominant theme throughout many years of Indian Affairs' annual reports. Thomas White, who wrote the florid educational report in 1887, urged that any available legitimate means be used to prevent educated Indians from returning to the reserves. After the "laudable teachers" of "these poor children of the forest" had expanded the "infantile Indian mind" and shown them the "light which a knowledge of the Christian religion invariably imparts," he believed they should be strongly discouraged from renewing their former reserve associations for fear of "retrogression."¹⁶

E. Dewdney, in the report of 1889, reiterated the idea that anyone taking an interest in the advancement of the Indian race would unquestionably see that boarding schools could best advance their morals and intellects.¹⁷ Dewdney did not define education's "object in view," but he did say that day schools were not accomplishing it. The boarding school would offer a "more perfect system":

The boarding school disassociates the Indian child from the deleterious home influences to which he would otherwise be subjected. It reclaims him from the uncivilized state in which he has been brought up. It brings him into contact from day to day with all that tends to effect a change in his views and habits of life.¹⁸

Dewdney was a strong advocate of boarding and industrial schooling during the four years he submitted the annual reports. Because he saw Indians as having an "innate...utter disregard of time and ignorance of

its value," he felt the intrinsic worth of this type of school was its teaching that there should be an object for the employment of every moment.¹⁹

In 1891 Dewdney made the bold observation that parents who agreed to board their children in industrial schools would be afforded new freedom. No longer restrained at home by the necessity of enforcing attendance of their children at day schools, they would be able to follow their wandering tendencies and "be at liberty to go where they pleased." This proposed dismissal of the adult Indians, who were perhaps felt to be beyond the redemption of civilization, was well suited to Dewdney's solution to the problem he designated "the Indian question." He envisioned that the Department of Indian Affairs should

obtain entire possession of all Indian children...and keep them at schools of the industrial type until they...had a thorough course of instruction...in the ordinary subjects taught at public schools (and) in some useful and profitable trade, or in agriculture.²⁰

Besides eliminating "ignorance and superstitious blindness," this would also be an economical solution to the Indian problem, as the schools would produce "useful" members of society.²¹ His suggestion not only relied on the parents' willingness to rid themselves of their children, but it gave no consideration to the damage that would be wrought upon the family life of the Indian, nor any thought to the possible long-term result of obliterating parental responsibility.²²

The attitude of the parents toward boarding and industrial schooling was recorded in the annual reports only according to the government's understanding of it. It has already been seen that the parents' nomadic habits were cited as a justification for having their children removed to boarding schools, and that they were accused of

being neglectful, ignorant, and superstitious. That they were "prejudiced" against residential schooling was first mentioned in the annual report of 1893, in which it was claimed that any parental objections were being rapidly overcome,

a result effected no doubt by their observing the kind treatment extended to their children and the great improvement in the appearance and manners of the latter.²³

However, this appears to have been unfounded optimism, as three years later it was reported that the "less civilized bands" were still suspicious of the government's intentions in placing their children in boarding institutions. Haytor Reed, who echoed many of Dewdney's solutions to the Indian question, did afford credit to the parents for having a "fondness" for their children, but felt certain they would get over their initial reluctance to place them in boarding schools.²⁴

The matter of "kind treatment" also came into question three years later. A newspaper item in 1886 reported that physical abuse of a child in a Saskatchewan Industrial School had resulted in parental opposition to enrolling their children in schools. "Indian Affairs denied the allegation, but it was not an isolated occurrence."²⁵ It will be seen in a chapter 6 how glibly the government was able to dismiss similar charges against the Shubenacadie Residential School some fifty years later.

James Smart noted in 1898 that Indians had a "natural aversion to the monotonous work and confinement in schools" and that the children received much sympathy from their parents, who disliked subjecting them to discipline, and regarded personal chastisement as a great indignity. He did not suggest curtailment of corporal punishment in the schools, but instead urged the removal of the children from home influences so

they could be speedily and thoroughly inculcated with "habits, customs, and modes of thought of the white man."²⁶

Smart also recorded the parents' "strong disinclination to apply or have teachers apply, especially to their boys, such discipline as is required to ensure attendance and progress." Superior teachers were being recommended for Indian schools, not because they would be able to offer better education, but because they were required to exert influence on the parents. Smart suggested that boarding schools should be established on the reserves "where the parents can see the children from time to time and thus greatly mitigate the sense of separation."²⁷ His successor, Frank Pedley, advocated boarding schools on the reserve "with a view to overcoming the strong objection manifested by the parents to the removal of their children to any great distance."²⁸ However, it was felt that Indian attitudes toward education would not change so long as they remained a distinct people. Smart looked forward to the "light of Christianity" removing any "remaining pagan element," and to the demise of dependence on "nomadic pursuits which are so inimical to anything like regularity of attendance."²⁹

Parental hostility was deepened as it became clear that the children enrolled in industrial schools would probably be away from home for several years, for in the interest of economy the Department of Indian Affairs did not always grant summer and holiday leave to children who lived long distances from the school.³⁰ This policy persisted, and in chapter 4 it will be shown that parents were not always informed, when they signed the admission forms for residential schools, that they were in fact relinquishing custody of their children, possibly until the age of eighteen, at the discretion of the department.

Smart blamed all parental objections to the schools on the paganism of the Indians:

the belief prevails that the children will be educated into other creeds, which will affect their existence in a future state, and separate them from their parents in the great hereafter.³¹

It was not only during the afterlife that parents felt they would lose their children; they recognized that education would also destroy sympathy between them and their children in this life.³² Thus it was deemed important to overcome these superstitions, prejudices, and fears of the parents. In 1904 Pedley suggested that continuing Indian contact with Christian civilization would make the parents less "disposed to regard education as an attempt to erect a barrier between them and their children." It is interesting that he expected the Indians would become more appreciative of the value of education once they understood the necessity "for protection in dealing with the superior race."³³

It was not necessary to wait, however, until contact with Christian civilization could make Indian parents well-disposed toward residential schooling for their children. In 1894 the government had taken over from the band councils the authority to make regulations regarding school attendance, and the Governor-in-Council was empowered to admit Indian children under sixteen to the care and education of industrial and boarding schools.³⁴

There was only a slight difference between the early Indian industrial and boarding schools: industrial schools tended to be far removed from the reserves and were for the benefit of children between fourteen and eighteen, while boarding schools for the younger children were situated on or near the reserves. In industrial schools, boys

studied with carpenters, cobblers, and blacksmiths, as well as learning to farm, while girls learned tailoring, laundry, kitchen work, and general housework, all these studies being in addition to academic work. Although the boarding schools offered no mechanical arts, the boys did gardening and farming while the girls undertook household duties, so even boarding schools were semi-industrial.³⁵ These schools were fitting the Indian children for their "expected future existence on the lower fringes of the dominant society."³⁶

The 1894 legislation which gave a legal basis to the establishment of industrial and boarding schools did not extend to day schools on the reserves. If these were considered the responsibility of the Indian communities, the majority did not have the finances or the leadership to establish and operate them.³⁷ Many day schools did operate, although they continued to be problematic according to the annual reports. Of 5,649 day pupils in 1891, there was a daily average attendance of only 52%.³⁸ Besides being difficult to induce regular attendance, it was equally hard to attract qualified teachers. There was not only the matter of inadequate salary, usually paid by the sponsoring churches,³⁹ but a lack of teacher residences as well, and it was an "unpleasant alternative" for the teachers to have to live in an Indian house.⁴⁰

Haytor Reed in his 1894 report mentioned the recent establishment of a school branch of Indian Affairs, which would continue to work in the direction of industrial schooling, where not only were the children removed from the "retarding influence" of home contact, but the instruction offered was superior to that of the day schools.⁴¹ Reed had his own solution to the "Indian problem" which he felt resulted

from the Indian being "untrained to take his place in the world." This solution was similar to that of Dewdney, but not only did he desire to "gather in all the Indian children and retain them for a certain period," but he added a dimension which was to cause much grievance to the Indian children in the schools: they must be taught in the English language. Without English, Reed maintained, the Indian would "remain a community apart" and be "permanently disabled."

With this end in view the children in all the industrial and boarding schools are taught in the English language exclusively.⁴²

He envisioned that this policy would not only produce "a generation of English speaking Indians accustomed to the ways of civilized life," but that it would eventually bring an end to the Indian problem:

Thus would be brought about a rapidly decreasing expenditure until the same should forever cease, and the Indian problem would have been solved.⁴³

It is not clear if the main motive behind this language policy was that the Indian child would be able to "hold his own with his white neighbours" or that the government would be economically benefitted. Dewdney in 1892 had maintained that money spent training the Indian youth

must surely be regarded as well spent...converting them into...contributors to, instead of merely consumers of, the wealth of the country.⁴⁴

This was a bold statement from a member of the race which had stripped the Indian of his land and livelihood.

The matter of expenditure on Indian education was a concern to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Clifford Sifton, who in 1897 decided that industrial school education was a waste of time for the Indian (and a waste of funds by the government) since Indians would

never be able to compete with the white race physically, mentally, or morally.⁴⁵ Besides, it was seen that "educating these Indians to compete industrially with our own people" was a "very undesirable use of public money."⁴⁶

The question of economy was to appear at frequent intervals in the annual educational reports, and it resurfaced in the 1898 report where Smart noted the spiralling cost of Indian education. It had gone from \$18,046.99 in 1880 to \$306,953.55 in the ensuing eighteen years,⁴⁷ and Smart suggested the government pause before extending Indian schools. In fact he stated that money spent on Indian education was wasted in any case, because

to educate children above the possibilities of their station, and create a distaste for what is certain to be their environment in life would be...doing them an injury instead of conferring a benefit upon them.⁴⁸

He reiterated this attitude in his report of 1902:

...only the certainty of some practical results could justify the large expense entailed upon the country for the maintenance of these schools.⁴⁹

Pedley reported similar concern for the waste of education on Indians when he was the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs following Smart:

Obvious as are the advantages of industrial and boarding schools...there is on the other hand the danger...of inculcating habits, tastes, and ideas calculated to produce unfitness for and discontent with a subsequent environment from which the prospect of escape is most remote.⁵⁰

In any case, both Smart and Pedley questioned whether the industrial and boarding schools were fulfilling their ultimate aim. Smart in 1902 noted they had not proven "successful in amalgamating the Indians with other classes of the community,"⁵¹ and Pedley in 1904

regretted that the spirit of the Indian toward the dominant race was one of alliance rather than amalgamation.⁵²

This ultimate aim according to Smart was to fit Indians for the full responsibilities of citizenship. It was not being served because most graduates of the industrial schools were found to "return to the communities of their own race and...to all intents and purposes remain Indians".⁵³ While Pedley stated the intention of education was to directly improve the future condition of the pupils on the reserves, experiments in the early 1900s were being conducted to discover whether school-leavers returning to the reserves would "retrograde under or elevate the conditions of their environment."⁵⁴ For while Smart had recognized in 1899 that in order to elevate the Indian race the pupils must return to their reserves, there was also the dismaying danger that they might be "affected by the degrading influence of their surroundings."⁵⁵ While these colonies of graduates on the reserves were being studied to note their effect on the reserve (or the reserve's effect on them), Pedley feared further the subjects might become "self-contained and self-sufficing," and he pointed out that the intention of education was "not to encourage isolation and self-sufficiency at the expense of amalgamation of the races."⁵⁶

Pedley thus envisioned a race of educated Indians able to "exert an elevating influence on their brethren"⁵⁷ without promoting self-sufficiency on the reserves.

Perhaps the existing educational system of Indian education with its three types of schools was not the best that could be devised, and Pedley suggested in 1905 that the potential of the schools had been exhausted. He expected that a solution to the problem would come from

the various religious denominations whose experience, co-operation, and interest in the work place them in the best possible position to render it.⁵⁸

The churches, of course, had from the beginning enjoyed a significant involvement in Indian education, which included a mutually beneficial arrangement with the government. Always concerned about the cost of Indian education, the government was frugal in its expenditure, and relied when possible upon missionary-operated schools to effect savings, especially in teachers' salaries.⁵⁹ At the same time, the church ensured the government a large enrollment in their schools, with a view to increasing their per-capita allotment, welcoming federal funds to subsidize their "evangelizing activities."⁶⁰ However not all industrial schools were cost-sharing, and those which the government supported in full were doubly draining on the public purse. The financial expenditure involved in the upkeep of the industrial schools played against their survival, as did the disappointing results. For not only were the schools not fulfilling the government's aim, but the school-leavers were not proving worthy of the cost of their education. A report on industrial schools in 1902 showed that of 1,700 students discharged to that date, only forty per cent went to other schools or were otherwise doing well, about thirty per cent either "turned out badly" or could not be accounted for, and almost thirty per cent were dead.⁶¹

Many of the deaths noted were from tuberculosis, which was rampant in the industrial schools where conditions "facilitated its development and diffusion."⁶² Dr. P.H. Bryce, Indian Affairs' medical officer, reported in 1907 that there was no "discrimination as to the degree of health of those admitted to school." He felt that the enticement of

the per capita grant system to keep numbers up resulted in little care being taken to prevent the admission of constitutional diseases into the industrial schools.⁶³ Both these factors, the importance of numbers and the careless admission of diseased children, will be demonstrated in this study.

Bryce devised a large-scale plan to eliminate the health problems in the schools, a plan rejected by Scott, the Superintendent of Indian Education, because of its considerable cost. Instead Scott instituted less costly reforms, such as the provision in the schools of medical isolation rooms, ventilation in the dormitories and classrooms, and proper upkeep of the buildings. He also increased the government's involvement in education by raising the per capita grant and increasing governmental supervision of the schools.⁶⁴

Gradually after 1910 the "industrial" designation for Indian schools was phased out. They were considered a failed experiment, and since there were only limited curricular differences between them and the "boarding" schools, both terms fell into disuse and were replaced by "residential" in 1923. Day schools at the same time were enjoying a revised interest, since during the evaluation of the Indian educational system of the early 1900s, they were recognized as economical and worth retaining. The worst of the existing industrial schools were eliminated, and some were replaced with day schools. To make them viable and to counter the still-present hostility of parents, teachers' salaries were raised, and it was suggested a daily warm meal be provided and that games be introduced to revitalize the daily program.⁶⁵

In the early 1920s the department accepted a larger part of the financial responsibility for the residential schools, including the

capital costs on new buildings and the purchase of existing ones. This allowed the churches to use their funds "for better instruction, food and clothing...(and) more efficient administration."⁶⁶ Scott continued throughout the 1920s to praise the residential schools and the results effected by the close association of the churches and government. The department's aims he listed as "closer supervision, better qualified instructors, and better buildings," while the emphases of the school were "vocational training, religious instruction, and the care of health."⁶⁷

That the residential schools were making an effort in the matter of health was reiterated in the educational reports of the early 1930s, which claimed that "good medical supervision has been arranged and much thought is given to physical education, proper diet and sanitation."⁶⁸ The stress on vocational training meant that much more attention was given to "farming, gardening, the care of stock, manual training, and domestic instruction."⁶⁹

Meanwhile the problem of attendance at day schools was still considered difficult, but it was greatly assisted by the 1920 amendment to the Indian Act which made the education of Indian children compulsory. The clause was strengthened in 1930 so it was "possible to compel the attendance of every physically fit Indian child" from the age of seven to sixteen, or "in very special cases," eighteen.⁷⁰ Now the churches no longer had to "scour the countryside annually in the hunt for new recruits" for their schools.⁷¹ The number of Indian students increased fifty-one per cent between 1912 and 1932, and though day schools continued to have attendance and staffing problems, residential school enrollment steadily improved.⁷¹

This increase in attendance Scott saw fit to attribute, not to the

law, but to the "growing conviction on the part of our wards that their children must be better suited for the future."⁷² It was reported in 1933 that Canadian residential schools were operating at capacity because economic conditions had made the parents "anxious to place their children in schools of this class."⁷³

In 1936 the Department of Indian Affairs became a branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, with educational affairs being administered by the Welfare and Training Services Division, under the Director of Indian Affairs. The aims of Indian education now purported to "bring the educational policy...into closer conformity with the actual life needs of Indian children." The "clearly defined objectives" envisioned

an adult Indian population proud of their racial origin and cultural heritage, adjusted to modern life, progressive, resourceful, and self-supporting...Consideration has been given to ways and means whereby the Indian population can be encouraged to conserve still further their ancient values and skills and then contribute to the cultural life of the nation.⁷⁴

These noble ideas, however, were translated only into "less emphasis on academic subjects" and more manual and vocational training for "those pupils who intend to establish themselves on reserves." This is reminiscent of the 1910 "rethinking" of Indian education, which had produced the goal of fitting the Indian "for civilized life in his own environment," but had meant in practice only a simplified curriculum, including such practical instruction as would be of use on an Indian reserve.⁷⁵ As academic education was minimized in 1910, so it was cut back again in 1936. Although the intent of residential schooling changed from removing the Indian from the reserve to preparing him for a better life there, the method was still through a

stress on the vocational side of education.

In the early 1940s, the annual reports of Indian Affairs were rife with mention of fires, which were devastating and destroying many day and residential schools. An especially high number of Indian school principals resigned, or reported difficulties in obtaining teachers, farm help, and skilled mechanics, probably owing to World War II.⁷⁶ Following the war in 1946, an inquiry began into the administration of Indian Affairs by a Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Senate and House of Commons,⁷⁷ and as a consequence of the Committee's report, the Indian Act underwent comprehensive revision in 1951. This resulted in the development of a new educational policy: the integration of Indian children into the provincial educational system.

Although that same year the government constructed a new residential school and added new classrooms to several existing ones,⁷⁸ it did work toward developing its policy of educating Indian children in association with non-Indian children. Agreements were made between the federal government and provincial and municipal authorities, whereby tuition was paid for each Indian student registered in a "joint" school.⁷⁹ An attempt was made to ensure that text books in the Indian schools conformed "as far as possible" with those in non-Indian schools, although residential schools continued to stress so-called practical arts. In fact, older boys in an Ontario residential school were learning beaver trapping and conservation.⁸⁰ In 1954 there were sixty-seven Indian residential schools in Canada, and the following year the government took over the responsibility for hiring teachers for these schools.⁸¹

In 1957 the residential schools faced their first important change: the per-capita grant system of financing, which had been in

effect officially since 1892, was replaced with a controlled-cost system. This meant reimbursement to each school according to "actual expenditure, within defined limitations."⁸² Residential schools were also being effectively phased out, and by 1962 it was reported that

the number of pupils requiring institutional care has declined and the residential schools are taking on a new role as hostels for pupils attending non-Indian schools, particularly at the high school level.⁸³

Indian educational problems remained the same as they had always been: absenteeism continued to result from the seasonal employment of the parents, and in 1964 it was noted that one-third of the Indian children entering school could speak little or no English or French.⁸⁴ Notwithstanding the consequent difficulties in successfully mainstreaming the Indian child, the trend continued toward educational integration, and by 1967 Indian enrollment in provincial joint schools exceeded that in federal schools. Student residences showed a declining enrollment, resulting in several closures in 1969.⁸⁵

In the late 1960s two more important changes were made to the former federal residential schools. Classroom operation was separated from the residences in 1968, and during the following year the management of the residences was transferred from the churches to the government, giving the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development "direct responsibility for the operation of residential services in terms of child care, health, food, clothing, and facilities." Eight residential schools were closed that year, although fifty-two were still in operation.⁸⁶

Government residential services for Indian students now stressed accommodation rather than schooling, and were available in the case of

home problems or home isolation, or where the parents were migratory or the student was physically handicapped.⁸⁷ As well, the residences sometimes served as transitional homes for students awaiting placement in private boarding homes. These homes were preferably but not necessarily Indian, and were situated close to the provincial school attended by the student, whose complete board and care was financed by the government. Group homes for students also operated as an alternative to accommodation in the larger former residential schools.

There was, however, a growing dissatisfaction with the government's policy of educational integration, which was expressed thus by one representative band:

The concept of integration was essential for the Indian pupils to (live) first hand with non-Indians as their peers. However, integration didn't solve this problem due primarily to insensitivity to the cultural and value differences. A lack of knowledge of these two concepts has led to difficulties for the Indian pupil.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the integration policy was expanding to become a policy of complete assimilation of the Indian people, and the government in its 1969 White Paper sought a final solution to the Indian problem in its plan to abolish both the Department of Indian Affairs and the reserve system.⁸⁹ However, this met with such strong Indian opposition that the assimilation policy was brought to a complete halt following presentation by the National Indian Brotherhood of its 1972 paper "Indian Control of Indian Education." Within five months the government had agreed to implement the paper's recommendations and began to encourage the transfer "of management and control of all educational programs, except capital construction, to band councils at their request."⁹⁰ This has proven a slow process, however, as the bands were sometimes to discover their influence was still limited, that the

provincial and federal governments might still sign agreements overruling Indians, and that the introduction of Indian curricular materials could be blocked by the school boards.⁹¹

One reserve which opened a new band-controlled school in 1980 observed that it did not have "much of a record to beat in the coming years," claiming that the integrated school policy had produced for its band only four high school graduates in eighteen years.⁹² The policy was effective, however, in bringing the viability of the residential schools into question, isolated education being incompatible with the aims of joint schooling. During the last fifteen years, many of the residential schools have closed, and the administration of most of those few remaining has been transferred to Indian control.

During the school year 1987-88, only thirteen Indian residential schools remained in Canada. Ten of these were operated by various Indian associations, and only three were federally-administered. Of these three federal schools, both the Saint Mary's School on the Blood Reserve in Alberta and the McKay Indian Residence in Manitoba closed in June, 1988, at the end of the school year. Presently there remains only one federal Indian residential school still operating in Canada--Gordon's, in Punnichy, Saskatchewan.⁹³

Chapter 2 - Notes and References

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2. Jaenen, C.J., "Education for Francization: The Case of New France in the Seventeenth Century," in Barman J. et al. (eds.) Indian Education in Canada, Vol. 1: The Legacy, 1986, UBC Press, pp. 50-82.
3. The Canadian Superintendent, op. cit., p. 13.
4. SPAR 1926-27, Duncan C. Scott to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, November 1, 1927, pp. 12-13.
5. Gresko, Jacqueline, "Creating Little Dominions Within the Dominion: Early Catholic Indian Schools in Saskatchewan and British Columbia," in Barman et al., op. cit., p. 94.
6. The Canadian Superintendent, op. cit., p. 13.
7. Gambill, J., The First Indian Residential School, 1968, Company of Young Canadians, Ottawa. Cited in Kaegi, G., A Comprehensive View of Indian Education, Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples, (1974?) Toronto.
8. Wilson, J.D., "No Blanket to be Worn in School: The Education of Indians in Nineteenth Century Ontario," in Barman et al., op. cit., pp. 72-73. Wilson notes that these were "white" values, in accordance with the belief that Indians would have less difficulty assimilating if they "learned to hold and respect the same values as the White man."
9. SPAR 1926-27, Duncan C. Scott, op. cit.
10. Ibid.
11. Titley, E.B., A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada, 1986, UBC Press, p. 76.
12. The Davin Report, cited by Gresko, op. cit., p. 91.
13. Titley, op. cit., p. 77.
14. SPAR 1891, report by E. Dewdney, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, for the year ended December 31, 1890.
15. SPAR 1881, report by John A. Macdonald, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, for the year ended December 31, 1880.
16. SPAR 1888, report of T. White, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, for the year ended December 31, 1887. Fortunately, White served in this position only the one year.

17. SPAR 1889, report of E. Dewdney, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.
18. SPAR 1890, E. Dewdney.
19. Ibid.
20. SPAR 1891, E. Dewdney.
21. SPAR 1892, E. Dewdney.
22. Proceedings of the Centennial National Conference on Indian and Northern Education, 29-30 March 1967, p. 35. In the testimony of Mrs. Hattie Fergusson, she admitted receiving "a very good education" in a B.C. residential school; however, she felt that the present deterioration of Indian home life had its roots in the residential schools.
23. SPAR 1893, report of V. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General Indian Affairs.
24. SPAR 1895, report of Haytor Reed, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.
25. Titley, op. cit., p. 78. The report was in the Montreal Gazette, September 1886.
26. SPAR 1898, report of James A. Smart, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.
27. SPAR 1900, J. Smart.
28. SPAR 1904, report of Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.
29. SPAR 1902, J. Smart.
30. Titley, op. cit., p. 78.
31. SPAR 1898, J. Smart.
32. SPAR 1900, J. Smart.
33. SPAR 1904, F. Pedley.
34. The Canadian Superintendent, op. cit., p. 5.
35. SPAR 1892, E. Dewdney.
36. Barman et al. op. cit., p. 6.
37. The Canadian Superintendent, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
38. SPAR 1891. A daily average attendance in day schools of 52% in 1891 compares with the average attendance of boarding schools at

that time of 93% and industrial schools at 90%. However, this must not be judged by 1989 standards: in 1890, the daily average attendance in all Nova Scotian public schools was 58%.

39. The Canadian Superintendent, op. cit., p. 17.
40. SPAR 1893, V. Vankoughnet.
41. SPAR 1895, H. Reed.
42. SPAR 1896, H. Reed.
43. Ibid.
44. SPAR 1892, E. Dewdney.
45. Titley, op. cit., p. 79.
46. Barman et al., op. cit., pp. 7-8.
47. SPAR 1898, J. Smart.
48. Ibid.
49. SPAR 1902, J. Smart.
50. SPAR 1904, F. Pedley. Note the use of the word "escape."
51. SPAR 1902, J. Smart.
52. SPAR 1904, F. Pedley.
53. SPAR 1902, J. Smart.
54. SPAR 1906-07, F. Pedley.
55. SPAR 1899, J. Smart.
56. SPAR 1906-07, F. Pedley.
57. Ibid. (?)
58. SPAR 1905, F. Pedley.
59. Barman et. al., op. cit., p. 8.
60. Van Thiel, F., "Accountant's Report" in Report on Indian Missions, Diocese of Calgary (Oxford Press, Toronto), July, 1899, p. 18, quoted in Maurice H. Lewis, "The Anglican Church and its Mission Schools Dispute", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 14 No. 4, Autumn 1966, p. 8: "Since the Government has decided to give its grants to the boarding schools on the basis of the attendance of the child...it has been the aim of those interested in the work to increase the number of children at the schools, not only for the good of the Christian work, but also to increase the assets."

61. Titley, op. cit., p. 80, citing correspondence from Martin Benson, head of the Department's school branch, in PAC RG 10 Vol. 3926.
62. Titley, op. cit., p. 84.
63. P.H. Bryce, Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, Ottawa, 1907, cited in Lewis, op. cit., p. 7-13.
64. Titley, op. cit., p. 85-86.
65. Ibid., p. 83, 87-90; SPAR 1910-11.
66. SPAR 1924, D. Scott.
67. SPAR 1924-1931, D. Scott.
68. SPAR 1931-32, A.S. Williams.
69. SPAR 1932-33, Harold W. McGill.
70. SPAR 29-30, D. Scott.
71. Titley, op. cit., pp. 81, 91.
72. SPAR 1929-30, D. Scott.
73. SPAR 1932-33, H.W. McGill.
74. SPAR 1936-37, H.W. McGill.
75. Barman et al., op. cit., p. 9.
76. Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1940-1945, H.W. McGill.
77. Barman et al., op. cit., p. 13. Critics of the integration policy saw it only as an extention of the cultural assimilation policy.
78. Thirteen new classrooms were added to residential schools, and the new Lower Post Residential School was opened in British Columbia that year. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1951-52, p. 56.
79. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1952-53, p. 41. Five new such agreements that year brought the total to fifteen. The payments were made in a lump sum in October, after which the school could expel students, but retain their tuition payments. Indian Self Government in Canada, Report of the Special Committee, House of Commons, 1983, p. 28.
80. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1952-53, D.M. MacKay, p. 58-61.
81. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1953-54, H.M. Jones.
82. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1957-58, H.M. Jones.

83. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1961-62, H.M. Jones.
84. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1963-64, R.F. Battle.
85. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1968-69.
86. Indian Affairs Annual Reports 1986-69, 1969-70.
87. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1969-70.
88. "History of Education on the Poorman Reserve," unpublished paper for discussion only, Poorman Band Council, Saskatchewan, 1980.
89. Barman et al., op. cit., pp. 14-15.
90. Indian Affairs Annual Report 1973-74, p. 44.
91. Indian Self Government in Canada, op. cit., pp. 28-29.
92. "History of Education on the Poorman Reserve," op. cit.
93. Mr. J. Connor, Education Branch, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, personal telephone communications, 14 March 1988, and 16 February 1989.

CHAPTER 3 - THE ESTABLISHMENT AND CURRICULUM OF THE SHUBENACADIE SCHOOL

Edgar Dewdney, who was the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1889-1892, and a strong advocate of residential schooling for Indians, greatly regretted the lack of such schools in the Maritime Provinces.¹ This deficiency was again noted in 1911 by the New Brunswick Supervisor of Indian Schools, Father F.C. Ryan, who believed that a central industrial school was necessary to make Indians fit for the "battle of life." The day schools, he saw, were offering lessons in sewing and knitting to the girls, but the boys had no such "means of improvement at their disposal." He envisaged that lessons in carpentry, blacksmithry, tailoring, and farming would help the Indian boys become useful citizens.² In 1924 the Indian Superintendent in Nova Scotia, A.J. Boyd, also expressed his feeling that a "centrally-located boarding and industrial school" was advisable for the Indians of his province, based on his understanding that similar schools across Canada were "highly successful."³

Several letters to the Department of Indian Affairs in the early 1920s made clear the perceived need for a residential school in the Maritimes. The Indian Agent in Guysborough, Nova Scotia, wrote that such a school was necessary to care for children in cases where there was no nearby day school.⁴ Father Ryan, who had written to the Department on the matter fourteen years earlier, again wrote in 1925 to voice the need for residential schooling in taking care of "delinquent Indian Children, orphans, and those who will not go to school but run wild." Little good had come from having "prosecuted Indian after Indian," and industrial houses and jails, he said, refused to take Indians. He expressed the opinion that the existing

...educational system is only good for a few, and these few are soon overcome by the conduct of the delinquent so in the end there cannot be an advancement but rather a retrogressive movement, all due to the want of this one institution.⁵

A letter recommending the establishment of an Indian residential school near Truro also drew the government's attention to the fact that there were no such schools in Nova Scotia, although there were over seventy in the rest of Canada.⁶ Another letter was intended to impress the department with the need for institutional care for orphaned and neglected Indian children, and pointed out that

...if such a school is built it could be conducted under the auspices of the Orders of the Catholic Church as all Indians in the Maritime Provinces belong to that faith.⁷

In a lengthy report to the government in 1926, Father Ryan used an economic argument to augment the appeal he had begun fifteen years earlier. The lack of residential schooling in the Maritimes had "proven a grave financial drainage" because orphans were living with Indian families who were being paid by the government for their care. This he called an "alarming financial waste" because he felt that the money was used, not for the benefit of the orphans, but to promote idleness among the Indians receiving the money. He felt that the savings to be realized over only twenty years would pay for the cost of the institution, and that in addition, "the Indian question in the Maritime Provinces would then, and only then, be solved for all time."⁸

The appeal was eventually successful. On April 23, 1927, Duncan Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, expressed his intentions in the matter of a residential school for the Maritimes in a letter to Boyd, the Indian Superintendent in Nova Scotia. It was necessary, he felt, to provide a home and school for the children who

were then in scattered institutions and foster homes. In this school,

...the children would receive academic training, as well as instruction in farming, gardening, care of stock, carpentry in the case of boys, and for the girls, domestic activity.⁹

He envisaged a school for 125 pupils, on a farm with pasture and outbuildings, including a barn and hen house, staffed by a Reverend Principal, assistant, farm instructor, engineer-carpenter, labourer, and eight to ten Sister-teachers. It was only necessary to await the provision from Parliament of the necessary funds for the capital costs of the building and equipment. The school would operate on a per-capita system, \$150 per child per annum, based on actual attendance.¹⁰ The cost of the building and site was estimated at \$172,500.¹¹

The Catholic Ecclesiastical authorities in Halifax were reported "very favourable" to the establishment of the school,¹² and were prepared to appoint Sisters of Charity as teachers. One of the Sisters was to visit the Blood Reserve school in Alberta "for the purpose of obtaining first hand knowledge of the methods used in conducting it."¹³

In June, 1927, the Hon. Charles Stewart, Minister of Indian Affairs, visited Shubenacadie and the nearby Indian Reserve, and "decided that it would not be in the interests of the scheme to locate the building on the Shubenacadie Reserve."¹⁴ Four farms in the Shubenacadie area were being considered for purchase, with the assistance of the local M.P., J.L. Ilsley, who was asked to "take an interest in the selection of a site."¹⁵ The requirement was for "a cultivated farm with at least fifty acres of good soil and sufficient pasture for a herd of twenty milch cows."¹⁶ Later that month Ilsley met with the Hon. Charles Stewart, and the Departmental architect, R.G. Orr, and the 130-acre George Gay farm was eventually chosen, amid some

local political grumblings that a Liberal government was buying from a Tory.¹⁷ It was purchased at a cost of \$7,000, not including the current crops, and an adjacent house and lot were acquired at an additional \$4,000.¹⁸

The chosen site, it was claimed, was one of the oldest Indian properties in Nova Scotia. It was said to be occupied by Indians from as far back as 1713, was later the home of the Abbe La Loutre, "a French priest who achieved more or less notoriety when he was accused of inciting the Indians against the crown," and once again belonged to Indians in later years.¹⁹ (For a description of the farm site, see Appendix A.)

The school architect, Orr, who had also designed most of the other Indian schools in Canada, passed the plans for the building to the Sisters of Charity at the Mount Saint Vincent Motherhouse for comment during the summer of 1927. Several months later the Sisters made a list of practical suggestions for improvements, and took the opportunity to make mention of the benefits to be derived from manual training and domestic science, noting that no provision appeared to be made for "this useful work."²⁰

"Do try to rush matters," New Brunswick's Father Ryan urged the following January in the matter of the new school. "Our whole educational system is hung up for the want of same, about all money is now practically wasted on education without this home."²¹ Tenders were invited for the building of the school on 29 March 1928, and early in May the lowest tender was accepted: \$153,000 from Rhodes Curry Ltd., Amherst.²² The work was completed in June of the following year at a final cost of approximately \$200,000.²³

The new school, "rated as one of the best institutions of its kind

in Canada,"²⁴ was a large three-storey brick tile and granite structure, 158 feet long by 64 feet wide.²⁵ The basement floor contained a playroom and three dining rooms: one for the children, one for the Principal and male staff members, and one for the Sisters. The ground floor contained the classrooms, including the manual training room, executive offices, and a chapel with a capacity of 200 worshippers. On the next floor were dormitories, infirmaries, sewing room, and visitors room (see copy of "first floor plan," Appendix B). It is probable that the top floor contained additional dormitories.²⁶

In March of 1928, even before tenders had been invited for the building construction, Reverend Father Jeremiah Mackey of St. Mary's Glebe in Halifax was officially appointed Principal of the school,²⁷ and he took up residence in Shubenacadie right away in order to be on the site during construction. In his approval of the choice of Principal, Duncan Scott wrote to the Archbishop in Halifax that he had "already been favourably impressed with this Reverend gentleman."²⁸

It was intended that the school should provide for the "underprivileged Indian child of Nova Scotia and the other Maritime Provinces," including "orphans, illegitimate and neglected children" and those children who lived "too distant from Indian or public day schools to attend regularly." Accommodation was provided for 125 children,²⁹ (see Appendix C for table of actual enrollment figures) and the government already had fifty "urgent cases" in convents and orphanages, as well as "thirty additional children needing maintenance as well as education." The other forty-five were to be recruited from families "in a semi-destitute condition."³⁰

In mid-January, 1930, Father Mackey expected that the first five Sisters would join him toward the end of the month, and that a week

later they would be ready to receive the first fifty to sixty children and the remaining Sisters.³¹ The first resident children arrived from the Saint Joseph's Orphanage, Saint Patrick's Home, and the Monastery of the Good Shepherd in Halifax, during the week of February 5, 1930.³²

Besides the ten Sisters and Principal, who were nominated for their positions by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Halifax, the school staff included a farmer, assistant farmer, and carpenter-engineer, who were appointed by the Principal with the concurrence of the Honorable J.L. Ilsley. A night fireman was added to the staff in the mid-1930s.³³ Government policy stated that the Catholic Church was responsible for the engaging of staff, and the department would interfere only if it felt the services engaged were unsatisfactory.³⁴ An early application for employment had been received in Ottawa from Chief Isaac Peters, and had the backing of M.P. A.E. MacLean, who felt "he would make good." Duncan Scott, however, responded that the Principal, not the department, hired and paid his assistants, and under the circumstances he could not consider the application.³⁵

In 1934, a well-written application was received from another Cape Breton Indian, William B. Young, for work as a night janitor in the school. He had "a large family to support and not work of any kind to be got," and he felt that as the school was an Indian institution, Indians would be preferred for jobs.³⁶ Ottawa's response was that "appointment of all members of staff at this school are in the hands of the Principal."³⁷ The application was passed on to Father Mackey, who wrote to Young that he had received many applications from local men, and was sorry to disappoint him.³⁸ Undaunted, Young tried again in 1936 with another letter to Ottawa. Of Father Mackey he wrote:

I feel that he won't give me a job as I understand that he generally employs white men. While this is an Indian institution, I feel that Indians should be preferred in manual labour at least, for employment. As it is operated and controlled by the Indian Department, I think that one word from you should land me a job.³⁹

Three years later, the department broached the matter with Father Mackay "that no Indians are employed in a(ny) capacity at the Indian Residential School." In explanation, unsure of the "source of complaint," Father Mackey cited the case of Elsie Charles, the only one of the school's pupils to date to be recommended for higher education. She had gone on to be a qualified teacher, and had been recommended for an opening in an Indian day school. The agent of the district was opposed to her hiring, however, "saying quite emphatically that he had tried Indian teachers on previous occasions, and found either that they were no good or that the Indians themselves refused to co-operate in the least." Mackey then considered employing the girl at the residential school "as a last resort," but concluded "that it would not work out to the advantage of anyone."⁴⁰

As for the hiring of Indian men, Mackey wrote that he knew of "no Indian who in any way could take the place of any of our regular staff." During the times when they needed extra labourers, "most of the Indians capable of doing the work were on the road making their way to Maine for picking potatoes."⁴¹

Salaries of all staff were paid by the Principal from the per-capita grant, which, supplemented by any income from the farm, also paid all current expenses. These included minor repairs, replacing worn out equipment, the cost of food, clothing for the pupils, fuel, and incidental expenses. The Department paid for classroom equipment,

medical services and drugs, and any major repairs to the building and mechanical plant.⁴² However, it was not always easy to obtain these extra allowances, and Father Mackey's requests often met negative responses from Ottawa because of a lack of available funds.⁴³ From the limited allowances offered, the Principal had to define priorities, and often had to wait years for authorization.

It was intended that the curriculum for the Shubenacadie Residential School was to follow that of the other Nova Scotian schools, as stated in the Programme of Studies for Indian Schools:

The Curriculum to be followed in each School is that prescribed by the Department of Education for the province in which the school is located. The textbooks authorized by the Provincial Department of Education for the public and separate schools are to be used in Indian day and residential schools. When preparing requisitions for school material ask only for those texts authorized for use in the province in which your school is located. The Department of Indian Affairs requires you to adhere strictly to this rule.⁴⁴

Teachers were further required to "induce pupils to speak English...during even the supervised play," and to discuss "Indian and white life, the evils of Indian isolation, enfranchisement," and to explain "labour as the law of existence." They were instructed to teach their pupils to read distinctly, because of Inspectors' reports that "Indian children either mumble inaudibly or shout their words in spasmodic fashion."⁴⁵

However, because the curriculum from the outset was intended to be both academic and vocational, it was more accurately said to be only "comparable to that in the public schools of Nova Scotia."⁴⁶ Courses of instruction were "especially designed to meet the particular needs" of the government's wards, and were to include the care of stock as well as religious training. "The object and desire of the Department,"

Duncan Scott wrote, is "that the graduates of this school will become self-supporting and not return to their old environment."⁴⁷ Mackey admitted that much time was spent on "work other than reading, writing, and arithmetic done in the classroom."⁴⁸

At the beginning of each school year, a list was made of the twenty or thirty older boys. They were divided into five or six teams of mixed experienced and inexperienced workers, and team lists were posted in the Principal's office, the dairy, and recreation room. The boys' duties were "barn chores and milking, morning and evening, for one week at a time," usually working out to a total of ten week's work for each team during the school year.⁴⁹ Morning milking was done under the direction of the farmer or assistant farmer, and began "not later than 5:15" each morning.⁵⁰ Sometimes neither supervisor was available, which would "leave the barn work for the boys alone."⁵¹ When the farm work required the use of the boys, the same ones who were on barn duty would be used. "In the early fall when the root crop is gathered in, there would be twelve to twenty of the bigger boys out of the classroom until this work is cleared up," and during spring planting time, the same procedure applied.⁵² Boys who were fourteen or older, but not large enough for heavy farm work, were used instead "around the house, from taking meals to those who may be sick, to washing dishes and cleaning up refectory, recreation, toilet and wash rooms."⁵³

Manual training for boys was accomplished through constructing various out buildings from the time of the school's inception. These included two dwelling houses for staff members, a 75 x 18' hog house, a dairy and ice house, and feed room. The Department of Indian Affairs required that "the services of school staff...be utilized as far as

possible" for such buildings,⁵⁴ and "staff" always included the bigger boys. When the first staff house was built, "the carpenter-engineer and the boys" did the work "with the exception of plastering and electric wiring," saving on labour costs,⁵⁵ and "a dozen big boys...were a great help with the excavation."⁵⁶ In 1938, when the feed room, hog house, and butchering space for cows were constructed, the work was done "without any outside help, thereby giving the older boys a good opportunity to learn carpentry work."⁵⁷ When Father Mackey requested permission to build in the spring, he asked that approval be given quickly so that the work could be completed before the older boys were discharged or gone on summer holidays.⁵⁸ In outlining the practical manual training received, the Principal stated,

All the bigger boys had their share in the work of erecting these buildings, from beginning to end, and the ones who were anxious to learn did learn, but what can anyone do with a boy who does not want to learn.⁵⁹

The bigger boys also helped the carpenter-engineer with all painting as well, at first in the chapel under the instruction of outside painters, but subsequently on their own in classrooms, sewing rooms, and other parts of the residence. The boys helped also with all repair work, including replacing glass and window frames, "a very practical thing for an Indian to learn."⁶⁰ Father Mackey used no outside help for plumbing and heating: "we had considerable work with leaky pipes, clogged drains, and many necessary replacements here and there. This work has been done by the carpenter-engineer and the boys."⁶¹

The manual training room contained a harness sewing machine, a boot and shoe sewing machine, and a boot repair stand. All footwear for the school's occupants was repaired there, and the boys given the

opportunity to learn. "We feel," Father Mackey wrote, "that every child capable of work should be impressed with the idea that if they are to get along, they must work."⁶²

For the girls, domestic science also meant work lists. Four girls and two Sisters worked the kitchen, each week one girl leaving and another taking her place, so that each girl had one month of kitchen work, twice per term. "For the girl going to the kitchen for the first time, her work does not require much experience, but by the end of the month she will, if she wants to, have learned a good deal." During preserving season, two girls were employed at that work as well. After her turn in the kitchen was completed, the girl leaving was taken to the Principal's dining room with a Sister who taught her to set the table and serve the meal.⁶³

The girls who were small for their age and less capable of kitchen work did laundry every weekday morning and in the afternoon as well, except Tuesday mornings when boys did this work. Mending and darning ("and there is plenty of that")⁶⁴ was done by whole classes at a time, four mornings a week. New garments, "blouses, middies, skirts and pants, requiring the use of sewing machines," was done every weekday afternoon, by the same girls who were on the list that week for kitchen work. Girls also learned "fancy work, hem stitching, tatting, crocheting, cut work, mat hooking, and quilting," and both boys and girls learned knitting, "so that all mittens and winter stockings" were made at the school. In the spring, the girls who were to be discharged that year made dresses "to suit and fit themselves" which were "their own property to wear to take home with them." A drawing of names determined who should have the mats and quilts made during the year.⁶⁵

After this busy schedule of manual training and domestic science, it is not clear how much time remained in a child's day for "reading, writing, and arithmetic." Father Mackey admitted that

By the time we have ball playing, coasting, skating, and keeping the house clean, the day is pretty well used up, and what is left we want for sleep.⁶⁶

Despite the accent on practical work at the school, the General Superintendent of Indian Affairs, M. Christianson, was concerned about the type of manual training being given. After spending an afternoon at the Shubenacadie School in the spring of 1937, he concluded that the students, after leaving the school, would soon join the rest of the Nova Scotian Indians in asking for government assistance.

The Indians all over Nova Scotia are depending, for a livelihood, on what relief they get from the Department and the sale of Indian handicraft, such as baskets, axe and pick handles.⁶⁷

He regretted that the children were not being given training in making baskets and handles, and therefore would have "absolutely no means of making a living when they return to their homes." Because he felt the "book-learning" they received would not make them self-sufficient, he recommended to the Department that the "benefit to the boys and girls" in becoming expert basket and axe handle makers should be given careful consideration.⁶⁸

The Department passed the suggestion along to Father Mackey, feeling unsure "exactly what should be done along these lines,"⁶⁹ but the Principal felt that more intensive manual training and domestic science would be of more use to the children. He suggested that the Department instead consider buying a "manual training outfit" from the United States which would enable the boys to learn to make "all sorts of furniture." For the girls, rather than making baskets in

competition with the workers on the reserve, he felt it would be more useful to hire a domestic science teacher for at least two afternoons a week to teach each girl to do "her own cooking, etc., from beginning to end."⁷⁰ Father Mackey felt that it was not the place of the school to teach the making of baskets and axe handles:

The market for these things in this locality is over supplied, and if we can teach the boys here to do some of the things that the boys on the reserve do not do, then we are bettering their own chances and leaving the market for baskets, etc., to those who need it most. Again, these boys are only sixteen years of age when they leave here, and if they want to learn basket making for a living, it is not too late.⁷¹

The usefulness of education in preparing the Indian to make a living was best described by an elderly native of the Millbrook reserve, in his clairvoyant but anonymous letter to The Truro Daily News in 1931. He felt there was nowhere an educated Indian could find employment, and that nowhere was there "a white businessman who would rather employ an Indian than his own kind."

"Modernism," he wrote, "instead of improving the condition of Micmac Indians in Nova Scotia, is playing...havoc with them and everything else 'Indian.'" Writing under the name "Glooscap 2nd," he expressed his views on the Shubenacadie School:

...Not very long ago I was asked what I thought of our some thousand dollars Indian College at Shubenacadie where the final touches of our long drawn 'civilization' is to be given, where everything 'Indian' is to be forever obliterated or cast into the Bottomless Pit. I was told, in less than ten years time, some smart young Indians can become priests, doctors and lawyers, young squaws (can become) school teachers, stenographers and salesladies, just like the Whites today.

Remembering my own experience of the effects or consequences of White Man's education upon an

Indian and knowing how unchangeable Lo the Low Indian is, I had to utter one of my great-great-Grand Father's grunts and prayed to our old Father Glonscap to come and save us which I hope he will do for to be an Indian is to be forever in constant state of being nothing more than a looker on longing for the good things of this world which he sees but never can get. It is nearly forty years since the Indians schools were introduced in all our Reservations in Nova Scotia. Millions of millions of dollars have been spent to educate 'The Indian.' Today we have not one single Injin who can earn His bread and butter, through or by the use of his pen...

As someone said, three months after an Indian Priest is ordained and Indian Doctor and Indian Lawyer graduates you will find the three working together at baskets and handles...⁷²

This old Indian, who described himself as being "away past the scriptural age of man," felt that "no white man has any other use for an Indian," and expressed his belief that basket and axe handle factories would have been more beneficial to the Indian children than the "great College at Shubenacadie."⁷³

Chapter 3 - Notes and References

1. SPAR 1892. Dewdney's report to the Governor General.
2. Letter to the Department of Indian Affairs from Reverend J. Ryan, New Brunswick Superintendent of Indian Schools, February 28, 1911. PAC Department of Indian Affairs School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
3. Extract from the Report of Nova Scotia Indian Superintendent A.J. Boyd for the year 1923-24 on Indian Education in Canada. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
4. Correspondence from Agent Heatherington, May 28, 1924. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
5. Correspondence to the Department of Indian Affairs from Reverend Ryan, Inspector of Indian Schools in New Brunswick, October 8, 1925. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
6. Correspondence from "Mr. Bury," February 7 (1926). PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
7. Correspondence from "G. Sutherland," who visited various schools and reserves in the Maritime Provinces, no date. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
8. Extract from Reports of Inspection made by Reverend F.C. Ryan, Inspector for Indian Schools for New Brunswick, on the Indian schools in the Province of New Brunswick, dated May 18, 1926. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
9. Letter to A.J. Boyd from D.C. Scott, April 23, 1927. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
10. "The amount of per capita grant due for the quarter is ascertained by multiplying the average attendance of pupils during quarter by the amount of the quarterly per capita grant." Note on Indian Residential Schools Quarterly Return Form.
11. Memo to Duncan Scott from Departmental Architect, R. Gurney Orr, and Superintendent of Indian Education, Russell Ferrier, December 21, 1926. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
12. Telegram, undated, and letter dated July 11, 1927 to Dr. Scott from A.J. Boyd, Chief Officer for the Department in Nova Scotia. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
13. Letter from A.J. Boyd to D.C. Scott, July 11, 1927. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
14. Correspondence from Minister of Indian Affairs, June 18, 1927, to J.L. Ilsley, LLb., Kentville. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.

15. Letter to J.L. Ilsley from D.C. Scott, July 11, 1927. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
16. Ibid.
17. Letter to Hon. C. Stewart, Minister, from J.L. Ilsley, LLb., July 23, 1927. "The selection of the Gay property was bitterly resented by Hon. B.B. Fulmer, the leading man in our party in the district who...indulged in much menacing talk about the support I would lose next election... Fulmer will criticize me because we are buying from a Tory." Other leading Liberals, he said, were favourable toward the Gay property, being interested in it "as mortgagees, creditors or otherwise." PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
18. Memo to Dr. Scott, Ottawa, from Superintendent of Indian Education and Departmental Architect, July 28, 1927, regarding the final selection of a site. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
19. Halifax Chronicle, Wednesday, June 26, 1929, p. 9.
20. Letter to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from Mother M. Buchmans, Mount Saint Vincent, Halifax, November 24, 1927. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
21. Correspondence from Father F.C. Ryan, Inspector of Indian Schools for New Brunswick, to Deputy of Indian Affairs, January 19, 1928. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
22. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
23. Halifax Chronicle, Wednesday, June 26, 1929, p. 9.
24. Halifax Chronicle, Wednesday, June 26, 1929, p. 9.
25. "The Indian Residential School, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, in The Catholic Diocesan Directory, 1936, p. 97.
26. Information derived from the Halifax Chronicle article op.cit. which mentions only the basement and two more floors; from the Catholic Diocesan Directory, and from PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053, which contains the plan for one floor only.
27. Correspondence from the Archbishop in Halifax to the Secretary for Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
28. Reply to the Archbishop from Duncan Scott, March 26, 1928. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
29. That the school was built for only 125 pupils is mentioned in the Halifax Chronicle article (Wednesday, June 26, 1929, p. 9), and in D.C. Scott's letters to J.L. Ilsley, March 1929, and the Halifax Chronicle, April 4, 1929. However, only in 1960 did the total enrollment fall below 130, and only in one year (1961) was it below 125. Before then, the lowest figure was 142 (1959) and

the highest was 175 in 1938. Under a per capita system, it was to the financial advantage of the school to accept more than 125 children. Father Mackey wrote to the Department on February 17, 1928, explaining that although he understood the school's capacity to be 125, he was expecting 160 to arrive on September 1, 1932. He wrote about the overflow again on March 9, 1931, not "to infer that we should not take more children, but only to prepare you for additional equipment for which we are asking." PAC DIA School Files Reel 8159, RG 10, Vol. 6052.

30. Letter to J.L. Ilsley from D. Scott, March 1st, 1929. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
31. Letter to A.F.Mackenzie from Father Mackey, January 17, 1930. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
32. "The Indian Residential School, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia," in The Catholic Diocesan Directory, 1936, p. 97.
33. Memo to The Honourable the Superintendent General from the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, December 16, 1935. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
34. Letter to A.E. MacLean, House of Commons, from D.C.Scott, March 24, 1930. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
35. Ibid.
36. Letter to the Secretary, Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Wm. B. Young, Whycocomagh Reserve, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, September 25, 1934. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
37. Departmental reply to Wm. B. Young, Whycocomagh Reserve, September 28, 1934. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
38. Letter to Wm. B. Young from Father Mackey, October 22, 1934. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
39. Letter to Department of Indian Affairs from Wm. B. Young, 1936. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
40. Letter to the Secretary of Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, January 30, 1939. PAC DIA School Files RG 10, Vol. 6054.
41. Ibid.
42. Letter to J.L. Ilsley from D.C. Scott, March 1, 1929. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
43. PAC DIA School Files RG 10, Vol. 6054, details letters of request from Father Mackey for building and repairs, which usually met a "no funds" response. As an example, Mackey repeatedly requested funds to build a cottage for the married carpenter-engineer, to alleviate the "very trying situation" of having the couple live at the school. The pleas took place over three years before approval

was given, and included Mackey's desperate offer to give half his years' salary to see the house built.

44. Programme of Studies for Indian Schools, from the Register of Attendance, Etc., for the Shubenacadie Residential School. Registers are held at the Amherst office of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.
45. Ibid.
46. Letter to J.L. Ilsley from Father Mackey, March 1, 1929. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
47. Letter to J.L. Ilsley from D.C. Scott, Mar 1, 1929. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053. It has been seen that one of the early goals of residential schools (1847-1899) was to prevent the Indians from returning to their reserves, but that subsequently it was realized that in order to improve reserve conditions, school leavers should return there (see annual reports, 1899-1904). Scott's statement seems to indicate a temporary reversal to anti-reserve feeling, which swung once again by 1936 when the educational goal was to conform to the actual needs of students who would return to reserve life.
48. Letter to the Secretary of Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, January 30, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
49. Ibid.
50. Letter to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, February 19, 1934. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
51. Letter to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, July 19, 1934. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
52. Letter to the Secretary of Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, January 30, 1939. PAC DIA School Files RG 10 Vol. 6054, File 265-1, Pt. 2.
53. Ibid.
54. Letter to Father Mackey from A.F. Mackenzie, Indian Affairs Secretary, August 4, 1934. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
55. Letter to the Secretary of Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, January 30, 1939. PAC DIA School Files RG 10 Vol. 6054.
56. Letter to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, April 22, 1935. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
57. Letter to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, January 7, 1938. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.

58. Letter to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, May 9, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6054.
59. Letter to the Secretary of Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, January 30, 1939. PAC DIA School Files RG 10 Vol. 6054, File 265-1, Pt. 2.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid. This statement reflects the suggestion in the Programme of Studies for Indian Schools to "inculcate...industry" and to "explain...labour as the law of existence."
63. Ibid. How much of the school year was spent doing kitchen work depends on the definition of a "term." If it refers to half a school year, a girl spent two of five months out of the classroom. In fact, according to the Register of Attendance for the quarter January 5 to March 31, 1931, one grade 6 girl spent 9-1/2 days in the classroom and 48-1/2 in the kitchen; another spent 12 days in the classroom and 46 in the kitchen, and a grade 5 girl spent 7-1/2 days in the classroom and 50-1/2 in the kitchen.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Memo to Dr. McGill from M. Christianson, June 2, 1937, PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
68. Ibid.
69. Letter to Father Mackey from R. Hoey, Superintendent of Welfare and Training, June 14, 1937. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
70. Letter to the Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey, January 30, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053.
71. Ibid.
72. Letter to the Editor, The Truro Daily News, January 3, 1931, p 8.
73. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4 - ADMISSION, VACATION, AND DISCHARGE: POLICIES AND PRACTICE

The Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie was intended primarily to educate orphaned and neglected children, and children who lived too distant to attend Indian day schools. Each prospective case was brought to the attention of the Indian Affairs branch by the local Indian Agents, who were required to forward an application form for the consideration of the Department (see Appendix D). As stated on the form, the minimum age for admission was 7, except in the case of an orphaned, destitute, or neglected child. Children would normally remain in the school until the end of the school year in which they turned sixteen, or "for such term as the Department of Indian Affairs may deem proper." All children in Indian residential schools were under the guardianship of the Principal.¹

It was generally necessary that the application forms be signed by the child's parent or guardian, but if the parents could not be located, or if the Agent considered them neglectful, parental consent was waived by the Department:

It will be possible to place the boy in the Residential School at Shubenacadie without his father's consent, the father not having shown very much interest in him in the past.²

The Department also had the authority to commit children to care in the residential school in the event that their parents failed to send them to a local school, as in the following case:

B.K. has a boy living with him thirteen years, never was in school, teaching him themselves they claim. The boy winked at me when the statement was made.³

Admissions, therefore, were at the discretion of the Indian Agents, who alone were responsible for assessing the home situation and

the need for institutionalization. In approving the applications, the Department assumed the agent believed "that these children should receive institutional care and that the parents or guardians are not in a position to support them and send them to the day school on the reserve."⁴ Typical reasons advanced by the Agents for recommending children to the Residential School at Shubenacadie included the following:

The child's mother is dead and the father though living, is of little consequence.⁵

The parents...are living but they are very poor, and of a roaming nature. They are not living on any reserve in particular, and their children have actually no school to attend.⁶

R. and A.B. ages 9 and 13 are wandering about the reserve from one home to another, their father has gone away somewhere.⁷

F. age 12 and G.J. are very neglected. F. goes to school occasionally; last week it was reported to me that he was intoxicated...Mr. D. does not want to have his children sent to Shubenacadie School, believing, wrongly of course, that children there are not well cared for.⁸

Mother is of such a character that she is entirely unfit to bring up a child.⁹

The father of these children deserted them some years ago. The mother is in the York County Jail awaiting trial on the charge of adultery.¹⁰

Father working 90 miles away, mother near but refuses to acknowledge her children or help with their support.¹¹

This child is practically a waif. Bufferred about, with no education or much religion, a factotum for anyone who will keep him, he gives promise of being a burden to himself and the Department. The Shubenacadie School is his only social and moral salvation.¹²

The Residential School at Shubenacadie also at times served a mildly reforming function, as the following admission requests suggest:

She is of an unruly disposition and is a difficult pupil in the day school and the result is that she will not get much training. I would strongly recommend that she be given a couple of years in the Shubenacadie Residential School.¹³

...a grown boy, father not living at home, rather uncontrollable at home and difficult to get him to attend day school. Mother anxious to have him receive a couple years in the residential school where he can be disciplined.¹⁴

...would not go to school and was very saucy with the teacher...I would recommend that she be sent to Shubenacadie for her own good as well as an example to the others.¹⁵

Although admissions were proposed by the Indian Agents, they were sometimes initiated by the parents, who made their appeals through the Agents, or even sent their requests for admission to the Department themselves:

My daughter and I was up to see the collage [sic]...and the Sisters showed us all through and I swear I think it sure is a wonderful place, everything they teach sure is useful knowledge...I hope to get my daughter there as soon as I possibly can.¹⁶

Several underaged children were admitted by the Department, but in such cases it was required that the parents provide "special reasons." The admission of a five-year-old girl was approved after the father pleaded the following circumstances:

I find it difficult to provide her with warm clothing, particularly as I am not able to work due to ill health. It will be a healthier environment for her. She will be with her [7-year-old] sister who can help her in the work.¹⁷

Following Departmental approval for admission to the school, the Indian Agents were advised to contact the principal of the school directly to see if space were available and if he were willing to take the children in question:

It should be distinctly understood that these children should not be sent to Shubenacadie unless Father Mackey advises you that he will take them.¹⁸

It was also necessary that the children be medically examined (see Physical Examination and Certificate of Health forms, Appendix E and F). The physical examination was arranged by the Indian Agent before the children were sent to the school, and the medical officer at the school examined them after their arrival.¹⁹ The Agent was responsible to arrange for the conveyance of the children to the school, and to "keep the expenses of their transportation to the lowest possible point." When the Agent considered that children needed new clothing for the trip to school, he was required to send an estimate of costs for Departmental approval, to buy from firms on an approved list, and to purchase only "a small amount of clothing in order that they may be respectable while proceeding to school." He was cautioned that a large expenditure for clothing was not necessary as pupils were "completely outfitted on reaching there." The Agent was reimbursed by the Department for approved transportation and clothing costs "upon receipt...of a properly certified account in triplicate."²⁰

One wonders whether class placement of children admitted to the residential school was a matter of concern to the teaching Sisters, as it appears from the school admission records that most children coming to the school had no previous education. The following table illustrates the wide age gap among the children who must have been placed together in first grade: the 46 children with no previous schooling, whose admission was recorded between October 1938 and January 1940, ranged in age from 5 to 14.

Table 1: Previous Schooling of 60 Children Whose Admission was Recorded Between October 1938 and January 1940

Total	46	1	7	4	0	2

14	1			1		
13	0					1
12	1					1
11	1		1	1		
10	6		1	1		
9	6		2	1		
8	14		1			
7	5	1	2			
6	9					
5	3					

	0	1	1	2	3	4
	No. of years previous schooling					

(Source: PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6052-53)

The problem was further complicated by the language difficulty encountered by those children who came to the school with little or no experience in English. Although language proficiency was not recorded in the school's admission records, it was sometimes mentioned on the admission forms prepared by the Agents. A fair number of children were stated to speak English; for example, on 36 admission forms received by the Department of Indian Affairs in the Summer of 1943, only 14 children were noted to be deficient in the language. Remarks such as "no English," "understands a few words English," "learning English," "fair English," "not much English," and "very little English," were noted on these forms.²¹

Often parents did not realize that once their children were admitted to the school, they might not see each other again for several years. The Department did not provide transportation for Indian parents who wished to visit the school,²² although many of the children came from Prince Edward Island and northern New Brunswick, and a few

from as distant as the province of Quebec.²³ The Departmental view on allowing children home for vacations was expressed thus by the Chief of the Training Division, Philip Phelan: "I do not see any great advantage in incurring expenditure in simply sending them home for holidays."²⁴

When summer vacations were approved for some children, the rule was that the parents must pay the railway fare one way, and must promise to have the children returned to school on the date set. Further, it was the policy of the Department not to allow children "living at a considerable distance from the school...home during the summer holidays."²⁵ Since it was the local Agents who decided when children should be admitted to the school and it was felt that they best knew the home conditions, so it was left to the Agents to decide which children should be allowed vacation. In response to a written request by a Prince Edward Island father to have his children home for the summer, the Agent sent this opinion on the matter to the Department:

...they have a very poor home to go to. [Their father] is moving around from place to place...and has no fit abode for children, and neither will he try to take care of them if he does get them. What this Indian is trying to work out, is to have the children with him in order that he will have a reason to apply for relief and then he will live on such relief and neglect the children.²⁶

Frequently the Agents did not agree to vacations, reporting the home conditions "unsatisfactory," but when they did recommend vacation for any children, the Principal stated that he was "only too glad to send them."²⁷ In 1936, one New Brunswick agent did not consider that any children from his reserve should be allowed vacation, "for can we depend on the parents providing their return expenses and will they

even let them go back without some trouble?"²⁸ The Department agreed that it was in the best interest of the New Brunswick pupils to remain at the school during summer holidays and enjoy the amusements arranged for them by the members of the staff:

Reports received indicate that the pupils who remain in the school during the holidays are taken on picnics and that other entertainment is provided for them.²⁹

It was also the policy of the Department not to allow children "living at a considerable distance from the school...home during the summer holidays."²⁶ Even many children from Nova Scotian reserves were deemed to live too far from the school to be allowed summer vacations at home. A parental request from Lunenburg to the Indian Agent stated

We would like them to come we are very busy every day and we are doing fine and we got fine garden...we will give them good clean comfort and we will see that they will tend [sic] mass on Sundays.³⁰

The Agent sent the letter on to the Department, noting only that he would "advise against this unless it is the usual thing."³¹ The Department understood, from this notation alone, that the home conditions of these children was unsatisfactory, and instructed Father Mackey to keep them during the holiday period.³² The Department also could deny vacation: when the Bear River Agent wrote to support a father who was "very anxious" to have his five children visit him, the response was:

...the Department's funds are not sufficient to permit us to allow all children from Residential Schools to go home for the summer holidays. Under these circumstances, we are not prepared to approve sending home the five children.³³

More frequently, requests which were backed by the Agent were successful, as in the following case in which it was felt the home

conditions were good and the parents were in a position to pay the travel fares for the children both ways.

...we would like to have our children [three boys, ages 14, 15, and 16] home for vacation. They never came home since they left here. It's about 6 years since I've seen them so I like to have them at once...We will pay the expense...The children wrote to us and they said that they were lonesome, they want to come home this coming vacation...my wife like to see them home at once. She's a kind of one that worries about children.³⁴

Most Agents made it a point to receive the return fare from the parents before recommending that the children be allowed home for vacation; the funds were forwarded to Fr. Mackey who used it to send the children home, and the cost of returning the children to the school was paid by the Department, through the Agent.³⁵

Parental pleas to have their children home for vacations sometimes were put off with promises, or were apparently ignored. There is no record in the files of a response to the following handwritten letter from an elderly New Brunswick father in 1939:

...I'm sick and total disable cripple, I'm not getting better I'm getting worst by worrying for to see my two boys which are in Shubenacadie School. I have ask my local agent Charles Hudson three years ago and he promise me he would send them home for a vacation last year but this was just a promise. One of my boys is fourteen and the other one is going on twelve years. I wish to see my boys for this vacation if it was ten or fifteen days. I wish to make my statements with my boys before I die as I don't think that I'm going to live very long now and I must tell you that my boys are in that school for five years it seem to me that when I see the rest of the young boys coming to visit their parents it make me lonesome for them not to be send home to see me.³⁶

Two years later, after the 75-year-old petitioner suffered a stroke, the Agent at last wrote to the Department on his behalf, understanding

that "it was the policy of the Department not to allow children to go home from school during the holidays unless for a very serious reason." He explained that the father was not expected to "last very long," and that the mother wanted her older boy home as she had a hard time getting along. The Department authorized discharge for the 14-year-old boy only, and it is not clear whether the 11-year-old son was granted vacation.³⁷

As it was the Agent's responsibility to decide who should be allowed home, so it was his duty to see that the children were returned to the school upon expiry of their leave.³⁸ Each September, the Principal sent a list of missing children to the Department, and the Agents involved were requested by the Department to make arrangements for their immediate return, unless they did not consider their return advisable.³⁹ Sometimes the Principal himself did not want them returned and noted against one missing child's name, "We are better rid of him and recommend that he be discharged."⁴⁰ In other cases the R.C.M.P. were used to bring back the children, as indicated in this letter to the police from an Agent:

...has not been returned to the school. And this after I warned his guardian...by letter and phone several times. The Indian Department has instructed us to make use of the good services of the Mounted Police in such and similar cases, and so I am asking you to please take this boy from his home...and convey him to the Shubenacadie School.⁴¹

After the boy was apprehended and escorted to Shubenacadie, his father applied for the dismissal of the boy and another son, in the Agent's view because of some "foolish tales" the children had told about the school.⁴² As Father Mackey "appeared glad to get rid of them,"⁴³ the Department approved their discharge. However, only half a year later the father proposed to the Agent that the older boy "be returned to the

school or sent to the reformatory at Halifax, as not much good can be had of him."⁴⁴

When the R.C.M.P. were used to return reluctant children from vacation, the children could then expect to be kept from home until their dismissal at age sixteen.⁴⁵ Proper procedure for parents who did not want to return their children to residential school was to apply for discharge through the Indian Agent, but in the following case the father decided to write directly to the Principal to say he wished to keep his twelve-year-old son at home:

...sorry to say that L. will not be going back to Shubenacadie School any more. I can send him to school here...there is no use of me writing the Indian Agent...as he never answers my letters anyway.⁴⁶

Father Mackey responded that since he was not responsible for admissions, he was also not responsible for discharges, and he advised that the father send the child back to school, then apply to the Indian Agent for dismissal.⁴⁷ Instead, the father consulted a medical doctor, who wrote to the Agent stating that the child got beatings at the school and did not want to go back.⁴⁸ Father Mackey denied the beatings, saying "that is the usual line of the Indian," and explained why it was important that the boy be returned:

It isn't that we need the boy at all, as there are many applications which we cannot accept. It is the old story over again. The Indian does not want to do what he is told or follow regulations, but must have his own way. Personally it is a matter of indifference to me whether the boy comes back or not, but I think it should be impressed upon the Indian that he cannot have his own way in matters concerning which the Department has set regulations.⁴⁹

The Department did approve the boy's dismissal, but in doing so denied any grant for his education at a white school.⁵⁰

In another instance involving the R.C.M.P., it was considered imperative that the children be returned to the Shubenacadie School for adequate food, clothing, and health. There was no local day school, the father had active tuberculosis, and the family was on relief. However, when the police interviewed the mother and ordered the children returned to the school, "she became insolent and very uncooperative." When she was advised to have the children ready to be picked up in the morning, she left the reserve and told no-one her destination.⁵¹

In the case of another mother who informed the Agent that her two children would not be returning to the school, Father Mackey pointed out that

It is just as necessary to obtain the permission of the Department of Indian Affairs to have children dismissed, before attaining the age of sixteen years, as it is to have them admitted to the school in the first place.⁵²

The mother's request to keep her children was next sent to the Department from a Stipendiary Magistrate who wrote on her behalf, "Mrs. P. says that she 'loves' her children and wishes to have them with her."⁵³ The Agent's opinion was that she wanted them home only to take care of the house and younger children, and his decision was that the residential school was the best place for them.⁵⁴

Perhaps because of the difficulty in having some of the children returned to the residential school after summer vacation, holidays at home were not allowed for any of the children during Christmas:

For many reasons which will no doubt suggest themselves to you, the Department does not allow holidays at Christmas, and I might say further that no valid reason has yet been given to us why holidays should be allowed at that period of the year. There is no question that the children attending the Shubenacadie Residential School

receive every possible care and attention, and in addition at Christmas time there are always special festivities which the children enjoy.⁵⁵

In 1939 the parents of the Cambridge Reserve in Nova Scotia were "determined to have their children...home during the Christmas vacation." The Agent refused the request, advising the parents it was against the rules of the Department. In his report to Phelan of the Training Division he wrote:

These people went so far as to have a man go to the school for their children, they did not get the children. Father Mackey would not let them take them.⁵⁶

Of one of these parents, who then sent her request on to the Department herself, the Agent reported:

[she] thought by writing she would be able to get her children home for Christmas. These people think they can have their own way and would like to do so, and when they find out they cannot they get mad.⁵⁷

Parents who signed admission forms to the school at Shubenacadie for their children, sometimes with an "X", could not or did not always read the notation on the form that the children would be under the guardianship of the principal for an indefinite term. The form did provide a space for the certification of a witness that the signing parent or guardian understood the contents of the application, but the full implications were not necessarily explained. The following plaintive letter of early 1943 was written to the Department of Indian Affairs by a father who had admitted his children to the school the previous fall:

I herewith make application to you for the return of my three children...who are now inmates of the Indian School at Shubenacadie. The oldest is 12 and the youngest only 7. They are too young to be away from their parents and my wife is fretting about them. When they went to school last fall I

signed a paper. Just lately I was told that in the paper I agreed to let them stay at the school until they are 16. I did not understand that when I signed the paper; I just wanted them to have a chance to learn English. We have a good school...and I am able to support the children, and both myself and my wife would like to have the little ones home again. Please permit us to take the children home.⁵⁸

The Department approved the dismissal of the children at the end of the school year, provided the Agent agreed the home conditions were "suitable" and believed "the children would be properly cared for and would regularly attend...day school."⁵⁹

Although children were usually dismissed at the end of the school year in which they turned sixteen, there were cases in which they were retained a further year or longer. In 1943 Father Mackey petitioned the Department, through the Agent, to have one girl retained past her sixteenth birthday because she was "an orphan and very small for her age" and because the home conditions were deemed "not suitable." Her brother in the army had arranged for her to stay with a family and receive his monthly allowance but the Agent felt that the matter was a "scheme...to get the assigned pay" and that the girl was better off not living with this large family in a small house. The matter was referred to the Department with the following result:

[It is] in the best interests of this girl to remain in the Shubenacadie Residential School...She will no doubt profit from another year at least... [it is] quite evident from the Agent's letter that the home conditions suggested would not be very suitable.⁶⁰

Sometimes the parents themselves requested that their children not be discharged, as in the following case regarding a 16-year old girl:

Only a short time ago the girl received a letter from her father saying that he hoped she would not be coming home, as they were starving up there. Even allowing for the average Indian exaggeration,

it is possible that her home conditions might be such that it might be better for her to remain another year.⁶¹

In another case, the Principal received Departmental permission to keep a boy at the Shubenacadie school until he was eighteen, in order that he could attend high school in the village. Father Mackey did not recall his people ever writing to him or coming to see him. Permission was also received to retain an 18-year old orphaned girl who was ill, as Father Mackey doubted her ability to earn her own living.⁶²

Although most children were discharged from the school at age sixteen, the Principal could petition the Department for early dismissal of disruptive children. One fifteen-year-old boy was discharged because he "became very hard to handle, [was] a truant, thief, etc. etc."⁶³ In the following instance, Father Mackey received permission to send two boys home in March, only three months before they were due for discharge:

Unless there is a change for the better soon, we consider that it would be good policy to discharge...both these boys [who] for the past months have been a great trial to the Sister Supervisor of the boys, and are having a very bad influence on a number of the other fellows. They are both sixteen years of age, and seem to take the attitude that they may do as they wish.⁶⁴

Also, every year a number of children were officially dismissed before reaching sixteen because they failed to return at the end of their vacations. Of the forty students discharged on September 1, 1939, nineteen were of age, nine had not returned from vacation, six left to attend day schools, three were considered mentally deficient, one was transferred to a tuberculosis sanatorium, and two had died. The following table shows the standings of the nineteen pupils discharged at age 16.

Table 2: Status of 16-year-old Students Discharged on September 1, 1939

	Years/Months in the School	Grade on Entering	Grade on Discharge
	-----	-----	-----
1.	3 / 11	2	7
2.	3 / 6	0	4
3.	1 / 6	0	0
4.	9 / 7	0	7
5.	8 / 9	0	7
6.	9 / 3	0	8
7.	9 / 0	0	8
8.	5 / 0	3	8
9.	4 / 3	0	5
10.	4 / 0	0	4
11.	3 / 9	0	3
12.	9 / 1	0	8
13.	9 / 1	0	8
14.	8 / 7	0	8
15.	8 / 7	0	8
16.	7 / 11	0	8
17.	7 / 11	0	6
18.	5 / 10	3	8
19.	4 / 4	3	8

(Source: PAC DIA School Files, RG 10, Vol. 6053)

Only ten of the nineteen pupils discharged at sixteen had attained a Grade VIII standing. All boys had been taught "farming, painting, and carpentry," and the girls had learned "sewing, cooking, and dressmaking." Most were noted as "fair pupils," five were expected to do well, and others were noted as "efficient and stubborn," "inclined to be lazy," "under-average intelligence," and "no brains." For the boy who did not attain any grade standing after 1-1/2 years in the school, it was noted that he had entered school too late, but had learned to write.⁶⁵

Those children who were dismissed were returned to the care of the Indian Agents at their home reserves, who saw them placed in suitable homes if they did not have families to keep them. In his report to the Department in August, 1939, one New Brunswick Agent requested that he

be given at least a month's notice when "a girl is discharged from the Shubenacadie Home that belongs to me." He wrote:

I have placed in the last four years some thirty girls in white homes as domestics. Some of them have let me down and been failures, but I am more than satisfied with the average.⁶⁶

Of one of the "failures" he said:

Just another case of a girl being discharged from our school where she had had the security of that school over a period of years and then sent to me; one by one I have watched them revert to type even though we move heaven and earth to save them.⁶⁷

In the case of a sixteen year old girl whose parents were dead, Father Mackey had departmental permission to keep her at the school after she was due for discharge, and to find work for her locally.

She did not want to go [home] and...got housework a couple months ago with a good family ten miles away and was back and forth to school.⁶⁸

However, the girl left her employment on a Tuesday night off, and still had not returned by the following Saturday. On Sunday, the Principal went to look for her, and found her in Bedford (near Halifax) where "she had spent the greater part of the week just hoboing around." Father Mackey then arranged to return the girl to her New Brunswick agency, and made the following remarks about her to the Agent:

During her years here at the Shubenacadie School she was no trouble at all, but apparently it did not take long for her to revert to type.⁶⁹

Many graduates of the residential school did find work placements, the boys on farms and the girls in domestic service, and many of them did leave their jobs to return to the reserves. In contrast to the attitude that these students had "reverted to type," a 1939 Halifax Chronicle newspaper article more sympathetically explained that

...the gregarious instinct of the Indian propels them to return to their reservations, where they become progressive and useful citizens.⁷⁰

The article went on to quote Father Mackey as saying, "We don't know whether we are teaching them or they are teaching us,"

...a statement indicating the humanitarian and democratic principles under which this fine institution is established.⁷¹

Chapter 4 - Notes and References

1. "Application for Admission" form, PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053, File 260-10, part 1. The form in Appendix 3 is a typed copy. It is worth noting here that the stated aims of the Shubenacadie Residential School differ from that of earlier aims for residential schools generally. While aims of the latter stress improving school attendance, amalgamation into white society, and even improving reserve life, aims of the former seem inclined toward a welfare function.
2. Letter of October 26, 1937, to Indian Agent MacNeil, Glendale, N.S. from Hoey, Indian Affairs, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
3. Letter of August 19, 1937, to Hoey, Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Robb, Shubenacadie. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
4. Letter of August 28, 1943, to Indian Agent MacLean, Eskasoni, N.S., from Indian Affairs, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
5. Letter of May 18, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Murray, Parrsboro, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
6. Letter of September 20, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent MacDougall, Summerside, P.E.I. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
7. Letter of November 9, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent McMullen, Truro, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
8. Letter of December 7, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Rev. Chaisson, Thorburn, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
9. Letter of March 30, 1936, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
10. Letter of November 17, 1936, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent McCutcheon, Fredericton, N.B. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
11. Letter of March 9, 1943, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Rice, Shubenacadie, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
12. Letter of January 3, 1937, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.

13. Letter of September 1, 1938, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
14. Letter of September 13, 1937, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent MacDougall, Summerside, P.E.I. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
15. Note written by Indian Agent Whalen, Fredericton, on a letter of May 4, 1943, from Regina McElligott, school teacher, N. Devon, N.B., which he passed to Indian Affairs, Ottawa Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
16. Letter of January 31, 1941, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Mrs. C.P., Cole Harbour Road Reserve, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
17. Letter of August 6, 1936, to Indian Agent Robb, Shubenacadie, N.S., from Mr. J.K. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
18. Letter of November 23, 1936, to Indian Agent McCutcheon, Fredericton, from Indian Affairs, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
19. Instructions sometimes conflicted. Agents usually sent application forms directly to the Department at Ottawa: "The Agent communicates with the Department and forwards an application form for their admission," (letter of August 31, 1936, to Indian Agent Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro, N.S., from J.D. Sutherland, Acting Superintendent of Indian Education, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056,) and the Agent was also required to arrange for the medical examination: "...you should have them medically examined and if they are physically fit you can arrange for sending them to the Shubenacadie School," (letter of September 9, 1941, to Indian Agent Dr. Richard, Restigouche, N.B., from Phelan, Chief, Training Division, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053). However, sometimes the Agents were instructed to mail the application forms to the Principal: "The forms should be mailed to Rev. J.P. Mackey...who will have the children examined by the medical officer at the school." (Letter of November 1, 1940, to Indian Agent Rev. McDonald, Christmas Island, N.S., from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053).
20. Relevant correspondence includes letter of April 17, 1940, to Indian Agent McDonald, Christmas Island, N.S., from Phelan, Ottawa; letter of September 9, 1941, to Indian Agent Dr. Richard, Restigouche, from Indian Affairs, Ottawa; letter of August 31, 1936, to Indian Agent Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro, N.S., from Sutherland, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vols. 6053 and 6056.
21. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.

22. Letter of August 31, 1936, to Indian Agent Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro, N.S., from Sutherland, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
23. Very few children came from Quebec. Two Quebec children were discharged in 1937, and Indian Agent Richard, Restigouche, requested that the school take two others in their place: "I beg to inform the Department that here are many young Indians could be sent at this school for education." (Letter of May 20, 1937, to the Secretary, Indian Affairs, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056). Father Mackey was informed that "it is only under special circumstances that the Department wishes to send children to Shubenacadie from such a distant reserve as Restigouche." (Letter of May 27, 1937, to Father Mackey from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056).
24. Letter of July 16, 1941, to Father Mackey from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
25. Letter of July 6, 1936, to Indian Agent Skinner, Chester Basin, N.S., from Sutherland, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
26. Letter of June 16, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
27. Letter of June 26, 1941, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
28. Letter of June 23, 1936, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
29. Letter of June 29, 1936, to Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B., from Sutherland, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
30. Letter of June 26, 1936, to Indian Agent Dr. Skinner, Chester Basin, N.S., from Mr. and Mrs. C.T. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
31. Undated letter to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Dr. Skinner, Chester Basin, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
32. Letter of July 6, 1936, to Indian Agent Dr. Skinner, Chester Basin, N.S., from Sutherland, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
33. Letter of May 27, 1938, from Indian Affairs, Ottawa, to Indian Agent Darres, Bear River, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.

34. Relevant correspondence includes letter of June 9, 1937, to Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B. from parent at Red Bank; letter of June 21, 1937 to Indian Affairs from Hudson, and undated response from Ottawa to Hudson. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
35. Undated letter to Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B. from Indian Affairs, Ottawa, Ibid.
36. Letter of July 8, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Mr. B.S., Burnt Church, N.B. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
37. Relevant correspondence includes letter of August 7, 1941, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B.; and undated response from Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
38. Undated letter to Indian Agent Hudson, Richibucto, N.B. from Indian Affairs, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
39. Circular letter of September 13, 1943, to Indian Agents, from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
40. Letter of September 12, 1942, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
41. Letter of October 4, 1937, to R.C.M.P. from Indian Agent Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
42. Letter of October 27, 1937, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro, N.S., quoted in letter of May 30, 1938, to Rev. McCarthy from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
43. Letter of November 15, 1937, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Father Mackey; and letter to Rev. McCarthy from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
44. Letter of May 25, 1938, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Rev. McCarthy, Parrsboro, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
45. Letter of August 31, 1937, to Mr. F.T., parent, Rollingham, N.B. from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
46. Letter of August 23, 1937, to Father Mackey from Mr. F.T., Rollingham, N.B. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
47. Letter of August 31, 1937, to Mr. F.T., Rollingham, N.B., from Father Mackey, op. cit.
48. Letter of September 4, 1937, to Indian Agent McCutcheon, Fredericton, N.B., from H.S. Everett, M.D., St. Stephen, N.B., and passed on to Father Mackey by the Agent. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.

49. Letter of September 8, 1937, to Indian Agent McCutcheon, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
50. Letter of September 20, 1937, to Indian Agent McCutcheon from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
51. R.C.M.P. report, September 12, 1944. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
52. Letter of September 3, 1941, to Indian Agent Langley, Barra Head, N.S., from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
53. Letter of September 20, 1941, to Indian Affairs from F.C. Cotton, Stipendiary Magistrate. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
54. Letter of September 30, 1941, to Phelan, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Langley, Barra Head, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
55. Letter of December 21, 1938, to Indian Agent Spinney, Kentville, N.S. from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
56. Letter of January 1, 1939, to Phelan, Ottawa, from Indian Agent Spinney. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
57. Ibid.
58. Letter of January 28, 1943, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Mr. C.P., Afton, N.S. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
59. Letter of February 2, 1943, to Indian Agent Cameron from Phelan, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
60. Relevant correspondence includes a letter of March 5, 1943, to Father Mackey from Indian Agent MacLean; Father Mackey's response of March 3, 1943; Father Mackey's letter of March 5, 1943 to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, and Phelan's undated response to Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
61. Letter of June 7, 1937, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
62. Relevant correspondence includes letter of January 6, 1943, to Father Mackey from Phelan, Ottawa; a letter of January 9, 1943, to Phelan from Father Mackey; and a letter of January 14, 1943, to Father Mackey from Phelan, in which he agreed the children could be retained at school to the end of the year, at which time the cases would be reviewed. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
63. Discharge Form dated April, 1942. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
64. Letter of March 3, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.

65. School Discharge Forms, September 1, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
66. Report of August 1, 1939, to Indian Affairs, Ottawa, from Indian Agent McCutcheon, N.B. Southwestern Indian Agency. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
67. Ibid.
68. Letter of June 7, 1937, to Indian Agent McCutcheon, Fredericton, N.B., from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
69. Ibid.
70. "Indian Boys and Girls Get Valuable Training at School at Shubenacadie," The Halifax Chronicle, Thursday, March 2, 1939, page 3.
71. Ibid.

CHAPTER 5 - HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

In September, 1929, five months before the first resident children arrived at the new school in Shubenacadie, the appointed Principal received a letter from the Director of Medical Services for Indian Affairs. The intention of the letter was to remind the Principal of the responsibility he was assuming for the welfare of these children as their guardian, and also to outline the Department's suggestions for their health care. Father Mackey was instructed to assure the vaccination of every child on entrance to the school, and to

resolutely refuse to receive any pupil who has tuberculosis in any form whether of the lungs or joints, or scrofula... Tuberculosis in any form is contagious and if you take them in you will have reason to regret it. They will give the disease to healthy children.

The cows at the school farm were also expected to be tuberculosis free, in order to provide the children with "plenty of clean whole milk...and butter too." It was recommended that the children eat brown bread, and that a diet high in protein--fish, meat, beans, cheese--was "best for Indians."²

In March, 1930, Dr. D.F. McInnis of Shubenacadie was appointed School Physician, his duties being to examine every child in the school every six months, and to perform all minor surgery.³ In addition, the Department employed a travelling nurse in Nova Scotia, who would visit the school from time to time. selection of drugs and dressings was issued for the school, and the Principal received an official list of available medical supplies from which he could order as required. He was cautioned, however, to keep in mind that "tonics and pills can never take the place of good food." In his letter, the Director of Medical Services outlined what he felt were the "most important things

which would keep [the] pupils in good health," and placed them in the following order:

...kindness, good feeding, good ventilation,
vigilance against contagious diseases and
tuberculosis, and last of all and least, medicine.⁴

It was not an easy matter to keep tuberculosis out of the school. That the disease was common among the Maritime natives is illustrated in the comment of one doctor at the Children's Hospital in Halifax, on the application to the residential school he completed for one of his patients: "Never had tuberculosis--the only Indian child I have ever had under my care free from tuberculosis."⁵

Two months after the school opened, it was found that five of the children had tuberculosis. The Medical Health Officer of the Nova Scotia Department of Public Health recommended four for sanatorium treatment, and one for observation and study, but since the N.S. Sanatorium in Kentville did not take patients under twelve, he suggested they be "placed...on the cure in a section of the school." He was strongly opposed to returning them to their homes.⁶

Although the Lourdes Sanatorium in Pictou took younger children, Father Mackey was unable to have his patients admitted there, and he separated their sleeping quarters from the other children.⁷ The Department expected that the Principal would continue in his efforts to place the children "in some institution at the earliest possible date," but did not suggest they be returned home.⁸ When Father Mackey was finally able to place two of "the worst of the five tuberculosis cases" at Kentville two months later, the Department scolded him for not adhering to the departmental policy of keeping the school tuberculosis free, and reminded him that sick children must be sent back to their

reserves.⁹ One child with active TB was returned home after two more months had passed, and the other two were declared "inactive" by the school doctor.¹⁰

Although the Department advised Father Mackey that "the essential feature is to prevent the entrance to the school of tuberculous children,"¹¹ it made what it called a "clear error such as sometimes occurs in the best organizations"¹² when it approved the admission of a boy whose tuberculous condition was actually noted on his application form. In this case, the boy arrived late on the evening of September 21st, 1939, "complained of a sore neck and within minutes the gland was discharging freely."¹³ Departmental advice to Father Mackey was that

this child should be disposed of in accordance with
the regulations for the disposal of tubercular
Indians.¹⁴

Accordingly, the boy was separated from the other children as much as possible, and although the Public Health Department was requested to examine him, it was not done. In early November the boy contracted a cold and bronchial condition, and Dr. McInnis had him sent to the Victoria General Hospital in Halifax on November 3rd. However, because he was "an active TB case," the hospital wanted him transferred to the N.S. Sanitorium. The school doctor contacted the sanitorium, who wanted authority from the Department of Indian Affairs before accepting him, to be assured that his expenses would be paid. On November 13th, before they were able to have him admitted to the sanitorium, the boy died. The school doctor wrote to the Principal:

It seems too bad that after all our efforts to keep the pupils in the school free from tuberculosis that an advanced case like this should be sent to us here. I am still of the opinion that the Department forgot this was a school and not a tuberculosis sanitorium.¹⁵

Several children at the Shubenacadie Residential School were syphilitic, and it was the view of the Department that if they required treatment, they were "in a good place to have it."¹⁶

The Department's attitude in this regard is that pupils who are known to have syphilis and are under treatment are relatively safe to associate with. They may be and probably are less dangerous than some unknown cases among the pupils who have not been examined.¹⁷

Of ten children given tests in early 1934, six tested positive 4 plus, which required "a very long time to clear up if it can be cleared up at all,"¹⁸ and the others ranged from two to three plus. Subsequent tests on twenty-five more children were also positive. The school doctor expressed the following attitude to the problem in a letter to the Principal in 1939:

We are apparently getting all the advanced tuberculosis cases and syphilitics in the three provinces shipped into our school and apparently there is no way left for us to keep them out. It is very unfair to the children who are clean and well...Just the other day we had [a boy] shipped to us and he is 4 plus syphilitic. Please impress on the Department at Ottawa that this is not a tuberculosis clinic and a syphilitic home, and the importance of protecting the health of the other children who came here with the impression that it was a residential school.¹⁹

During that school year, the doctor also had to deal with an epidemic of influenza, a case of appendicitis, and "five mild cases of diptheria" which put the school under quarantine for a month. One boy died that year from tuberculosis, and a girl died from pneumonia following a tonsillectomy. Both had been in the school less than two months.²⁰

Besides admitting to the school some children with venereal diseases and signs of tuberculosis, the Department also approved the admission of several deaf children. On the application form of a ten-

year old with no previous schooling, it was written that "this child is very defective in hearing and appears to be subnormal mentally." It was noted that he would be difficult to teach.²¹ Dr. McInnis could not see the purpose of keeping deaf children in the school, but the situation was beyond Father Mackey's control. When he sent the oldest one home because he could not be kept quiet in the classroom, the agent applied for his readmission and the Department again gave its approval and returned him.²² Two boys who were deaf from infancy and suffered epileptic fits were finally discharged after three and five years respectively, having attained no grade status and learned "not much of anything."²³

In another case, a fourteen-year-old girl described as "crippled and mentally deficient" was admitted to the school. She had been recommended to the school by her doctor at the Children's Hospital, who described her as "an ideal case for this type of institutional care and a lovely child." Because of "terrible home conditions" she had never walked or been given the opportunity to talk; now she was getting around with a leg brace and crutches, and her mental retardation was described as "improving rapidly." The Agent also supported her admission to the residential school, feeling it was "most practical." Father Mackey was aware of her condition and agreed to accept her, but only three months later arranged to return her to P.E.I., even offering to pay both fares, the child's plus expenses for the mother.²⁴

Twice a year, after the regular inspections done by Dr. McInnis, he recommended a number of children for tonsillectomies, dentistry, and eye glasses. This departmental response to the 1932 report and request for the necessary funds was typical:

Owing to orders for strict economy and our funds being extremely limited, it will not be possible to carry out all the...work which Dr. McInnis states is required...only the more urgent cases should be given attention.²⁵

Although the Departmental ruling was that the individual consent of the parents was required before any operations could be undertaken,²⁶ such consent could be waived. Father Mackey was instructed to use his own judgement:

Technically you should do so, but in some cases it may be inconvenient, or even impossible, on account of distance.²⁷

The Department expected that minor surgery such as tonsillectomies should be done at the school, but in 1932 Father Mackey requested that the work to be done instead at a nearby hospital, pleading that

...for at least a week the school would be upset during day and night. Our last experience with tonsils gave us many uneasy moments and we are not anxious to go through the same experience again.²⁸

However, the response to his request was that "considering all the circumstances, the Department prefers not to go on with this work at the present time."²⁹ Tonsillectomies were finally allowed two months later, but for the next three years the Department refused to fund any dentistry, tonsillectomies, or eye glasses for this school:

The Department has rarely ever been able to provide clinics of this kind at every school every year...The funds provided by Parliament will not cover the cost for all.³⁰

Eventually, in the fall of 1936, the Department accepted Father Mackey's offer to pay for the necessary work with funds from the school budget, saying they would be "very pleased indeed:"

Your offer removes the Department's only difficulty. I know that you will see that the safety of the children is well safeguarded.³¹

Taking funds from the school budget meant that summer vacation

allotments were diverted for medical expenses:

Since the Department is having the tuberculosis test for all children at considerable expense, we suppose that it is not possible that there will be any funds for teeth and tonsils. If we can, we expect to do the same as we did last year with vacation expenses; that is, spend it on teeth and tonsils.³²

In the years when vacations were allowed, some parents used medical grounds in their attempts to keep their children from returning to school after the holidays. One child who had been reported by the Agent as too sickly to return to the school was ordered back by the Department, who felt it "very likely that the parents have reported to you that she is ill in order to keep her at home."³³

In the same year, 1936, the records show a father's valiant attempts to keep his two daughters, 12 and 14, at home. The twelve-year old was diagnosed as having chorea (or St. Vitus's Dance), and had the local doctor's recommendation to remain home, as rest was essential and her return "might reasonably injure her health."³⁴ On this basis, the Agent applied to the Department for her discharge, and for that of her elder sister who was needed at home to help look after her, as they had no mother.³⁵ According to the school records, the child had spent four weeks in bed the previous year with a condition undiagnosed by the school physician.³⁶ The Department's response to the request was only that the children had been

allowed out on holidays on the distinct understanding that they would return to the school upon expiry of their leave,

and the Agent was instructed to return the children to the school where they would be examined by the school doctor.

If he decides that either of them is not physically fit to remain at school, the Department will then be prepared to consider granting discharge.³⁷

The Agent wrote again to the Department, promising to send the elder girl to school and the younger one as soon as the doctor decided she was fit, despite the father's determination to keep his girls at home.

He claimed that I could not take his girls as he supported himself and family and he was free to send his children to any school he chose...This man is very obstinate and dared me to take these girls by force which I did not want to do.³⁸

The Agent was instructed to have the R.C.M.P. apprehend the children and return them to school, but after "a deal of persuading and threatening" the father, he was allowed to take them.³⁹ Two days after their arrival at the school the younger girl was examined by Dr. McInnis, who offered the following diagnosis:

I find no specific disease...she is nervous but I find nothing approaching chorea. I advised giving her a mixture containing iron and arsenic as a tonic.⁴⁰

In another case, a mother returned her son to the school after his vacation, but then applied to the Agent for his discharge, because

...he isn't in good health for he is inclined of taking fainting spells since he has been tending [sic] the school. The doctor said that it was sort of inward fits...he is the only child I have and I would like to have him...I can put him in school...⁴¹

Father Mackey attested to the boy's lack of illness, good appetite, and perfect school attendance, and had Dr. McInnis examine him with the following result:

[I] could not find any disease. He gives the history of taking occasional fainting spells but I could not find any cause of them. There is a possibility that they may be mild fits (petit mal) but I have no definite evidence of this.⁴²

The Agent sent all correspondence on the matter to the Department, recommending that the discharge not be allowed, and asking to be sent a

"good sharp letter I can read to this lady."⁴³ The boy, of course, remained at school.

There are reports of several accidents which occurred at the school, all apparently owing to carelessness of the victims themselves. Just three months after the school opened in 1930, two girls who were working in the kitchen were caught in the dough mixer. While one girl was cleaning the machine, the other threw the power switch on, "for what reason we cannot tell." Although it was the opinion of the local doctor that each girl would lose two fingers of their right hands, they were taken to the Victoria General Hospital where the fingers of the girl cleaning the mixer were saved. The second girl, however, lost part of one finger, back to the second joint. They had been "warned many times about tinkering with the machines," and to prevent a recurrence, the Principal "put padlocks on every hand switch in the school."⁴⁴

In December, 1933, a fourteen-year-old boy had an accident while "coasting where the hill is steep and they'd been forbidden to go." The boy said that he "fell off his sleigh." Perhaps four days later the Sister Nurse noticed he was passing blood, and at the last report in the file he had had a kidney removed and was in only fair condition.⁴⁵

The next reported accident took place in December, 1941, when a girl went to the laundry, "warmed her hands on the mangle and remarked that she was nearly caught. The next time she warmed her hands she was caught." After spending over four months in hospital, she returned with stiff fingers, bent toward the palm. Father Mackey wrote in his report:

While she was at the hospital we heard about the doctors being quite annoyed because she would not exercise the hand, and also, that a certain amount of experimentation was being tried out.

Within a month of her return, however, she had improved by doing crochet work, had recovered movement in her fingers, and was able to grip with her hand.⁴⁶

The most tragic accident took place on August 13, 1943, when two fifteen-year-old girls were drowned in the lake abutting the school lands. Twenty children had gone together berry picking after lunch, and as usual had broken into small groups of two to four. When the children began returning around 4 p.m., one group took the path near the lake and saw two pairs of shoes and two full gallon pails on the shore where the flat-bottomed punt had been, and the boat was seen tipped over in a patch of water lilies. It was said that no one had seen the girls at the lake nor heard any calls for help, and it was believed that neither girl could swim. The bodies were recovered four hours later, and the following day were sent home to New Brunswick. "We," Father Mackey wrote, "all the children and Sisters, accompanied the bodies to the train."⁴⁷

It once appeared to be the opinion of the school physician that Father Mackey was unsympathetic to the deaths of students. In 1934 when an eleven-year-old died, the doctor noted that on visiting the school the previous day, he had not been asked to look at the child. When he did see her the next day, he knew she would not live. He suspected negligence, and wrote in his report to the Department that

it is futile to report these cases to the Department as they probably feel as the Superintendent of the school does, that they go to Heaven and that it is not worthwhile trying to keep those poor Indian children alive.⁴⁸

However, it was the opinion of the Indian Agent at Shubenacadie that the Principal felt very deeply the diseases and deaths of the children. When Father Mackey, now Monsignor, resigned as Principal on December 14, 1943, he said it was because of recurring illnesses:

My days at the Indian Residential School are over. I have not been well and I did not have what it takes to continue further. Some of my years there were really enjoyable and we had smooth sailing, and others were tough going...I am going back to a small parish with mixed feelings, some of relief, others of regret.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, Indian Agent Rice believed Monsignor Mackey resigned because his medical problems had been "aggravated...by a series of regrettable occurrences." Regarding the loss of "a good friend and an experienced advisor," he wrote the following to the Department:

First blow was the accidental drowning of two young girls of the school. He felt this very keenly. Next came an epidemic of diphtheria at the school, and three runaway attempts in extremely cold weather by children who were ill clothed for the temperatures we were then experiencing. Finally just home from the hospital he was unfortunate enough to meet the doctor, on the doorsteps of the school, coming out with a child on a stretcher. The idea which had been milling in his mind for some time suddenly became a decision and he forthwith sent in his resignation.⁵⁰

Of Monsignor Mackey's successor, Father J.W. Brown, Rice added:

He is a favourite of all children regardless of color or creed and in my opinion will have more trouble with ration coupons and pedigrees than managing 160 children.

"It is well known," he said of Father Brown, "that he always had a liking for what he calls 'the poor Indian.'"⁵¹

This change in superintendency presumably meant a change in child care practices. Although it is difficult to judge how this change affected the children, the next chapter offers evidence that Father Brown seemed much less sympathetic in his attitude toward the children.

However, in chapter 7 it will be shown that it is Father Mackey whom the students recall as a harsh administrator.

Father Brown's stay in the school proved to be temporary only. He was 63 when he took over the superintendency of the school, and his health was poor from the start. For several years a younger and healthier replacement was sought, and Brown was finally notified in July, 1948, that he must relinquish his office.⁵² The Right Reverend Mackey consented to return as Principal upon Father Brown's relief of duties, on September 1, 1948.⁵³

...the Monsignor loved the school and the children,
and returned to them to stay until his death in
1957.⁵⁴

It was said that after Monsignor Mackey's death, on May 10, 1957:

once more he came back to his beloved Indian
children...The continual flow of visitors who came
to pay their respects was a sign of the love and
reverence with which they remembered him.⁵⁵

Chapter 5 - Notes and References

1. Letter of September 18, 1929, to Father Mackey from "M.B.," Director of Medical Services. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
2. Ibid.
3. Memo of March 21, 1931, to Mr. Ferrier and Dr. Stone, Director of Medical Services, from D.C. Scott. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
4. Letter of September 18, 1929, to Father Mackey from "M.B.," Director of Medical Services. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
5. Application form dated June 1, 1939, signed by J. Blecker, M.D., Children's Hospital, Halifax. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
6. Letter of April 28, 1930, to Dr. McInnis from P.S. Campbell, M.D. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
7. Letter of May 14, 1930, to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
8. Letter of May 19, 1930, to Father Mackey from A.S. Williams, Acting Assistant Departmental Secretary. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
9. Letter of July 8, 1930, to Father Mackey from A.F. Mackenzie, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
10. Letter of September 25, 1930, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
11. Letter of July 8, 1930, to Father Mackey from A.F. Mackenzie. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
12. Letter of February 16, 1939, to Father Mackey from E.L. Stone, M.B., Superintendent of Medical Services, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
13. Letter of September 22, 1938, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
14. Letter of September 24, 1938, to Father Mackey from Secretary, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
15. Relevant correspondence included a letter of November 12, 1938, to the Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey, and a letter of November 13, 1939, to Father Mackey from Dr. McInnis. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.

16. Letter of February 16, 1939, to Father Mackey from E.L. Stone. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
17. Letter of April 16, 1932, to Father Mackey from A.F. Mackenzie, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
18. Remark on test results, November 28, 1933. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
19. Letter of February 11, 1939, to Father Mackey from Dr. McInnis. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
20. Relevant correspondence includes letters of October 27, 1938, November 18, 1938, and February 13, 1939, and a letter and telegram of April 30, 1939, to the Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files RG10, Vol. 6058. It also includes a letter of March 21, 1939, to Indian Agent MacDougall, Summerside, P.E.I., from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files RG10, Vol. 6053. The girl who died of pneumonia following a tonsillectomy was only seven years old, and it was discovered after her death that she was not even eligible to be in the school as her father was "considered by the Department as a white man."
21. Application form dated November 13, 1936, and approved by Sutherland, Indian Affairs, November 17. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
22. Letter of November 20, 1937, to Indian Affairs from Dr. McInnis. There were five deaf children in the school at that time. Also undated letter to Dr. McInnis from Father Mackey, agreeing that "with a school attendance of over 160, it is impossible to do very much for these boys." PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
23. Comments on Discharge Sheet dated September 1, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
24. Application form of June 1, 1939, signed by J. Blecker, M.D.; undated letter to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent MacDougall, Summerside, P.E.I., and letter of September 17, 1939 to MacDougall from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
25. Undated letter to Father Mackey from Parker, Acting Secretary, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
26. Letter of November 22, 1937, to Father Mackey from MacInnes, Secretary, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
27. Letter of October 3, 1935, to Father Mackey from MacInnes, Secretary, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
28. Letter of June 17, 1932, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
29. Letter of June 25, 1932, to Father Mackey from Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.

30. Letters of May 7, 1936, and October 19, 1936, to Father Mackey from Mackenzie, Secretary, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
31. Relevant correspondence includes a letter of October 28, 1936, to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, and a response of November 4, 1936, from the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
32. Letter of October 13, 1937, to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
33. Relevant correspondence includes a letter of September 21, 1936, to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent McDougall, Summerside, P.E.I., and the departmental response of September 25, 1936. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
34. Letters of July 29, 1936, and August 16, 1936, to Indian Agent Harry, Annapolis Royal, from Dr. Laurence Braine. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
35. Letter of July 31, 1936, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Indian Agent Harry. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
36. Department of Indian Affairs Memo of August 6, 1936, to P. Phelan, Chief, Training Division. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
37. Letter of August 8, 1936, to Indian Agent Harry from MacInnes, Acting Secretary, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
38. Letter of August 31, 1936, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Indian Agent Harry. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
39. Letter of September 10, 1936, to Indian Agent Harry, from Sutherland, Indian Affairs, and reply of September 14, 1936. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
40. Report dated September 17, 1936, by Dr. D.F. McInnis. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
41. Letter of September 1, 1937, to Indian Agent Robb, Shubenacadie, from Mrs. R.P. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
42. Dr. McInnis's health certificate of September 3, 1937; and letter of September 28, 1937, to Indian Agent Robb from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
43. Letter of September 27, 1937, to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent Robb. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
44. Letter of May 20, 1930, to A.F. Mackenzie, Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.

45. Letter of January 3, 1934, to Secretary, Indian Affairs from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
46. Letter of May 23, 1942, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6054.
47. Relevant correspondence includes a telegram dated August 13, 1943, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey; and a letter of August 14, 1943, to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, with accompanying statements made by two pupils, Sister Mary Leonard, and Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058. Also, Halifax Mail, Friday, August 13, 1943, page 1.
48. Report of June 6, 1936, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Dr. McInnis. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6058.
49. Letter of December, 1943, to Phelan from Father Mackey at the Halifax Infirmary. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
50. "Summary of Activities at the Shubenacadie Agency from October 1943 to January 1944," to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent H.C. Rice. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6054.
51. Ibid.
52. Memo of September 28, 1944, to Hoey from Phelan, reporting that although he had on inspection "found everything running smoothly," the operation of the school was depending on the Rev. Sisters, and that a younger man should be found. Phelan sent a similar memo on February 13, 1947, to Col. B.F. Neary, Superintendant of Welfare and Training, pointing out the importance of having a younger and more energetic principal. "Our school," he wrote, "would be in a very bad condition if it were not for the very excellent services given us by the Sisters." PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
53. Letter of July 28, 1948, to Hoey from Archbishop McNally of Halifax. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
54. Carl Kelly, O.M.I. (1986) The Oblates in Nova Scotia, 1948-1986, p. 9. Although Father Mackey was to stay in the school until his death in 1957, his ill health caused him to be replaced as Principal in 1955 by Father Myles Power. Father Paddy Collins assumed responsibility for the school in the summer of 1956, and around 1960, he was joined for one year by Brother Paul Duffy and for two years by Brother John MacDonald. Brother MacDonald was replaced by Brother Alex Sampson in 1962. In 1964, Father William Bernardo lived at the residential school and was Assistant Principal. Father Collins left in 1966, and was replaced by Father Michael Kearney, who remained until the school closed the following year.
55. Note taken from a short typewritten history of the school provided by the Sisters of Charity, the Motherhouse at Mount Saint Vincent University, to Isabel Shay of the Micmac Reserve.

CHAPTER 6 - REPORTS ON THE SCHOOL, THE STAFF, AND TRUANTS, 1930-1947

When the children of the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie went home for their first summer vacation in 1930, the school had been in operation for only half a year. That August, the first letter of complaint about the school was sent to Ottawa, by Chief Dan Francis of the Cambridge Reserve in Nova Scotia. It read in part:

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

The Department did "not place much reliance in his charges," believing the school to be "under the management of a competent staff, who have the best interests of the children in mind." Further, it was the Department's intention that children in all residential schools help with the work in the school and on the farm. The Agent of the Cambridge Reserve was instructed to speak with the Chief, to learn more about the complaints, and to explain to him "the purposes for which this school was carried on."² Meanwhile, Father Mackey was requested to invite the Chief to see the school, and "to satisfy him that there is no ground for any complaints," because

In order to facilitate future recruiting, the Department desires that the Indians themselves will be favourably disposed and given every opportunity to see that the Indian children are being well cared for in every respect.³

It was discovered that several children had made complaints to the Chief, generally that there was "too much work and not enough study." Three children, he said, were lonesome and homesick and were wanted at home by their parents. One girl had become ill from the work she was required to do and because she "didn't get enough to eat," and a boy

had blistered hands from work with a shovel. There were reports from two parents who had visited the school that they had found their children "lousy and dirty."⁴

"Very little reliance," the Department again stated, "is placed on the Chief's statements." The problem of homesickness could be given little consideration, and the official line continued to be that

the pupils at this school are well treated, and we are sure the Reverend Sisters would not permit any uncleanness or vermin on the children under their charge...it is being conducted in the best interests of the children.⁵

Two years later, in June, 1933, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Dr. H.W. McGill, enjoyed an "exceedingly pleasant visit" to the school, and was "very pleased indeed...with the work which is being conducted in such an excellent manner."⁶

When the school was inspected in March, 1936, the following positive comments were made in the inspection report to Dr. McGill:

Pupils: neat and clean in dress and appearance. Apparently happy and well nourished...Father Mackie [sic] is a man of splendid executive ability and intensely interested in his work. He has gathered about him a staff apparently imbued with the same high ideals.

During that same year, conflicting observations on the school were made by two Indian Agents from Nova Scotia. Agent Harry of Annapolis County, after meeting several former pupils of the school, forwarded the following comments to Ottawa in July, 1936:

I am rather disappointed at the results. Whether the fault is on the pupils or the method of teaching is hard to say but I have met bright and sharp children of fourteen years only doing Grade 5 work. I have met a lad who was at school until he was 17 and he was in Grade 5 when he came home. Now this lad is as bright and intelligent as any white lad in the locality. When the school reopens I would like your permission to visit the school

and I hope make a discovery as to the cause of what I term poor results.⁸

The response from the Acting Secretary of Indian Affairs was that the staff was "putting forth their best possible efforts on behalf of the children." He wrote, "I am inclined to feel that the fault is due to themselves--not lack of work by the staff." The Agent was assured that he could visit the school at any time.⁹

In contrast, Agent Spinney of Kentville visited the school when he was delivering children there in September, 1936, and upheld the Department's view of the value of the education and the competence of the school staff in the following letter of praise:

The school is wonderful and Father Mackey and the Sisters that are in charge are all very fine and they certainly are doing their best to give the children their very best attention and each child should be benefited greatly from the training they get at this school...one thing in particular I noticed was the order which the children had toward those who had charge of them. Also how clean the building was kept. Everything seemed spotless ...Father Mackey...needs to be congratulated on the way he is conducting the school.¹⁰

However, T.S., a former pupil of the school, held an opposite view of it. He retained a lawyer, R.H. Butts, in an attempt to keep his younger brother and sister from being returned to Shubenacadie after their summer holidays in 1936. In his report to Indian Agent Rev. MacNeil, the lawyer said the complainant had related

a very hard story of the treatment young Indian children receive there. It would appear that his own experience has been so hard that he dreads very much the idea of going back there, and naturally, feels it hard to see his younger brother and sister taken there, where they will receive similar hard treatment.¹¹

The Agent, who did "not believe a word of its contents," sent a copy of the letter to Father Mackey, "fearing they may with their

falsehoods start new trouble through a lawyer."¹² Father Mackey's reaction to the letter was that because of having the biggest attendance ever at the school, and turning away several applicants, he did not need these children returned. However, he felt that

To let them get away with their lies doesn't seem the right thing to do--to keep them from spreading falsehoods about those who try to do something for them, seems hopeless. And why white people fall for such stories, is hard to explain. For myself I never hope to catch up with the Indian and his lies...I think the best thing to do is write to the Department and since we have a full school, request a few more beds and insist upon them coming back. I am getting a bit tired of playing square with the Indian and in turn have him cut my throat.¹³

In his opinion, Butts knew very little about the school and was also ignorant of the regulations calling for one half day each in the classroom and the other half in labour:

for boys, farm or carpenter work, and for girls, cooking, sewing and washing. Here we have not enough work of that kind with the result that each child spends far more time in the classroom than the regulations call for.¹⁴

He also believed that most of the bigger boys preferred to be at work rather than in the classroom, because "the greater part of their work is made play." As for the former pupil who had made the complaint, Father Mackey dismissed him as "a big body with the mind of a ten year old child," and offered the following opinion:

To play a game of baseball was work for [him]; he would rather sit in the sun and pester a bumble bee or a fly, by pulling off one wing and one leg at a time. To make an Indian work is the unpardonable sin among them.¹⁵

The Principal also denied the allegation of hard treatment, calling it "ridiculous." He could not remember ever punishing the boy, and said that the Sisters would not punish a boy of his size. Father Mackey felt that the lawyer should have reservations about accepting the

statements of a boy with limited mental capacity, and could not understand "why a man of his position could be duped by an Indian."¹⁶

It was decided by the Acting Superintendent of Indian Education, J.D. Sutherland, not to insist upon the return to the school of the children in question; however, as in other cases of children who refused to return, the Department denied any remuneration to another school for their education.¹⁷

That same year, when a student from the Shubenacadie Reserve had also refused to return to the school following summer vacation, she gave the following explanation in a statement to the Indian Agent and the R.C.M.P.:

I have been going to Indian school for past five years. I am fifteen years past March 1936. Before my holidays this year I was employed in kitchen for eleven weeks. I first went in kitchen for 11 weeks, January 9, 1936. We had to start work at 5:30 in kitchen and were kept working till 6:30 p.m. Then we go to recreation room till 8 p.m. In the eleven weeks I was employed in kitchen I spent a total of two weeks in school. Sister M.A. has beaten me many times over the head and pulled my hair and struck me on the back of neck with a ruler and at times grabbed ahold of me and beat me on the back with her fists.

I have also been ordered to stand on the outside of the windows with a rope around my waist to clean windows on the fourth floor with a little girl holding the rope. When I told the Sister I was afraid to go on the window she scolded me and made me clean the window and threatened to beat me if I did not do it. This is being done to other children. After we get a beating we are asked what we get the beating for and if we tell them we do not know we get another beating. The Sisters always tell us not to tell our parents about getting a beating.¹⁸

Father Mackey did not think it necessary "to take this statement item by item and refute each one," but said

The statement contains one lie after another...we

went to the bother of making inquiries and the Sister's statement is that there is absolutely no truth in what [she] says.¹⁹

He requested that the girl be returned, although he "would not want her longer than twenty-four hours." She actually returned to the school for eleven days, after which her release was approved by the Department. The official reason given for her discharge was that her mother, who had arthritis of the right hand and wrist, required her assistance at home.²⁰

The next summer, 1937, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs visited the school for one afternoon and made the following observations on the Principal and staff:

In the Principal, Rev. JP. Mackey, the Dept has I believe a good official. I also talked with the Sisters and other members of the staff and my opinion is that there is a very efficient staff at this school.²¹

Thus, a discrepancy becomes apparent with regard to the school: the official view and opinion of the Department concur with the statements of the Principal, while the judgements of at least one Chief and Indian Agent seem to support the accusations made by several of the pupils. Although the School Files do not offer any further evidence, they do record more than twenty cases of truancy between 1937 and 1945. Unfortunately, these are shown only from the viewpoint of the Principal, or the R.C.M.P., who in accordance with the Indian Act, were truant officers.²² There are no statements made by the runaways themselves to explain the conditions which prompted their attempts to return home.

Although the first truancy reports found in the School Files were for the school year 1936-37, there had been previous cases, according to Father Mackey:

This is the first boy to leave for at least from four to five years, so no matter how far he may roam, I want him brought back here.²³

This boy, who had been in poor health, had been in an infirmary room before he left. He was seen begging in Annapolis, then was picked up by an Indian Agent at Kentville, who questioned him and released him after he gave a false name. Father Mackey made his own search for the boy through the various Reserves in the vicinity, with no success. The R.C.M.P. found him working on a farm about two weeks later, and he was placed in jail until he was returned to school. "Under normal circumstances," Father Mackey wrote, "he would be discharged on July 1st, but now he can make up two days for every one he was away."²⁴

Three months later, while the Principal was on his annual retreat in July, another boy "decided to take a vacation for himself." He got up early to do the morning milking, but did not go to the barn and was missed at breakfast. He was located by the R.C.M.P. eleven days later, and Father Mackey travelled "a distance of 260 miles" to pick him up and return him to school. "Now he is doing his share of work in the hayfield," Father Mackey reported.²⁵

There were reports of three more truant boys during the year 1937-38, but all were picked up quickly by the R.C.M.P.²⁶

The year 1938-39 was rife with runaways. A boy from Pictou, who had also run away several years previously, left on September 21, 1938, in the company of a boy from P.E.I. After a day of picking potatoes, they had been given the option of going to bed at 7:15 with the younger children, or studying until 8:00 p.m. According to Father Mackey they were not soon missed, because "the Sister supervising the retiring was under the impression that they were at study, and the Sisters

supervising the study thought that these children had gone to bed."²⁷

One of the boys made his way home to Prince Edward Island, and was located there on the 15th of October. Since he was 15 years old it was decided that he not be brought back to Shubenacadie.²⁸ The other was found hiding in the woods near his home in Pictou and returned on October 6th. However, the following morning he was "sent out of the classroom" and was gone again. Although the R.C.M.P. found him difficult to apprehend because "his parents were helping him to hide in the wood whenever it was known that we were on the reserve," he was found by the Indian Agent and returned to the school six days later. However, he was gone again within three days, this time in the company of fourteen-year old N.J., one of the boys who had unsuccessfully run away the previous year. Both boys were returned to the school by the end of October.²⁹

N.J. did not remain in school long, leaving again in mid-November with another boy. N.J. was described in the R.C.M.P truancy report as having a shaven head, presumably punishment for his last runaway attempt. The other boy was found the following day, in the company of several hobos in the Truro train yard, and N.J. was found five days later in Mulgrave. It seems that N.J. must have left the school once again the next month, for there is a report of his apprehension in mid-December, when he went into a hospital in Antigonish suffering with "flat feet," an ailment evidently brought on during his trek."³⁰

March, 1939, was a busy month for truant boys and Father Mackey. On the 10th, two boys who were both of age to be discharged in the coming June, left the school. The Principal was concerned that "with the weather as cold as it is...the boys will not find the going very pleasant."³¹ They were immediately listed on the school's Discharge

Sheet, with the notation that "if they come back, they will go to Saint Patrick's Home till the school term is over."³² Although J.J., one of these boys, was not soon found, the other was picked up by the R.C.M.P. one month after his escape, held in jail overnight in Antigonish, and met there by Father Mackey who returned him to school.³³

On March 19, a twelve-year-old boy, "following the example of the older brother," and N.J., "an old offender," left the school with two other boys. Two were picked up by sunset, but Father Mackey and the R.C.M.P. travelled miles the next day to track the other two across the ice on the Shubenacadie River and through the woods. In the effort, the Principal caught a cold, and wrote to N.J.'s Agent:

This is the fifth time for [this boy] during the past two years, and I feel that Saint Patrick's Home is the only place for that imbecile.³⁴

Four days after leaving the school, the twelve-year old was found in a railway trackman's shanty, "without food and with feet in bad condition."³⁵ N.J. was also found, in the company of J.J., who had been truant for a month, and they were returned to the school on April 12th.³⁶

Police dogs were used in at least two truancy cases, the first in April 1939 when Father Mackey seemed unable to restrain the epidemic of runaways. Two boys had left the school at six one morning, and although they were "no amateurs in the woods and they employed many tricks to throw off pursuit," both were tracked by the dog and returned to the institution the same day. The R.C.M.P. report on the case was self-congratulatory:

"Perky" under the direction of Ct. Boland made an excellent showing and it is thought the performance will have a salutary effect on the boys at the school who might have notions of playing

truant...The boys at the school have been warned that a dog would be obtained to trail them...one may conscientiously state the result obtained...was most gratifying and overshadowed any exaggeration that might have been made to previous truants as to the results that would follow when a dog might be brought into service.³⁷

Perhaps the use of the Doberman Pinscher did dissuade the boys from running away, as the only truant during 1940-41 was a fifteen-year-old girl, suffering from a venereal disease and suspected to be a "melancholia mental case," who was found in an exhausted condition in the early morning following her flight. Father Mackey and two male school staff members had accompanied the police during the overnight search.³⁸

When the first boy ran away during the school year 1941-42, the Principal considered there had been no runaways for two years, and he intended to "curb any such practice promptly."

[This boy]...has run away twice in the last ten days, and put us to plenty of trouble and expense. The young fellow is a first cousin of [a family of boys who] caused nothing but trouble and expense. So we are taking this boy to Saint Patrick's Home tomorrow morning.³⁹

He was only nine years old and had been in the school for one year.⁴⁰ Despite Father Mackey's determination to send him to Saint Patrick's Home, the Department refused to maintain him there because of a lack of funds, and returned him to his parents.⁴¹

That December, two fifteen-year old boys left the school and were found by the R.C.M.P. only two days later in Truro. It was Father Mackey's intention to expel one of them as soon as his Agent found a home placement for him, and he was discharged in April. On that same day, his companion left again, this time to enjoy a week of freedom. He was discharged before the next school year began.⁴²

There were three more runaways in November, 1943. Fifteen-year-old J.T., who had already truanted once that year, made a key to fit all the doors, and used it to visit various storerooms for a supply of food and blankets. He took with him two boys of twelve and thirteen, and all three were found in different places within two weeks. Father Mackey and Indian Agent Rice decided that the best place for J.T. would be the Saint Patrick's Home, and they had him locked in a top-floor dormitory pending his transportation there. Using a fire hose, the boy escaped through a window, delaying for one day his removal to the Home.⁴³

The next month, December, 1943, Father Mackey resigned his position as Principal of the school, and was succeeded by Father Brown. His successor was especially diligent in the matter of locating truants, as the following incident reveals. In November, 1944, four boys left the school using an old key which they had filed down. Three of them, all fourteen, were picked up in Wolfville when they were put off a train for not having tickets. The fourth, R.K., who was twelve or thirteen,⁴⁴ was believed to be headed for Maine to join his father.⁴⁵ In January, Father Brown sent a telegram to Ottawa to request a copy of the "contract...for boy remaining until sixteen," that is, the application for admission which had been signed by the boy's father.⁴⁶ He intended thereby to assure the boy's return to the school; however, the Department had adopted the attitude that there was "not much advantage in going to a great deal of expense in returning boys of this age who have truanted."

It is very unlikely that they would be satisfied if they were brought back, and if this supposition is correct, they would be a constant source of trouble to the school staff and in addition would have a bad effect on general discipline. This applies

particularly where the boy has gone out of the country...as you know the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are extremely co-operative with us, but the expense they incur in returning truant pupils is a charge against this Branch.⁴⁷

Father Brown, however, was determined that the boy should be returned to school. He learned that R.K. and his father were working at the Maritime Shipyards in Portland, Maine, obtained their home address, and planned to arrange with the Portland police to escort the boy to New Brunswick where he would be met by a school official. It was the Principal's intention to press charges against the truant boy, for the theft of "the wearing apparel this boy had on him when he left the school."⁴⁸ When Father Brown then approached R.K.'s Indian Agent and asked him to go to Portland to personally bring the boy back to Shubenacadie, the Agent requested the Department's permission to do so:

The Principal...considers this boy to be the ring leader and chiefly responsible for the run-away incident...Father Brown's opinion is that he should be made to come back for the principle of the thing, at least for a time, and if necessary he could be placed in Saint Patrick's Home.⁴⁹

Although the Principal thought to remove the Department's main objection by offering to take care of all expenses incurred by Agent Rice, the Department still responded that the idea was inadvisable.⁵⁰ After all his efforts, a disappointed Father Brown explained his position to Phelan, in the training division of Indian affairs:

Our only motive in bringing him back was to convince the others that no one could just walk out and stay; that we would, at any cost, bring them back...Since he is not returned, I think others will try in the Spring. However, since your decision is at hand, that closes [his] case.⁵¹

This boy's fifteen-year-old sister, however, did not wait until spring to escape: she left one evening in February, crawling through a dormitory window. It was Father Brown's opinion that the escape was

planned beforehand by her father, in an attempt to get his family together in Maine, and that possibly someone with a car was waiting for the girl at a prearranged spot.⁵² She was, in fact, found four days later hiding out three miles from the school. In this case, Father Brown was able to take "disciplinary action...to act as a deterrent should any other similar plans be in the making," and the girl was "taken to the Good Shepherd Reformatory for a time."⁵³ The following telling remark appears on the R.C.M.P. report regarding this case:

Father Brown expressed his appreciation of having this girl returned, as it has a great morale effect on the students.⁵⁴

The next August, when a thirteen-year-old boy escaped from the school, Father Brown requested the services of an R.C.M.P. dog to intercept him. "Chips" was immediately put on the trail, and the boy soon "came out of the woods and gave himself up."⁵⁵ The final truancy case found in the School Files involved a ten-year-old boy who left the school twice in September, 1945. The first time he was found riding a freight car, and the second time, after he succeeded in reaching Halifax by train and was apprehended there by the R.C.M.P., it was decided to commit him to Saint Patrick's Home.⁵⁶

Even during this period of apparent unrest, the Shubenacadie Residential School was able to offer a favourable impression to visitors. After the Indian Agent from the largest agency in New Brunswick had delivered a destitute boy there in 1945, he expressed the following view of the school:

It was my pleasure, while at Shubenacadie, to inspect briefly the institution, and I feel that a great deal of good work is being accomplished there.⁵⁷

In 1947, Father Brown's last year at the school, when his lack of health meant he would soon be superannuated, the Department expressed its satisfaction with the "very fine work" he had done at the school:

Our officials all agree that no one could show a more fatherly interest in the Indians. He has endeared himself to these people and has always been their champion.⁵⁸

Chapter 6 - Notes and References

1. Unfortunately, this handwritten letter is extremely difficult to decipher from the microfilm, and these are the only legible lines. The letter is dated August 27, 1930. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
2. Letter of August 30, 1930, to Indian Agent Prince, Kentville, from MacInnes, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
3. Letter of August 30, 1930, to Father Mackey from MacInnes, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
4. Report of September 5, 1930, from Indian Agent Prince to the Secretary, Indian Affairs. "You will understand that these reports are word for word as given to me by Dan Francis this morning and I obtained none of them from any other source." PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
5. Letter of September 10, 1930, to Indian Agent Prince from Mackenzie, Ottawa. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
6. Note of "cordial thanks for the hospitality and assistance given me during my visit to Nova Scotia," dated June 15, 1930, to Father Mackey from Dr. H.W. McGill, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
7. Report of March 19, 1936, from Thos. Robertson, Borden, P.E.I., to Dr. H.W. McGill. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
8. Letter of July 31, 1936, to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent Harry, Annapolis County. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053. It should be noted that this view is not supported by the evidence in the table on page 72. Although the table shows that 16-year old school leavers had a wide achievement level, their school accomplishments are related to their grade on entering and their years in the school.
9. Letter of August 5, 1936, to Indian Agent Harry from MacInnes, Acting Secretary, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
10. Letter of September 28, 1936, to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent Spinney, Kentville. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
11. Letter of October 1, 1936, to Indian Agent Rev. MacNeil, Glendale, N.S., from R.H. Butts, Lawyer, Sydney Mines. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
12. Letter of October 3, 1936, to Father Mackey from Indian Agent Rev. MacNeil. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.

13. Letter of October 5, 1936, to Indian Agent Rev. MacNeil from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Letter of October 20, 1936, to Indian Agent Rev. MacNeil from J.D. Sutherland, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
18. Statement of C.S. to R.C.M.P. Corporal Murray, R.C.M.P. and Indian Agent Robb of Shubenacadie, October 1936. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
19. Letter of October 12, 1936, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
20. Relevant correspondence includes letter of October 12, 1936, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey; letter of October 26, 1936 to Sutherland, Indian Affairs, from Indian Agent Robb; and Letter of November 2, 1936, to Father Mackey from Sutherland. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
21. Memo of June 2, 1937, to Dr. McGill from the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, regarding his visit to the Shubenacadie Residential School. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
22. Indian Act 119 (6) and 123: "A truant officer may take into custody a child whom he believes on reasonable grounds to be absent from school contrary to this Act and may convey the child to school, using as much force as the circumstances require ...truant officer" includes (a) a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police..."
23. Undated letter to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey, regarding truancy of May 21, 1937. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
24. Relevant correspondence includes undated letter to Indian Affairs from Father Mackey, op. cit.; R.C.M.P. report dated May 27, 1937; and letter of June 7, 1937, to Secretary, Indian Affairs from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
25. Letters dated July 16 and July 27, 1937, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
26. R.C.M.P. reports dated January 6, 1938, and May 23, 1938. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
27. Letter of September 22, 1938, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.

28. Application for Admission, September 13, 1937, and R.C.M.P. report of October 15, 1938. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
29. R.C.M.P. reports of October 6, 7, 12, 15, 31, 1938; letter of October 10, 1938, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
30. R.C.M.P. reports dated November 14 and 16, 1938, and December 12, 1938. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6056.
31. Letter of March 13, 1939, to Indian Agent Cameron, Heatherington, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
32. School Discharge Sheet dated March 10, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
33. R.C.M.P. report of April 19, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
34. Letter of March 21, 1939, to Indian Agent Cameron from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
35. R.C.M.P. report of March 24, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
36. R.C.M.P. report of April 19, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
37. R.C.M.P. report of April 9, 1939. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053. Also Halifax Herald, April 10, 1939, local page.
38. R.C.M.P. report of January 26, 1940. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
39. Letter of September 15, 1941, to Secretary, Ottawa, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
40. School Discharge Sheet dated September 15, 1941. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
41. Letter of September 24, 1941, to Father Mackey from Phelan, Chief, Training Division, Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
42. Relevant correspondence includes letters of December 7, 10 and 17, 1941, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey; letter of April 14, 1942, to Father Mackey from Phelan; also R.C.M.P. report of April 22, 1942, and School Discharge Sheets of April and September, 1942. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
43. Letter of November 25, 1943, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Mackey. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.

44. It is not clear if R.K. was 12 or 13: letter of December 5, 1944, regarding his truancy says he was 13, but the later Discharge Sheet lists him as 12. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
45. Letter of December 5, 1944, to Secretary, Indian Affairs, from Father Brown. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
46. Telegram of January 16, 1945, to Phelan, Indian Affairs, from Father Brown. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
47. Letter of January 17, 1945, to Father Brown from Phelan. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
48. R.C.M.P. reports of December 23, 1944, and January 15, 1945. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
49. Letter of January 16, 1945, to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent Rice, Shubenacadie. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
50. Letter of January 19, 1945, to Indian Agent Rice, from Phelan. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
51. Letter of January 19, 1945, to Phelan from Father Brown. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
52. R.C.M.P. report of February 18, 1945. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
53. Letter of February 28, 1945, to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent Rice. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
54. R.C.M.P. report, February 1945. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
55. R.C.M.P. report of August 20, 1945. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
56. Two R.C.M.P. reports dated September 24, 1945. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
57. Undated letter, c. Spring 1945, to Indian Affairs from Indian Agent Fraser, Rexton, N.B. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.
58. Letter of December 22, 1947, to Archbishop McNally, Halifax, from Director of Indian Affairs. PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053.

CHAPTER 7 - THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL AT SHUBENACADIE REMEMBERED

The Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie closed in June, 1967, in keeping with the government's policy at the time for phasing out these schools in Canada. Improved educational facilities on or near Maritime reserves had eliminated the need for the school, and during its last year of operation, enrollment was down to 60-66 students. An Indian Affairs official in Amherst, Nova Scotia, said the school had become a welfare institution. Cecil Thompson, the assistant superintendant of the Shubenacadie reserve, described the school as outdated and no longer needed, and felt that parents were abusing the school by sending children there only in preference to keeping them at home. It was only the Indians at the Shubenacadie reserve who voted to keep the school open, as those in all other Maritime reserves favoured its closing.¹

An assistant Indian Agency superintendent in Cape Breton, Ernie Skinner, is said to have played an important part in the school's closing, when he too noticed that the school was increasingly taking on a welfare role, as a "convenient place where parents could leave their children if they tired of caring for them."² Instead of recommending the youths in his charge for admission to the Shubenacadie school, he began putting them in foster homes--a step which directed federal funding away from the residence, and into private hands.³ Soon it was recommended by the Maritime Advisory Council on Indian Affairs that the residential school be permanently closed, and the final 60 to 66 students were taken from the school and placed in local foster homes.⁴

On the evening of September 2, 1986, nineteen years after its closure, the building that had been the Indian Residential School at

Shubenacadie was mysteriously destroyed by fire.⁵ A former student, who had previously avoided passing the school, parked by the side of the road and watched it burn to the ground.

There's a lot of bitter memories...my mind was going around like a merry-go-round. A lot of things I thought about sitting there. I never spoke but I just watched the fire. And to me I felt like, "there, that part of me is gone. It has burnt"...but the wounds are still there. Those will never heal. The memories are still there.⁶

Memories are, indeed, all that remain. The official record, which in previous chapters has been gleaned from national archival material, has been useful not only in organizing a chronological and topical history of the school, but also in exposing the attitudes of the government officials, the Indian agents, and the school principals. However, what is largely missing from this record, except for the few examples given in Chapter 6, is a picture of the school as seen through the eyes of the children who attended it. For direct accounts of life as a student there, this chapter relies largely on published accounts, supplemented by personal interviews held with a few of the students.⁷

There is some feeling in the native community of Nova Scotia that only those who experienced life in the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie can know the truth. However, as a concept meaning agreement with reality, truth is difficult to discern or verify. For the truth about the school as experienced by the students, there is only memory, subject as it is to selectivity and time.

Though the years have passed, the unforgiving acts of the supposedly [sic] workers of the institution engaged in relief of the poor, is so instilled in the hearts of the recipients, that even now when asked about the incidents they still speak of them as with hate, a hate so consuming that it lingers on this length of time.⁸

Since 1978, these memories have been given public voice, a voice growing louder and bolder through the years. Beginning with the Micmac News series on the school,⁹ it has railed against the remembered unbending discipline, and emphasized the recalled punishments. There was frequent mention of confinement in cloakrooms:

For punishment a...student at times had to be placed in a dark closet or storage room...you spent between a few hours to a few days. Time normally spent in class and play would be spent [there]. At times you were deprived of at least one meal, sometimes all your meals...It was a common enough punishment.¹⁰

There were remembered beatings and cruelties, said not to be fit for print. There were countless tales of children being made to eat both unpalatable food and regurgitated food. There were remembered thrashings for such misdemeanors as wetting a bed, or having difficulty threading a needle:

Sister...took a bamboo ski pole and thrashed him soundly on the back. The more he struggled the more Sister...beat him.¹¹

There were other stories of brutality, inflicted not only by the school administrators, but by fellow pupils: "You had to deal with older and bigger children picking on you."¹² Protection was purchased with food, and beatings resulted if payment wasn't made. There was a story of a young boy being raped in the shower by older boys.¹³ The series concluded with the accusation that the children in the residential school were

herded like common cattle, beaten like a wayward dog, fed like farm animals, with communications cut off, and your identity became a number...¹⁴

A CBC radio essay in 1986¹⁵ continued the tales. Two former students spoke of their bitter memories, of punishments remembered:

We usually got strapped with a strap they used to use from the harnesses for the horses...They'd take the ruler...the steel part of your ruler, and hit you on the hands with it. Sometimes you could cut your hands they hit so hard.¹⁶

Some boys, they said, carried to their graves scars on their backs which resulted from whippings received at the school. Runaways were treated especially harshly.

If you done a very serious offence like run away from this institution and get caught and be returned, then you would have to go in front of the priest and he would execute the whipping and the lashing, and they would let the child take his trousers off and lean over a table and they would administer the belt to him on his buttocks, and the screaming and screeching, I've heard it many times.

There was one guy ran away...in the winter time...they caught up with him and he had frozen his feet...so when he got back, what the Sisters did, they didn't thaw his feet out or put them in water, they just took his socks and peeled them right off with the skin on them. And the boy had to go to the hospital and have...part of his feet removed and part of his toes on the other foot.¹⁷

A 1988 article in the Atlantic Insight¹⁸ also focussed on "harsh and often cruel discipline." It told a similar story of a winter runaway (or perhaps another version of the same story), in which the returned truant was said to have had his head shaven.

...then he was put in a closet for several days on a bread and water diet until it was found that his feet were frostbitten. The condition was neglected and his toes had to be amputated.¹⁹

A runaway girl, it was recalled, was tied to a pole and strapped. One former pupil informed the reporter that

the worst punishment was for wetting or making a mess in your bed--they'd put your face in it and then you'd get a strapping.²⁰

According to an article in the The Daily News in August, 1987, former students recall the residential school as "the real school of

hard knocks." A planned reunion, which was held that month among the rubble that remains at the building site, brought back many memories. There was the sound of children screaming at night, recalled by a former student who described the school as a "madhouse for children." Another informant traced her drinking problem to the school, where she used to steal altar wine to give her the courage to steal food when she was hungry.²¹

Prominent amongst these published memories were stories of psychological punishments received or witnessed. It was recalled that children had to wear as hats the underwear they had stained, or they were made to wrap their soiled bed sheets around their heads. One woman remembers how her brother was punished:

My little brother...had a problem with wetting the bed...so whenever he did [the nuns] would make him put on a little girl's dress and have him parade around the students at breakfast. And we, his older sisters, had to watch it happen.²²

Perhaps stronger than either the physical or the psychological pain the children suffered was their cultural confusion, which began with their fear when initially confronted by their new caretakers:

It was frightening because I had never seen a nun in my life...and they were dressed in black and they were white-complected...and it was the first time I'd noticed that I was different from other people.²³

Another former student recalls being "bewildered because it was so strange and they wore different clothes."²⁴ "The first few months I was there," another remembers, "all I did was cry."²⁵

The school is also remembered as stripping the children of their very self-images. First their own clothing was removed and burned,²⁶ and replaced with what one student recalls as "canvas-like khaki clothes,"²⁷ or, as the Sisters of Charity described it, a "uniform with

a red tie [to suit] their dark colouring."²⁸

Our identity was lost because we were no longer--we couldn't say no longer native people, but that's the way they treated us...They called us savages when we did anything wrong. That was their main word...uncivilized savages.²⁹

Looking back, a former student recalls:

We were told that we had come from an uncivilized culture and that our ancestors were pagans and godless savages.³⁰

Now he feels that under the guise of civilizing and Christianizing the native people, the religious administration actually was using

a form of pressure...a form of cultural genocide ...a form of imprisonment...a form of killing the language.³¹

Today, many of the former pupils strongly resent this loss of their language.

We had to pray, but the only prayers I knew were in Indian. When we entered there it was made plain, clearly to us, that we were never to speak Micmac language in that school by another girl [who] was an interpreter for the sisters. She told us, whatever you do, don't talk Indian anymore. The sisters don't want anyone talking Indian because they don't understand us. She told us it was just gibberish, don't talk that gibberish--that's what they called the Micmac language.³²

English, of course, was gibberish to them: "We tried to get hold of the language and that was our biggest problem."³³ A woman who had been a pupil in the school for five years said that when she left she could neither read nor write English, and had forgotten her native language, which was banned inside the school.³⁴

When we talked in Micmac, we all got punished by a slap in the face or she punished you by shaking you, grabbing you by the ear, shaking your head, or under your chin, and shaking your chin, you know, going back and forth till you got dizzy...³⁵

Abetting the feeling that they had lost their identities was the alien way of life into which the children were thrust. From the freedom they had enjoyed at home and on the reserves, they were suddenly confined, commanded, and controlled. "The worst thing was the strappings and the rules, one former student said, "rules for dormitory, for line-up, for everything."³⁶

Another prominent complaint about life in the school is the mention of constant hunger. This is evident in several reports in the Micmac News, of scouring the priest's garbage can for meat left on bones, eating cow feed while doing barn chores,³⁷ and catching pigeons to cook in the boiler room.³⁸ The hunger stemmed partly from an unaccustomed mealtime regimen:

There was a meal at 12 noon and nothing till 5, after being used to the Indian ways at home [where] you'd eat at any time you wanted.³⁹

In fact, the lack of freedom the children felt was well exemplified by the unfamiliar organized meals in the school:

Everybody lined up for breakfast and we all had certain places where we ate [and] sat. Girls on one side and the boys on one side. It's just like prison, where you have to obey orders all the time. You have to do what they tell you or else.⁴⁰

Also, the regimented life at the school was foreign to children who had known the freedom of the outdoors:

We could frolic around in the woods when we were home, but when we got there there was no woods to frolic in. We were just up in that building...⁴¹

It was naturally difficult for the children to understand being punished for leaving the school grounds:

Some punishments were very severe. If you were caught doing something such as going over the boundary line...you see pretty flowers and you went to get them. It wasn't much, but you sure got punished for it.⁴²

There was a time I rolled under the fence to pick dandelions and when I was told to go inside to be punished, for the life of me I couldn't understand what the punishment was for, what wrong is it when anybody picks dandelions under a fence...⁴³

The monotony of the daily routine added to the prison atmosphere. One former pupil, in an interview, could still recite the following regimen:

6:00 a.m.	rising
7:00 a.m.	Mass
8:00 a.m.	breakfast
9:00 a.m.	classes, primary to grade X
12:00 noon	lunch
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	classes for primary to grade III; kitchen, laundry, or barn work for grades V-X
5:00 p.m.	supper
6:00 p.m.	indoor recreation
7:00 p.m.	benediction
8:00 - 9:00 p.m.	study period in classroom for older children. ⁴⁴

Saturdays the children spent cleaning the building, including the washing and waxing of all floors and stairs.⁴⁵ Chores were done with the older children in charge of the younger.⁴⁶ Another interviewed student recalls that chores were of two or three hours' duration, and consisted of

scrubbing, general cleaning, washing dishes, mending and making clothes, i.e., shirts, darning stockings, knitting mitts, laundry work, standing in windows killing flies--there were hundreds of them.⁴⁷

Two other former students remember the kitchen work routine and general chores as follows:

two kitchen girls up at 5 a.m.; made coal fires; made two aluminum pots of porridge; each girl sliced sixteen loaves of bread and buttered it; separated milk--Nuns and Priests got the cream.⁴⁸

When I was there we were the ones that done all the chores: the laundry, the sewing, the cooking. The boys would farm down [on] the farm, milk cows, feed the animals, clean the barn, plow the fields. We were more like slaves, and girls were put there to

serve the Sisters, do their washing and ironing of their clothes, mending their clothes if they was ripped or anything.⁴⁹

After-school hours were spent in play much like that of children anywhere, during the warm weather playing ball games, hopscotch, marbles, skipping, or playing on swings and teetertotters, or sitting behind the trees talking; or, when it rained, "we stayed indoors...and more or less sat around on hard benches."⁵⁰ In the winter, there was coasting and skating, and before Christmas "all evening, every evening" was spent tying fir boughs to fill barrels to decorate the school.⁵¹

When Christmas was spent at the school the routine was the same, but without the classes for one week. One former pupils recalls

Those of us who got parcels were separated and almost made to feel guilty opening presents while others received none, but then maybe it was because of sensitivity for the children who received nothing from home. I received a beautiful doll but was not allowed to play with it and I could only look at it sitting in the chair in the dormitory.⁵²

This recollection is verified by another former student, who remembers the Christmas toys being taken away, and the dolls hung on the walls out of reach.⁵³

It was the feeling of confinement that gnawed most persistently. One former student says she cannot recall the names of any of the outside workers at the school, but recalls only her envy of their freedom in being able to go home every night. Sometimes the children were taken out for walks, but only within sight of the school building, and even then they were regimented and restrained by having to walk in line, two by two. Being taken to a movie in town was a special treat which the Sisters could threaten to withhold as a punishment for misbehaviour. These movies were recalled as being westerns, or cowboy-and-Indian shows, which depicted the Indians as ruthless savages.⁵⁴

Segregation by sex was also a new concept to the children, although provincial public schools at the time, even into the 1950s, also had separate playgrounds and separate entrances for boys and girls. To many of the children in the Indian Residential School, some of whom had never attended school before, this was seen as further curtailment of freedom. Not only separated from their homes and parents, they were also apart from their siblings in the school. Boys and girls slept on opposite sides of the building, sat apart in the classroom and the chapel, ate at different tables, and were separated in the playground.⁵⁵ One former pupil recalls that he was forbidden to speak to his sister, and that siblings came together only when their parents visited their children at the school.⁵⁶ A woman remembers looking for her brother in church:

I'd look around for him, stretch my neck so I could see him, but I could never talk to him while we were there unless my parents came and visited us.⁵⁷

But, of course, since most of the children came from homes far from the school, family visits were not frequent. Visits took place in the visiting parlour on the second floor--a cosy room containing a piano and books, none of which the children were allowed to use.⁵⁸

Children kept in touch with their families by letter, and one former student recalls they were required to write home once a month. Letters, however, were sometimes dictated, and were always censored, incoming and outgoing. "We were beaten if we said something."⁵⁹

Recalling the school curriculum, one former student says that time not spent in work was spent in prayer:

We'd kneel down by our beds and we prayed. Then after we had cleaned up then we came back and made our beds and we came downstairs and went to Mass. After Mass we lined up and had our breakfast. Shortly after breakfast we would line up again and

go to our individual classrooms and, of course, the first thing we did in the classrooms was to pray again. So we prayed when we got up in the morning, then we went to Mass, then we prayed again, and our first assignment in school was to pray once more. Right after that the first period, after prayer, was Catechism. At ten o'clock when the Angelus rang we prayed again. And then we were supposed to go to classes, whatever we learned in between was very minimal I take it, because I don't feel that we learned all that much.⁶⁰

An interviewed former pupil says the curriculum consisted of arithmetic, reading, and writing. Although she feels she got a good basic education, she was "hardly satisfied in the manner it was carried out." When she left the residential school after completing grade IV, she was warned that she would not be given a pass into grade V unless she returned to the school in September. In fact, she did not return, and she did have to repeat grade IV in her new school.⁶¹

In another case, when a student had completed the course of studies at the residential school and left to attend high school, she found herself far behind her new classmates academically. In fact, she recalls arriving at high school not knowing what science was.⁶²

The Sisters of Charity in Halifax feel, naturally, that the Indian School at Shubenacadie is a sensitive topic.⁶³ Most of the criticisms made by the former pupils focus on the harsh rules and the cruel discipline meted out by those in charge. The children also perceived, in the way they were treated, a complete lack of love. It was felt that the Sisters could not hug, caress, or touch a lonely and hurt child "because I think their discipline forbids them to do that."⁶⁴

There was no affection there, nobody to love you, only your own sister, if you were lucky to have a sister. Nobody ever cuddled you, or [said] what's wrong, or do you need anything. We never got that love and affection.⁶⁵

There is a disappointing lack of information available about the Sisters who taught in the school. There is only the following published story, which is repeated here because it serves to indicate that the Sisters did care for the children, in their own way, through prayer and faith. It is the story of a "miraculous answer to prayer"⁶⁶ which resulted from the concern of Sister Mary Charles for the sick children in her charge. In 1939 a virulent streptococcus infection was rampant in the Shubenacadie residential school. Beginning in the winter and lasting through the summer, the infection became an epidemic by the following October: the children were ill and feverish, and their sore throats were not responding to medical treatment.

Then an inspiration came to [Sister Mary Charles, the Superior]. At Benediction time that evening, Sister had the whole school, boys and girls, begin a novena to Kateri Tekakwitha, the Mohawk sachem's daughter, begging her to intercede that the epidemic might cease. The next morning, the ten pupils who were so sick the night before, were perfectly normal, and went to class. From that twenty-fifth of October as long as Sister Mary Charles was Superior, no other case of streptococcus throat developed at the Indian Residential School.⁶⁷

The school physician, D.F. MacInnis, corroborated this story in a statement made two years later:

During the winter of 1939 and for months following we were having an epidemic of streptococcal sore throats at the school. Sister Mary Charles asked me whether I had any treatment to prevent the occurrence of these cases, but I replied no, that the drugs recommended had been used, but with no effect. Sister then began the novena. Our cases all cleared up and we haven't had any since.

I have been medical attendant at the school since it was opened, and I have been in practice twenty-three years. I am a Scottish Presbyterian. I am not offering any explanation of the cessation of the epidemic, I am simply stating the facts.⁶⁸

The Sisters of Charity, who have been deeply maligned by the published accounts about the school, believe many of the tales told to be "unfounded or exaggerated":

...religious life used to be a lot more rigid
...harsher punishments were then more acceptable
socially, and...the adjustment for both children
and nuns was very difficult because they led such
different lives.⁶⁹

A Sister who had been a teacher in the Shubenacadie Residential School points out the importance of

...the admittedly sad fact of very young children
away from home. Every negative aspect would be
magnified. Also discipline everywhere forty
years ago was inclined to be more rigid than it is
today.⁷⁰

Regarding reports of hunger and the general poor quality of the food served to the children, this teacher recalls that

at least twice while I was there, nutritionists
from Ottawa dropped in unannounced and remained for
at least three days...to my knowledge their reports
were good.⁷¹

In her years at the school, she could recall only one child who did not master reading at the Primary level (grades 1-III):

Over the years I have marvelled at how well they
did in spite of living in a different environment
and being taught in a second language.⁷²

However, as this chapter demonstrates, the judgements made in retrospect upon the Sisters and the school are strongly negative. The Sisters are accused of rendering "awful beatings, humiliations, guilt, shame..."⁷³ and the school of perpetrating "child abuse, child labour, forced religion, discrimination, sexual abuse, punishment, whipping of children, loneliness, belittlement..."⁷⁴ It appears that the Sisters who taught in the school will continue to bear much of the blame: they are no longer alive or they are too old to speak in their own defense.

Even so, the school experience at Shubenacadie is not recalled by all former students as totally bad. One woman defends the mental and moral training she received there:

A child needs discipline...I don't call it abuse.
If we were punished then we brought it on ourselves
...It prepared me and I'm glad it did.⁷⁵

Several former students are glad of the opportunity their education afforded for learning English, although as one man recalled, "Of course, I had no choice in the matter."⁷⁶

I liked the friends I made. I also appreciated
learning the English language and the art of sewing
and knitting.⁷⁷

One thing I got out of this is how to talk English
...and I think the other part is to respect other
people.⁷⁸

It taught me self-discipline. It taught me how to
look after myself.⁷⁹

School experiences, however, also encouraged some former pupils to turn away from the Catholic church and its harsh God, and toward native religion. At least two former students from this school now preach...

Native Spirituality which attempts to bring back
Micmac religion before it was sullied by Christian
missionaries' narrow view of religion and life.⁸⁰

One man says this allows him freedom to be honest with his past:

I, for one, will testify to the cruelty,
beatings, whipping, etc., at any formal tribunal or
court in Canada. I can say this with a "free"
spirit, because I'm no longer a practicing Catholic
...I'm free from the Christian way--I believe in
God, the Great Spirit, and I pray to him alone.⁸¹

Even though one interviewed woman still embraces the Catholic church, having undergone what she calls a spiritual reconciliation, she remains much affected by her experiences as a pupil in the Shubenacadie residential school. She is still haunted by the memories:

...the corporal punishments I witnessed and personally experienced from two of the sisters--my classroom teacher and the sister who was in charge of the girls. [The latter] often punished me, mentally and physically, mostly for insignificant reasons.⁸²

Her stay in the school has left her determined to prove the Sisters were wrong:

...that I was not a "jackass" but a human being who had brains and had the potential to make someone of myself. I was determined that they weren't going to break me like they did to so many other Indian children.⁸³

Chapter 7 - Notes and References

1. The Truro Weekly News, Thursday, February 9, 1967, p. 1.
2. The Daily News, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Thursday, August 27, 1987, p. 17.
3. Placing children in private boarding homes instead of the Residential School was a reversion to the situation in the early 1920s, when the existing system of private child care was termed an alarming financial waste. See Chapter 3, p. 40.
4. The Daily News, Ibid.
5. Micmac News, September 1986, p. 43. According to The Daily News article, op. cit., there has been speculation that the fire was deliberately set.
6. "When School Becomes Prison: Remembering the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie," CBC Radio, Maritime Magazine, Sunday, 12 October 1986.
7. Two former students spoke with me about their memories of the school, and a third one completed a questionnaire by mail. Other questionnaires mailed to former students were never returned. There was apparently some feeling that only Indians should be involved in researching this school.
8. Rita Joe, "As I Saw It...Shubie," Micmac News, October 1978, p. 23.
9. See Chapter 1, footnote 6, p. 11.
10. Micmac News, August 1978, p. 23.
11. Ibid.
12. Micmac News, September 1978, p. 18.
13. Micmac News, November 1978, p. 18.
14. Ibid., p. 19. The series was never properly concluded. An installment of the series promised for the December 1978 issue, which was to include "a short resume of each of the Sisters in this heavy dark side of human misery" did not appear. In the November 1978 issue (p. 20) the author of the series, Conrad W. Paul, stated his intention to reveal some material of an "eruptive nature" pending confirmation. He also stated he would publish letters sent in by readers who wrote their own views on the school. The series, however, abruptly ended with that November 1978 issue.
15. CBC Radio, op. cit.
16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.
18. Heather Lasky, "Hard to erase bitter memories of school days filled with fear," Atlantic Insight, February 1988, p. 21-24. This article was written by the reporter who prepared the CBC Radio programme (op. cit.) and incorporates some of the same material.
19. Ibid. Note that this boy's feet were recorded as being "in bad condition" on the RCMP report after he was picked up after having run away. See Chapter 6, footnote 35, p. 113.
20. Atlantic Insight, op. cit., p. 23
21. The Daily News, op. cit.
22. Ibid.
23. CBC Radio, op. cit.
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25. Micmac News, August 1978, p. 22.
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28. Sister Maura, The Sisters of Charity: Halifax, June 1, 1956, The Ryerson Press, Toronto, p. 234.
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30. Atlantic Insight, op. cit., p. 22
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32. Ibid.
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37. Micmac News, September 1978, p. 16.
38. Micmac News, November 1978, p. 19.
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40. Micmac News, November 1978, p. 18.

41. CBC Radio, op. cit.
42. Micmac News, August 1978, p. 23.
43. Rita Joe, op. cit., p. 15.
44. Personal interview with female former student, October, 1987.
45. Ibid. This practice was apparently discontinued after 1955, under Father Collins as Principal, as he hired native women to do this work.
46. Ibid.
47. Questionnaire interview with female former student, September 1987.
48. Personal interview with female former student, October 1987.
49. CBC Radio, op. cit.
50. Information from one personal interview and one questionnaire interview.
51. Ibid.
52. Questionnaire interview with female former student, September 1987.
53. Personal interview with female former student, October 1987.
54. Information from one personal interview and one questionnaire interview.
55. Atlantic Insight, op. cit. Also personal interview with male former student, September 1986.
56. Personal communication with male former student, November 1986.
57. CBC Radio, op. cit.
58. Personal interview with female former student, October 1987.
59. Information from one personal interview and one questionnaire interview. This situation was also mentioned in the Micmac News series of articles, November 1978, p. 19: "...you sent a letter out and it was censored...They opened our mail as well...they read the mail before us."
60. CBC Radio, op. cit.
61. Questionnaire interview with female former student, September 1987.
62. Personal interview with female former student, October 1987.

63. Some reluctance was encountered when attempting to question the Sisters of Charity about the school. The Catholic Archives in the Archbishop's Residence in Halifax has very little on the school. As it was not under the direction of the Chancery, they had nothing to do with policies or the way the school was regulated. Because the school was "public" (as opposed to parochial), statistics and reports went to the government. The Archivist at the Motherhouse at Mount St. Vincent University was also unable to help. These Archives keep annals of the lives of Sisters only, and has never kept any school records.
64. CBC Radio, op. cit.
65. Ibid.
66. Sister Maura, op. cit., p. 233-234.
67. Ibid.
68. Statement issued April 1942 by Dr. McInnis through the NCWC News Service, cited in Sister Maura, op. cit., p. 234.
69. Atlantic Insight, op. cit., p. 24.
70. Personal letter from Sister Margaret Ellsworth, Star of the Sea Convent, Terence Bay, Nova Scotia, in letter to Isabel Shay, February 23, 1987. Isabel Shay kindly shared this letter with me.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Personal interview with female former student, October 1987.
74. Personal communication with male former student, November 1986.
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76. Micmac News, September 1978, p. 16.
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78. CBC Radio, op. cit.
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81. Personal communication with male former student, November 1986.
82. Questionnaire interview with female former student, September 1987.
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CHAPTER 8 - SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

The story of the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie is told, yet it is not fully told. The full story is evasive, hiding between the lines of the official record and beneath the memories of the former pupils. Perhaps it is true, as one woman said of this school and its administration, "You have to, really have to be there, to know all these things about what they done."¹ Perhaps the rest of us will never know.

From this history of the events which shaped and supported the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, it has become obvious that a true and complete reconstruction of all the events, ideas, and personalities is not possible. At best, this study provides some insight into the roles played by the federal government, the local Indian agents, the school administrators, the parents, and their children. Unfortunately, it is inclined toward a white perspective, because historical documents do not tend to offer history from the Indian's point of view. Even so, the Shubenacadie Residential School story creates in its own telling an undeniable understanding of the native perspective.

It has not been the intention in this study to assign fault or blame, or to discover and uncover untruths. There are expected dead ends; for example it becomes necessary to face the enigma of Father Mackey. Through his letters to the Indian Affairs officials at Ottawa, he is revealed as an overworked but completely dedicated Principal--dedicated both in his duties as school administrator and as guardian of hundreds of native children. It is easy to accept that "he loved the children and did all he could to help them...[that] the Sisters recall

him as an extremely kind man."² Yet this is the same man the former students said was cruel, and whose long years at the school they called a reign of terror. "He loved to dish out punishment. He was that type of person."³ Although perhaps these two descriptions of Father Mackey may never be reconciled, they serve to illustrate the cultural gap which existed between the administrators and the students, the Whiteman⁴ and the Indian.

In reviewing the history of the Indian residential school system in Canada, it becomes obvious that

...it is not safe to be defined as a social problem
by a dominant party...because the dominant group
will eventually find "solutions" to the "problem."⁵

The solution found to the Indian problem was enforced conformity, with no regard even to the cultural differences which may have existed between native children in different parts of the country, but concern only for complete change and conformity to the dominant and supposedly superior culture. The residential schools which were used to encourage this standard culture were alike themselves, even architecturally (see p. 42). Small wonder that problems were similar in all Indian residential schools, and the tales told were often the same. In a way it is true, then, that to have lived in one such school is to have lived in them all.⁶ An understanding of the common residential school experience unfolds in the examination of the way federal policies were translated into actual school rules. Many of the problems of the residential school system, as perceived by the Indians, had their roots in these policies, and can be understood only in relation to them. These problems, which will be considered separately, include the lack of parental consent and input into the matter of education, the loss of native culture and language, the separation from family and community,

an inadequate or inappropriate curriculum, and miscellaneous student complaints, especially those regarding hunger and discipline.

The initial problem was that Indian parents often had no alternative but to put their children in residential schools. Parents not only had no say in the matter of education and no input into educational policies, but as wards of the government themselves, had no power to keep their children at home, even when there were nearby day schools. As Titley noted, they "were not often enthusiastic about the prospect of their children being resocialized...some measure of coercion was therefore found necessary."⁷ At a 1967 conference on native education in Saskatchewan, one speaker offered a parents' view:

As far as I know, I have not heard where the parents who have their children in residential schools were given a chance to comment...Let's face it, who in the world would part from their children if they had a choice? ...these people who have survived for centuries were not asked for any suggestions as to what kind of education their children should receive.⁸

All the power lay with the Indian Agents to determine which children should be removed from their parents, and then, which of those children should be allowed home for vacations (see ch. 4). On the other hand, it has been seen that some parents chose to have their children removed to residential schools, usually in the belief that it was best for the children; in any case, the consequence was that they were relieved of their parental obligations. At the 1967 Saskatchewan conference, a native woman spoke against residential schools because she felt they inflicted great damage on Indian home life, not only by taking children from their parents, but by taking the responsibility for those children from their parents.⁹

The impact of the empty places in the beds, the missing faces at the table, the absence of little voices, served to overshadow the relief which the parents felt at this weaning of their responsibilities for ten months of the year. What chance had a normal family life to develop under these circumstances?¹⁰

The early historical record suggests that the government's intent was to relieve the Indian problem by assimilation through education. Were the main purpose of residential schools simply to give the children an academic and vocational education, there would not have been the perceived need to eradicate their native identities and to "get the savage out of the Indian."¹¹ This type of teaching is illustrated by the following passage, which was written by a Grade III boy, and appeared in a 1939 Albertan residential school newspaper:

We should never go to sun dances, and we should try to stop it if we can by telling our parents it is forbidden by God...I will never go to a sun dance.¹²

The devaluation of native culture was a governmental policy which has been attributed to contempt for the Indian, based on the belief that he lacked any true cultural background.¹³ Dignity is destroyed when tradition is denied, and the sadness of this loss to the children has found native expression:

I had been spellbound by my mother's ability to narrate Cree legends and enriched by my father's dreams, until the teacher outlawed Cree and made fun of dreams.¹⁴

It has already been seen that native language loss resulted from the residential school policy which had its roots in an 1896 decision that all teaching was to be done in English. This was intended to prevent the Indian from remaining "a community apart" and also was seen as a necessary step in the solution to the Indian problem.¹⁵ The rule was strictly defined in the front of the attendance book of each

teacher:

Every effort must be made to induce pupils to speak English, and to teach them to understand it. Insist on English during even the supervised play. Failure in this means wasted efforts.¹⁶

As recently as 1967, in a case study of an Indian residential school in British Columbia, it was noted that the children were threatened with punishment should they use their native language.¹⁷ However, this English language policy was apparently not strictly upheld and enforced in all residential schools in Canada. In the 1940s in an Albertan school, the language of instruction was English as required; however, the students were either native Cree or Chipewyan speakers, and they were taught to read and write the catechism and to pray in their own languages. In the 1950s, one teacher there learned Cree words herself in order to facilitate the teaching of English, and at the same time, both native languages were being incorporated into class work as well as religious study.¹⁸ This suggests that the language rule was open to interpretation, although softening of this rule appears to have been exceptional. Even though at Shubenacadie the teachers neither taught Micmac nor taught in Micmac, it has already been illustrated that several former students appreciate the fact that they learned English. The Micmac News admits that one positive result of the Shubenacadie School is that "more Micmacs than ever before speak coherent and articulate English."¹⁹ Nevertheless, there does remain a resentment of the way it was forced upon them under threat of punishment, as well as a determination to retain or relearn the Micmac language.

In addition to the loss of identity, culture, and language, the children in residential schools suffered from the loss of their

families. A man who experienced this loss, first as a child, and then as a parent, understood the pain of separation from both sides:

We know how it is for a child to ache with loneliness, to shake from unshed tears in some corner of the building or under the blanket at night...afraid to cry because the keeper said not to cry; and we know the worry, the emptiness and the desolation of our homes because as parents our hearts are with our little children who are away at school.²⁰

The sentiment is reiterated in Johnston's memoirs of an Ontario residential school, in his description of the loneliness of the smallest children there, bereft of tangible love. He describes the misery and melancholy which was revealed in the darkness of the dormitory, where thoughts of home were thoughts of abandonment.²¹ The Micmac News series on the Shubenacadie school suggests that people who were unloved and overdisciplined as children will become unloving and abusive parents;²² although this is possibly true, it is not necessarily so. As one former pupil of the Shubenacadie school said, in recalling her own suffering from a lack of love and affection, "Maybe that's why I love all my kids so much."²³

As seen in chapter 4, the government easily dismissed the factor of parental affection in its determination to remove the children to improved circumstances. In one plea from a mother to have her children returned from the Shubenacadie school, which was relayed to Indian Affairs on her behalf by a Stipendiary Magistrate (see p. 68), it may be recalled that he denied and negated the sincerity of her request by writing, "(she) says that she 'loves' her children." The consequences of removing small children from their homes to an institution were never assessed--not one of the advocates of residential schooling perceived the psychological harm that could be wrought upon a child

removed from a loving family and placed in a loveless school. The government agents willingly removed children from their homes for their own good, seeing only the change from poverty to plenty.

Although the strong vocational element in residential school education was not listed as part of the "Programme of Studies for Indian Schools" in the school registers, it has been shown that its provision was a basic element in governmental policy, and was strictly followed in all Indian residential schools. The unrelenting routine, partly academic, and at least half vocational, offered respite from the classroom for those disinclined to schoolwork, but also discouraged the brighter students.²⁴ One result of the policy was that children necessarily progressed slowly through their grades. Many residential schools had only eight grades, but students generally stayed in school until they reached sixteen; that is, they may have been graded according to age rather than academic achievement.²⁵ In his book, Johnston recounts how he was held back a grade on entrance to residential school, and came to recognize that, were he to progress normally, he would be ready to leave the school at age twelve. The solution, he realized, was to have children "repeat grades until Grade 8 and age 16 were synchronized," and he claims he was not the only child penalized this way.²⁶

This Indian view of the age-grade problem was countered by Renaud, in his 1958 study of Indian education. He felt that an Indian child could not by any stretch of the imagination be expected to achieve in eight school years what the non-Indian child could. This is because the curriculum, developed by one culture to enhance its own enculturation process, requires that its own cultural foundations have

already been in place since infancy. These presupposed basics are naturally absent in the Indian child, and Renaud felt that failure to recognise and allow for this cultural difference resulted in the inability of the schools to meet the true educational needs of the native children.²⁷

Also in question is the value of the vocational training which was offered to children in residential schools. Although the intent was to prepare them for useful lives, there was confusion as to the way in which they should be moulded. At times the intention was to fit the Indian to the lifestyle of the dominant society, at others to prepare him for a return to the reserve. Vocational efforts at Shubenacadie sought to teach the boys farming, shoemaking, construction, and minor household repairs, including plumbing. How useful these skills were to the boys is not clear; however, Johnston, in his memoirs, claims that none of the children from his school ever made a living at anything they learned in manual training classes.²⁸

Perhaps, though, the girls fared better in the learning of domestic skills. In 1968, an Indian woman who otherwise took a harsh view of the results of white man's education on her people, felt that this work was important and useful.²⁹ Perhaps it was not so much the mix of labour and study that was wrong, but rather the stronger emphasis on life skills. It may be recalled (see p. 97) that several Shubenacadie School children in 1930 were said to be discontent with the school's policy of too much work and too little study.

A common student complaint about life at the Shubenacadie Residential School regarded the constant hunger which permeated the children's days. Again, Johnston agreed: "Our sole preoccupation was food... 'I'm full' was an expression alien in our world and to our

experience."³⁰ As the government intended that residential schools should be self-sufficient farms, it might be expected that the children would have eaten well. It has already been seen that the Shubenacadie boys in grades 5 to 10 spent half of every day in the fields or barns, growing vegetable crops and caring for (as well as slaughtering) cows, pigs, and hens, and that the government enjoined the Principal to feed the children plenty of whole milk, butter, and meat (see chapter 5). Although it is not clear how much of the produce and meat were sold to contribute to operating costs, and how much was consumed at the school, it has been suggested that children in residential schools had only their minimum nutritional needs met.³¹

The other prominent student complaint regarded discipline and punishment. Rebellious students in residential schools ran away to escape frequent punishment, only to be brought back and punished again. Parents were seldom able to retain their truant children at home, though it has been seen in chapter 6 that they tried, often helping their runaway children hide from the authorities, and sometimes subsequently supporting them by making official application to have them removed from the school. It is interesting that the worst offenders were indeed the successful ones. The Shubenacadie story has revealed that at least one child who was sentenced to St. Patrick's Home because of repeated truancy, was instead returned to his own home by a government unwilling to pay the charges to keep him at St. Patrick's. It has been seen also that other incorrigible boys were eventually sent home to relieve the Sisters of their difficult care.

Although punishment seems to have been a way of life in residential schools, it is true that discipline everywhere was

generally more rigid during the period of the Shubenacadie School. On the other hand, it must be remembered that one of the initial criticisms against government-imposed education made by Indian parents in the 1890s regarded personal chastisement, which they perceived as personal indignity. They did not want discipline applied to their children, especially to their boys. However, despite the different attitudes displayed toward discipline by Indians and school administrators, and despite the stricter disciplinary practices of all schools in the past, it still must be considered that the children in residential schools were never away from the school and its rules. There was not the respite and comfort of going home at the end of the day, or, sometimes, even at the end of the year.

The students' perceptions of their schools and teachers were often based on educational policies which were formulated in Ottawa and not in the schools themselves. Many of these policies and the resulting problems evolved from a paternalistic outlook that extended from the Superintendents of Indian Affairs to the Superintendents of the residential schools. Also, shifts in governmental attitudes throughout the residential school period resulted in a confusion of educational goals. While changing outlooks and aims may not have directly affected the students' perceptions of the schools, they may have contributed to the failure of the residential school system.

First, Canadian government officials did not campaign for native schooling with agreement on how Indians should be educated. It may be recalled from chapter 2 that one Indian Affairs official felt it undesirable to educate Indians to compete with "our own people," that another felt it a financial waste to educate Indians "above the possibilities of their station," and yet another felt it dangerous to

educate Indians in "habits, tastes, and ideas" which would make them discontent with their destiny. Further, changing goals of residential education meant a lack of clear and consistent aims. It has been seen that nowhere in the early Annual Reports were permanent goals definitely defined; instead, they are apparent only in the expressed attitudes of the various reporters. Education required on the one hand to make the Indian self-sufficient, but on the other not to make him self-contained (see p. 25). Sometimes the educated Indian was intended to become an elevating influence on the reserve, and sometimes he was expected to join the civilization of the Whiteman. This confusion created a native

[who] despises his own traditions, and who not only does not know how to live as his fathers lived, but who does not know enough of Canadian culture and technology to be integrated successfully into either.³²

Besides ill-defining its goals for Indian education, the government met this responsibility only by passing it on--by allocating it to the churches. This was not merely an easy answer for the government, but a monetary relief as well. The churches, as charitable organizations, were willing to run their schools frugally on the meagre per-capita funding provided by the government. The Shubenacadie School records are rife with requests from Father Mackey for funds for necessities, both material and medical. That he managed so much without adequate federal support attests to his administrative ability and his dedication to the school. He juggled the school budget, offered his own salary, and repeatedly sent monetary requests to Ottawa.

The error was not that the government placed native education

under the careful and charitable administration of the churches, but that it subsequently shortfunded the schools it established. The example of the Shubenacadie School shows that there was never enough money for even regular health care: treatment for urgent cases of tooth decay and tonsillitis was delayed and postponed and cancelled, the government pleading insufficient funds time after time.

Regulations regarding health matters at Shubenacadie illustrate another inconsistent government policy for residential schooling. On one hand, tubercular children were to be strictly refused entrance to the school; on the other, they were admitted again and again. Though beyond Father Mackey's control, he was held responsible for the outcome. It may be recalled (see chapter 5) that in one letter he was told to retain tubercular children until they could be removed to a sanatorium; in another he was chastised for not having immediately sent them home. The health of the children appears to have been a declared, but not an upheld, concern of the government.

After considering some of the problems inherent in the government policies, the question emerges as to whether the entire idea of residential schooling for Indian children was a mistake. It was certainly a solution to the problem of providing education for children living in isolated areas and at long distances from schools, a solution still valid today in the north.³³ When education became compulsory for all Canadian children, it was only through native residential schools that regular attendance could be assured. The problem lies less perhaps with the schools themselves, than with the inevitable cultural clash they engendered. Admittedly, by definition education is always assimilationist, to the extent that it attempts to fit children into a pre-set cultural pattern. Because the Indian Residential school system

was conceived, controlled, and conducted by members of the dominant white society, it could not, perhaps, avoid inclining both its academic education and its life skills teachings toward its own culture. Because the perceptions and values of the school administrators and teachers did not match those of the Indian students, the schools were inevitably assimilationist.

The government has been accused of attempting cultural genocide through its educational policies. There is no denial that the early superintendents of Indian Affairs who wanted to disassociate native children from their homes and their pasts, saw Indians as ignorant, superstitious, and useless to Canadian society. Completely ethnocentric, they saw no value in the Indian culture, or saw it as no culture at all.³⁴ They deplored the native attitude to time, defined not as something to save, but as something to enjoy,³⁵ and sought to teach that use must be made of every moment.

In the residential schools, the teaching of time meant that native children were subjected to a scheduled day which was unnatural and unfamiliar, where time was of the utmost importance and ordered by the ringing of bells. It has been seen in chapter 7 that one of the most difficult adjustments they had to make was to the strict mealtime regimen, so opposed was it to the remembered luxury at home of eating when hungry. Most children at Shubenacadie would have been accustomed to a meal pattern similar to that described by a Micmac father:

How often do we feed 'em? Well, we don't have special hours or anything. They eat when we eat, three times a day, whenever meals happen to come. If they get hungry and raise a fuss between meals, we give them a piece of bread...to keep 'em quiet.³⁶

Indians traditionally valued life as something to be lived and

enjoyed in the present, and this affected not only their perception of time but of labour as well. There was no particular value perceived in hard work and drudgery, and therefore not an adherence to the Whiteman's work ethic, in which work is valued for its own sake, or for its power to make the future secure.³⁷ The basis of the residential school system was the teaching of life-skills; that is, work skills useful in a non-Indian society. However, the work ethic involves progress and personal advancement, ideas alien in an Indian life which stresses satisfaction instead. Also, Whiteman's work is not the only kind.

Indians certainly had their share of work. Hunting, trapping, fishing, farming, and trekking through rivers and mountains for white explorers... one is not necessarily lazy because one does not subscribe to the work ethic.³⁸

Nomadism was perceived only as an obstacle to education, rather than as offering an education of a different type. The Canadian government sought to make their own kind of education the only kind, and they made it compulsory. Only parental neglect, they felt, caused parents not to compel school attendance. However, again there was evidence of a cultural gap:

It is generally against the child rearing practices of Indian people to bother or interrupt their children when they are playing or to make them do something against their will, even when it is in their own interest. Some Anglo educators show their ignorance of this principle by condemning Indian parents for not forcing their children to attend school.³⁹

Even though the government officials recognised the aversion of Indian parents to any disciplining of their children in schools, their own attitude, that punishment is given for a child's own good, took precedence. The native position toward discipline has never been

allowed validity. In 1967, almost seventy years after this cultural difference was first noted, it was still true that

for most Indian children, school provides their first experience with adults who deliberately inflict physical punishment upon children.⁴⁰

The residential schools were unable to inculcate upon native children the value of discipline, and so did not eliminate this cultural discrepancy.

In its disregard for the existing Indian culture, the Canadian government was not content to offer native children an education, but was determined in the process to eliminate their language, their ceremonials, their way of life, even their spirituality. It may be recalled from chapter 2 that the government saw Indian "paganism" as the root of parental objection to education. There was no sympathy for parents who expressed a fear that they were not only losing their children in this life, but in the afterlife as well, should they be taught another religion. This fear was dismissed as superstition.

A Nova Scotian Micmac woman speaking on native education has asked why she should be telling white people about the problems of Indian education today, when it is we who should be explaining to the Indian where we went wrong.⁴¹ This study has attempted to discover where we went wrong. It is easy, of course, perhaps too easy, to be glib and facile in judging the mistakes of history. Decisions and policies depend on the times in which they are made and the beliefs from which they grow. In looking for causes of the failure of the residential school system, there are the government policies, the church attitudes, and the native resistance to consider. Rather than assign blame, it must be allowed that the government attempted to educate the Indians

according to its understanding of the need to fit the Indian to the white society in which he was expected to live, and that the churches wanted to offer the advantages they perceived in Christian values and a moral upbringing. As one Indian band has stated,

The sincerity of these people is not what is in question, but the system that had been established is certainly a point of contention.⁴²

The Indians themselves must be credited with having had a hand in the failure of the residential school system. Although their initial resistance was overruled, they never completely gave in or gave up. While their children were being removed to residential schools, parents sometimes tried to keep them at home, protected them when they ran away, refused to return them after vacations, or applied to have them dismissed. The children played their part in the resistance by rejecting acculturation and by remaining Indians. Many of the children who went through the residential school system are the adults today who are taking charge of their own childrens' educations.

It was one of history's ironies that many of the post-war Indian leaders who were to argue the case for greater Indian control of Indian policy were products of the residential schools... who gained their literacy and political skills in the schools designed for their assimilation...a new generation of Indian leaders, schooled in residential institutions, is devoted to the preservation of their people as Indians.⁴³

While residential schools were being phased out across Canada, the government was advocating joint education, so that native children (still federally-funded) would be physically integrated into white provincial schools. However, this move was interpreted by many Indians as a new attempt at assimilation. In its 1972 retaliatory statement which demanded Indian control of Indian education and outlined its own educational aims, the National Indian Brotherhood gave

first importance to "pride in one's self," the very quality that white-imposed education had sought to eradicate.⁴⁴

It is too soon to say that the new band-controlled schools on Indian reserves are the final answer, or to know if they will eventually be any more successful than the integrated provincial schools are proving to be. It is true that many problems exist in the provincial schools, which are often rife with racism: native children are usually bussed to these schools from the reserve, and are considered outsiders.⁴⁵

For the most part...the non-Indian community and teachers remain distant and indifferent to reserve students and their parents and community.⁴⁶

Also, provincial schools typically provide no specific native content in their curricula;⁴⁷ naturally, there are still attendance and drop-out problems. However, it should be realized that integration is not assimilation, and if properly regarded and thoughtfully administered, provincial schools could "help the Native to understand and adjust to change while remaining Native."⁴⁸

Even where band-controlled schools exist on reserves, they are sometimes beset by problems of their own, such as frequent staff turnover, an inability to hire enough native teachers, and a difficulty in acquiring sufficient government funding. Further, there is not always consensus among the native people themselves regarding the superiority of these schools; even where they are available, some Indian parents opt to send their children to the integrated provincial schools.⁴⁹

The most promising aspect of the band-controlled schools, however, is their potential to control the curriculum. One cause of the failure

of the residential schools was the dubious curriculum; as one sixteen-year old student put it,

The R.C.M.P. sent the children from each tribe to school so that they could learn to read, write, and speak English...and learn about white people better.⁵⁰

In the new Indian-controlled schools, the children should be able to learn about their own people better.

Today, native people in Nova Scotia have a choice as to where and how their children will be educated. The residential school is gone. Only one federally-controlled reserve school remains, a K-9 school at Whycocomagh with an enrollment of 130. Most Nova Scotian Indians receive a racially-integrated education in regular provincial schools, which range in native enrollment from 11 at Acadia to 259 at Shubenacadie. The federal government has tuition arrangements with twelve of these provincial schools, while for eight of them, including that at Shubenacadie, the Indian band itself negotiates the financial agreement. Nova Scotia now has three band-controlled schools, all on Cape Breton Island, with a total enrollment of 674 children in K-9. There is also one federal Headstart school for four-year-olds, and four such programs which are native-controlled.⁵¹

While the government is gradually returning the responsibility for native education to the native people, it is also handing over something which one hundred years of its well-intended education could not eradicate--the Indian problem. This legacy, however, is perhaps less an Indian problem than it is an educational problem, and the beginning of its solution requires undoing what has been done. The leaders in Indian education today are not assuming a simple task. First, there is the challenge of returning to the native children their

pride, along with the sense of family and community that residential schools removed. Further, through a curricular focus on native heritage and history, language and culture, it is hoped that students will be less inclined to drop out early and more inclined to academic success. Overall, there still remains the dilemma of providing an education that successfully combines and validates the best of two cultures; in which, for instance, Micmac and English can be treated as equal languages.⁵²

Indians today are hopeful that their own schools will be successful in eliminating the problems resulting from the inadequate educational opportunities and inappropriate educational experiences offered to them in the past. In defining their own goals for education and implementing their own methods of reaching them, Indians are taking a stand toward self-improvement and self-determination.

In the 1936-37 report on Indian Affairs, H.W. McGill stated his own ideas regarding Indian education. He felt education should produce an adult Indian population not only self-supporting and adjusted to modern life, but proud of its heritage. He realized the importance of Indians conserving their ancient skills and values, and recognised the unique contribution they could make to the cultural life of Canada.⁵³ Although his visions were somehow lost to an overriding political aim of acculturation, they represent an idea that was recognised and expressed, even though it was never incorporated into the practice of white-imposed education. These same visions under Indian control may eventually find fulfillment.

Chapter 8 - Notes and References

1. CBC Radio Essay, "When School Becomes Prison," Maritime Magazine, October 12, 1986.
2. Micmac News, August 1978, p. 23.
3. Ibid., p. 22.
4. The term "Whiteman" is used in the Proceedings of the Centennial Conference on Indian and Northern Education, Saskatoon, 29-30 March 1967, where its definition "encompasses the whole concept of White Supremacy." In The School at Mopass, by Richard King, it is used to mean the dominant society as contrasted to Indians. King says it is the most frequently used Indian term to mean all non-Indians generally, and that it is not pronounced as two distinct words.
5. LaRoque, Emma, Defeathering the Indian, 1975, The Book Society of Canada Limited, Agincourt, p. 40.
6. Johnston, Basil H., Indian School Days, 1988, Key Porter Books Limited, Toronto, 250 pp. This book brings to life the realities of living in an Indian residential school, through its account of an Ontario school written by a former pupil.
7. Titley, E.B. A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada, 1986, UBC Press, p. 15.
8. Menarik, Elijah, "Residential schools," Proceedings of the Centennial National Conference on Indian and Northern Education, op. cit., p. 43.
9. Fergusson, Hattie, "Problems and its phases," Proceedings of the Centennial National Conference on Indian and Northern Education, op. cit., p. 35.
10. Lavallee, Mary, "School integration," Proceedings of the Centennial National Conference on Indian and Northern Education, op. cit., p. 27-28.
11. Persson, Diane, "The Changing Experience of Indian Residential Schooling: Blue Quills, 1931-1970," in Barman, J. et al., Indian Education in Canada: Volume 1: The Legacy, 1986, UBC Press, p. 156.
12. Ibid., p. 154.
13. Jenness, Diamond, "Canada's Indians Yesterday. What of Today?" Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (20) No. 1, February 1954, p. 96.
14. LaRoque, Emma, op. cit., p. 68.

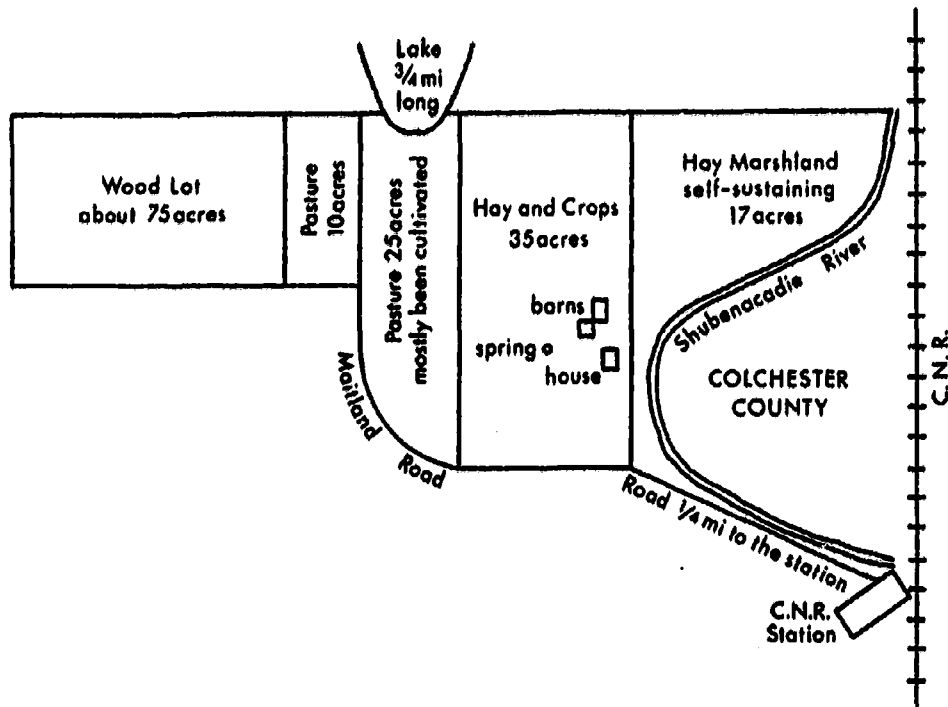
15. SPAR 1896, report of Haytor Reed.
16. Programme of Studies for Indian Schools, from the "Register of Attendance, Etc.", for the Shubenacadie Residential School.
17. Wolcott, Harry F. A Kwakiutl Village and School, 1967, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, p. 70.
18. Persson, Diane, op cit., p. 159.
19. Micmac News, August 1978, p. 21.
20. Menarik, Elijah, op cit., p. 44.
21. Johnston, Basil H., op cit., p. 60.
22. Micmac News, November 1978, p. 19.
23. CBC Radio Essay, op cit.
24. LaVallee, Mary Ann, "Too little and too late: Indian education in Canada," Arbos, November-December 1968, p. 28.
25. Ibid.
26. Johnston, Basil H., op cit., p. 35.
27. Renaud, Andre, "Indian education today," Anthropologica, No. 6, 1958, p. 29.
28. Johnston, Basil H., op cit., p. 164.
29. LaVallee, Mary Ann, op cit., p. 29.
30. Johnston, Basil H., op cit., pp. 37, 40.
31. According to one former student of the Shubenacadie residential school interviewed, the children drank skim, not whole milk, although cows on the school farm were milked every day. Whole milk and cream were served only to the Principal and Sisters. Lack of sufficient food is also indicated in the Micmac News stories mentioned in chapter 7. In Johnston's book, he claims that all the chickens kept at the school farm were sent to hospital kitchens: "None ended up on the boys' plates" (p. 87). It should be noted here that by 1972, the residential schools still in existence in Canada were said to have improved mealtime routines. Meals became less formal, small tables replacing the long ones, and children being allowed to prepare their own simple breakfasts on weekends. (Fulton, Hilary J.M., The Melting Snowman: The Canadian Indian Residence as a Place for Children to Live and Grow, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1972, p. 52.)
32. Hepburn, D.W., "Northern education, facade for failure," Variables, 2 (1), 1963, p. 16.

33. Homewood, E.L., "The Indian and education," The United Church Observer, April 1, 1965, p. 18.
34. These governmental attitudes and perceptions towards Indians and their worth continued well into this century. In the 1940s, Canadian natives were stripped by the government of their Indian names, which were replaced with 'white' names. This policy was carried out with "no effort to discover or preserve any identity," and has been called a "final and irrevocable loss." The new names were often a source of embarrassment with which children had to learn to cope. (See King, Richard, The School at Mopass, p. 27-29). The change, however, was not irrevocable. In a current reaffirmation of their true heritage, some Indians are now resuming their former names. For example, "Amiskusees" is a Cree name which was incorrectly translated into English as "Worm;" many Worms are now regaining their dignity along with their traditional names.
35. Renaud, Andre, op cit., p. 22.
36. Sayres, William C., Sammy Louis: The Life History of a Young Micmac, The Compass Publishing Company, New Haven, 1956, p. 177.
37. Reifel, Ben, "To be or to become: cultural factors in social adjustment of Indians," Indian Education, April 15, 1957.
38. LaRoque, Emma, op cit., p. 39.
39. Good Tracks, Jimm G., "Native American Non-Interference," Social Work, November 1973, p. 32.
40. King, Richard, The School at Mopass: A Problem of Identity, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967, p. 24.
41. Sister Dorothy Moore, Native Education Coordinator and Lecturer, University College of Cape Breton, one of three speakers at Saint Mary's University's International Education Centre's Network Luncheon: "Cultural Diversity: Educating Our Youth," February 28, 1989.
42. "History of education on the Poorman Reserve," unpublished paper for discussion only.
43. Miller, J.R., (1987) "The Irony of Residential Schooling" Canadian Journal of Native Education, 14(2), p. 10-11.
44. "Indian control of Indian education," policy paper presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development by the National Indian Brotherhood, 1972, p. 1.
45. Micmac News, "The framework of Indian Education in Canada," September 1986, p. 24.

46. Battiste, Marie, "Band wants greater control over education," Micmac News, September 1986, p. 23. This attitude was also noted in 1980-81 when I was a teacher at Balcarres School, Saskatchewan, a joint provincial K-12 school in which enrollment was 50% native. After expressing an interest in making home visits to some of my students on the reserve, one long-standing teacher at the school said I was taking my life in my hands. It was said by two native parents that I was the first white teacher who had ever set foot on the reserve.
47. Using Balcarres School as an example again, in 1980-81 French classes were offered to students in the 3rd and 4th divisions (junior and senior high) but Cree was not.
48. Anon., "An analysis from an Indian point of view," Proceedings of the Centennial National Conference on Indian and Northern Education, op cit., p. 117.
49. For example, there is a split in the Chapel Island community, Nova Scotia, where some parents send their children to the band-controlled school, but others still prefer to use the provincial school, not feeling secure that Indian people can design and establish a successful educational system. (Battiste, Marie, op. cit., p. 22) This was also the case on the Poorman Reserve, Saskatchewan, in 1981-82, where their children were spread among the band-controlled reserve school and two near-by provincial schools.
50. Hepburn, D.W., op cit., p. 17.
51. Information received by telephone from the Amherst office of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, February 22, 1989.
52. Sullivan, Keith C., December 1982, Minority Group Perceptions of the Goals of Education for Nova Scotia Schools, Atlantic Institute of Education and Secretary of State, p. 36. In a questionnaire regarding preferred goals for education, Indians gave priority to developing skills in Micmac and English, and noted these were not to be seen as first and second languages, but as equal.
53. SPAR 1936-37, report of H.W. McGill.

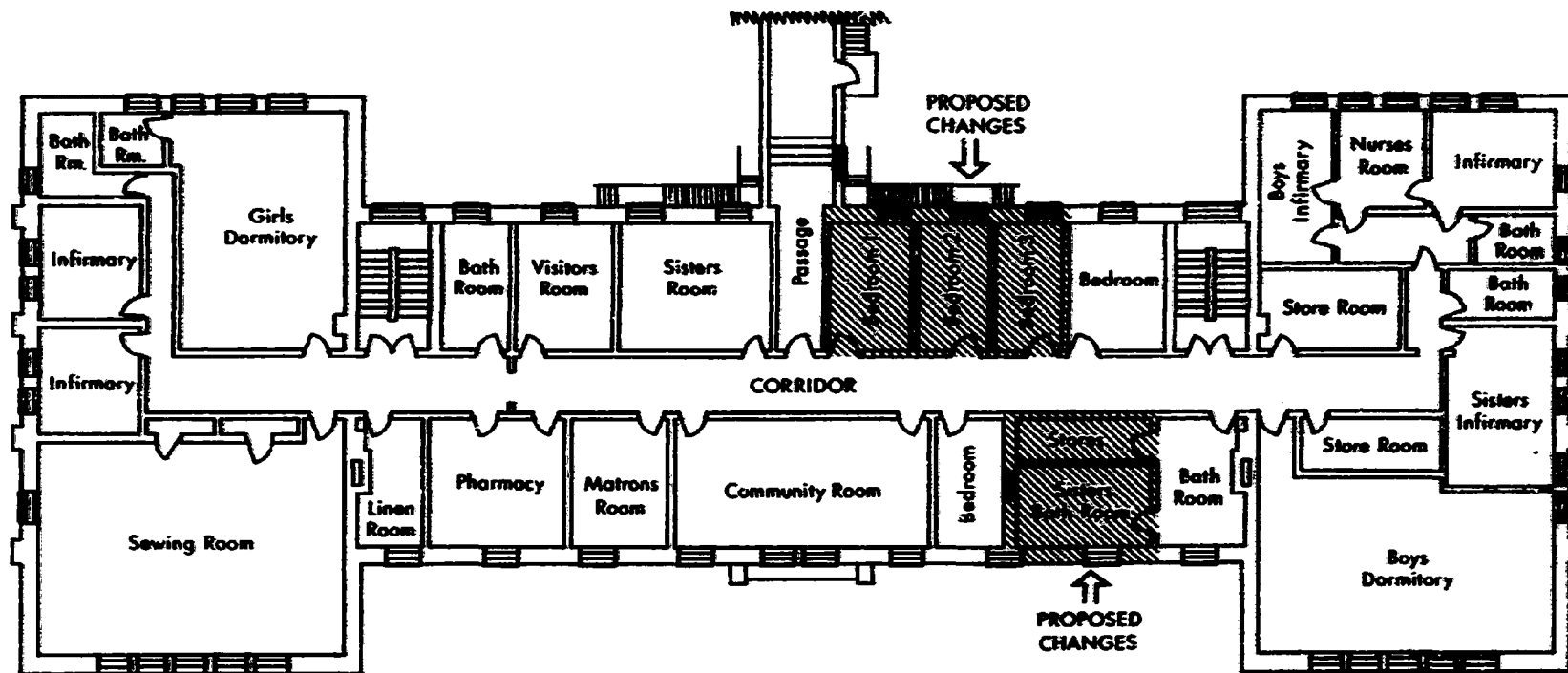
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



The above is a plan of the farm offered by George Gay. The building site is on an elevation overlooking the village, distance from station 1/4 mile. From building, a fall of 40 feet to river, in a horizontal distance of 150 feet provides special facilities for drainage. Never failing supply of water in barns for stock. Pumped from springs 160 feet from barn. Lake privileges on north side of farm, offering unlimited supply of best water for domestic and sanitary purposes. Farm is excellent clay loam, with good natural drainage, and is in a high state of cultivation. The price of the farm complete including this season's crop is \$9,000. The value of the crop is approximately \$1,000.

(Source: PAC RG10, Vol. 6055, File 265-5, part 2)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Source: PAC DIA School Files, RG10, Vol. 6053. Although this plan is designated as "first floor," it is the floor above the ground floor.

APPENDIX C

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT IN SHUBENACADIE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL BY SEX AND GRADE

Year Ending	Boys Enrolled	Girls	Tot.	Avg. Daily Attendance	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1931	70	76	146	119		62	16	27	14	14	8	3	2	-			
1932	79	81	160	146		61	18	33	16	16	7	4	3	2			
1933	80	82	162	158		30	23	61	17	12	13	3	3	-			
1934	80	79	159	157		25	23	68	16	16	8	3	-	-			
1935	78	80	158	133		19	25	56	27	20	11	-	-	-			
1936	74	74	148	139		31	17	45	25	20	9	1	-	-			
1937	83	82	165	155		49	22	20	24	34	7	9	1	-			
1938	90	85	175	161		33	23	35	20	29	21	14	-	-			
1939	84	85	169	161		52	20	30	28	10	17	20	2	-			
1940	80	87	167	163		43	23	30	25	11	16	19	-	-			
1941	82	82	164	156		47	12	36	21	22	9	9	8	-			
1942	82	78	160	155		33	17	17	32	24	13	10	8	6			
1943	79	76	155	149		39	14	27	30	20	7	13	3	2			
1944	76	78	154	149		48	9	21	27	20	8	14	7	-			

APPENDIX C (Continued)

ANNUAL ENROLMENT IN SHUBENALDIE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL BY SEX AND GRADE

Year Ending	Boys Enrolled	Girls	Tot.	Avg. Daily Attendance	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1945	76	79	155	147		42	27	19	25	15	10	7	10	-			
1946	75	78	153	149		44	10	13	28	25	15	7	11	-			
1947	80	85	165	155		41	21	30	25	18	14	10	5	1	-		
1948	79	82	161	149		39	22	28	27	18	10	11	5	1	-	-	
1949	71	87	158	140.70		41	21	34	21	16	16	6	-	3	-	-	-
1950	82	84	166	164.49		49	13	33	23	23	13	8	4	-	-	-	-
1951	84	84	168	164.11		51	13	34	22	23	12	9	4	-	-	-	-
1952	80	79	159	156.48		34	22	24	19	22	20	8	5	5	-	-	-
1953	76	75	151	150.43		32	20	21	20	20	15	16	3	4	-	-	-
1954	80	81	161	147.64		37	22	21	26	19	15	9	10	2	-	-	-
1955	77	75	152	150.0		29	23	21	26	20	15	8	8	2	-	-	-
1956	69	77	146	143.30		31	25	17	22	21	16	6	8	-	-	-	-
1957	79	80	159	155.80	10	25	29	22	25	14	14	11	9	-	-	-	-
1958	76	67	143	130.90	14	21	26	20	20	19	14	9	-	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX C (Continued)

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT IN SHUBENACADIE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL BY SEX AND GRADE

Year Ending	Boys Enrolled	Girls Enrolled	Tot.	Per Cent Attendance *	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1959	68	74	142	98	7	24	31	22	20	14	13	11	-	-	-	-	-
1960	65	64	129	97	9	18	19	19	24	16	7	17	-	-	-	-	-
1961	56	64	120	-	13	12	18	15	15	15	10	10	12	-	-	-	-
1962	64	64	128	-	6	18	17	11	25	15	22	7	7	-	-	-	-
1963	62	70	132	-	9	20	18	12	27	12	18	11	5	-	-	-	-
1964	Statistics not available																
1965	Statistics not available																
1966	Statistics not available																
1967	Statistics not available (school closed in June)																

* In 1959, statistics were changed to show per cent attendance rather than average daily attendance.

Source: Sessional Papers, Annual Reports for Indian Affairs, 1931-1967

APPENDIX D

COPY OF "APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION" FORM

To the
Director of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, Canada

Sir:- _____ 193 _____

I hereby make application for admission of the undermentioned child into the
_____ Residential School; to remain therein under the guardianship of the
Principal for such term as the Minister of Mines and Resources may deem proper:

Indian name of child _____

English name _____

Age _____

Name of Band _____

No. of ticket under which child's annuity is paid _____

Father's full name and No. _____

Mother's full name and No. _____

Parents living or dead _____

State of child's health _____

Religion _____

Does applicant speak English? _____

Previously attended _____ school for _____ years

(Signature of father)

Note--If mother or guardian signs,
agent must forward full explanatory note.

I hereby certify that the above application
for admission has been read over and
interpreted to the parent or guardian and
that the contents were understood by him or
her and that I witnessed his or her signature
to this document:

I recommend the admission of the
above child, who is of good moral
character and is eligible to be
admitted as a grant-earning pupil.

Signature of Missionary or other Witness
(Principal or other official of the school
must not sign as witness)

Agent

Note--All the above particulars must be fully given, especially the "Name of Band," "No. of ticket under which child's annuity is paid" and "Religion." The minimum age for admission is seven (7) years, except in the case of an orphan, destitute or neglected child. When application is made for the admission of such cases, full particulars should accompany the application.

APPENDIX E

COPY OF "PHYSICAL EXAMINATION" FORM

Agency _____ Band _____

Child's name _____ Age _____ Weight _____

Height _____ Is child undernourished? _____ Has child

any defect or deformity of body or limb? _____ Any defect of vision? _____

Any defect of hearing? _____ Any cutaneous disease or eruption? _____

Any sign of mental deficiency? _____ Any enlarged or broken down glands? _____

If child has any of the above defects, describe them. _____

Pulse rate _____ Temperature _____ If feverish, from what cause? _____

Has this child active tuberculosis in your opinion? _____

If so, of what part of the body and in what stage? _____

Trachoma, or other communicable eye disease? _____ Syphilis? _____

Describe any other condition in child or parents which would make the child an unsuitable candidate for admission to a residential school, or of which the Principal of the school should have warning.

Date _____ Time of day _____

_____ M.D.

APPENDIX F

COPY OF "CERTIFICATE OF HEALTH" FORM

_____ Agency
Shubenacadie Indian Residential School
_____ 193 _____

CERTIFICATE OF HEALTH

Child's Name _____
Age _____
Height _____
Weight _____
State defects of limb, if any _____
State defects of eyesight, if any _____
State defects of hearing, if any _____
State signs of scrofula or other forms of tubercular diseases, if any _____

Describe what cutaneous disease, if any _____
State whether subject to fits _____
State whether child has had small-pox _____
State whether vaccinated, and if so, in what year _____
Is this candidate generally of sound and healthy constitution, and fitted to enter
the School? _____

I certify that I have made a personal examination of the above-named applicant, and that
the answers set down by me are correct.

_____ M.D.

N.B.--No child suffering from scrofula or any form of tubercular disease is to be admitted
to school; if in any special case it is thought that this rule should be relaxed, a report
should be made to the Department setting forth the facts.

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